

treasure chest in which to place their heart (excuse the pun). They may say that heaven holds their undivided attention; but job, family, recreation may all be dividing their true affection.

Where is your treasure? Or, to how many treasures are you trying to cling? You only have one heart. Where is it? There is only one *true* treasure in your life. Where is it?

NEWSWORTHY NOTES:

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Radio Program: WJLS 99.5FM every Sunday at 9:00AM
Website: www.beckleychurch.com

The *Carriage Drive Messenger*
is published weekly by the
Carriage Drive church of Christ,
Beckley, WV
Editor: Bob Pulliam
Building Phone: 252-8108

TIMES OF SERVICES

Sunday: Bible Study 10:00am
Morning Worship 10:50am
Evening Worship 6:00pm
Wednesday: Bible Study 7:30pm

The Carriage Drive Messenger



Volume 4

July 12, 2009

Number 27

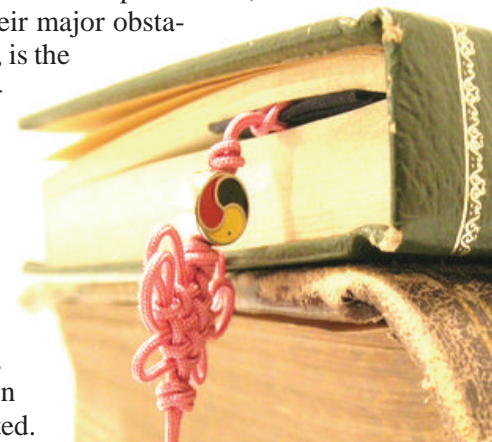
EVIDENCES FOR FAITH

JESUS OF HISTORY

by Bob Pulliam

No rational, informed person rejects Jesus as an historical character. And yet there are still some who would suggest that Jesus did not exist, and that all was invented by the Catholic Church. Below, you will find my answer to this little absurdity (The Successful Invention...).

Rejection usually begins when we speak of the miracles performed by Jesus. And the greatest miracle rejected by people is His resurrection. Such an occurrence is beyond their comprehension, so they fully reject it as a lie. Their major obstacle, in denying the resurrection, is the fact that Jesus' body was missing from the tomb. Many theories have been set forth to explain what happened to Jesus' body. Next week, we will examine the most "plausible" of those theories. But for now, we need to verify that Jesus really existed, and that He was crucified when the Bible claims He was executed.



The Successful Invention?...

Did the Roman Catholic Church invent the trial, death, and resurrection of Jesus? The Catholic Church dates from the year A.D. 606. Before that time, the New Testament was already in existence. Fragments from the trial of Jesus in the Gospel of John have been found that date to around A.D. 125. The entire New Testament can be found in the Latin Vulgate which dates to A.D. 325. The existence of the New Testament before the formation of the Catholic Church is well attested, and only denied by unreasonable souls.

That the gospel was being proclaimed in the days of the apostles, as declared in Acts, is confirmed by secular sources. Josephus was a Jewish historian who records the existence of many characters found in the Bible. Pilate, Herod, Felix, Festus, Caiaphas, Ananias, and many more are found in his works. His histories provide an excellent means of verifying the historical authenticity of the Bible. The character of each historical figure in the Bible is always in line with the profile presented by Josephus. We may read of the deaths of John the baptist, and James; not to mention the events surrounding Herod's unlawful marriage, about which John accused him. Josephus gives us details on the uprising of Judas, mentioned in Acts 5; the famine mentioned in Acts 11; and the death of Herod Agrippa in acts 12. Josephus also speaks of Jesus, and while some doubt the authenticity of statements regarding Jesus, none doubt that Josephus did mention Him.

Another early source is the historian Thallus, who wrote in the mid-first century A.D. While none of his works exist in their entirety, we have references to his work by later writers. One such reference is to the third book of his histories, and tells of him trying to explain away the darkening of the sun as a natural eclipse at the time that Jesus died (which is impossible since the Passover occurred at the full moon). A Roman historian named Tacitus (born A.D. 52), wrote concerning the great fire of Rome in A.D. 64. About the rumor that Nero had started the fire, which was widely spread, Tacitus wrote:

Therefore, to scotch the rumour, Nero substituted as culprits, and punished with the utmost refinements of cruelty, a class of men, loathed for their vices, whom the crowd styled Christians. Christus, from whom they got their name, had been executed by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilate when Tiberius was emperor; and the pernicious superstition was checked for a short time, only to break out afresh, not only in Judea, the home of the

plague, but in Rome itself, where all the horrible and shameful things in the world collect and find a home.

(Cornelius Tacitus, *Annals*, xv. 44)

Another historian, writing around A.D. 120 said:

Punishment was inflicted on the Christians. a class of men addicted to a novel and mischievous superstition.

(Suetonius, *Life of Nero*, xvi. 2)

If there were "Christians", then there was a Christ after which the Christians were named.

Conclusion...

Other sources could be cited, but the bottom line is this: Jesus was, at the least, an historical character (not a myth), deserving of attention that would evaluate the claims made concerning him. Those who will not give honest evaluation are less than honorable in their application of logic.

So... If Jesus was an historical character, and His crucifixion in the days of Pontius Pilate is a matter of historical fact, then the evidence concerning His resurrection deserves our attention and evaluation. Next weeks article on evidences will undertake that very subject.

WHERE THE HEART IS

by Bob Pulliam

The old saying tells us, "Home is where the heart is." But Jesus had a much better classification for where the heart can be found, in any circumstance. He said, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Mt 6:21) There are many cases around this country, and the world, where we find that home is *not* where the heart is. But you can always find a person's heart where his treasure is! And would you please note that "treasure" is singular? We would love to think that we can have our heart in more than one place (more than one treasure). Jesus went on to say, "No one can serve two masters..." (Mt 6:24)

It seems to me that a lot of people are trying to have more than one