

Neighborly Apologetics

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Jesus and the Resurrection, Part 4.2

Christ's Resurrection: The Heart of Christian Faith and Apologetics

(Thumbnail Sketch from Del Tackett's Webinar, [September 5, 2023](#))

In the ongoing Neighborly Apologetics series led by Dr. Del Tackett, the session titled "Jesus and the Resurrection, Part 4.2 - Christ's Resurrection" stands as a pivotal exploration of the cornerstone of Christian belief. Delivered on September 5, 2023, and facilitated by Marc Fey, this webinar delves deeply into what Tackett describes as not only the central piece of Christianity but also the heart of effective apologetics. With a pastoral and scholarly tone, Tackett guides participants through the profound theological, historical, and practical implications of Jesus' resurrection, emphasizing its role in everyday faith and neighborly engagement.

The webinar opens with warm greetings and a reminder of the purpose behind Neighborly Apologetics. Rooted in the royal law of loving one's neighbor as articulated by the Apostle Paul, the series equips ordinary Christian families to build trusting relationships, pray diligently for others, and address obstacles that prevent people from knowing Christ. This approach is not about winning arguments but demonstrating genuine agape love. The three guiding questions framing the series—Why does God exist? Is the Bible reliable? And who is Jesus?—provide structure. Having previously examined prophecies, Jesus' life, and His death (including refutations of theories like the swoon hypothesis), the session turns fully to the resurrection.

Tackett underscores the resurrection as the fundamental heart of Christianity and Christian apologetics. Without it, faith collapses. He draws participants' attention to the sweeping historical impact of Jesus Christ. All of world history centers on this man, evidenced by how time itself is divided—traditionally BC/AD, now often BCE/CE. Even attempts to secularize the calendar by removing explicit reference to Christ fail to erase the reality: history splits around His arrival. Yet Tackett argues this division would mean little without the resurrection. The birth alone might have been noted, but the resurrection transformed everything. He encourages believers to ask neighbors a probing question: If history pivots on this individual's life, shouldn't we understand who He truly is?

The biblical foundation receives extensive treatment. Tackett highlights 1 Corinthians 15, where Paul delivers an early creed received shortly after the events themselves—possibly within months of the resurrection. This creed, which Paul says he "received" and passed on as of first importance, states that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, was buried, was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and appeared to Cephas, the Twelve, over 500 brethren (most still alive), James, all the apostles, and finally Paul himself. Tackett suggests Ananias may have shared this creed with the newly converted Saul in Damascus. The creed's early date powerfully counters claims that the resurrection story evolved as legend over time.

Tackett then surveys apostolic preaching. Peter's Pentecost sermon boldly proclaims Jesus, attested by God through miracles, crucified according to God's plan, yet raised by God because death could not hold Him. Paul, in Acts 17, reasons from the Scriptures that the Christ must suffer and rise. In Romans, Paul declares Jesus as the Son of God in power by His resurrection and links belief in the resurrection to justification and salvation: "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." In Thessalonians, the resurrection grounds hope for believers who have died. Peter echoes this in his epistle, praising God who has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The resurrection proves Jesus is the Son of God and forms the essence of Christian faith and hope.

Tackett laments how the resurrection has often been reduced to a cultural holiday. He recalls White House Easter egg rolls—lavish preparations followed by swift cleanup—and similar patterns in churches: special music, lilies, and once-a-year attendees. By Monday, it is "just another holiday." In contrast, the early church kept the resurrection central. Even Charles Spurgeon later regretted not emphasizing it enough in his preaching. Tackett shares his own 40-day Easter devotional project (hoping it becomes a book) to help believers live daily in the reality that Jesus is alive, not merely part of a religious sect but united to the living Lord.

Given its centrality, the resurrection faces intense attack. Tackett prepares participants not for intellectual pride but for loving engagement. He outlines several skeptical theories, grouping them into roughly four weak categories with little evidence: the twin theory (a twin substituted for Jesus on the cross or appeared afterward), the substitution theory (popular in Islamic tradition, claiming someone else died in Jesus' place), the hallucination theory, the wrong tomb theory, the swoon theory (already addressed in the prior session), the disciples-stole-the-body theory, and the legend theory. He notes one somewhat fairer objection involving apparent inconsistencies in the Gospel accounts, such as the number of angels or timing of the women's visits, promising to address these later with a map of Jerusalem.

Transitioning to historical facts, Tackett affirms the validity of the scriptural documents. They are ancient sources on par with any others and should not be dismissed. Non-biblical sources also attest to Jesus, far more substantially than for many accepted ancient figures like Caesar. The selective skepticism toward Jesus, Tackett suggests, reveals a motive to "cancel" Him. This observation itself becomes a neighborly apologetic tool: Why the annual "search for the historical Jesus" but no parallel doubts about Caesar?

The session then examines key evidence. No one survived Roman crucifixion, a brutal execution involving scourging with a horrific whip and nailing with spikes. Professional executioners confirmed Jesus' death before Pilate. His body was wrapped with 75 pounds of spices and linen and placed in a tomb. Historians no longer seriously propose the swoon theory.

