

Includes  
Interactive Game CD!

*The*  
**CASE**  
*for the*  
**Resurrection**  
*of* **JESUS**



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For over a quarter of a century, Gary R. Habermas has focused his research on the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. And for some time now, Gary has been recognized by myself and others as the top expert on the topic. A former student of Gary's, Mike Licona is also a leading "resurrection scholar" today. From these two come a tool that is broad in its scope, thorough and detailed in its depth, providing the fruit of considerable intellect and vigorous labor on this topic. Combined with a very creative style that is user friendly to the learner, I know of no other source quite like it. It may be the most thorough defense of the historicity of the resurrection.

# Appendix

## *A Detailed Outline of Arguments*

The following outline summarizes the ideas and arguments presented by the authors. It can be used as a convenient way to review and learn the arguments and as a quick reference. Page numbers after main points indicate where to find the full discussion.

### I. Introductory Information

#### A. Importance of Jesus' Resurrection (pp. 26–29)

1. It was the focal point of the disciples' preaching.
  - a. Many doctrines were based upon it.
  - b. Belief in it is required for salvation (Rom. 10:9).
  - c. It secured for us an inheritance in heaven (1 Peter 1:3–4).
  - d. If it did not occur we are lost (1 Cor. 15:17).
2. It was the evidence that Jesus provided to validate his teachings (Matt. 12:38–40; 16:1–4; John 2:18–21; Cf. Mark 14:58; Luke 11:29–30). The Resurrection was also the chief evidence provided by the apostles that Christianity is true (Acts 17:2–3, 18, 31; 2:22–32; 3:15; 1 Cor. 15:17).
3. Therefore, Jesus' resurrection largely confirms Jesus' claims, much of Christian doctrine, and the truthfulness of Christianity (1 Cor. 15:14).

#### B. At least four reasons support the likelihood that Jesus actually predicted his resurrection: (pp. 29–30)

1. These predictions are denied, usually because the Resurrection itself is denied as an historical event. If, however, the Resurrection occurred, the reason for rejecting Jesus' predictions concerning it fails.
2. The Gospels provide embarrassing testimony concerning the disciples and the women in relation to Jesus' resurrection. They either were truly distraught or didn't believe (Mark 8:31–33; 9:31–32; 14:27–31; Luke 24:13–24; cf. Luke 24:10–11; John 20:2, 9, 13–15, 24–25). The principle of embarrassment supports authenticity; it seems highly unlikely that the disciples—or early Christians who highly respected them—would invent predictions of Jesus, which, in hindsight, casts them in such a negative way.
3. Jesus' use of the title "Son of Man" in reference to his predictions of his own resurrection (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33–34) heavily supports authenticity. The New Testament Epistles never refer to Him in this manner, nor did the Jews think of *Son of Man* in the sense of a suffering Messiah (see Dan 7:13–14). Thus, the principle of dissimilarity may be employed, which "focuses on words or deeds of Jesus that cannot be derived either from Judaism at the time of Jesus or from the early Church after him" (Meier).
4. Jesus' predictions concerning his resurrection are multiply attested to: Matthew 12:38–40; 16:1–4, 21; 17:23; 20:19; Mark 8:31–32; 9:31; 10:33; Luke 9:22; John 2:18–21. Cf. Mark 14:58; Luke 11:29–30.

#### C. Minimal Facts Approach:

*Considers only those facts that are both strongly supported by evidence and are conceded by almost every scholar, even those who are skeptical.* We present five facts (4 + 1). Four meet the minimal facts criteria and one closely meets it.

#### D. Argument for Jesus' Resurrection

1. Jesus' disciples sincerely believed he rose from the dead and appeared to them.
2. External evidence and events support the authenticity of their belief in his resurrection: the conversion of the church persecutor Paul, the conversion of the skeptic James, and the empty tomb.
3. Since no plausible opposing theories exist that can account for the historical facts, Jesus' resurrection is the only plausible explanation.

### II. The Facts (4 + 1)

#### A. Jesus' death by crucifixion (p. 48)

1. Reported in all four Gospels
2. Reported by a number of non-Christian sources
  - a. Josephus (*Ant.* 18:3)
  - b. Tacitus (*Annals* 15:44)
  - c. Lucian (*The Death of Peregrine*, 11–13)
  - d. Mara bar Serapion (Letter at British Museum)

B. Disciples believed Jesus rose from the dead (p. 49)

1. They claimed it. (*POW!*)

a. Paul

(1) Paul said that disciples claimed Jesus rose

(a) 1 Corinthians 15:9–11

(b) Galatians 2:1–10

(2) Paul's authority

(a) Claimed by Paul (2 Cor. 10:8; 11:5; 13:10; 1 Thess. 2:6; 4:2; 2 Thess. 3:4; Philem. 1:21)

(b) Acknowledged by Apostolic Fathers (Clement of Rome [1 Clem. 5:3–5], Polycarp [Pol. *Phil.* 3:2; 12:1], Ignatius [Ign. *Rom.* 4:3 ])

b. Oral Tradition

(1) Early Creed (1 Cor. 15:3–8)

(a) How do we know it's a creed?

i. "Delivered" and "received" communicates that Paul is giving them the tradition he received.

ii. It contains indicators of an Aramaic original:

a. Fourfold use of the Greek term *hoti* is common in creeds

b. "Cephas," is Aramaic for Peter, but Paul wrote in Greek.

c. Text's content is stylized, containing parallelisms

d. Non-Pauline terms

(b) When is origin of creed dated? Very soon after Jesus' crucifixion (probably within five years).

i. Crucifixion dated A.D. 30 by most scholars

ii. Paul's conversion dated A.D. 31–33

iii. Paul goes away for three years after his conversion, then visits Peter and James in Jerusalem (Gal. 1:18–19). Most scholars believe that Paul received the creed from them at this time.

iv. The other option is that he received it in Damascus at conversion (three years earlier). Either way he probably received it within two to five years of Jesus' crucifixion (which places the origin of the creed even earlier) from someone whom he, as an apostle, deemed to be a trustworthy source.

v. Very latest dating of the creed would be prior to A.D. 51, since Paul writes that what he had received, he delivered to them while visiting Corinth (1 Cor. 15:3), which visit scholars date around A.D. 51. So Paul had the creedal information prior to that time and received it still earlier from a source he considered trustworthy.

