



The Reality of the Resurrection: Nothing Else Really Matters

“APOLOGETICS
101” WORKSHOP
ZION LUTHERAN
CHURCH

MASCOUTAH IL
OCTOBER 7, 2023

BY REV. DR. KIRK
M. CLAYTON

Dying Words of Dr. Jaroslav Pelikan



“If Christ is risen,
nothing else matters.
And if Christ is not
risen—nothing else
matters.”

Cited in Brian J. Arnold, “If Christ Is Risen, Nothing Else Matters,” Phoenix Seminary, April 11, 2020, <https://ps.edu/if-christ-is-risen-nothing-else-matters/>. Pelikan reportedly said this on his deathbed. See Nancy A. Almodovar, *Nothing Else Matters: How the Resurrection of Jesus Changes Everything* (Eugene: Resource Publications, 2022), xiii–xv, 1.

Reminiscent of St. Paul's Words

- "And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. "
 - (1 Corinthians 15:14-19 ESV)
-

“Deep Thoughts With Dawkins” (Part 1)

- “People believe in the Resurrection not because of good evidence (there isn’t any) but because, if the Resurrection is not true, Christianity becomes null and void, and their life, they think, meaningless. From this it is grotesquely false logic to conclude that therefore the Resurrection must be true. The alternative – that their religion is indeed null and void – may be unpleasant for Christians to contemplate, but there is no law that says the truth has to be pleasant.”
- Interconnect, “Did Jesus Really Rise from the Dead?,” The Spectator, accessed September 6, 2022, <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/did-jesus-really-rise-from-the-dead->.



“Deep Thoughts With Dawkins” (Part 2)

- “Presumably what happened to Jesus was what happens to all of us when we die. We decompose. Accounts of Jesus’s resurrection and ascension are about as well-documented as Jack and the Beanstalk.”
- Richard Dawkins, “Richard Dawkins: You Ask the Questions Special,” *The Independent* (Independent Digital News and Media, December 4, 2006), <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/profiles/richard-dawkins-you-ask-the-questions-special-427003.html>.



“Deep Thoughts With Dawkins” (Part 3)



- <https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?fr=mcafee&ei=UTF-8&p=lutheran+satire+dawkins&type=E210US105G0#id=1&vid=a106159a8e7196d0ef4aeb8d54890fbd&action=click>
 - Hans Fiene, “Donall and Conall Meet Richard Dawkins,” *Lutheran Satire*, 2015.
-

“Deep Thoughts ABOUT Dawkins” (Part 1)

Dawkins is basically saying that Christians believe the Resurrection is true because they WANT the Resurrection to be true.

Actually, the opposite is the case. Dawkins believes the Resurrection is not true because he doesn't want the Resurrection to be true!



“Deep Thoughts ABOUT Dawkins” (Part 2)

“I know of no serious attempt by any of the New Atheists to engage with the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Indeed, it is even worse than that. Their whole attitude to history in general is characterized by sheer closed-mind prejudice: light years removed from the open-minded scientific attitude that they pretend to hold in high esteem.”

John Lennox, *Gunning for God: Why the New Atheists Are Missing the Target* (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2011), 187.

(Since the 1980's there have been over 3,000 scholarly articles and books written in multiple languages, and Dawkins tries to overlook all of them.)

