

No Way!
Easter, 2016

ETS: The Resurrection of Jesus changed the world

ESS: If there is no resurrection, there is no Christianity;
our faith is futile!

OSS: I want people to know the foundation for our faith

PQ: Do you believe?

ME

4th Great Grandfather: John Beals

- Fought in the Civil War
- Buried in Westfield

If I could somehow travel back in time when my 4th great grandfather was alive the conversation would probably sound like this....

“Hey great, great, great, great grandfather” (I’d probably leave off all the “greats’), did you know that in **less than 150 years....**

- People can **fly** around the world in **pressurized tubes with wings!**
 - His Response: **NO WAY!**

Did you know that in less than 150 years....

- People can look at a **big black screen** and see what people are doing on the **other side** of the **world LIVE!**
 - His Response: **NO WAY!** (*By the way, what is a screen?*)

Did you know that in *less than 150 years....*

- People can travel **across the country** in **automobiles** that are NOT being pulled by **horses!**
 - His Response: **NO WAY!** (*By the way, what is an automobile?*)

Did you know that in less than 150 years....

- You turn on your **computer** and instantly see your **friends** anywhere in the world!
 - His Response: **NO WAY!** (*By the way, what is a computer?*)

WE

I bet you've had someone tell you something about someone and you've responded with "**No way!**"

- Maybe you heard the shocking news of the **sudden death** of a **friend** and you say "**No Way! I just saw her a few days ago and she was fine!**"
- Maybe you found out you were **expecting** a child and your response was "**NO Way!**"

We use the phrase “**No Way**” when something **shocking, unexpected** or **seemingly untrue** becomes a reality!

- You get **passed over** for a **promotion** and you thought you were going to get one and you say “**No Way! I thought I had the promotion.**”
- The **guy** you like starts showing **interest** in your **rival**- and **she** is not as **cute**-and you say “**No Way! I can’t believe he likes her over me!**”

We use the phrase “**No Way**” when something **shocking, unexpected** or **seemingly untrue** becomes a reality!

GOD

Today, Christians around the world celebrate the **Resurrection of Jesus.**

You may be here this morning and you are not sure you buy into the whole resurrection thing!

- **Rationally**, you are thinking “**NO WAY did a man come back from the dead!**”
 - You’ve **never seen** anyone **rise** from the dead, so you are **skeptical**-I understand.
- **Rationally**, you are thinking “**There is a logical explanation for the supposed resurrection of Jesus.**”
 - Maybe they went to the **wrong tomb**
 - Maybe Jesus’ **disciples stole** His body

- Maybe the **Bible is lying** to us about the resurrection.
 - The resurrection is a **story created by His followers** to make Jesus into a **mythological** type figure.

How is it that today, all over the world, perhaps a **couple billion** people are celebrating the resurrection of Jesus?

When you think about it, it seems like one of those “**NO Way**” things.

- It seems like there is NO WAY to **rationally explain** why *people all around the world* would celebrate the death of a **Jewish carpenter**.
 - **Thousands of Jewish carpenters** have **lived** and died-no one is celebrating any of them
 - Why this Jewish carpenter named Jesus?
- It seems like there is NO WAY to **rationally explain** why *people all around the world* would celebrate the death of a man who was **crucified** as a **common criminal!**
 - Why would you celebrate the death of someone crucified as a criminal?
- It seems like there is NO WAY to **rationally explain** why *people all around the world* would celebrate the

death of a man who was crucified in a **little nation-** which was under the **Thumb** of the **Roman Empire!**

- Jesus **did not lead** a **revolt** against Rome!
- Jesus was **not** a great **military leader!**
- It seems like there is **NO WAY** to **rationally explain** why *people all around the world* would celebrate the death of a man who...
 - **Was so poor**-He didn't own a home
 - **Never** wrote any **books**
 - **Did not lead** any **military** conquests
 - Was **not** an **academic** professor
 - Didn't **have** a **family** to carry on His name

2,000 years ago there were a lot of people who woke up today and before the day was over were saying **“NO Way!”**

Let's start with the crucifixion: **Matthew 27:57–61**

“When it was evening, (This was Friday night) **a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph came, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. 58 He approached Pilate and asked for Jesus's body. Then Pilate ordered that it be released.**

- This would have been a **“NO WAY”** moment for **Joseph's** friends because Joseph was a member of the **Sanhedrin.**

- The **Sanhedrin**, was the council that had made the decision to have Jesus crucified. Joseph was clearly going against his own friends by **showing sympathy** toward the **dead** Jesus!

