**Mike Hipes – Facebook Lesson, July 1, 2020**

Good afternoon!

Why are you a Christian? It’s likely to do with your belief that Jesus was truly raised from the dead! The pivotal point of faith is “The Reality of The Resurrection” of Jesus! If Jesus was in fact bodily raised from the dead, then He is God and the bible is the word of God! If not, then all that Jesus said was a lie and we are still in our sins. I would like to show some facts from history and logic to show you that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a provable fact, that should reaffirm our hope in the risen Savior.

For the next few minutes think of your NT bible as a history book. Not only a history book, for it is certainly filled with miracles and prophesies and so much more. But because it does contain history as well, we will look only at the historical facts that surround the resurrection of Jesus. Facts that can be found in secular history as well. Provable facts that can be substantiated to make the case of the reality of the resurrection. Can you know that something is true without actually witnessing it yourself? Sure! I know that there is a California even though I have never seen it. I know that WWII happened, or that George Washington lived and was our first president, even though I was not living when these things occurred. How can I know? Consistent Reliable Testimony!

The fact that so many people in history, many who never knew the others, wrote about these things with an overall consistent factual accounting, creates for us this consistent reliable testimony. I never saw it, but I can count on it being true! In like manner, there are 66 books of the bible that were written over a span of thousands of years, by 40 authors. Most who never knew each other, or communicated with each other, yet the bible as a whole is consistent and reliable testimony! You see Christianity was not written in a bubble. It doesn’t begin with statements like once upon a time…. It was written in a space-time dimension! It left it self-open to be checked out and verified by outside sources of history to be provable as to the factual accounts and events that took place, including the resurrection of Jesus! When it came to history, places, culture, and more It should be consistent with secular history to become reliable. The history book, the bible, is consistent and reliable testimony!

So, using only provable facts, from the bible as a history book, and from secular history, can we logically prove for sure that Jesus was raised from the dead? YES!

Josephus, who was a first-century historian, and who was a secular writer recorded a most significant reference to Jesus himself in the following words. “Pilate (the Roman governor) condemned Him to the cross at the instigation of His own leaders, those who loved Him from the first did not cease. For He appeared to them on the third day alive again, as the prophets had predicted…”.

The historical facts from history that are reliable and provable are:

1. Jesus Christ lived and died on a Roman cross.

2. He was buried as is the burial custom of the Jews. (Jn. 19:38-42)

3. He was put in a garden tomb. (John 20:1-8)

4. He was seen appearing to many after.

The BIG question is How was the tomb emptied?

The records in history that are consistent with other sources say that the tomb was secured and then emptied. Matt. 27:62-66 Jesus after being crucified, and having His side pierced by a Roman soldier’s spear while on the cross died. He was then mummified, with linen wrappings, which included spices, to offset the decaying body odor. He in effect was buried as is the burial custom of the Jews in a garden tomb. The tomb was sealed with a large stone (Mark 16:4 exceedingly great stone) and stamped with the Roman seal and guarded by Roman soldiers, whose lives were on the line if anyone got by them. Yet history says somehow the tomb was found empty and Jesus appeared to many after. These are simply the facts of history!

The BIG question remains, what happened to the body? The record says that the tomb was found empty and the linen wrappings were left. The guards claim that they fell asleep. Could it have been the disciples or a grave robber? How could they have gotten past the guards, or rolled the large stone away, or taken the time to unwrap the dead body of Jesus, while not waking up the guards, whose lives were on the line, if they allowed this to happen? Not likely! Could it be that Jesus didn’t really die, and in the cool of the tomb He somehow revived? Did He unwrap himself, and roll back the huge stone alone with pierced hands and feet and a side that was cut by a spear, to then find sleeping guards, and tiptoe past them? Not likely! Could the leading Jews anticipating that something might happen, keep the dead body of Jesus in another location? Not likely! Why then wouldn’t they have produced the body later? The only logical and reasonable answer after looking at all the provable, consistent, reliable and factual history is that Jesus Christ was supernaturally raised from the dead! This means that Jesus is God, and the bible is the word of God!

May we be assured that because of the Reality of the Resurrection Fact of Jesus Christ, as believers, when we die, we will also be raised to live with Him in heaven forever!

Blessings to all,

Mike