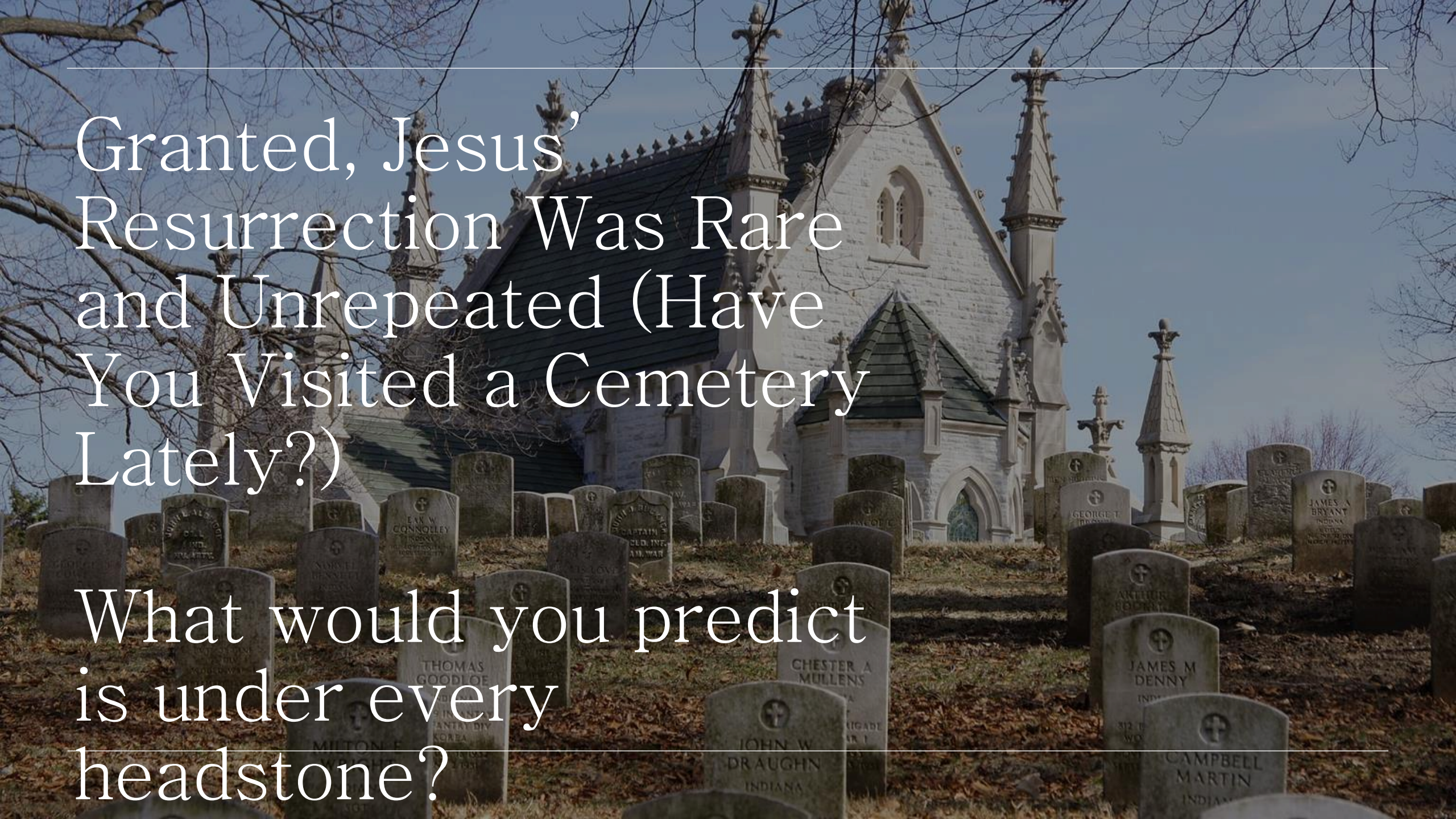


Granted, Jesus' Resurrection Was Rare and Unrepeated (Have You Visited a Cemetery Lately?)



Granted, Jesus' Resurrection Was Rare and Unrepeated (Have You Visited a Cemetery Lately?)

What would you predict is under every headstone?





Let's Do What Dawkins Didn't:
Actually Look at the Evidence!

The Key
Piece of
Evidence:

The Tomb
Was Empty!



How do we know the tomb was empty?

If Jesus' body were still in the tomb, the story of the resurrection would have lasted about as long as it took for the Chief Priest to go to the tomb and point to the dead body of Jesus!



Matthew 28:11-15

(English Standard Version)

While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers and said, "Tell people, 'His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.' And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day.



