

IMPACT

I **M**ust **P**ersonally **A**cknowledge **C**hrist **T**oday
Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; *in all your ways acknowledge Him* and He shall direct your path.
Proverbs 3:5-6

Passage: “Ephesians 6:17 “...And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God...”

Quote: “Dr. Paul Maier calls the references to Christ in Jewish writings ‘positive evidence from a hostile source,’ which is the strongest kind of historical evidence. In essence, this means that if a source admits a fact decidedly not in its favor, then that fact is genuine.” J. McDowell

Specific Old Testament prophecies that were fulfilled in the birth, life and death of Jesus provide remarkable evidence that the Bible is the written Word of God and that Jesus was God the Son. Just as profoundly convincing are the circumstances surrounding His resurrection which He foretold.¹ It is the pivotal event in the history of redemption, the keystone of the Christian faith.² Lord Darling, a former Chief Justice of England, wrote, “We as Christians are asked to take a very great deal on trust; the teachings, for example, and the miracles of Jesus. If we had to take all on trust, I, for one, should be skeptical. The crux of the problem of whether Jesus was, or was not, what He proclaimed Himself to be must surely depend upon the truth or otherwise of the resurrection. On that greatest point we are not merely asked to have faith. In its favor as a living truth there exists such overwhelming evidence, positive and negative, factual and circumstantial, that no intelligent jury in the world could fail to bring in a verdict that the resurrection story is true.”

In the wake of the resurrection, Jewish leaders claimed Christ’s disciples stole His body. They paid off the Roman guards and promised their safety from execution.³ The fact that Jewish historians, Justin and Tertullian, verified that the Jewish leaders claimed Christ’s body was stolen confirms His death and the empty tomb! How and why would disciples, who fled earlier, break a Roman seal, move a huge stone in the presence of guards, and steal the body of their dead leader? If His followers planned this as part of an elaborate hoax, why would the empty tomb be first visited by women? In a patriarchal society, women were

considered second-class citizens who would be spurned as witnesses.

Paul, the Christian-killing Pharisee who was converted upon encountering the risen Christ, recorded what he had been told of the resurrection and mentions several eye-witness accounts.⁴ Those identified by name would be in peril of execution as was Paul himself on many occasions. Other accounts of the resurrection were written much earlier by disciples who also interacted with the risen Christ.⁴ The creed of Christ’s resurrection rapidly spread and the early church grew in the midst of unparalleled persecution. Tacitus, a Roman senator and historian, wrote, “Nero inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populous. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty...at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus

checked for the moment, broke out again, not only in Judea, but also in Rome.... Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed by the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired.”⁵ Without the conviction that Christ arose as He foretold, the early Christian religion could never have come into being and endured! So rapid was the spread of Christianity that the early disciples were called “these who turn the world upside down.”⁶ Foxes Book of Martyrs and the historical writings of Eusebius chronicle the hardships and deaths of thousands whose faith rested in the centerpiece of the Word of God—Christ’s resurrection. The unifying theme of the books that comprise the Bible is a life-giving message of redemption! “Soldier of Christ,” pick up the Sword of the Spirit! With confidence, share its message of faith, hope and love!

“The Sword of the Spirit”, Part II

1 Matt.20:17-19; 26:61-66; John 2:19-20 2 I Cor.15:12-19 3 Matt. 28:12-13 4 Acts 9; 22:1-11; I Cor.9:1; 15:8; Gal.1:16; Acts 1:3-4 5 Tacitus (55-115 A.D.) The Annals, XV:44 6 Acts 17 **NOTE:** Atheists who scornfully label doctrines like the resurrection as myths must still deal with their own mysteries that defy explanation like the origin of the universe as well as the scientifically disproved “spontaneous generation” of life from non-life!