Crucially, a guard was posted and the tomb sealed at the request of chief priests and Pharisees, who remembered Jesus' predictions of rising after three days. Tackett speculates these were likely Roman soldiers (a cohort of 600 had arrested Jesus), though temple guards were also professional. The Pharisees' concern highlights their awareness of the resurrection claim, unlike the emotionally attached disciples who struggled to accept it.

Tackett poetically frames the events as "creation claps its hands." Scripture uses anthropomorphic language for creation's involvement in major divine acts. At the crucifixion, darkness covered the land, earthquakes split tombs, and the temple veil tore. On resurrection morning, another great

earthquake occurred. Geologist Dr. Steve Austin's research identifies seismites (distorted sediment layers from earthquakes) near Jerusalem dated to approximately 30 AD, consistent with a magnitude 5 event. This was no minor tremor.

Matthew records three key passages about the guards. First, their posting. Second, the angel's descent amid the earthquake: appearing like lightning, the angel rolls away the stone and sits on it. The guards tremble and become "like dead men." The angel announces to the women that Jesus has risen and invites them to see the empty place. Third, some guards report to the chief priests, who bribe them to spread the story that disciples stole the body while they slept. This false narrative, Matthew notes, circulated among the Jews "to this day."

Tackett addresses objections. The account's presence only in Matthew does not invalidate it; historians selectively record events, as with Jesus washing the disciples' feet (only in John). The Pharisees' knowledge of prophecies came from attentive spying, while disciples' emotional investment led to denial. Practically, the guards would have inspected the tomb after the angel's appearance, confirming its emptiness before reporting. Matthew's early claim about the ongoing false story would have been easily disproven if false, lending credibility.

Why roll away the stone? Not for Jesus to exit—He had already risen and later appeared in locked rooms. The stone was removed so witnesses could examine the evidence. God does not call believers to blind faith. From the pillar of cloud to Jesus' miracles to the empty tomb, physical evidence abounds. Sir Norman Anderson, a renowned legal scholar, concluded after lifelong study that the empty tomb is "a veritable rock on which all radicalistic theories of the resurrection dash themselves."

Finally, Tackett discusses the seals. The stone was secured with ropes, hooks, and clay seals—inviolable in the ancient world, as illustrated in Esther, Daniel, and Isaiah. Breaking them carried severe consequences. This imagery points to God's unbreakable seal on believers through the Holy Spirit (Ephesians), guaranteeing security in Christ. Our faith rests on the resurrection's reality.

Tackett concludes that this is only the beginning of resurrection apologetics. Future sessions will examine the witnesses. The webinar closes with announcements about recordings, slides, and resources, followed by Tackett's prayer. He thanks God for providing strong testimony and inviting examination of evidence rather than demanding a blind leap. He prays for softened hearts, open eyes, and diligence in responding to neighbors' questions—all for God's glory.

Dr. Tackett's presentation masterfully weaves theology, history, and practical application. The resurrection is no mere holiday but the living reality that empowers faith, justifies sinners, and grounds hope. By equipping believers with evidence and heart, Neighborly Apologetics fulfills its mission: loving neighbors toward Christ. As Tackett reminds us, because He lives, we live also.

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Jesus and the Resurrection, Part 4.2

Christ's Resurrection - Del Tackett's Neighborly Apologetics

(Thumbnail Sketch from Del Tackett's Webinar, [September 5, 2023](#))

In Dr. Del Tackett's Neighborly Apologetics webinar, "Jesus and the Resurrection, Part 4.2," the focus turns to the cornerstone of Christian faith. Delivered on September 5, 2023, Tackett emphasizes that the resurrection is not only the heart of Christianity but the central pillar of Christian apologetics. Without it, preaching is vain and faith is futile, as Paul declares in 1 Corinthians 15.

Tackett reminds participants that all world history pivots on Jesus Christ. The very calendar—BC/AD or BCE/CE—bears witness to His life. Yet it is the resurrection, not merely His birth, that gives this division its ultimate meaning. He explores the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15, delivered to Paul soon after the events, affirming Christ's death, burial, resurrection on the third day, and appearances to hundreds of witnesses. Apostolic preaching by Peter and Paul consistently highlights the resurrection as proof that Jesus is the Son of God, the basis of justification, salvation, and living hope.

Tackett contrasts the cultural reduction of Easter to a one-day holiday with its prominence in early church testimony. He laments how modern preaching often neglects it, sharing his own 40-day devotional effort to make the resurrection a daily reality for believers.

The session addresses skeptical theories—twin, substitution, hallucination, swoon, stolen body, and legend—before examining historical facts. Jesus' brutal death by Roman crucifixion left no doubt He was dead. A guard was posted and the tomb sealed. On resurrection morning, a great earthquake shook the area (supported by geologist Dr. Steve Austin's seismite research), an angel rolled away the stone, and guards became "like dead men." The empty tomb stands as irrefutable evidence.

Tackett stresses that God does not call believers to blind faith. The rolled-away stone, broken seals, and empty tomb invite examination. As legal scholar Sir Norman Anderson concluded, the empty tomb is the rock upon which skeptical theories shatter.

The session equips Christians to lovingly engage neighbors with evidence-based hope in the risen Christ.

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