The tomb **WAS**
empty! The only
question is **WHY?**

Various Theories

Stolen Body Theory

Swoon Theory

Lettuce Theory

Twin Theory

Wrong Tomb Theory



Stolen Body Theory



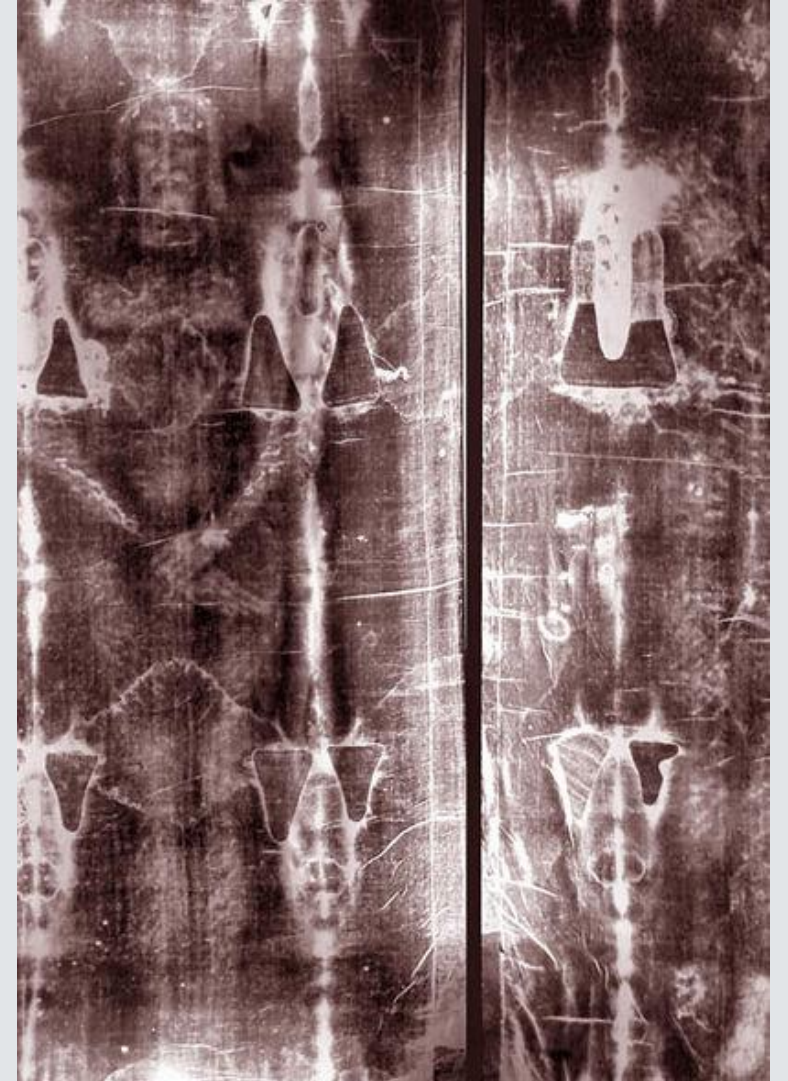
(OR...)

Stolen Body Theory



Stolen Body Theory

- Another detail...
- John 20:1-7 (English Standard Version)
- Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself.



Swoon Theory



Lettuce Theory



- John 19:41-42 (ESV)
 - Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.
-

Twin Theory





Wrong Tomb
Theory

The Tomb WAS Empty...
The Question Is WHY!?!



The Tomb WAS
Empty...

The Question Is WHY!?!

The *LEAST UNLIKELY*
ANSWER Is...