(c) Biblical vs. extrabiblical

i. Paul quotes secular writers in New Testament (1 Cor. 15:33; Titus 1:12; Acts 17:28), but this does not make them New Testament sources.

ii. Evidence that demonstrates that the creed existed prior to Paul's writings and was not originated by him, can be claimed as a non-New Testament source. Such evidence includes the terms "delivered" and "received," and the non-Pauline terms.

(d) Important points concerning this creed:

i. Early testimony to Jesus' resurrection

- ii. Probably eyewitness testimony to Jesus' resurrection
- iii. Multiple testimonies to Jesus' resurrection: Cephas (Peter), the Twelve, more than five hundred at one time, James, all of the apostles, Paul.
- iv. Post Resurrection appearances: the 12, 500+, all of the apostles.
- (e) Sermon Summaries (Acts 1–5, 10, 13, 17)
  - i. When is origin of sermons dated? Probably within twenty years of Jesus' crucifixion
  - ii. Important points concerning the sermon summaries:
    - a. Early testimony to Jesus' resurrection
    - b. Possible eyewitness testimony to Jesus' resurrection
    - c. Group appearances: Acts 10, 13

## (2) Written Tradition

- (a) All four Gospels. Regardless of critics' skepticism concerning the Gospels, they contain multiple claims by disciples, written within seventy years of Jesus, that Jesus rose from the dead.
- (b) Apostolic Fathers
  - i. Clement of Rome (A.D. 95, 1 *Clem.* 42:3)
  - ii. Polycarp (A.D. 110, Pol. *Phil.* 9:2)

## 2. They believed it.

- a. Their transformation is strongly documented—from men who abandoned and denied Jesus at his arrest and execution to men who, to their own harm, boldly and publicly proclaimed him risen from the dead.
  - (1) Luke (Acts 7; 12)
  - (2) Clement of Rome, a contemporary of the apostles, reports the sufferings and deaths of the apostles Peter and Paul (1 *Clem.* 5:2–7).
  - (3) Ignatius, who likely knew the apostles, reports that the disciples were so encouraged by seeing and touching the risen Jesus, they were unaffected by the fear of martyrdom (*Ign. Smyrn* 3:2–3).
  - (4) Polycarp was instructed and appointed by the apostles and attests that Paul and all of the apostles suffered (Pol. *Phil.* 9:2).
  - (5) Dionysius of Corinth (cited by Eusebius in *EH* 2:25:8)
  - (6) Tertullian (*Scorpiace* 15).
  - (7) Origen (*Contra Celsum* 2:56, 77)
  - (8) Important points:
    - (a) The willingness of the apostles to suffer and die for their testimony of the risen Jesus is evidence of their sincerity. They truly believed that Jesus rose from the dead.
    - (b) It's not implied that their sincerity verifies the truth of their beliefs; people have long been willing to suffer and die for various religions and causes. It does, however, demonstrate that they were not deliberately lying. Liars make poor martyrs.
    - (c) The fact is strongly attested to, then, that Jesus' disciples sincerely believed that he rose from the dead and appeared to them. Thus, legend and lies fail to account for the appearances, because the original apostles both claimed and believed that the risen Jesus had appeared to them.

## C. Conversion of the church persecutor Paul (pp. 64–65)

### 1. His conversion

- a. Paul (1 *Cor.* 15:9–10; *Gal.* 1:13–16; *Phil.* 3:6–7)
- b. Recorded in Acts (9; 22; 26)
- c. Early oral tradition circulating in Judea (*Gal.* 1:22–23)

### 2. His suffering and martyrdom

- a. Paul (2 *Cor.* 11:23–28; *Phil.* 1:21–23)
- b. Luke (Acts 14:19; 16:19–24; 17:5; 17:13–15; 18:12–13; 21:27–36; 23:12–35)

- c. Clement of Rome (1 Clem 5:2–7)
- d. Polycarp (Pol. *Phil.* 9:2)
- e. Tertullian (*Scorpiace* 15; also cited by Eusebius in *EH*2:25:8)
- f. Dionysius of Corinth (cited by Eusebius in *EH*2:25:8)
- g. Origen (Commentary on Genesis cited by Eusebius in *EH* 3:1)

#### D. Conversion of the skeptic James (pp. 67–69)

##### 1. His conversion

- a. The Gospels report that Jesus' brothers were unbelievers prior to Resurrection (Mark 3:21, 31; 6:3–4; John 7:5)
- b. Early creed reports appearance to James (1 Cor. 15:7)
- c. Paul and Acts identify James as a leader in the church (Gal. 1:19; Acts 15:12–21)

##### 2. His suffering and martyrdom

- a. Josephus (*Ant.* 20:200)
- b. Hegesippus (quoted at length by Eusebius in *EH*2:23)
- c. Clement of Alexandria (quoted by Eusebius in *EH* 2:1; mentioned in *EH*2:23)

#### E. Empty tomb (pp. 69–74)

1. *Jerusalem factor*. Impossible for Christianity to survive and expand in Jerusalem if body still in tomb. The enemies would have only to produce the corpse.
2. *Enemy attestation*. In claiming that Jesus' disciples stole the body, his enemies (Matt. 28:12–13; Justin Martyr, *Trypho* 108; Tertullian, *De Spectaculis* 30) indirectly affirmed an empty tomb; they would not have claimed such if the body were still in the tomb.
3. *Testimony of women*. Women are listed as primary witnesses to empty tomb. It's unlikely that the disciples would have invented the story, since in their a woman's testimony was not highly regarded and, in fact, would have been damaging to their claim (Luke 24:11; Josephus, *Ant.* 4:8:15; *Talmud*: J Sotah 19a; Rosh Hashannah 1:8; Kiddushin 82b; Origen, *Contra Celsum* 2:59; 3:55; Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars*, Augustus 44).

### III. Opposing Theories

#### A. Legend (pp. 84–92)

##### 1. Embellishments to the story over time

- a. The story of the Resurrection can be traced back to the original disciples. Critics can accuse them of lying or hallucinating, but claiming that a resurrection legend developed after the time of the disciples is not an option; the disciples themselves made the claim.
- b. Paul came to believe in Jesus' resurrection apart from the testimonies of the disciples.
- c. James came to believe in Jesus' resurrection apart from the testimonies of the disciples.
- d. While it's true that embellishments occur overtime, the issue is, Has such occurred with the Resurrection claims. Merely making an assertion of embellishment is not evidence.

