

Avoid Gospel Negligence: Remember how you have been saved - 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

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[0 : 00] The resurrection. The resurrection is the epicenter of our faith.

And it is the resurrection, and I would couple with that the deity of Christ that is most disputed, attacked in our day by the critics, by the evolved, and by those, yes, that once called Jesus their Savior.

And I interact with them as I drive taxi in Spokane. That Jesus, he's a way to God.

That he wasn't divine, but he had a God consciousness, a little spark of divinity upon him.

That he was a sage, or as the academics like to call him an apocalyptic prophet.

[1 : 20] Some that once claimed Jesus are today atheists, or as it's in fashion, they call themselves the nuns, those who don't believe anything at all.

So this morning, we're going to talk resurrection. And for some here, you may be thinking like, okay, that's good theology, it's sort of academic, but how does the resurrection impact me today?

And I would say it this way that if the resurrection is true, then it changes everything.

If the resurrection of Jesus is true, it actually means that sorrow, that grief for the believer is actually only for today.

It means that there is life, that there is consciousness after death, and that Jesus is who he claimed to be.

[2 : 37] And we call this functional Christology. We know who Christ is by that which he did. And if he resurrected from the grave, it's got power over death itself.

And he is God indeed. The resurrection has profound implications for today.

And I would say best of all, it means that Narnia is a place that actually exists.

Church our faith, it rests and it falls on the resurrection. If the resurrection is not true, this, this is a waste.

That's how central the resurrection is to our faith. And so this morning, we're going to begin a three-part quest through the largest passage in the Bible dealing with the resurrection.

[3 : 40] First Corinthians 15. I want you to know this chapter. And so let's begin and see what we can gain from the first section of our journey, verses 1 through 11.

But beginning here, verse 1, Paul writes, Now I remind you, I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received in which you stand and by which you are being saved.

If you hold fast to the word I preached to you, unless you believe in vain. So the first thing Paul mentions here is the gospel, the gospel, the Evangelion in the Greek, the good news.

And Paul here is saying now in chapter 15, Hey Corinthians, when I came to you, I preached the gospel and you responded, you said yes.

In fact, he says I preached to you which you received. So Paul has just spent 14 chapters correcting the Corinthians.

[5 : 03] I.e., hey, guys, remember when you said yes to Jesus? Well, that's who you are.

And presently, you're not living that way. In fact, you're living as though you've hijacked someone else's worldview, grand narrative, and you're treating the gospel as simply hell insurance.

But the gospel is for today. In fact, what Paul says here is it's what you stand in, in which you stand. The gospel is for today, church.

Fourth Memorial, the gospel is for us today. Amen? We forgive because we have been forgiven.

We have been rescued out of the mire so we don't walk and trudge around in it today.

[6 : 17] Paul says this is what you stand in, stand on the gospel. And essentially what he's saying is, man, if there's one thing that you're going to grip tightly to in this life, it's not stuff.

It's the gospel. It's Jesus. Hold fast, he says, to the word I preached to you.

For this is the most important bit of information that we possess in this life. In fact, Paul says it this way, for I deliver to you of first importance.

This is the most important thing you will ever know. Maybe in life you can get a lot of things wrong and still be okay.

But if you get it wrong on the gospel, on the resurrection, there's eternal cost.

[7 : 15] So Paul begins a section on resurrection by reminding them of the gospel. And perhaps some of you this morning, maybe this is your first time at church.

I hope that we have some folks here that this is the first time they've ever been to church. And they're still trying to figure out why do you drink juice out of just the tiniest cups? That's the weirdest thing I've ever seen.

And if this was my first time here, I would probably feel that way. I'm like, are they going to serve that again?

We talk about the gospel, but what is the gospel? What's the gospel? Well, I'm glad that you guys asked the question. I'm just taking that for granted. Because Paul actually defines it, look at verses three and four.

He says, for I deliver to you as a first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins, accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures.