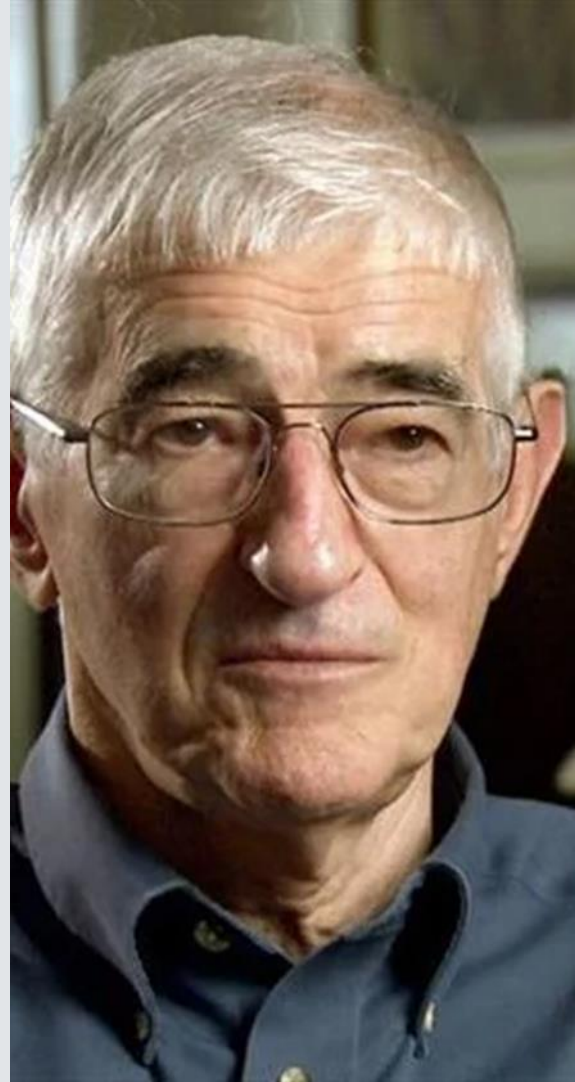


Criticism from Crossan



Criticism from Crossan

Jesus' tomb was empty because Jesus was never buried in the first place! That is a story made up by the compilers of the New Testament many years later.



- “The soldiers guarded the body until death and thereafter it was left for carrion crow, scavenger dog, or other wild beasts to finish the brutal job.”
- John Dominic Crossan, *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994), 153.

Criticism from Crossan

Jesus' tomb was empty because Jesus was never buried in the first place! That is a story made up by the compilers of the New Testament many years later.



- "The norm was to let crucifieds rot on the cross or be cast aside for carrion."
- John Dominic Crossan and Jonathan Reed, *Excavating Jesus: Beneath the Stones, Behind the Texts*, Revised and Expanded (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001), 289.

- Criticism OF Crossan!

(Oops, multiple crucifixion victims HAVE been found, buried!)



- Crossan's suggestions are sheer speculation!

Possible Mentions of Jesus' Resurrection Outside of Scripture:

Tacitus, *Annals*, 115 A.D.

- Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular.

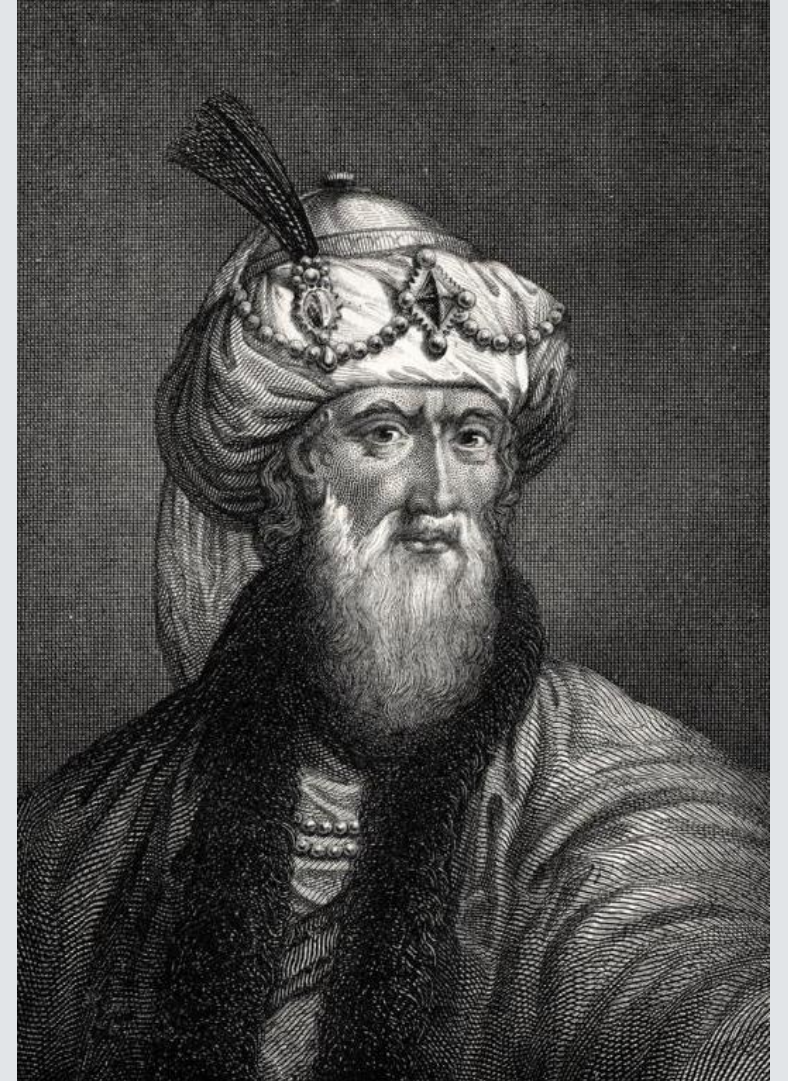
- Tacitus, 15.44, in Habermas, *The Historical Jesus*, 188.