##### 2. Non-historical genre, that is, disciples wrote in a literary style of the time to honor their teacher, and their writings were not meant to be historical accounts of a literal resurrection.

- a. Empty tomb, which is attested to apart from New Testament (e.g., Jerusalem factor, enemy attestation).
- b. The skeptic Paul, who was hostile to Christians, was educated (Pharisee) and would be well acquainted with Jewish fable. He wouldn't have been persuaded by—in his perception—a feeble Christian attempt at Jewish Midrash, nor would he have followed someone he considered to be a false Messiah, thereby jeopardizing his soul.
- c. The same applies to James. Sources tell us that James remained pious toward the Jewish law even after becoming a Christian (Hegesippus quoted by Eusebius). It is extremely unlikely that, merely over a story he would have considered fiction, he would change his worldview, follow a false Messiah who was cursed by God (since Jesus had been crucified), and jeopardize his soul.

d. It is true that fable genre existed. It is also true that historical genre existed. Merely pointing out mystical accounts does nothing to demonstrate that the Christian accounts are of the same genre. A separate argument must be presented.

e. When we come to the Resurrection accounts, a historical genre seems likely:

(1) Acts 2:13, where David is contrasted with Jesus: David's body decayed, Jesus' did not.

f. The responses of early critics imply that the early church believed that the resurrection of Jesus was an historical event (e.g., Celsus, Jewish leaders). These responses presented arguments against the view of a literal and bodily resurrection. Why argue against it, if a literal and bodily resurrection was not what was being claimed?

### 3. Resurrections in other religions

a. The accounts of rising gods in other religions are unclear.

(1) Today's scholars would not regard the stories as parallels, since the details of the accounts are vague and are not similar to Jesus' resurrection.

(a) Aesculapius was struck by lightning and ascended to heaven.

(b) Baccus and Hercules and a few other sons rose to heaven on the horse Pegasus, having died violent deaths.

(2) First clear parallel is 100+ years after Jesus

(3) That a resurrection was reported in the earlier accounts of these pagan deities is questionable.

(a) No clear death or resurrection of Marduk.

(b) In the earliest versions of Adonis, no death or a resurrection is reported.

(c) In no version is there a clear account of Osiris rising from the dead.

b. Accounts of rising gods in other religions lack evidence and can easily be accounted for by opposing theories.

c. Opposing theories cannot explain the evidence that exists for Jesus' resurrection.

## B. Fraud Theory (pp. 93–97)

### 1. Fraud 1 (Disciples lied and/or stole body)

a. Disciples sincerely believed that they saw the risen Jesus.

b. Does not explain conversion of Paul, who, as an enemy of the church, would have concluded fraud was responsible for the empty tomb. He was converted because of an appearance of Jesus.

c. Does not explain conversion of James, who apparently disbelieved reports of Jesus' miracles prior to his death. Resurrection would simply have been another of the disciples' lies.

### 2. Fraud 2 (Someone else stole body)

a. Does not explain conversion of Paul, who would have suspected fraud and who converted because of an appearance.

b. Does not explain conversion of James, who would have suspected fraud and who converted because of an appearance.

c. Does not explain beliefs of the disciples, which were based on the appearances. Moreover New Testament indicates Jesus' followers did not expect Resurrection and did not respond with belief in Resurrection when they saw empty tomb (John 20:2, 13–15; 24–25; Luke 24:10–12).

d. *Even if true*, could only call into question the cause of the empty tomb.

### 3. Being willing to die for one's beliefs does not verify that those beliefs are true; many who embrace beliefs contrary to Christianity's have also died for their beliefs.

a. The claim is that a person's willingness to suffer and die for his or her beliefs strongly indicates that person sincerely thought those beliefs to be true.

b. This willingness on the disciples' part strongly indicates that they sincerely believed that Jesus arose. In other words, they were not lying.

c. Examples of adherents to other religions who were willing to die for their beliefs differ from the case of the disciples. Muslims, Buddhist monks, Christians, and others who die for their beliefs may be deceived by false teachings. But the disciples claimed that they themselves saw the risen Jesus.

## C. Wrong Tomb Theory (pp. 97–98)

### 1. Even if true, the appearances to the disciples cannot be accounted for.

2. The testimony of the Gospels is that the empty tomb convinced no one but John.
  - a. Mary concluded that the gardener stole the body.
  - b. Disciples did not believe upon seeing the empty tomb.
3. Paul was not convinced by the empty tomb but by an appearance of Jesus. Without it, he would have concluded that the body was stolen or that the disciples went to the wrong tomb.
4. James would have been unconvinced by the empty tomb. As with Paul, an appearance convinced James.
5. No sources exist that they went to the wrong tomb.
6. Burial by Joseph of Aramethea indicates tomb's location was known.

#### D. Apparent Death Theory (Jesus survived the cross) (pp. 99–103)

1. JAMA (3/21/86) says such is impossible, considering the pathological effects of scourging and crucifixion.
  - a. Asphyxiation generally believed to be cause of death with crucifixion.
  - b. Spear wound (John 19:34–35) indicates that the blood and water that flowed probably issued from the sac surrounding the heart (the pericardium), it being ruptured, produced the water, and the right side of the heart being pierced produced the blood. (The Roman author Quintilian [A.D. 35–95] reports this procedure being performed on crucifixion victims.)
2. Strauss' critique. Implausible to believe the wounded Jesus pushed the stone away with nail-pierced hands, then beat up the guards, walked blocks on pierced and wounded feet, appeared to his disciples in his pathetic and mutilated state, and convinced them he was the risen prince of life.
3. Cannot account for Paul's dramatic reversal of worldviews. Paul claimed that he experienced a glorious appearance of the risen Jesus.

#### E. Psychological Phenomena

1. Definitions
  - a. Illusions are distorted perceptions.
  - b. Hallucinations are false perceptions of something that is not there.
  - c. Delusions are false beliefs, when evidence to the contrary is known.