[8 : 20] I love that Paul pulls a Peter here. Right? Peter, when he defines spiritual gifts, right? Serving speaking.

Let me just give you the cliff notes. And that's essentially what Paul does here for us related to the gospel. He's essentially putting the gospel on the bottom shelf. These are the bare essentials.

This is at its essence. If you want the gospel, you need to have three ingredients. And he defines them for us here in deity, death and resurrection.

The three ingredients of the gospel, deity, death and resurrection. Where do we see deity? Paul calls Jesus, he says, Christ died.

Christ. Messiah. Anointed one. Now I'm not saying it's the strongest title for Jesus related to deity.

[9 : 22] Lord would be a better title and Paul uses that elsewhere, but we still get deity from Christ. You have to believe that Jesus is God. It's the first thing.

Second thing, death. Says Christ died. You have to believe that Jesus died in your place for the forgiveness of your sins.

If there's no payment for sin, there is no gospel. And then thirdly, resurrection.

That Jesus was buried and he was raised, according to the scriptures. You need to trust that Jesus rose from the grave unto eternal life because if there's no resurrection, there's no access to heaven and there's no demonstration that Jesus even could deliver on what he promised.

So the resurrection, it all hinges, did Jesus rise from the grave? And maybe this morning, you're thinking, man, how can a person believe the resurrection actually happened?

[10 : 42] Because our faith, it's based upon a historical event that happened 2,000 years ago and not just an historical event, a miraculous historical event.

Now miracles are hard enough if you see them to even believe and now we're supposed to believe a miracle that happened 2,000 years ago.

I mean, aren't there more rational explanations for this historical Jesus? And as I talk with folks in my Uber, what I will often hear when we talk about Christ and what He accomplished and then His deathbed of resurrection, I'll often receive back, well, the text has changed.

It has errors. It's not authentic. There have been additions. The people don't base their lives on the telephone game.

In fact, the leading atheist today, it's not Richard Dawkins. Probably the most dangerous atheist of today is Bart Erdman.

[12 : 04] Bart Erdman is a New Testament scholar and he is what some have given him the title as he is the apostle of the deconverted.

The apostle of the deconverted. Why is he received this name? Because Bart, who's an academic, he went to Moody Bible Institute.

He then studied at Wheaton and then he went to Princeton and he left the faith. He left the faith and he argues today that the resurrection is an evolution of the story.

And he's more influential than you may realize and if you've never heard his name, what you need to know is as you see the apostasy in the church, this is the apostle.

Bart Erdman is the leader of this group. He's written 30 books, five New York Times bestsellers, one of them, how Jesus became God.

[13 : 16] And his view is that Jesus' followers made additions to the text claiming something occurred that did not.

And there is a generation of individuals who once professed Christ that now are listening to these intellectual arguments and going, man, there's no resurrection.

And so my question for us this morning is how would we respond? How would we respond to the critic in terms of why we believe the resurrection?

Or even just for ourselves to be confident? How can I be confident that indeed 2000 years ago Jesus rose from the grave?

And when you're talking with the unbeliever, if you are to respond to them and say, well, the Bible says so, how far does that go? Not far at all.

[14 : 25] Now I would agree, even though I do believe if the book is inspired, if this is the inspired word of God, then yeah, the resurrection is true. I mean, I believe that, but I wouldn't say that to an unbeliever necessarily.

Is the belief then in the resurrection of Jesus only work if I believe the Bible is the word of God? No. No, see, if the Bible, you don't have to concede it's the word of God. If you just believe it's a reliable historical document, then guess what?

The resurrection is true. But what about those who don't even regard the Bible as a historical reliable document?

Is the resurrection still defensible? Is it still true? And I would say yes.

[15 : 35] It doesn't matter if you even disregard this book as being unreliable. The resurrection is still true.

In fact, we can trust the testimony of the resurrection based upon normal historical methods and without the Bible.