Possible Mentions of Jesus' Resurrection Outside of Scripture: Josephus

- "Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man. For he was one who wrought surprising feats...He was (the) Christ...he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him."

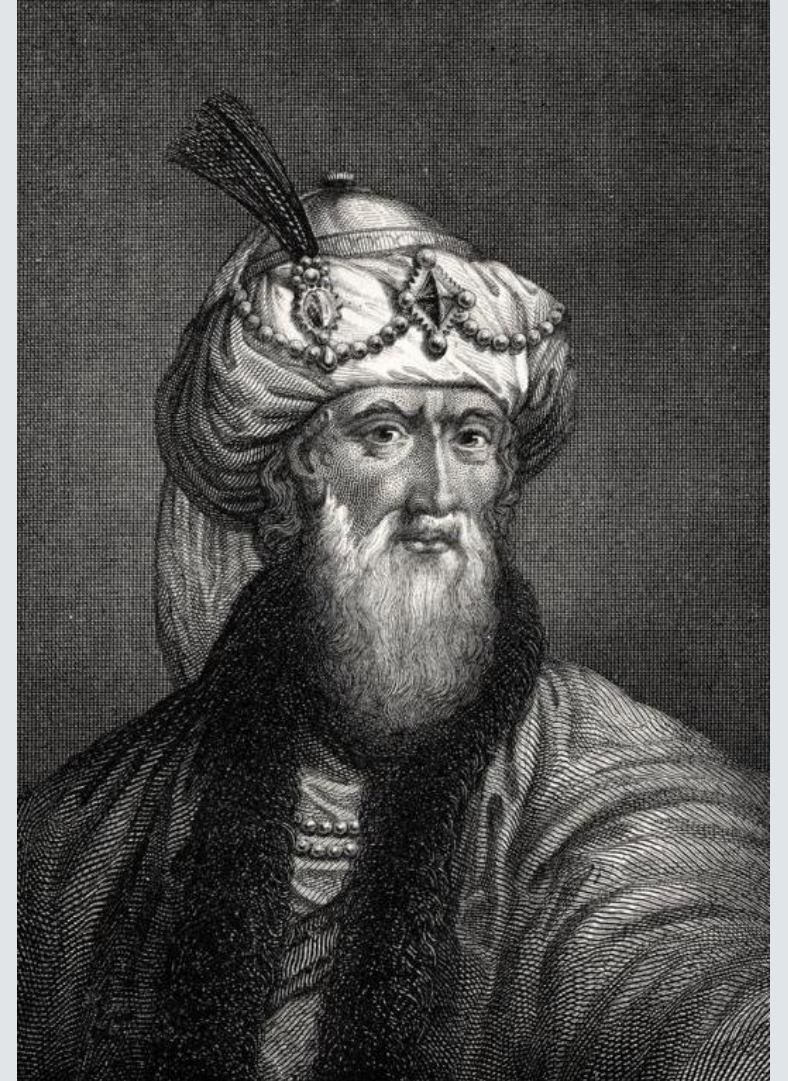
• Josephus, *Antiquities*, 18:3, in Habermas, *The Historical Jesus*, 192.



Possible Mentions of Jesus' Resurrection Outside of Scripture: Josephus

- "At this time there was a wise man called Jesus, and his conduct was good, and he was known to be virtuous. Many people among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. But those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive. According, he was perhaps the Messiah, concerning whom the prophets have reported wonders."