59 So Joseph took the body, wrapped it in clean, fine linen, 60 and placed it in his new tomb, which he had cut into the rock. He left after rolling a great stone against the entrance of the tomb. 61 Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were seated there, facing the tomb.”

- *If you were making up this story, it is unlikely you would have had a member of the council which condemned Jesus to death to become sympathetic to him.*
- *It is also unlikely you would have had him bury Jesus in his own, new tomb.*

Jesus was crucified on the eve of the **Sabbath**.

- The **Jews did not work** on the Sabbath so the **preparation** and **burial** had to be done quickly.
- **Joseph of Arimathea** was a **Jewish leader** so he knew his time was very limited.
 - He **owned a tomb** in Jerusalem and, since the Sabbath was quickly approaching, he put Jesus' body in his tomb.
 - There was **no time to travel back to Jesus' hometown** or anywhere else.

Understand that Jesus is buried **in the very city in which...**

- He was **crucified**
- The Temple and all the **religious leaders reside**
 - Jesus is **NOT being buried among friends**
 - Jesus is NOT being buried in the **family plot!**

V. 60: “He left after rolling a great stone against the entrance of the tomb.”

- The other Gospels tell us that **Nicodemus** was also with Joseph
 - Nicodemus was also a **Jewish religious** leader who was, like Joseph, going against the views of his fellow religious leaders!
 - The actions of these two men were **not popular** with their friends!

So you have two Jewish religious leaders who have gone from **being unbelievers** in Jesus, who then turned **Skeptics** are **NOW Confused** but had become believers.

⁶¹ Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were seated there, facing the tomb.

- The location of the tomb was *NOT* a **secret**

- Not a secret to Joseph, Nicodemus, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary

Matthew 27:62–66 (HCSB) The next day, which followed the preparation day, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate 63 and said, “Sir, we remember that while this deceiver was still alive he said, ‘After three days I will rise again.’

Note a few things....

- FIRST, these religious leaders **DID NOT BELIEVE** Jesus was the Messiah.
 - **They believed Jesus was only a man** who somehow did miracles and was great teacher- but nonetheless was a man!
 - Jesus **did not fit their concept** of the coming Messiah!
 - Jesus did not ACT like they **expected** the Messiah to act
 - Jesus did not **treat the religious traditions** the way they expected the Messiah would
 - Jesus **did not teach** about God the way they expect the Messiah would teach

- Jesus **did not respond to their enemies**, the **sick**, the **poor** and the religious leaders the way they thought the Messiah would respond.
 - Notice they call Jesus **“this deceiver”**
- **Jesus had enemies**
 - Jesus’ body was buried in the middle of enemy territory!
- **SECOND, Jesus’ enemies remembered His prediction** of a resurrection.
 - They acknowledge that Jesus had predicted His resurrection
 - Interestingly, Jesus’ **own disciples** seemed to *forget* this prediction!

Jesus’ enemies...

- DO NOT BELIEVE Jesus is the promised Messiah
- DO NOT BELIEVE Jesus is more than a man
- DO NOT BELIEVE Jesus can or will rise from the dead!

However, they are afraid that something could still happen so they ask Pilate: **64 So give orders that the tomb be made secure until the third day.**

Why the “Third Day”? (Sunday)

- That was the day Jesus predicted He would **rise** from the dead!

Otherwise, his disciples may come, steal him, and tell the people, 'He has been raised from the dead,' and the last deception will be worse than the first."

- *IF* there was a **plot** to make Jesus into a religious figure, it would make sense that His disciples would attempt to steal Jesus' body and so make His prediction look like it had come true!

Jesus' enemies knew that *IF* the "people" could be **convinced** that Jesus has risen from the dead, they would have a bigger problem than they had before.

- They **needed the allegiance** of the people to be to the religious system with its **man-made traditions**
 - If people were convinced Jesus rose from the dead, that would be **detrimental** to their **power** as religious leaders

⁶⁵ **"Take guards," Pilate told them. "Go and make it as secure as you know how."**

Pilate gives them a guard –or gives them permission to use the **Temple guard**-perhaps because **PILATE KNOWS THE CONSEQUENCES** too!