This is good news. And this is the information that the critics don't want you actually to know the atheists. They don't want you to know this.

Or as Peter Boghossian calls the evangelistic atheists of the day street epistemologists. Epistemology. How do we know what we know?

And Peter Boghossian has written a book called The Manual for Creating Atheists. I'm reading it.

[16 : 49] I read that stuff for fun. And the entire book is basically a manual for how do you respond to Christians when they come and try to argue the deity of Christ, the resurrection, the existence of God.

For instance, hey, something exists as opposed to nothing. There must be a creator and he'll give a response. What should you say as an atheist? Well you could say, you know, well, why is creation the miracle or why is existence itself the miraculous?

Why don't you just respond saying non-existence is the miraculous. And the stuff and existence has always been.

Wow. I mean it's kind of clever but it's pretty stupid because non-existence being the miraculous it doesn't work in any other area of life.

I mean it doesn't work for breakfast. It doesn't work for birthdays. I wake up in the morning and no breakfast is not the miraculous.

[18 : 13] The miraculous in my house is when I smell bacon and coffee. That's the miracle. That's the miraculous for birthdays.

I mean how does this atheist treat his wife as special on her birthday? Hey I got you something really amazing. I got you the miraculous.

Nothing. I read this stuff because it's helpful for me as they interact with people all the time.

But I would say for us related to the resurrection, I believe I would go so far as to say. That the resurrection on historical grounds is irrefutable.

It's irrefutable. And this church is where we're going to get totally nerdy. I'm believing that half of you are going to really like this and the other half are going to try to stay awake.

[19 : 16] So that's pretty much the plan this morning. It's going to be a little different than what I normally would do in terms of expositing the passage verse by verse.

But I want us to think a little bit apologetically this morning and talk about the resurrection in terms of how do we know that it's true and how can you prove it even without the Bible?

In terms of historiography, which is basically the writing of history based upon critical examination of the sources, or we could say historical forensics piecing together what actually happened in history based upon the type of sources that we're actually reading, how do we know the resurrection actually occurred?

And there's two keys in terms of doing really good historical forensics when you're reading sources. You're looking for material that is twofold.

It's eyewitness and it's early. Two E's of historical forensics. It's eyewitness and it's early. And what I want us to know this morning is there is great inequity in terms of what the world believes occurred in history related to every other person versus Jesus.

[20 : 52] Historical figures are given far more leeway, but when it comes to Jesus, the critics come out. Let me give you an example.

Alexander the Great. Alexander the Great died in 323 BC right here. In video, you're going to want to pan back for this.

We're going to do a little moving around the stage this morning. This is my exercise. I'm working out before your eyes. It counts. It does. It counts.

Alexander the Great, 323 BC. Now we're going down the timeline. The earliest record we have of Alexander the Great is like 20 BC.

Theodorus wrote about Alexander the Great. He used some other sources, but the earliest information we have from about 20 BC. And it's not even the best information we have about Alexander the Great.

[21 : 57] But what I want you to see is there is a gap of what? 300 years. This is a math savvy congregation. I love this. And if you go even further, I would probably be off the stage at this point because Arius wrote about Alexander the Great in the second century AD.

And these are the best documents we have related to the historical Alexander the Great. And we're talking four to 450 year gap.

Think about that. Is anyone in history question whether Alexander the Great, some consider the greatest military commander of all time?

Like is his existence and his accomplishments questioned? No, it's taken as fact. And yet there's a gap of 300 and the best material 400, 450 years.

When it comes to the resurrection, we have better historical material.

[23 : 06] And yet everyone becomes a skeptic because on our timeline now, the resurrection, crucifixion. Scholars agree we're talking about around 30 AD, right?

Crucifixion occurred 30 AD. We're just going to take that date this morning for sake of give or take a few years, but 30 AD.

We have the gospels, right? Written tradition. Talk about the resurrection. We have the Gospel of John written about 95 AD.