• Josephus, *Antiquities* 18:63-64, in Maier, *In the Fullness of Time*, 200.



1 I know that my Redeemer lives;
What comfort this sweet sentence gives!
He lives, He lives, who once was dead;
He lives, my ever-living head.

2 He lives triumphant from the grave;
He lives eternally to save;
He lives all-glorious in the sky;
He lives exalted there on high.

8 He lives, all glory to His name!
He lives, my Jesus, still the same;
Oh, the sweet joy this sentence gives;
I know that my Redeemer lives!

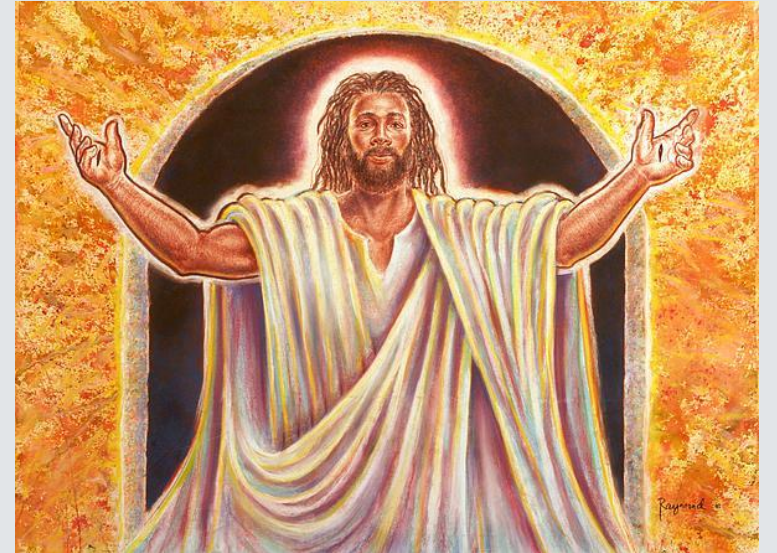


LSB 466 Christ Has Arisen, Alleluia

1 Christ has arisen, alleluia.
Rejoice and praise Him, alleluia.
For our Redeemer burst from the tomb,
Even from death, dispelling its gloom.

Refrain

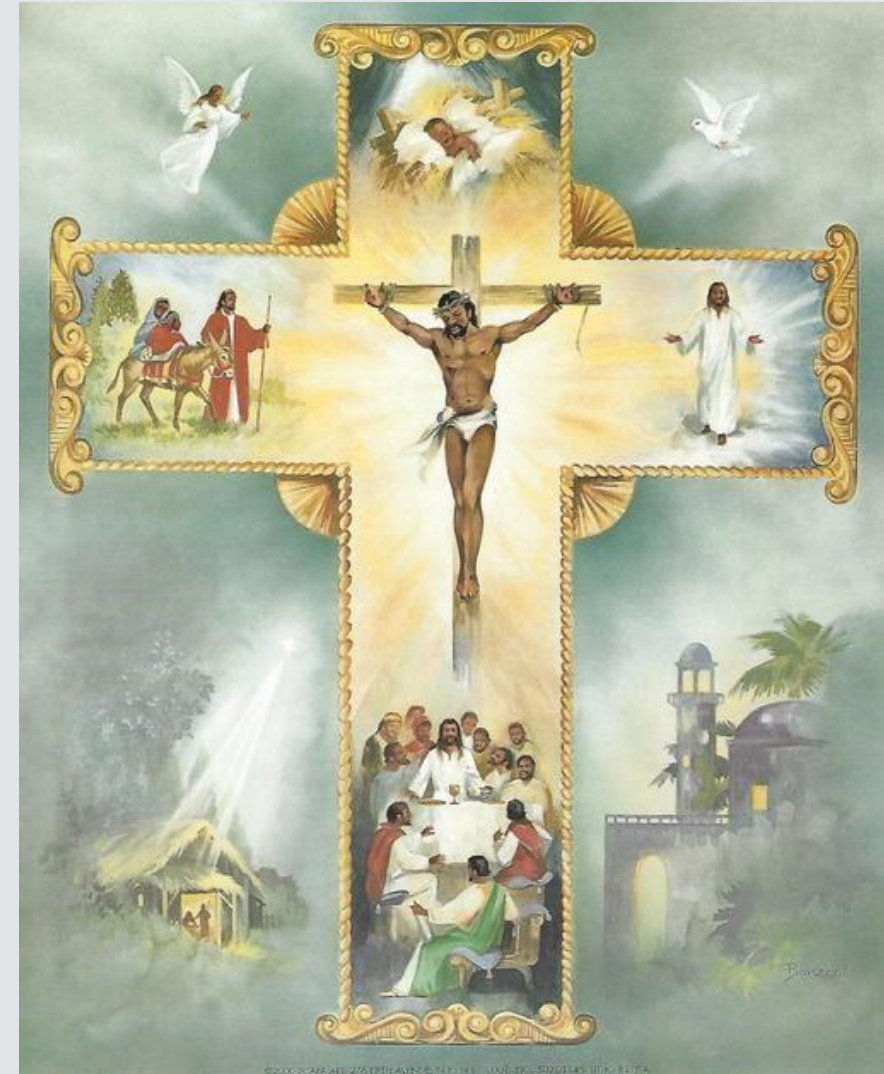
Let us sing praise to Him with endless joy;
Death's fearful sting He has come to destroy.
Our sin forgiving, alleluia!
Jesus is living, alleluia!



