

26-0715wc Neighborly Apologetics

Dr. Del Tackett's Neighborly Apologetics Webinar Series

26-0715wc - NA- 9-Jesus' Resurrection, Part 6, Dr. Del Tackett

This detailed summary by Grok / X, (Transcription by TurboScribe.ai)

Del's site: deltackett.com, [Neighborly Apologetics Series Video link](#),

Class Resources: [NA-links](#), Our website: wschurchofchrist.org/education.php

See the transcript: [Transcript HTML](#) - [Transcript PDF](#)

Neighborly Apologetics Summary

26-0715-Summary: 9 - Jesus' Resurrection, Part 6 (0:04 - 56:25)

Title: *The Early Polemic and Creed*, **Facilitator:** Scott Reynolds

Part 1

(0:04 - 2:01) Opening Greeting and Purpose of the Session

Del Tackett begins by thanking the audience for taking time out of their busy schedules to attend the session. He expresses appreciation and prays that the Lord will bless their time together as they examine what he considers one of the strongest arguments for the resurrection of Christ. He acknowledges that the topic is a bit technical—not as immediately obvious as some others—but emphasizes that it is something every believer should know deeply and embed in their hearts and minds. The goal is not merely academic but practical: to equip believers to interact with their neighbors as relationships are built and questions arise. Tackett highlights the importance of understanding the polemic and early creed they will discuss, describing these as essential tools for every Christian's toolkit. He announces that he will share his screen with slides and, as Marc mentioned, will send the slides out in PDF form afterward so participants do not need to copy everything down. He encourages everyone to relax, take notes if they wish, and allow the Lord to speak through His Word.

(2:01 - 6:10) Neighborly Apologetics Vision and Priestly Role

Tackett explains that they call this series "neighborly apologetics" because it focuses on building the ability in their hearts and minds to respond to neighbors while cultivating genuine relationships. This is rooted in the royal law given by Jesus, the King of kings, to love one's neighbor. He stresses that God has entrusted the primary work of the kingdom to ordinary Christian families, aligning with Christ's desire and vision for how the body of Christ should engage the world. Drawing from 1 Peter, believers are described as a royal priesthood who fulfill priestly duties in their neighborhoods by going to their knees in prayer. They are to lift up the names of those God has placed near them before the throne of grace, praying diligently that God would work in their hearts

and grant opportunities for relationships where neighbors ask for the reason for the hope within. This is framed as a family ministry where parents and children learn together. Tackett illustrates with the example of "Mrs. Smith," who believes the resurrection is a myth or legend. Tonight's session aims to strengthen their ability to defend the faith—not academically, but in the loving, gentle manner Scripture calls for, as in 2 Timothy, where the Lord's servant gently instructs opponents in the hope that God grants repentance, leading them to truth and escape from the devil's trap. He mentions recent prayers for national repentance and invites participation in a brief Tuesday noon Eastern prayer time, noting that similar prayers are offered for neighbors.

(6:10 - 11:01) Current Cultural Context and Centrality of the Resurrection

Tackett observes a rise in hostility toward Christianity online, with various materials promoting the idea that Jesus and the resurrection are myths. Tonight's topic is the importance of the early polemic and creed, particularly their early formation. He reviews the series structure, noting they outlined 12 or 13 categories of apologetics for believers to know or reference. After covering the problem of evil and suffering, they moved to the claims of Jesus and the resurrection, recognizing it as critical and potentially the longest section. They have examined the promises, prophecies, life, words, and death of Christ and are now addressing the resurrection and its apologetics. He recalls that the resurrection is the heart and key of Christian apologetics. Many famous preachers expressed regret late in life for not emphasizing it more, as the apostles constantly referenced the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Tackett underscores how the resurrection has divided time—despite attempts to shift from BC/AD to BCE/CE, history is bifurcated before and after Christ, with the resurrection at its center. He cites Paul's strong statements in 1 Corinthians that if Christ has not been raised, preaching and faith are in vain, and believers remain in their sins. This should prompt ongoing contemplation of the resurrection's importance for both apologetics with others and personal faith, recognizing daily that they serve the living risen Lord who dwells within them.

(11:01 - 15:35) Bridge from Previous Session: Appearances and Accusations

Tackett bridges from the November session on the many physical appearances of the risen Jesus to the current topic. He lists key appearances: to Mary Magdalene at the tomb, other women, Cleopas on the road to Emmaus, the ten in the locked room, Peter, the eleven with Thomas eight days later, on the Sea of Tiberias, on the mountain, to more than 500 at once, to James, and many others during the time Jesus spent with the disciples. These appearances demonstrate that the resurrection was not a mere rumor but a well-attested event witnessed by many, including groups like the 500. Paul emphasizes that most of these witnesses were still alive, which is crucial for tonight's discussion. The events and appearances were proclaimed while eyewitnesses lived, making the claims verifiable and powerful testimony since living people could refute falsehoods. Tackett introduces the terms "polemic" and "creed," reassuring the audience not to be put off by "polemic," which refers to a cultural point-counterpoint discussion early in the church. He explains creeds as statements of belief formed to counter challenges or heresies to the biblical worldview, particularly claims about Jesus' identity and resurrection. Recapping prior accusations addressed last time—hallucinations (impossible for groups), mistaken identity (unrealistic given the disciples' and Mary's long familiarity with Jesus), and a merely spiritual (not physical) resurrection (contradicted by the empty tomb and grave clothes)—he notes that the final accusation of the resurrection being a myth or legend leads directly into tonight's material.