95 AD, 30 AD. We have a gap of, come on, let's be confident. 55 years. I shouldn't even be this far because that's Alexander the Great, that's 300.

I am just not, right? This is, okay, I'm more like right here. I've got to do this to scale. 65. Gospel of Luke written 85 AD.

[24 : 10] Now what's the gap? What's the gap? 55. Who said 60? Don't raise your hand. Okay, 55 years.

Matthew, 80 AD, or yeah, 80 AD. No. Yes. All right, 80 AD, we have a gap of what?

How many years? 50. Okay. And then probably the earliest Gospel. I'm not sure what that means, but Adam's going to go check out if the building is burning down and while he checks and gives us instructions, the Gospel of Mark, okay?

The missing man. The missing man. The missing man. The missing man. Okay. It's an alert, amber alert. Whoo. All right, no fire.

Okay. But somebody is missing. So Lord, we just pray for this person. Pray that you would bring the people around to find them and they would be safe and you just, you would give wisdom to those that need it and somebody could give you credit for the help today.

[25 : 46] Amen. The Gospel of Luke, or the Gospel of Mark finally, written 70 AD.

That's a gap of 40 years. I want you to kind of compare that. Everybody mute your phones. Or maybe you can't, they override. That's the world in which we live folks. 1984 in 2021. Think about that contrast. There's a gap of 300 years between Alexander the Great and the earliest historical material. And yet we have the record of Jesus and the resurrection within how many years?

40. Here's the problem. We can't use the Bible to argue resurrection. And in fact, scholars question the authenticity of the Gospels in terms of their authorship.

[26 : 57] So they're in question. And so if I was talking to a critic, I wouldn't even use the Gospels in terms of is the resurrection verifiable on historical grounds?

So then what do we do? How do we get to the resurrection without using the Bible? Well, it just so happens that I have a friend, Dr. Gary Habermas, who is the foremost expert on the resurrection in the world.

He's my friend. I know a guy. I know a guy. Okay. And he's written like 20 books on the resurrection. He's currently working on a 5,000 page work presently on the resurrection. Teachers at Liberty University, had him come speak at some apologetic conferences. In the past, I've heard him lecture a zillion times.

He is a friend. He's an amazing guy. He's a kind guy. He's a Spokane guy. He's like a hockey fan. Just he's a brawler and he's an intellect.

[28 : 03] It's wonderful. But he has done probably the best work on the resurrection in academic circles.

And he's also an expert on NDE's, which is what is an NDE? It's a near death experience. And these are written up in medical journals. He's documented all this stuff because if there is consciousness after death, perhaps resurrection is something that we need to think about. We don't just die and are gone. And I wish I had time to tell you some of the stories because it will blow your mind. And I'm going to give you one, even though I don't have time. Operating table, individual. Apparently they die. Heart, brain shows no activity. They're gone for five minutes. And then they come back.

And when they come back, this individual says, yeah, I was conscious the whole time. In fact, I was kind of hovering above the room. And in fact, I saw on this machine over here, I saw there were 12 digits on the top of it.

[29 : 12] And I'm sort of OCD. And so I memorized them. And they say, what? And they say, yeah, let me give you the numbers. So give the numbers.

Sure enough, they look on the top of this medical device. They're the 12 numbers. What in the world? So we don't die. And that's it.

But Gary, he studies that he's also done the best work, I think, on emotional doubt. And I have probably given his messages out to countless on this issue of emotional doubt.

Because I think it is the doubt that most folks struggle with. I.e., God did something I didn't approve of. I've had a bad experience. God's failed me. He's not good.

What about suffering? And I think Gary Habermas, the expert on the resurrection, has done probably the best work on this front as well. So this morning, what I want to do is give you his argument for the resurrection.

[30 : 13] It's called the minimal facts argument. Okay? I told you, half of you are going to love this, half aren't. I'm going to get nerdy. Minimal, the minimal facts argument. And I mean, you can Google YouTube, you can watch a lecture.