#### 2. Hallucination Theory (pp. 105–109)

- a. Not group occurrences, but individual (like dreams)
- b. Does not explain empty tomb
- c. Does not explain conversion of Paul, who was not in the mindset
- d. Does not explain conversion of James, who was not in the mindset
- e. Too many variances in incidences
  - (1) Included men and women
  - (2) Seen by individuals and groups
  - (3) Attested by friend and foe
  - (4) Hard-headed Peter and soft-hearted Mary Magdalene
  - (5) Indoors and outdoors
  - (6) Seen not once but many times over a period of forty days

#### 3. Delusion Theory (pp. 109–110)

- a. Does not explain empty tomb
- b. Does not explain conversion of Paul. People who are candidates for delusions believe something to the extent that it overrides their logic. Paul was a Jew committed to his current faith and even hostile toward Christians. No reason can be offered for his motivation to leave his faith for a dead man, whom he would have viewed as a false prophet rightly put to death for blasphemy.
- c. Does not explain conversion of James for the same reason as Paul.

#### 4. Vision Theory (pp. 110–113)

a. Determine what is meant by vision

- (1) If vision genre, such is refuted above (see Legend/Nonhistorical genre).
  - (2) If visions were objective, Christ, then, is risen. "Objective" vision means Jesus was really seen but not in a physical state. If Jesus was seen, then he survived death and the ramifications are the same as Resurrection; God exists and Christianity is true. The issue then becomes the nature of Jesus' resurrection body, not whether or not he was raised.
  - (3) If visions were subjective, the appearances were hallucinations/delusions. Such is problematic, however, for the reasons above.
- b. Does not explain empty tomb.
- c. Bodily nature of appearances. New Testament writers spoke of physical, material body of risen Jesus, rather than an immaterial one.

5. Conversion Disorder (pp. 113–115)

- a. At best, only accounts for Paul's experience
- (1) Cannot account for the appearances to the disciples
  - (2) Cannot account for the appearance to James
- b. Cannot account for the empty tomb
- c. Paul does not fit the profile of a person with conversion disorder
- (1) Woman by 5:1
  - (2) Adolescents
  - (3) Low economic status
  - (4) Low IQ
  - (5) Military persons in battle
- d. Paul's conversion, too, would require more than a conversion disorder.
- (1) Visual hallucination
  - (2) Auditory hallucination
  - (3) Messiah Complex
- e. Since multiple explanations are required in order to account for Paul's experience, a new combination theory (see below) appears *ad hoc*.

F. Target: Paul (pp. 115–119)

1. Guilt

- a. No evidence that Paul felt guilt at the time of his experience
- b. Paul's writings indicate the very opposite—he was very content in Judaism and confident of his actions (Phil. 3:5–6).
- c. Even if guilt could account for the appearance to Paul, it does not account for Jesus' appearances to the others.
- d. Does not account for the empty tomb

2. Desire for power

- a. If Paul was looking for power through a prominent position of authority in the church, his behavior provide us no indication of such. During the first seventeen years of his Christian life He had little contact with those who could have empowered him.
- b. If Paul was looking for more power, being a Roman citizen, he could have pursued a position of power within the Roman government.
- c. The difficult life that Paul cheerfully lived as a Christian did not reflect a person whose goal was self-gratification.

3. Epiphany

- a. Even if true, it only accounts for the appearance to Paul.
- (1) Does not account for the appearances to the disciples
  - (2) Does not account for the appearance to the skeptic James



- b. Does not account for the empty tomb
- c. Christianity's critics responded to a literal Resurrection rather than to an epiphany, which implies that literal Resurrection was being proclaimed by the witnesses.
  - (1) The Jewish leadership claimed that the disciples stole the body.
  - (2) Celsus claimed that either Jesus never really died on the cross or that trickery was used.
- d. The accounts of the bright light and voice appear in Acts, which dates after Paul's conversion and the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. It's unlikely, then, that the story of Jesus' resurrection evolved from epiphany to bodily appearances.

#### G. Combination Theories (p. 121)

1. Combinations of theories lead to higher improbabilities. Two theories, each having a 50 percent probability, lead to a combined probability of 25 percent.
2. Remaining are many of the same problems that face individual opposing theories.
3. Even if no problems remained, the number of opposing theories that must be employed in order to account for all of the facts screams of being *ad hoc*.
4. The mere stating of an opposing theory does nothing to prove that the theory is true. Evidence must be provided.

#### H. Discrepancies in the Gospel accounts of Resurrection make entire story dubious. (p. 122)

1. At most, calls into question inerrancy.
2. Historians do not conclude that, because individual accounts contain discrepancies, an event did not occur. Other works of antiquity are not rejected when discrepancies exist. Rather, the data is more closely examined. Thus, the "minimal facts" approach is valuable in this discussion.
3. Differences in the Gospels may indicate that they were independent accounts, thus, from an historian's perspective, adding to their credibility because of the existence of multiple witnesses.
4. Plausible explanations exist for many if not all of the discrepancies.

#### I. Biased Testimony (p. 124)

1. Paul who was actually biased against Jesus.
2. James appears to have been biased against Jesus.
3. If testimony is dismissed because it comes from an interested party, most of our historical sources would have to be rejected, since the author wrote about the events because he or she has an interest in the subject.
4. Recognizing the bias of an author does not automatically merit the conclusion that the author has distorted the facts. Jewish historians who write about the Holocaust have reason to report what happened. This works in favor of historical accuracy.
5. *Genetic fallacy*. We must recognize the difference between understanding *whysomething* is believed versus understanding why something is true.
6. *Ad hominem fallacy*, that is, attacking the source rather than the argument.

#### J. A risen Jesus would have made a great impact on his culture and, thus, we would have more records on him. (p. 126)

1. Few records survive from two thousand years ago.
  - a. Non-Christian writings
    - (1) About 50 percent of the writings of Tacitus have been lost.
    - (2) The writings of Thallus have been lost.
    - (3) The writings of Asclepiades of Mendes have been lost.
    - (4) Herod the Great's secretary Nicolas of Damascus wrote a *Universal History* of 144 books. None have survived.
    - (5) Only the early books of Livy and excerpts from some of his other writings have survived.
  - b. Christian Writings
    - (1) Papias. Only fragments remain, referenced by others.
    - (2) Quadratus. Only fragments remain, referenced by others.
    - (3) Hegesippus. Only fragments remain, referenced by others.

2. The accounts that now exist concerning Jesus are impressive.

a. Forty-two authors mention Jesus within 150 years of his life:

(1) Nine traditional authors of the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Author of Hebrews, James, Peter, Jude.

