

Deconstructing Doubt: The Truth About the Crucifixion

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Going back to visit Throop Elementary School...

Dark windows were huge...

The hallways weren't short

Ballfield was "way down the street"

Isn't it true

That when you experience something as a kid

If you don't go back

And reexperience it through adult eyes

You never get out of that childlike viewpoint

The trouble with that

Is that many of us

Have our first experiences with Jesus as a kid

At a VBS

Or in a Sunday School class

Flannel-graph Jesus

So, we learned about the cross

We learned about the empty tomb
And then if we don't ever go back
And re-experience it through adult eyes
Our viewpoint will always be stunted
And off

By the way

This is one of the biggest reasons
I'm excited about so many of you
Being interested in going to Israel

I mean, I put my hand
Inside the hole where Jesus' cross stood
I walked the short distance
To where they laid Him in a tomb
I prayed in an olive grove in Gethsemane
And looked up at the city
And the temple mount
From the Kidron Valley

If you're a Christian who wants to grow in your faith

I'd love to take you to Israel...

Signups will start soon

If you're a skeptic who's not sure if this is real

I'd love to take you to Israel...

So today

As a part of our deconstructing doubt series

I want us to go back

And reconsider

Through adult eyes

This real event in history

I've titled this message

"The Truth About the Resurrection"

To keep our thoughts collected

- I'm going to explore the physical realities of the crucifixion**
- The spiritual realities of the resurrection**
- And the emotional realities of the resurrection**

First, we'll start with the physical realities

This is a picture

Of a 1st century model of Jerusalem

This was actually my favorite stop

On the Jerusalem trip

This model was built in 1966

Based on Jerusalem

In 66 AD

Right before the Romans destroyed it

This is the temple mount area

That covers approximately 36 acres

The largest area of its kind in the world

The temple and the porticos

Were destroyed in AD 70

But the 36-acre mount still remains

The temple would have been in the middle

Temple courts

That are talked about throughout the book of Acts

Surround the temple *inside* the mount

Inside the 36 acres

The Antonia Fortress

Built by Herod

Named after his buddy Marc Antony

Provided security for the temple mount area

This is one of two likely locations

For Jesus' trial by Pilate

Here's a zoomed in picture to the Antonia Fortress

You can picture Pilate walking out with Jesus
From those steps
Out onto the terrace
With the crowd in the temple courts below

If you zoom in some more

You can really get the feel
This happened in real time
In real space
To a real person

That's so different
Then flannel-graph Jesus

So, this is one option
For where Jesus' trial took place
We don't know this 100%

The other option

Is Herod's palace on the western edge of the city

And honestly, it's possible that Jesus was arraigned
At both sites
As He was transferred from Pilate to Herod

And then back again

I mentioned that the model

Was based on Jerusalem in 66 A.D.

That's about 30 years after the crucifixion

At the time of Jesus' arrest and crucifixion

The walled in area of the city was smaller

And just outside the city

There was an old quarry

Where they got rock for all this construction

And where they crucified convicts

Golgotha would have been right here

The tomb

Very likely

Was nearby

In that same quarry area

Just a short walk

From the cross

This is a recreation

From National Geographic

You can see the city wall of Jerusalem

On the right side of the pic

You see the cross in the middle

Near the edge of the bluff

And you see the tomb

In that same quarry area

About 30 yards away from the cross

John 19 tells us it was

In.the.same.place.

Do you see that?

The cross would have been

A brutal execution

In fact, the history of the word “excruciating”

Comes from the Latin word excruciare

Which means

“As painful as a crucifixion”

Crucifixion was so painful

The Romans had to create a new word to describe it

Excruciating

The goal of the Romans

In execution
Wasn't just to kill the criminal
But to intimidate those who were left behind

Jesus was flogged before the crucifixion
But often they weren't
And this allowed the body
To hang on for days

So, for days
The family and friends and passerby's
Would see this pour soul
Losing his life

First century historian Josephus
Who was also a military leader
Writes about coming on to a mass execution
And seeing three of his buddies
Who had just been put up on the crosses
To be crucified

They hadn't been flogged like Jesus
Just crucified
And immediately

He goes to Titus

The Roman leader in the area

And the emperor Vespasian's son

Who was Josephus' buddy

And he protests

Look what Josephus writes:

I saw many captives crucified, and remembered three of them as my former acquaintances. I was very sorry at this in my mind, and went with tears in my eyes to Titus, and told him of them; so he immediately commanded them to be taken down, and to have the greatest care taken of them, in order to their recovery; yet two of them died under the physician's hands, while the third recovered. – Josephus, *The Life of Flavius Josephus*

This is the only time I'm aware of

In recorded history

Where someone is crucified *and* survives

The only time

But think about it

If two out of three crucified men

Who hadn't been flogged beforehand

Were taken down quickly

And still died under the best medical care of the day

What do you think that was like for Jesus?

Crucifixion was brutal

Ex-cruciating!

Jim Caviezel

The actor who played Jesus in the 2004 film Passion of the Christ
Said when they raised him up on the cross
And dropped the cross down into the hole
He actually experienced a separated left shoulder

Caviezel is quoted as saying

That filming those scenes
“Nearly killed me”

And it was fake

It was for a movie
It wasn't a real execution

Crucifixion was a brutal, excruciating way to die

Most scholars agree that crucified people probably died from a combination of:

Suffocation

Heart failure

Exposure

Dehydration

Or a rapid onset of sepsis

One additional bit of information:

You'll notice the height of these crosses...

"Father forgive them"

Sponge...

So, with that in mind

Let us dispel of a couple of myths

That have developed to explain away

The miracle of Jesus' resurrection

Myth #1:

Jesus didn't die, it was a near-death experience...

Romans very good at what they did...

Spear in the side...

Uninspiring figure...

Myth #2:

They found an empty tomb

Because they went to the wrong one

They forgot where He was buried

And went to the wrong tomb

We've considered the physical realities

Let's talk for a moment about the spiritual realities

Isaiah 53:2-7 (NIV) - He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to Him, nothing in His appearance that we should desire Him. He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.

Like one from whom people hide their faces He was despised, and we held Him in low esteem. Surely He took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by Him, and afflicted. But He was pierced for our transgressions,

He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He did not open His mouth.

Prophetic – 750 years before Jesus

It'd be like someone in the 1300's

Predicting something today

Crucifixion was created by the Persians

About 350 years after Isaiah said this

2 Corinthians 5:15 (NIV) - He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again.

When you come to faith in Christ

You essentially trade lives with Jesus

He died for you

Gave His life in your stead

And then you give your life up

You no longer live for yourself

For Him

1 John 2:1b-2 (NIV) - We have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

Sometimes Christianity is accused

Of being exclusive

But the reality

Christ died for the whole world

Not for a particular race

Or ethnicity

Or socio-economic status

The center of Christianity today

Is not in the west

The US & Europe like it once was

It's in the south

Africa & South America

And in the east

China, South Korea

Romans 4:25 (NLT) - He was handed over to die because of our sins, and He was raised to life to make us right with God.

I love this verse

Because sometimes Scripture can be confusing

There's a lot in this book

But the simplicity of Jesus' sacrifice

Is pretty astounding

He was handed over to die because of our sins, and He was raised to life to make us right with God.

He's offered to make you right with God

If you've not given yourself over to Him

Now's the time

Romans 8:31b-32 (NIV) - If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all—how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?

If God is willing to do that for us

It should give you confidence about

How He's willing to do

Everything else

Let's talk about the emotional realities

Gethsemene...

{2 Pics that I'll call for}