He does far better than me. I'm plagiarizing him and he's okay with it. But I want you to hear the reasoning on how we can know the resurrection even without the Bible.

Now, Dr. Habermas would use two texts to prove the Bible or true to prove the resurrection. He would use 1 Corinthians 15 where we're at this morning and he would also then use Galatians one. Now some of you are going, wait a second, Jay, I thought you said we're not going to use the Bible to prove the resurrection. We're not. You don't have to believe the Bible.

You don't have to embrace the Bible. But here's what all the liberal scholars concede, even Bart Ehrman, the apostle to the de-converted.

[31 : 23] And the reason he's so dangerous is because his argument is, hey, I used to be an evangelical, but now I have more information. With all the skeptics, they would all agree that Paul's

works, Paul wrote 13 letters.

We have in the New Testament. Virtually every scholar, liberal, evangelical, and by the way, Gary Habermas did his PhD at Michigan State University and he did his PhD on the resurrection. Not from a seminary, just a liberal arts university. Every scholar would agree to seven of Paul's works being authentically from Paul.

Okay? Romans 1 and 2 Corinthians, 1 Thessalonians. I know I really should have slides. Scott knows what he's doing. Romans 1 and 2 Corinthians, 1 Thessalonians, Galatians, Philippians, and Philemon.

Every skeptic, every scholar would agree those seven books are authentically from the apostle Paul. So we can use those books.

[32 : 48] We don't have to take the Bible as a whole, but we can take these ancient documents that all the skeptics agree are legit, are authentic, and just boil them down to 2, 1 Corinthians 15, and Galatians 1.

And this is where it gets really fun, church. I know you guys are like, man, it's the fourth. I should be eating a hot dog right now. It's 10 a.m., guys. So stick with me.

We're going to go back even further than Paul this morning. And it's based upon the study of New Testament Christian creeds.

You can write down creeds. I know you heard creeds and your eyes rolled back. These are probably the most exciting New Testament scholarship that's occurring today in biblical studies, these ancient creeds.

What is a creed, Jay? What's a New Testament creed? What are you talking about? Well, a New Testament creed is the record of the preaching during the apostolic era of the church.

[34 : 17] So before we had the New Testament, we have a record of the preaching that was occurring.

This is exciting because what we actually have is probably what the apostles themselves were teaching.

It's just going to be one of those Sundays. In the Bible, there are roughly, in the New Testament, there's roughly 12 or so creeds that are just, they're hidden within the pages of the New Testament. Maybe this is new to some of you. And so you're saying, Jay, what exactly, you know, okay, it's a record of what was taught, but why do we have these things?

You can call these creeds traditions. You can call these creeds hymns. See Josh just perked up. Wow. He's right. Hymns.

[35 : 20] Confessions. Dr. Habermas would call them little ditties. You could call them jingles. That's a little crass, but I'm trying to get you to see what they are because these things exist because scholars believe that in the days of Jesus, 70% likely of those in those days were illiterate.

So how do you teach? You teach someone a jingle. You teach them a little ditty.

So in this oral tradition, these things are put together. It's a song. It's a rhyme. It's a rhyme, but it's something you can remember. Let me give you an example.

ABCs. How do you learn the ABCs? ABCD. Okay, let's just stop there. Oh, yeah.

Or how about this one? Ring around the rosies. Pocket full of, that's my part. Pocket full of posies.

[36 : 29] Yeah. So you can teach your children about the bubonic plague at recess.

But we have these. Every culture has these. And within the New Testament, we have these as well. And how do we know these creeds exist?

Because, and you can talk to Dr. Vreeland about this later who's an expert on languages, but these sections of Scripture read differently than the rest of the passages in Greek.

They just, they stand out. There's a different rhythm to the Greek related to these creeds. Let me give you a couple examples of a New Testament creed.