(2) Twenty early Christian writers outside the New Testament: Clement of Rome, 2 Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, Martyrdom of Polycarp, Didache, Barnabas, Shepherd of Hermas, Fragments of Papias, Justin Martyr, Aristides, Athenagoras, Theophilus of Antioch, Quadratus, Aristo of Pella, Melito of Sardis, Diognetus, Gospel of Peter, Apocalypse of Peter, and Epistula Apostolorum.

(3) Four heretical writings: Gospel of Thomas, Gospel of Truth, Apocryphon of John, Treatise on Resurrection.

(4) Nine secular non-Christian sources: Josephus (Jewish historian), Tacitus (Roman historian), Pliny the Younger (Roman politician), Phlegon (freed slave who wrote histories), Lucian (Greek satirist), Celsus (Roman philosopher), Mara Bar-Serapion (prisoner awaiting execution), Suetonius, Thallus.

b. Ten authors mention Tiberius Caesar—the Roman emperor during Jesus' ministry—within 150 years of his life: Josephus, Tacitus, Suetonius, Seneca, Paterculus, Plutarch, Pliny the Elder, Strabo, Valerius Maximum, and Luke.

c. The ratio of sources mentioning Jesus compared to those mentioning the Roman emperor at the same time and during the same period is 42:10! Even if only secular non-Christian sources who attest to Jesus are considered, the ratio is 9:9.

K. The disciples seemed to have experienced something. What it was will never be known. (p. 128)

1. Rejects the *conclusion* rather than the *evidence*.

2. What we do not know is not the issue; rather, the issue is what we do know: facts that are pieces of a puzzle and that when put together looks like only a resurrection.

3. The religious context in which the evidence for Jesus' resurrection appears increases the likelihood that it occurred, i.e., Jesus' claims to divinity, that he was known as a powerful miracle-worker, and evidence for God's existence.

L. Alien Theory (p. 130)

1. Alien theory does not deny Jesus' resurrection; only God as its cause.

2. The life of Jesus differs substantially from typical alien accounts.

a. Aliens usually arrive in a spaceship. Jesus was born on earth.

b. Aliens usually appear for a very short time. Jesus was on earth for 30+ years.

c. Aliens usually are abusive. Jesus was loving.

3. The evidence that aliens exist is questionable. Scientific evidence, namely cosmic constants, indicates the high improbability for life to exist anywhere in the universe except on earth.

4. There is good evidence that God exists (e.g., intelligent design and argument for a final eternal cause of the universe). Therefore, Jesus' resurrection is better explained as confirmation of his claims to divinity than as an alien playing a cosmic joke.

5. The Christian might say to the skeptic posing the alien theory, "Let's stick with the academic arguments for now. Once we're done with those, we'll get back to some of the fun ones." Or "Yes, Jesus as Son of God was an alien and not of this world."

M. Naturalism (comes in several forms) (p. 132)

1. "Only what science proves is true."

a. Science relates to only what can be observed and tested. Some things lay outside of empirical science. Love, for instance, cannot be measured. The limitations of science, however, are not a reason to deny Jesus' resurrection.

b. Self-refuting. A scientist placed in a room with the latest technology would be unable to prove that only what science proves is true. Thus, naturalism fails its own test.

c. Self-refuting again. To require that historical events be predictable or repeatable is self-refuting, just a restatement that science is the only way to know something. I.e., the rule that establishes these sorts of requirements is not scientific, hence it fails its own test.

d. There is no reason why the historian cannot determine the non-supernatural portions of claims concerning the Resurrection. E.g., Did Jesus die? Was he seen alive at some later time? The scientist or historian could conclude that "Jesus was seen alive after his death."

2. "Science proves that people do not come back to life."

- a. Science proves that people do not come back to life—by *natural causes*. Scripture does not claim that Jesus rose by natural causes.
- b. The Resurrection occurred in an interconnected religio-historical context that includes Jesus' claims to divinity, his deeds that appeared miraculous, and his predictions concerning his resurrection. In other words, Jesus' life and claims provide a suitable context for his resurrection.

3. "Science can explain everything. We don't need a God."

- a. "God of the gaps" explanations of the past no more undermine current arguments for God than do discarded scientific theories and medical beliefs undermine today's science and medicine.
- b. *Genetic fallacy*. This is the assumption that discovering how a belief originated (e.g., god of the gaps) is sufficient to explain that belief. It is fallacious, however, because it attacks the origin of a view instead of the view itself, which could still be correct.
- c. Jesus' resurrection as the best explanation of the data results not from what we don't know from science, but from what we do know from science
- d. It is an unjustified leap to proclaim that in the future we will find a scientific answer for the resurrection of Jesus. This could be said about almost anything.

4. "If God exists, he cannot intervene in the laws of nature."

- a. How does the skeptic know what God can and cannot do?
- b. If God created the universe, including the natural laws that govern it, it is neither logically impossible nor inconsistent for him to override those same laws at will.
- c. Jesus' resurrection would show that God *could* and *did* act in our world.

5. "Science must assume a naturalistic explanation for everything."

- a. While science must look for a naturalistic explanation, there is no need to deny a supernatural one, when both evidence and a religio-historical context is present, and no plausible naturalistic explanations exists. (Elephant example)
- b. The issue is not whether everything can be explained by the laws of nature. The more crucial question is whether there is a God who may have superseded nature by a superior power.
- c. Certain miracles demonstrate characteristics of actually interfering with the laws of nature.
- d. When a naturalist *insists* on assuming that all events *must* be interpreted naturally, or that the laws of nature must have been expanded to allow an events, that person is engaging in circular argumentation because he or she *assumes* a naturalistic stance.

6. "Even if a miracle really occurred, we could never know that it was a miracle."

- a. If God exists, then we have good reason to consider a link between a qualified event and a divine cause.
- b. A religio-historical context helps to identify an act as a miracle.
- c. Expanding the laws of nature in order to eliminate the miraculous nature of the data surrounding Jesus' resurrection creates more problems. One must propose unreasonable natural theories that are highly improbable to impossible.

7. "Miracles in other religions count against Christian miracle claims."

- a. Genuine miracles could occur among unbelievers and still be entirely compatible with Christian belief.
- b. Miracles in other religions are for the most part poorly evidenced and are scarcely able to rule out a well-evidenced one.
- c. Miracles in other religions are usually always dismissed by a plausible opposing theory, whereas these theories fail regarding Jesus' resurrection.

8. "Even before investigating a claimed miracle, there is a huge mountain of improbability against it ever being an act of God."