2 For three long days the grave did its worst
Until its strength by God was dispersed.
He who gives life did death undergo;
And in its conquest His might did show.

Refrain

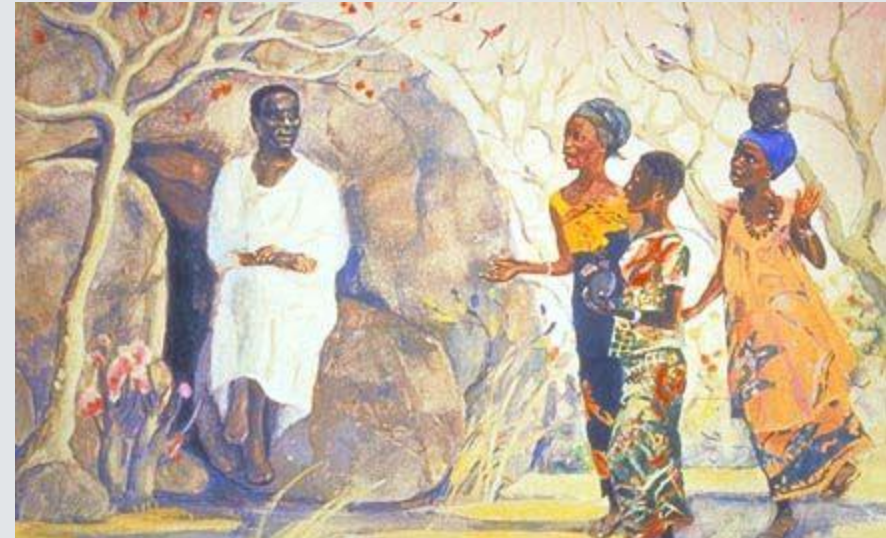
Let us sing praise to Him with endless joy;
Death's fearful sting He has come to destroy.
Our sin forgiving, alleluia!
Jesus is living, alleluia!



3 The angel said to them, “Do not fear!
You look for Jesus who is not here.
See for yourselves the tomb is all bare;
Only the grave cloths are lying there.”

Refrain

Let us sing praise to Him with endless joy;
Death’s fearful sting He has come to destroy.
Our sin forgiving, alleluia!
Jesus is living, alleluia!



4 “Go spread the news: He’s not in the grave;
He has arisen this world to save.
Jesus’ redeeming labors are done;
Even the battle with sin is won.”

Refrain

Let us sing praise to Him with endless joy;
Death’s fearful sting He has come to destroy.
Our sin forgiving, alleluia!
Jesus is living, alleluia!



5 Christ has arisen; He sets us free;
Alleluia, to Him praises be.
Jesus is living! Let us all sing;
He reigns triumphant, heavenly King.

Refrain

Let us sing praise to Him with endless joy;
Death's fearful sting He has come to destroy.
Our sin forgiving, alleluia!
Jesus is living, alleluia!