These are well documented. First, or Romans 1, verses 3 and 4. According to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power, according to the Spirit of holiness by His resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.

[37 : 43] That's a New Testament creed. Let me give you another one. Romans 10, 9. Because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

So that's like our ABC song, a jingle or this little song that Christians were taught and then they would recite to one another.

And what's cool about Romans 10, 9, it's believed to be a baptismal creed. So this is like the confession of a believer that he would make as he entered the water.

And even the most liberal scholars, New Testament scholars believe that this is so. And I just love the fact that we have this, that if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and if this is the creed of what occurred and it's a baptismal creed, I can just see the early believers entering into, they didn't have baptistry, okay?

That's an acronym. But you know, if entering into the river proclaiming Jesus is Lord, Jesus is Lord, we're connected.

[39 : 07] We're not doing anything different today than they did 2,000 years ago. I wish I could share more, but let's get back to our text because Paul actually gives us here the possibly oldest and most important creed of them all.

1 Corinthians 15, 3 to 7. You didn't know this was hidden in the passage, but it's there. Paul says, for I delivered to you as first importance what I also received.

That Christ died for our sins, this is where the creed begins, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas then to the 12, then He appeared to more than 500 brothers at one time.

Most are still alive though some have fallen asleep, then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles. So that church is part of the early church's oral tradition.

And I want you to notice something here in verse 3 because before Paul recites this creed, he says, for I delivered to you of first importance what I also received.

[40 : 37] So Paul is now telling the Corinthians, hey Corinthians, I'm giving you something that somebody gave to me. This is pretty cool.

And like historical scholars when they look at this stuff, they start to drool like when they see things like this because according to the scholars, first Corinthians is authentically Pauline.

And now you have somebody from the first century saying, hey, I received something. Somebody gave me this, I hate to call it rhyme, this jingle, this creed.

So we got to ask the question then, like who gave this to Paul? Who gave Paul? The Christian ABC song.

When did that occur? Well, it's believed that we have a record from Galatians actually, another book that the critics accept is authentic from Paul.

[41 : 43] In Galatians 1 verses 18 and 19, Paul writes this. He says, then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him 15 days.

But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the brother, the Lord's brother. So Paul had a conversion experience.

Amen. Are you still with me? Yes, Damascus Road. Amen. Yeah. Believed to be probably a couple years after the resurrection.

On his conversion, he says here in Galatians 1 that he consults with no one, in fact in Galatians 1, 16 and 17.

Instead, he just heads off to the Judean desert. But then he says here in verse 18, after three years, now he wants to go to Jerusalem.

[42 : 44] And I don't know what Paul was doing for those three years after his conversion. I have no idea. I don't know if because he was so hostile to Christians, it was just time out.

But after three years, he's like, I need to go to Jerusalem. And so he goes to Jerusalem. And it says here that he speaks with two individuals, with who?

Peter and James, the brother of Jesus. And he says I'm going to go to Jerusalem, Galatians 1, 18, to visit Cephas.

This word visit is not actually a good word. The word is actually, visit here is actually the word hystereci, which is where we get our word history from.

But this word hystereci, it actually means to interview, to inquire about truth.

[43 : 49] So what we find in Galatians 1, 18 is Paul says, hey, three years after my conversion, I'm going to Jerusalem to talk to Peter, to talk to James. And I want to inquire about their experience with the gospel because Galatians, the book of Galatians is the book is what's the gospel?

So he goes down there, probably to share his experience, and then he wants to hear from them. He's going down there to gather information.

The consensus position among New Testament scholars is that Paul received this material about 35 AD.

Two years, right, after the crucifixion, say crucifixion, 30 AD, two years later, 32. Paul experiences like conversion comes to faith in Christ.

Then three years later, he goes to Jerusalem to inquire of Peter and James. So it's just the gap, 35 to 30, the gap is five years.