- a. If God exists, there is no reason to reject miracles as the explanation of well-attested events for which no plausible natural explanations exist.
- b. To say that we should deny Jesus' resurrection, no matter how strong the evidence, is to be biased against the possibility that this could be the very case for which we have been looking
- c. We learn about the nature of this world by our experiences. Arriving at the "mountain of improbability" conclusion rules out many claims of supernatural experiences.
- d. Evidence exists for contemporary supernatural phenomena (e.g., answered prayer, NDEs). To the extent that they can be con-

firmed, this phenomena significantly challenge a naturalistic interpretation of this world. If other miracles subsequently occur, the Resurrection would become enormously more plausible.

#### IV. Other Issues

##### A. Bodily Resurrection (p. 154)

###### 1. Paul preached a bodily resurrection.

- a. First Corinthians 15:4. "He was buried . . . he was raised" signifies what goes down in burial comes up in resurrection. Just a few verses later, Paul says the same, four additional times (15:42–44). In other words, what goes down comes up.
- b. Philippians 3:21. Christ will *transform* our lowly bodies, not eliminate them.
- c. Romans 8:11. The Holy Spirit will give life to our mortal bodies as he did to Jesus' mortal body at his resurrection.
- d. Colossians 2:9. Paul says that the fullness of God's nature and essence presently dwells in Jesus' body. Jesus has a body now. He is not a disembodied spirit.
- e. Acts 13:34–37. Paul is reported to preach that, contrary to king David's body, which decayed after death, Jesus' body, as a fulfillment of prophecy, did not decay (Ps. 16:10). Rather, God raised it and there were eyewitnesses.
- f. Acts 9; 22; 26. Although the appearance to Paul is described differently than what we read in the Gospels, the discrepancy is insufficient to conclude that Paul believed that Jesus was not raised bodily.
  - (1) Other details in the account indicate that the experience occurred not only in the mind of Paul (others saw the light and heard the voice).
  - (2) If critics use Paul's testimony in Acts in order to conclude vision, they must consider the other words of Paul in Acts 13:34–37 that clearly speak of bodily resurrection.
  - (3) Paul's experience was post-ascension and may explain how Jesus' appearance after death was different than in the Gospels.
  - (4) Luke apparently was not troubled by the difference between Paul's appearance and those made to the disciples (Luke 24; Acts 1:1–11); he records *both*.
  - (5) Acts was written after Matthew, Mark, and Luke, which are clear regarding bodily resurrection. Thus, if an evolution is taking place, it one that has devolved rather than evolved.

###### 2. Peter preached bodily Resurrection

- a. Acts 2:25–32. Peter is reported preaching that Jesus' body did not decay in the grave as did David's, but rather was raised up by God as a fulfillment of prophecy (Ps. 16:10).
- b. Acts 10:39–41. Peter is reported to preach that Jesus ate and drank with his disciples.

###### 3. All four gospels clearly speak of a bodily resurrection of Jesus.

- a. Empty tomb implies bodily Resurrection.
- b. Matthew, Luke, and John testify that people touched the risen Jesus (Matt. 28:9; Luke 24:39–40; John 20:24–8).
- c. Luke and John attest that Jesus ate in front of or with his disciples (Luke 24:41–3; John 21:19–30).
- d. Luke said Jesus' resurrection body had "flesh and bones" (Luke 24:39).
- e. John reports Jesus saying that if his enemies destroyed his body, he would raise that body in three days (John 2:18–22).

###### 4. Thus, the bodily resurrection of Jesus was proclaimed at the earliest stages of Christianity (i.e., Paul and the Acts sermon summaries) and is multiply attested to.

###### 5. No Christian writer of the first century presents a contrary view.

###### 6. But critics use a few New Testament verses to support a non-bodily Resurrection.

- a. John 21:12. "None of the disciples ventured to question Jesus: "Who are you?" knowing that it was the Lord.

(1) Jesus' immortal body may have been slightly different.

(2) The same author who writes this verse clearly spoke of a bodily Resurrection just one chapter earlier (20:27).

- b. Matthew 28:17. "When they saw him, they worshiped Him; but some were doubtful."

(1) The word for "doubt" (*distazo*)

may more accurately be translated "hesitate."