- Jesus' **enemies falsely accused Jesus** of trying to incite an **insurrection** against Rome.

- Although **Pilate** dismissed the charge, he was nonetheless concerned that if Jesus is portrayed as being resurrected, *some would use the opportunity to start and insurrection!*
 - The Jews had a **history of insurrections** against Rome!
- Pilate tells Jesus' enemies to "Go and make [the tomb] **as secure as you know how.**"
 - Understanding the **consequences** of Jesus' resurrection, do you think they are going to play games? **NO WAY!**

⁶⁶ They went and secured the tomb by setting a seal on the stone and placing the guards.

- The securing of the tomb would have involved the application to the stone of some kind of substance, perhaps a **soft clay**, impressed with the **Roman imperial stamp**.
 - The **seal** would then be attached to the stone with a large rope or cord.
- The **presence** of the **soldiers** themselves would have been the greater deterrent to a posse trying to roll away the rock and steal the body, but the seal would have been more permanent and made grave robbing an **illegal, punishable offense**.

Remember, this meeting is on **Saturday** morning and Jesus had been **buried** on **Friday** night.

- *Had the disciples wanted to steal the body, the best time to steal it was Friday night.*
 - Had they stolen the body the night before, the **guards** would have found **evidence** when they went to **seal the tomb!**
 - The fact that the **guards do not go back to Pilate** or Jesus enemies reporting Jesus body is gone points to the fact that *Jesus' body was still in the tomb.*
- By the way, a **good Jew** would never think of **robbing a tomb on the Sabbath**
- **Jesus' disciples** were nowhere to be seen at this point!
 - They didn't even stay at the **cross**-except John
 - They **didn't help in the burial** of Jesus either!
 - They were scared and "**Shell shocked**"

Stealing Jesus body was **pointless** for the disciples!

- They had nothing to gain
 - Why would they **risk** their life for a dead man?

- They didn't stand up for Jesus when **He was alive-**
why would they risk their lives for Him when He was dead?

Why would you risk your life for a dead man whose death *seemingly* disproved everything He talked about while He was alive?

- Furthermore, IF Jesus was the Son of God, why didn't He **stop people from killing Him?**
 - Why didn't Jesus **come down from the cross** in a miraculous display of supernatural power?

Don't forget this fact: At the **center of Jesus** message was—Jesus!

- Jesus said "**He was the Way**" but now He is dead!
- Jesus said "**He was the Truth**" but now HE is dead!
- Jesus said "**He was the Life**" but now He has no life-His body is cold!
- Jesus allowed people to worship Him as God, but now He is dead-How can you kill God?

Don't forget this fact: At the center of Jesus message was—Jesus!

- A **major difference** between Christianity and **all other religions** is all other religious are built on a **philosophy**

or a **system** of attaining a better life: **True Christianity is built on a PERSON: Jesus Christ.**

- But that Person is dead!
 - There was no reason to take His body because **apparently** everything Jesus taught about Himself was a **lie at worst** and **wishful thinking** at best!
- If Jesus couldn't stay alive to keep His movement alive, why risk their lives by stealing Jesus' body?

Let's summarize:

- Disillusioned Apostles
- Nervous religious leaders
- Despondent Women
- Confused soldiers
 - Guard a dead man?
 - His followers fled from Him do you think they are going to try to steal His body?

NO ONE is anticipating a resurrection!

- The **Apostles** are **not anticipating** the resurrection
- The **Religious Leaders** are **not anticipating** the resurrection
- The **Despondent Women** are **not anticipating** the resurrection
- The **Soldiers** are not anticipating the resurrection

- **Pilate is not anticipating** the resurrection

Why are we-and perhaps a couple billion people-gathered in buildings, in homes, around a dinner table, commemorating a Jewish Carpenter named Jesus?

- Was it because Jesus was a **great teacher**? No!
- Was it because Jesus did **miracles**? No!
- Was it because Jesus wrote a **series of great books**? NO!
- Was it because Jesus was a **political leader**? No!
- Was it because Jesus was a **military leader**? No!

We are here today because **NO ONE** was anticipating the resurrection of Jesus!

How do we know Christ rose from the dead?

- It is because the EVIDENCE

HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN...

Simon Peter

- He goes from **denying** he knew Jesus when asked by a **Jr. High middle schooler** girl to preaching in the very city in which Jesus was crucified that Jesus was risen from the dead!
 - How do you explain that?