[44 : 58] Alexander, the greats, 300. So you want to talk about early in eyewitness.

It's believed that Paul received this creed from Peter and James when he went to Jerusalem.

So Paul first heard this. Okay. And it's believed that 1 Corinthians is written probably 55, 57 AD.

So we're talking a gap of 25 years. But within 1 Corinthians 15, you have this creed hidden, this oral tradition, which goes back to within five years of the crucifixion.

But if Peter and James gave it to Paul, how long did they possess?

[45 : 57] Listen to this. The leading atheist, Bart Ehrman, believes that this creed existed not more than one or two years after the cross.

So we have the record of what was being taught in the early church. And we have now a gap of possibly one year.

And it's Bart Ehrman that says, well, the resurrection narrative evolved over time. And yet he conceives that we have the record of the resurrection possibly within one year of the crucifixion.

It gets even better because the top three scholars, secular, historical Jesus scholars. And if you know, I know this is so nerdy, I'm so sorry. But the secular Jesus scholars, they are the ones that view Jesus as merely the apostolic prophet, like they don't see Jesus as God, as divine.

They would even date this creed even earlier, saying that the apostles must have had this in their hands six months after the resurrection, after the crucifixion.

[47 : 19] I mean, there's no gap. Talk about early. Talk about eyewitness. And I would agree with this statement from a leading theologian today that says, you know what, the resurrection is not a belief that grew up within the church.

It is a belief around which the church itself grew up. Amen? I mean, folks, in terms of like historiography, I mean, this is just unheard of.

It's unheard of. And yet the critics are so hard on what Jesus isn't really who he said he was.

And I think what's a tragedy is that Bart Ehrman, he wants to argue that the resurrection is a later addition to the Jesus narrative.

All the while he can see the teaching of the early church. It's just it's incongruous. And if you actually know his story, and this is what's sad is that Ehrman, he isn't actually an atheist because of his own scholarship on the New Testament.

[48 : 33] He would say, I'm an atheist because of the problem of suffering in the world. It's emotional doubt. It's not intellectual.

Just think about this, though. If this creed was circulating a year after the resurrection, then Paul, it's possible, even though he received it from Peter and James when he went to Jerusalem, it's possible when he was persecuting the church that he probably heard this.

This was the teaching. This is the stuff that if you were a believer in the very earliest of the church in the New Testament, you would have heard this.

And what's astounding in our passage is this, that you get down to verse eight, 1 Corinthians 15 verse eight. And guess what Paul does?

He adds himself into the creed because he says, last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

[49 : 40] It's incredible. All the one that was violently just ravaging the church, he was the Bart Ehrman of the early church.

He was the critic. He was the skeptic. And now he says, add me onto that creed. I'm in. In fact, I am all in.

And that's why Paul finishes this section in verse nine to 11. I mean, grace wrecked him, changed his life forever. And he says, for I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

But by the grace of God, I am what I am. And his grace towards me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.

Harder than it was I or they, he's speaking of the other apostles. Together he's saying, we preach and so you believed.

[50 : 55] Church the resurrection, the record that we have on the resurrection is just unparalleled.

There is nothing that we know of ancient history that even comes close related to the material that we have on the resurrection.

And it's interesting because with this creed, you know, the probably the leading rejection of the resurrection amongst scholars has been because we have this information.

Their argument is, well, basically the apostles, the early disciples, they were delusional. They hallucinated.

That's their scholarship. They hallucinated because the facts of history are clear. So they hallucinated.

[52 : 08] But the creed actually counters that actually destroys that argument because in verse six, it says, he Jesus appeared to more than 500 brothers at one time.

So now what are we talking mass hallucination? These 500 individuals all had the same hallucination. They saw the risen Jesus.

Typically hallucinations are individual experiences. And then additionally in this creed, we have the record.

This is the oral tradition. We have the record that both James and Paul, they believe that they saw the resurrected Jesus.