- (2) The some who hesitated may have been other than the Twelve and were seeing Jesus for the first time. Or they could be some of the Twelve having the same thoughts many of us would have today if someone we loved had died and then suddenly appeared before us. We would rejoice greatly and yet we would have questions: "Is this really him [or her]? How can this be? People do not come back from death."
- (3) Just a few verses earlier, Matthew clearly speaks of a bodily Resurrection (28:5–10).
- (4) Appearance reported in Galilee (a few days walk from Jerusalem), where most would only have heard about Jesus' crucifixion. Thus, upon seeing him, many may have doubted he had been crucified.
- c. Galatians 1:16. "to reveal His Son in me."
- (1) Paul strongly hints at bodily resurrection elsewhere.
- (2) Acts 13:30–37 portrays Paul with a strong belief in Jesus' bodily resurrection.
- (3) Paul here probably refers to his spiritual growth in the three years following his Damascus road experience.
- d. First Peter 3:18. Jesus was "put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit."
- (1) Critics who cite this verse usually deny that Peter wrote this letter and assign its composition to the final quarter of the first century. If true, the passage is contrary to what we know the apostles were teaching. Therefore, to support critics' belief that spiritual resurrection was first proclaimed, evolution of the story would be devolving rather than evolving.
- e. Mark 16:7. "He is going ahead of you" could be translated "he is leading you," thus, could hint at an inward (i.e., visionary) experience at their destination.
- (1) If Greek "proagō" is translated in this manner, it does not follow that disciples will experience a vision in Galilee.
- (2) In the verse that immediately precedes, the angel is clear that a bodily resurrection has occurred (empty tomb). Thus, it's poor exegesis to assign an alternate definition to a word to make it fit with a visionary appearance and heavily strains the text.
- (3) While "leading" is a possible translation, "going ahead" is more common, which is how the majority of translations render it.
- f. First Corinthians 15:37–50. Natural vs. Spiritual body
- (1) Paul is *not* contrasting a material body vs. an immaterial one. Rather, he's contrasting a body that is holy and has spiritual appetites to one that is weak and has both fleshly and sinful appetites.
- (2) Paul used the same two Greek terms earlier in 2:14–15, where he contrasts the spiritual or godly man with the lost man who thinks only of worldly things.
- (3) If Paul was contrasting a physical body with an immaterial one, a better Greek word was available to him, one which he had just used a few chapters earlier in a similar contrast, even using a seed analogy as he does in chapter 15 (1 Cor. 9:3–10)! In 9:11 Paul writes, "If we sowed *spiritual* things in you, is it too much if we reap *material [sarkikos]* things from you [such as food, clothing, and lodging]?" Thus, in 1 Corinthians 15, no basis exists for holding that Paul is making a contrast between the material and immaterial.
- (4) Elsewhere in the New Testament and the intertestamental writings, the Greek term Paul uses in chapter 15 for "natural" is used to refer to the fleshly nature of man as opposed to the spiritual. In fact, *neither Paul, nor any other New Testament author, nor the writers of intertestamental books ever use the term psychikos in the sense of something that is material.* The word does not appear in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers.
- (a) James uses *psychikos* to contrast a Christian's state of heart that is not from God (described as "earthly, natural [*psychikos*], demonic") verses the spirit-filled Christian's state of the heart (James 3:15).
- (b) Jude uses the word of the lost who live by "natural instinct" [*psychikos*], not having the Holy Spirit (Jude 1:19).
- (c) In 2 Maccabees 4:37 and 14:24 it means "heartily" in reference to feelings of grief and warmth.
- (d) In 4 Maccabees 1:32 it is used of a bodily appetite.
- (5) Paul uses the same Greek word for "spiritual" (*pneumatikos*) four other times in all of his writings: three times in 1 Corinthians and once in Galatians (2:15; 3:1; 14:37; Gal. 6:1). In each case he is referring to the spiritually mature. *Paul never uses the term to mean an immaterial body.* Only three times elsewhere in the New Testament (1 Peter 2:5 [2x's]; Rev. 11:8), none of which mean "immaterial." Not found in LXX or intertestamental writings. The word appears twenty-one times in the Apostolic Fathers (1 Clem. 47:3; 2 Clem. 14:1, 2, 3; Barn. 1:2; 4:11; 16:10; Ign. Eph. 8:2 [3x's]; 5:1; 7:2; 11:2; 10:3; Ign. Mag. 13:1,2; Ign. Smyr. 3:3; 12:2; Ign. Polycarp 1:2; 2:2; Didache 10:3). Of these, six may be considered candidates for a meaning of "immaterial," although it is not clear (Ign. Eph. 7:2; 10:3; 2 Clem. 14:1–3; Barn. 16:10). In each case, however, the sense of being of God is always present and it is never used of Jesus' resurrection in the sense of the body being immaterial.

(6) When Paul states that “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,” “flesh and blood” was a common Jewish expression for a mortal body (Matt. 16:17; 1 Cor. 15:50; Gal. 1:16; Eph. 6:12; Heb. 2:14; Ecclesiasticus 14:18; 17:31).

## B. Claims of Jesus about Himself (p. 166)

### 1. Son of Man. Mark 14:61–62 (cf. Dan 7:13–14).

#### a. Its Authenticity

(1) The term appears in the New Testament only three times outside of the Gospels (Acts 7:56; Rev. 1:13; 14:14) and only three times in Christian writings during the first 120 years following Jesus (Ign. *Eph.* 19; Ign. *Trall.* 9; *Barn.* 12). Is it unlikely that the church originated the title Son of Man as Jesus’ favorite self-description, when the church itself did not refer to him in this manner.

(2) The title as used in the Gospels is found in *all* of the Gospel sources.

(3) The title seems to lack indications that it was a result of theological evolution, since at first glance it appears to be a title that places more emphasis on Jesus’ humanity.

b. Its Meaning. Jesus’ use of it in Mark 14 seems to make reference to himself as the divine the Son of Man in Daniel 7. This person is given eternal authority, glory, power, and is worshipped. He rides the clouds of heaven, something deity does (Ps. 104:3; Isa. 19:1).

### 2. Son of God. Mark 13:32

a. Its Authenticity. Principle of Embarrassment in Mark 13:32. When claiming the view that Jesus is divine, Mark would not say there is something that Jesus does not know.

#### b. Its Meaning

(1) In antiquity, the term Son of God could be used of a divine being, leaders, philosophers, angels, and the nation Israel. But what did Jesus mean when he referred to himself as “Son of God”?

(2) Mark 13:32. Anabasis (ascending scale with increasing emphasis). Jesus is greater than all humans and all angels. Thus, he understood himself as Son of God in a divine sense.

c. Other texts where “Son of God” claims have good evidence: Matthew 11:27; Mark 14:36.

## C. If atheism is true, Jesus did not rise: *Problem of Evil* (p. 172)

### 1. Does not call into question God’s existence; only his character

2. It may be that we currently live in the best of all possible worlds, at least worlds wherein free beings are involved. If it’s true that God cannot engage in logical absurdities, perhaps he cannot *make* someone *freely* choose to do right all of the time.

3. Suffering may be the optimal way for us to grow.

4. If the Bible is correct, God created a perfect world in which humans chose to sin and that such produced moral and natural consequences. Therefore, God is not responsible for the evil in the world—humans are.

### 5. Good evidence exists for God (p. 174)

#### a. Scientific argument for an intelligent Designer of the universe

##### (1) Identifying design

(a) Extremely unlikely to have occurred by chance

(b) Exhibits a pattern normally associated with an intelligent cause

(2) Cosmic constants: Factors in the universe, which, if varied only a little, would make the universe a life-prohibiting place.

(a) Improbable: Given all the possible ways in which the universe could have obtained as a result of the Big Bang, the ratio of life-permitting universes to life-prohibiting ones is 1 in  $10^{10^{124}}$  (Nobel Laureate Donald Page).

(b) Pattern: A 2002 paper titled “Disturbing Implications of a Cosmological Constant” by physicists Dyson, Kleban, and Susskind of Stanford University and MIT concludes that, aside from assistance from an unknown agent outside the universe, the appearance of life in the universe requires “statistically miraculous events” and is incomprehensibly unlikely.

##### (3) Scientific argument for a First Cause

(a) Everything that begins to exist has a cause.

(b) The universe began to exist (Big Bang).

(c) Therefore, the universe was caused.

