



### *RCC Phoenix – 4.4.21 – The Pursuit of Truth*

#### **Matthew 28:1-10 NLT**

Early on Sunday morning, as the new day was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went out to visit the tomb. Suddenly there was a great earthquake! For an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled aside the stone, and sat on it. His face shone like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow. The guards shook with fear when they saw him, and they fell into a dead faint. Then the angel spoke to the women. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He isn't here! He is risen from the dead, just as he said would happen. Come, see where his body was lying. And now, go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and he is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there. Remember what I have told you." The women ran quickly from the tomb. They were very frightened but also filled with great joy, and they rushed to give the disciples the angel's message. And as they went, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they ran to him, grasped his feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Don't be afraid! Go tell my brothers to leave for Galilee, and they will see me there."

#### *The True Story of Lee:*

A young man named Lee was a huge skeptic by nature and determined at a very young age that there was no God.

#### *Hedonist Defined:*

Belief that the pursuit of \_\_\_\_\_ is the most \_\_\_\_\_ thing in life.

#### *The hedonist ripple effect:*

The hedonist doesn't care who is \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ in their pursuit of pleasure.

The key to Christianity is the \_\_\_\_\_.

#### **1 Corinthians 15:17-20 NLT**

"And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins. In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost! And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world. But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died."

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Evidence

#### *Question:*

Was Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ after being crucified?

5 first century sources (outside of the Bible) confirm Jesus was executed.

- Josephus – 1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish Historian who worked for Rome
- Mara Bar Serapion
- Tacitus – Early Historian
- Lucian
- Jewish Talmud

*The Scientific Medical Journal of the American Medical Association:*

“Clearly the weight of the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ evidence indicates that Jesus was dead, even before the wound to His side was inflicted.”

*Gerd Lüdemann – (atheist scholar from Vanderbilt University):*

“Jesus death as a consequence of crucifixion, is \_\_\_\_\_.”

## 2. \_\_\_\_\_ Evidence

*Question:*

Was the story of Jesus was just a made up \_\_\_\_\_?

*A.N. Sherwin-White (A fellow at St. John’s College & the University of Oxford):*

Sherman-White wrote a book called Roman Society & Roman Law in the New Testament. He determined the passage of 2 generations is not enough time for mythical tendencies or the tendencies of oral tradition to wipe out the core of historical facts.

Paul wrote the Biblical book of 1 Corinthians \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ years after Jesus Death.

### 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 NLT

“I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. *Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said.* He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles.”

*Michael Goulder (Professor of Biblical Studies University of Birmingham):*

Paul’s testimony about the resurrection appearances “goes back at least to what Paul was taught when he was converted, a couple of years after the crucifixion.”

*James D.G. Dunn (Professor of Divinity in the Department of Theology at the University of Durham):*

“We can be entirely confident that the creed was formulated as tradition within months of the death of Christ.”

## 3. \_\_\_\_\_ Evidence

*Question:*

Was the body of Jesus actually \_\_\_\_\_? (Some have promoted the idea that Crucifixion victims weren’t allowed to be buried. They were left on the cross or discarded for the birds/animals to eat their bodies.)

*Byzantine emperor Justinian I:*

Justinian I compiled a summary of the Roman law and procedures from the 1<sup>st</sup> century, commonly referred to as *the Digesta*. The summary stated \_\_\_\_\_ victims can be buried.

In 1968, a crucifixion victim's body was discovered during an archeological dig. The \_\_\_\_\_ was still present in the ankle bones of the person who was crucified.

The enemies of Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ His tomb was empty.

- The Roman government didn't take the body. They wanted Jesus dead.
- The Jewish leaders didn't take the body. They wanted Jesus to stay dead.
- The Disciples didn't have the motive, means or opportunity to overpower trained Roman soldiers, open a sealed tomb and take the body.

#### 4. \_\_\_\_\_ Evidence

Jesus appeared alive in more than a dozen different instances to more than \_\_\_\_\_ people.

Jesus appears to skeptics, doubters, believers, men, women, groups, individuals, daytime, night time, people spoke to him, touched him and ate with him.

\_\_\_\_\_ ancient sources confirm the belief of the disciples that they encountered the risen Jesus.

\_\_\_\_\_ of the disciples recanted their belief.

\_\_\_\_\_ sources outside the Bible that confirm the disciples lived life of deprivation and suffering as a result of their proclamation that Jesus had \_\_\_\_\_ from the dead.

*Lee Strobel (award winning investigative journalist from the Chicago Tribune & author of the Case for Christ):*

"In light of the avalanche of evidence that points so powerfully toward the truth of Christianity, I realized it would take more faith to maintain my atheism than to become a Christian."

*Question:*

How does the true, historical account of Jesus Christ apply to us today?

#### **John 14:1-6 NLT**

"Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. And you know the way to where I am going." "No, we don't know, Lord," Thomas said. "We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus told him, "*I am the way, **the truth**, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.*"