And those two individuals are the two least candidates that you would think would want to profess the resurrection. Because if you know James, the brother of Jesus, what did he think about his brother?

[53 : 10] He thought that he was mad for believing that he was divine. Okay, that was just individual. That was on you.

Okay, I'm just saying. It's okay. It's probably God. So you probably should have taken it. But in fact, it says in Mark 321, his family thought Jesus was out of his mind for claiming to be the Messiah.

So James probably rejected Christ for 30 years. You think he, I mean, how is that conversation? James believes he saw his brother resurrected so much so that it altered his life.

Great church leader, James the brother of Jesus. And then you have in this creed, you have Paul, who had no reason to embrace the notion of a resurrected Jesus.

He was the critic. He was the critic of the ancient world. And he believes he saw the resurrected Jesus.

[54 : 22] What do you do with that testimony? That's the most unlikely testimony ever. Okay, let me put it on a level you can understand. It would be like CNN professing that Donald Trump was the greatest president of all time.

You would laugh. I mean, we could equally say that that Fox profess the same thing about our current president. Okay? And you're like, that would never happen.

That would never, ever, ever. That's how it would have been thought of Paul. Never in a million years is this guy going to claim that he saw the risen Christ.

Church, listen to this, virtually all skeptics agree that Jesus earliest followers had experiences that they believed were appearances of the risen Jesus.

Skeptics don't, they don't even fight you on that. They just say, well, it must have been, we don't know what it is. Sir Erman, who I'm beating up on, but he can take it.

[55 : 43] I was reading a blog of his this week on his own blog. He says this, the greatest atheist of our day. He says either Jesus really appeared to his disciples after his crucifixion or they were seeing things.

And what's sad is he has the data and yet he still rejects Jesus as his Lord and Savior.

Jesus appeared to the apostles. You have their testimony as well. And what's striking is you have these individuals who didn't just go on with life as normal after the crucifixion of Christ.

In fact, they were willing to die for their beliefs. And in 200 AD, the church father of the African church father, Tritonian, we have the record.

He writes. Paul's beheaded in Rome. Peter crucified.

[57 : 06] And it's most likely that Paul and Peter were crucified. Paul was beheaded Peter crucified in 64 AD because Tritonian says happened during the time of Nero. What happened in 64 AD?

Rome burned. Who'd Nero blame? Christians. Who are the top of the list to take the blame? Peter, Paul. That's history, folks.

And you have the record of these apostles who they went from lambs being led to the slaughter to lions. They turned the world upside down for the gospel because they believe that they saw the risen Jesus.

It's incredible. And I know some of you are like, well, Jay, but there's zealots today that die for their beliefs. Great.

But they're not eyewitnesses. You can have somebody go into a supermarket, blow themselves up or fly a plane into a building, but they're not eyewitnesses.

[58 : 08] You have the eyewitnesses here who if they were lying, do you think that they would have lived the lives that they did? Dr. Habermas puts it this way.

He says liars make poor martyrs. So what's the big deal with the resurrection?

It means that the hardest things in life, the saddest things are going to become untrue. That's what it means. It means that Narnia exists, that there is life after this, that this is temporary, this is short. It means that my dad, who I haven't seen or spoken to because he's with the Lord, for 30 years that I'm going to have that reunion.

That's the power of the resurrection. It means that the gambles, I know Darlene and Dave are here, means that their daughter, Melissa, that passed away this week, they're going to see her again because she knew Christ.

[59 : 11] See, that's, you want to know, talk about the relevance of the resurrection? I think Jesus said it best. He says, hey, because I live, so shall you.

Amen? Let's pray. Father, thank you for time together. Even with the distractions, Lord, I pray that there would be something of this truth.

Lord it would just compel us and our faith would have been bolstered this morning because truth was actually on our side.

Lord, help us to live today as though the resurrection, that we believe it. We love you Jesus and we look forward to forever.

In His name we pray and all guys, people said, Amen.