#### D. Other Challenges

1. Jesus' resurrection does not prove the existence of God. (p. 182)
  - a. The question has become *who* raised Jesus or *how* was he raised; not whether the Resurrection occurred.
  - b. There are no claims from or evidence for another cause that could be responsible for Jesus' resurrection.
  - c. The one who was raised claimed that God raised him.
  - d. The Resurrection was not an isolated event. It occurred to one whose entire life was charged with religious significance (e.g., miracles and claims to divinity).
2. Muslims claim that Jesus was never crucified and, therefore, was never risen. Based on two sources: *Qur'an* (sura 4:157–158) and *Gospel of Barnabas* (Section 217) (p. 184)
  - a. *Qur'an*
    - (1) It can be established historically that Jesus' disciples believed he rose from dead and appeared to them.
    - (2) If Jesus not crucified, what caused them to believe that he rose? The *Qur'an* claims that God raised Jesus up to himself, apparently at the time of the rescue (4:157–158). So who or what did the disciples see three days later?
    - (3) The *Qur'an* was written six hundred years after Jesus, too late to provide valuable information.
  - b. *Gospel of Barnabas*
    - (1) Appears to be Muslim forgery composed no earlier than fifteenth century
      - (a) No evidence that it existed prior to then
        - i. No manuscript prior to fifteenth century
        - ii. Prior to the fifteenth century, not cited by anyone. Nor mentioned by the early church Fathers or by Muslim apologists who were engaged in constant debates with Christians throughout the first eight centuries of Islam's existence. (Only mention relating a *Gospel to Barnabas* is in a fifth-century document (The Gelasian Decree, by Pope Gelasius, A.D. 492–495). Only its name is mentioned and that it was a spurious book rejected by the church. Given the medieval anachronisms in the *GoB* we have today, however, this reference is probably referring to a different *GoB*.
        - iii. Contains a striking contradiction that would rule out Barnabas as its true author. The Hebrew/Aramaic word "Messiah" was translated "Christ" in Greek. The *GoB* makes the mistake of referring to Jesus as "Christ" on at least two occasions in the first two sentences of the gospel only to later deny that he is the Messiah (chaps. 42; 70; 82; 96; 97; 198; 206). Barnabas would certainly not have made this mistake, since he would have been well acquainted with Hebrew/Aramaic and Greek.
        - iv. Contains several anachronisms, indicating a later date
          - a. Year of Jubilee every 100 years. It was, however, celebrated every fifty years until papal decree in A.D. 1343 (*GoB* 83).
          - b. Medieval feudalism (*GoB* 122)
          - c. Medieval court procedure (*GoB* 121)
          - d. Wooden wine casks instead of wineskins used in first-century Palestine (*GoB* 152)
  3. Joseph Smith and eleven witnesses vs. Jesus and twelve disciples. They all said they experienced supernatural appearances. (p. 185)
    - a. While all of the apostles were willing to suffer and die for their beliefs, six of the eleven witnesses to the gold plates left the Mormon Church!
    - b. *Even if* several persons witnessed the gold plates, this says *absolutely nothing* concerning the viability of their content.
    - c. There is no evidence that the *Book of Mormon* is true (e.g., specific archaeological findings, which link the events and places to the *Book of Mormon*), while other evidence exists outside of the testimony of the apostles to support Jesus' resurrection (e.g., empty tomb, conversion of the skeptics Paul and James).
    - d. Evidence exists, however, against Mormonism (e.g., the severe problems with the *Book of Abraham*, no archaeological evidence for the *Book of Mormon* where it should be), while no viable evidence exists against Christianity.
  4. What about Elvis and alien sightings? (p. 186)

#### a. Elvis Sightings

- (1) Elvis' body is still in his tomb. Jesus' tomb, however, was empty.
- (2) Elvis sightings may be best explained by various opposing theories, such as Elvis faked his death or mistaken identity (since many impersonators). All such explanations of Jesus' resurrection fail.
- (3) The religio-historical context for a resurrection is not present with Elvis as it was with Jesus. Elvis never claimed divinity; Jesus did. Elvis did not perform deeds that appeared miraculous; Jesus did. Elvis never predicted his resurrection; Jesus did.

#### b. Alien Sightings

##### (1) Eyewitnesses of Jesus' resurrection

- (a) It can be established that multiple believers and at least two hard-core skeptics believed that the risen Jesus had appeared to them.
- (b) No good reasons exist for doubting the testimonies of the disciples since those testimonies are supported by hard-core skeptics, who were also convinced that they saw him; the tomb was empty, Resurrection occurred within the context of Jesus' claims, his miracles, and the probable existence of God, and no plausible explanations can account for all of the known historical data.
- (c) Therefore, Jesus' resurrection is the only plausible explanation to account for the evidence.

##### (2) Eyewitnesses of alien activity

- (a) Many of the testimonies are questionable.
- (b) Many plausible opposing theories exist (e.g., weather balloons, military aircraft, hallucinations, poor reporting techniques, etc.)
- (c) Strong data from science renders the chances of life elsewhere in the universe as extremely unlikely.
- (d) UFO testimonies frequently attest that these phenomena regularly break the laws of nature, requiring a rejection of *material* entities. So we must consider a *spiritual* reality as a possible cause. In other words, certain UFO reports may actually be true, and don't have to be explained away.

#### c. Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence. (p. 187)

##### (1) Extraordinary evidence exists.

- (a) Jesus appeared to individuals and groups.
- (b) Jesus appeared to friends and foes.
- (c) His tomb was empty.
- (d) Opposing theories fail.
- (e) Jesus' resurrection is the only plausible explanation of the data.

- (2) The requirement for extraordinary evidence is reciprocal. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, one must explain the evidence. Explanations such as group hallucinations are extraordinary and must be supported by extraordinary evidence.

#### E. How to have eternal life (p. 215)

1. We all stand condemned before God for failing to live up to his standard of perfection (Rom. 3:23).
2. There is a penalty for missing the mark, and that is an eternal separation from God, quarantined in a place he calls hell (Rom. 6:23; 2 Thess. 1:9; Rev. 20:15).
3. He loves us all so much, however, that he left his divine lifestyle in heaven to come die for our sins (Rom. 5:8; Phil. 2:7).
4. If we put our faith in him alone as risen Lord of the universe and in his ability to save us, he promises to extend his mercy and grant us eternal life. Salvation cannot be earned through good deeds, but through faith in what he has already done for us (Rom. 10:9; Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5).