

“Unbelievably Believable”

Easter 2018

March 29th & April 1st, 2018

When you investigate the resurrection story of Jesus, you will find it is unbelievably **BELIEVABLE**

We don't believe Jesus rose from the dead because the **BIBLE** tells us so

Starting off with faith as a **CHILD** is very different than starting off with faith as an **ADULT**

The reason we believe Jesus rose from the dead is because of the **WITNESSES** of the resurrection who believed & their **LIVES**

The Basics of the Easter Story

For centuries the Jewish people had waited for a messiah (savior) who would come and free them from **FOREIGN** rule

A man called **JOHN** the Baptist came announcing the imminent coming of the Messiah
Matthew 3:1-2 (NIV) “In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.’”

Soon after this **JESUS** begins his three year public ministry

Ultimately Jesus came into **CONFLICT** with the religious leaders of the Jewish temple

Rumors spread that Jesus had raised a man named Lazarus from death

John 11:39 (KJ) “Jesus said, ‘Take ye away the stone.’ Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto Him, ‘Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.’”

More and more people were flocking to Jesus which greatly **CONCERNED** the Jewish religious leaders
John 11:47-48 (GN) “[the religious leaders said] Look at all the miracles this man [Jesus] is performing! ⁴⁸ If we let Him go on in this way, everyone will believe in Him, & the Roman authorities will take action and destroy our Temple and our nation!”

John 11:53 (NIV) “So from that day on they plotted to take His [Jesus] life.”

The writers of the gospels [accounts of Jesus' life] made themselves look terrible after Jesus was arrested – as **COWARDS**, not **HEROES**

When Jesus was arrested all of His disciples **RAN** for their lives

Mark 14:51-52 (NIV) “⁵¹ A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. When they seized him, ⁵² he fled naked, leaving his garment behind.”

When Jesus was **CRUCIFIED** only one (John) of His 12 disciples was there (*see John 19:25-27*)

A rich man, who was a secret follower of Jesus, and a Pharisee (religious leader) **BURIED** Jesus
John 19:38-39 (NIV) “Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders... ³⁹ He was accompanied by Nicodemus...”

Following Jesus' death, His disciples were **IN HIDING**

Jesus' enemies (those who had Him crucified) had more **CONFIDENCE** in the Jesus movement than Jesus' followers

The Jewish religious leaders asked the Roman governor to place **SOLDIERS** around Jesus' tomb
Matthew 27:62-65 (GN) “⁶² The next day, which was a Sabbath, the chief priests and the Pharisees met with Pilate ⁶³ and said, ‘Sir, we remember that while that liar was still alive He said, ‘I will be raised to life three days later.’ ⁶⁴ Give orders, then, for His tomb to be carefully guarded until the third day, so that His disciples will not be able to go and steal the body, and then tell the people that He was raised from death. This last lie would be even worse than the first one.’ ⁶⁵ ‘Take a guard,’ Pilate told them; ‘go and make the tomb as secure as you can.’”

For the disciples to steal Jesus' body to perpetrate a lie of a resurrection would have been **DANGEROUS** and **POINTLESS**

John 11:25 (NIV) "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life.'"

When Jesus died, in the minds of His followers, the **MOVEMENT** died & ended as well

Not one person in the accounts of Jesus' life expected a **RESURRECTION**

Nobody expected **NO BODY**

Just a few days after the resurrection, Jesus' followers poured into the streets of Jerusalem with this message, you **KILLED** Him, God **RAISED** Him, we've **SEEN** Him, **TURN** to God

Many, if not most, of the early followers of Jesus gave their lives not because of what they **BELIEVED**, but for what they **SAW** – a **RESURRECTED** Savior

1 Corinthians 15:1-9 (NIV) "Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ² By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. ³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,⁴ that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,⁵ and that He appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.⁶ After that, He appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.⁷ Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles,⁸ and last of all He appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. ⁹ For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."

This means your faith is not in **VAIN**

On the surface it may appear the resurrection story is unbelievable, but when you consider and factor in all that is in this story, it is unbelievably **BELIEVABLE**

My Next Step Today Is:

- My prayer today is, "Heavenly Father, I'm curious."
- My prayer today is, "Heavenly Father, I'm back."
- My prayer today is, "Heavenly Father, I believe that Jesus died for me, was buried, rose from the dead and was seen. I place all my faith in that Jesus as my Savior."
- I am interested in participating in the Starting Point Class w/Pastor Russ on Tues, April 10th at 6:30 pm

Next week: Join us as we begin a new message series, "**What Makes You Happy?**" Invite a friend!

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