- He goes from the **simple life** of a **fisherman** with a wife to
 - Living **an itinerate life** traveling and preaching about Jesus and ultimately being **crucified upside down** for preaching Jesus has risen from the dead!
 - How do you explain that?

If you had told Peter the day Jesus was crucified that Peter would one day be crucified for preaching Jesus was the Son of God, he would have said “NO WAY!”

HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN...

The eleven Apostles

- They go from being **gathered in a room** for fear of being caught as Jesus’ followers **to preaching** in the very city in which Jesus was crucified that Jesus was risen from the dead!
- They go from being **gathered in a room** for fear of being caught as Jesus’ followers to preaching in **foreign lands** like India, Spain, and even into the heart of the Roman Empire-Rome!

If you had told THE ELEVEN on the day Jesus was crucified that they would one day be **preaching** Jesus was the Son of God, and that they **would all be killed** for that message they would have said “NO WAY!”

HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN...

James, the **half-brother** of Jesus

- He was **skeptical** about Jesus' claim to be the Messiah (Would you believe it if your brother claimed to be the Son of God!?)
 - How does James go from being skeptical of His brother to proclaiming his brother is the Son of God?

If you had told JAMES on the day Jesus was crucified that he would one day be **preaching** Jesus was the Son of God, and that he **would all be killed** for that message he would have said “NO WAY!”

HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN...

The reaction of Jesus' enemies!

Matthew 28:11–15 (HCSB) ¹¹ **As they were on their way,** (This is Sunday morning and **Jesus has appeared** to Mary Magdalen and the other Mary who had gone to the tomb to better prepare the body of Jesus) **some of the guards came into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened.**

- What had happened? THE RESURRECTION!

¹² **After the priests had assembled with the elders and agreed on a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of**

money¹³ and told them, “Say this, ‘His disciples came during the night and stole Him while we were sleeping.’”

- If this were a **made-up story**, it would have read ““Say this, ‘His disciples came *before we posted the guard* and stole Him while we were sleeping.’”

- That would be more plausible

- Instead, their response is an **admission** that Jesus’ body was still there when they posted the guard on Saturday, but now it is gone on Sunday!

Also, if this were made up, why would you tell the soldiers to say they “**were sleeping**”!

- That showed they were not doing their job and could have been punishable by death!

¹⁴ If this reaches the governor’s ears, we will deal with him and keep you out of trouble.” ¹⁵They took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been spread among Jewish people to this day.

40 Days later in Jerusalem-outside of which Jesus was crucified-Peter starts preaching Jesus is resurrected!

- If the **Jesus’ enemies** had wanted to squash the Jesus’ movement all they would have had to do was produce Jesus’ body!

- They knew where the tomb was

- They had had 40 days to do an investigation!
 - They had the full force of the Jewish council and temple resources to do an in-depth investigation!
 - However, they never produced a body!
 - Furthermore, it would have been in **the best interest of Pilate** and the Roman government to produce a body-but they didn't.
 - They wanted people to worship and follow Caesar not a Jewish Carpenter crucified on a cross!

HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN...

When Peter and the Apostles started preaching that Jesus was resurrected, thousands of people in Jerusalem responded to the message?

- They had seen Jesus alive
- They had seen Jesus crucified
- They were now being told Jesus was resurrected!
 - Why would they believe this?

Because...

- The **Old Testament prophecies all made sense** in light of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.

- Jesus had proven He was **the long-awaited Messiah!**
- Jesus had **appeared** to more than the apostles-there were more **eyewitness** of Jesus
 - Mary Magdalene and the “other Mary”
 - The two on the Road to Emmaus
 - Paul later tells us that Jesus appeared to “more than 500 people”
- The sudden **inexplicable boldness** of the apostles!

WE

The reason two billion people are gathered around the world today is because you can't explain how a Jewish carpenter is...

- Worshiped
- Preached about
- Taught about
- Had volumes of books written about
- Movies made about
 - **unless something inexplicably supernatural happened!**

What does the Resurrection mean for us?

- Easter dinner?
- Easter Bunny?
- Nice church services?
- New clothes for Easter?

What does the Resurrection mean for us?

- Jesus Christ is who He said He was!
 - “The Way
 - The Truth
 - The Life
 - NO ONE comes to the Father except through Him!”