(15:35 - 22:30) The Myth/Legend Accusation and Timeline for Legends

Tackett addresses the accusation that all resurrection appearances (to Magdalene, the eleven, the 500, James, etc.) are part of a later-developed myth or legend, meaning the events never actually happened. He references a recent British survey showing 22% of Brits do not believe a real Jesus existed, viewing it all as fabricated myth or deception. Extrapolating to America, where roughly half believe in the resurrection, this suggests a significant portion may view it as legend, making it likely believers will encounter this objection when engaging neighbors per the royal law. He connects this to previous evidences, especially the strongest ones like the grave clothes left in the tomb (no thief would unwrap a sticky body and leave them), the sealed stone, posted guards, earthquake, angels, terrified guards, women at the tomb, Peter and John's examination, and soldiers reporting the empty tomb, all of which sparked the polemic. Before examining the passage, Tackett presents a timeline slide (noting it may be small on phones but PDFs will be provided) illustrating how long myths take to form—typically several generations, as living eyewitnesses, their children, and grandchildren would refute false claims. It takes three to five generations or more for legends to evolve. In contrast, the polemic formed within months and the creed within months or years of the resurrection, leaving insufficient time for myth development. This knowledge equips the body of Christ to respond kindly to those who casually dismiss the resurrection as myth by discussing how long legends actually take and noting that these events arose immediately within the lifetime of participants. He transitions by saying it is time to examine the early polemic first.

(22:30 - 30:40) The Early Polemic in Matthew 27 and Its Immediate Origin

Tackett defines the polemic as a point-counterpoint cultural argument or discussion occurring early in the church. He turns to Matthew 27, picking up the heart of the polemic (noting they will return to its beginning). After the preparation day, chief priests and Pharisees approach Pilate, recalling Jesus' claim to rise after three days. They request the tomb be secured until the third day to prevent disciples from stealing the body and claiming resurrection, which would worsen the deception. Pilate allows a guard; they seal the stone. Tackett recaps prior discussion of the seal and guards, then continues the story post-earthquake and angel: guards, terrified like stone, report to the chief priests. The priests and elders consult, bribe the soldiers to claim disciples stole the body while they slept, promising to handle any trouble with the governor (noting Roman soldiers faced severe punishment for sleeping). The soldiers comply, and Matthew records that this story spread widely among the Jews and persists to his day. This argument arose at the very time of the resurrection and continued to Matthew's writing. Tackett returns to the trial night: the high priest asks if Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One. Jesus affirms, declaring He will be seen at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds. The high priest tears his clothes, calls it blasphemy, and they condemn Jesus to death. This marks the first point of the polemic: Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. The counterpoint is that He is not—He is crucified and dead. If no resurrection occurred, the polemic would end quickly. But with the resurrection, the empty tomb prompts the counter that disciples stole the body; the response cites the guarding soldiers; the counter claims they slept. The polemic culminates in the bribery accusation, which has no effective counter. Because the tomb is empty and grave clothes remain, along with other evidences, this immediate cultural argument serves as powerful witness that the events happened—they are not myth.

Part 2

(30:41 - 32:10) Introduction to Creeds and Their Purpose

Tackett transitions to examining the creed, describing it as a statement of belief formed to counter a challenge. He references Webster's 1828 dictionary, which he consults regularly, defining a creed as a brief summary of the articles of Christian faith, such as the Apostles' Creed, representing that which is believed. He notes that the Apostles' Creed likely arose to counter the heresy of Marcion. The Creed of Nicaea countered charges from Arius, the Nicene Creed addressed Apollinarianism, and the Creed of Chalcedon opposed the Nestorians, among others. Overall, creeds were created as statements to counter challenges—what could be called charges against the truth of God—providing the affirmative declaration of what is believed in response. This sets the stage for the specific early creed they will examine.

(32:10 - 36:17) The Early Creed in 1 Corinthians 15

Tackett presents the creed found in 1 Corinthians 15 as written by Paul. He reads the passage: Paul makes known the gospel he preached, which the recipients received, in which they stand, and by which they are saved if they hold fast to it—unless they believed in vain. Paul states that he delivered to them as of first importance what he also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas (Peter), then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, though some have fallen asleep. Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to Paul also. Tackett highlights Paul's introductory language—"For I delivered to you... what I also received"—as well-known rabbinical terms used to introduce a creed or tradition from that era. Paul follows with a list, which is typical of creeds. Scholars versed in Greek note that the creed's style is foreign to Paul's normal writing, indicating he is quoting an already-formed creed. The content affirms Christ's death, burial, resurrection on the third day according to Scripture, and appearances to Cephas, the Twelve, the five hundred, James, all the apostles, and finally Paul. Paul wrote to the Corinthians around 57 AD, within about 20 years of the death and resurrection of Jesus. Not only had the creed already formed by then, but Paul had received it earlier, possibly when he met with James and Peter in Jerusalem. It is very possible the creed formed within months or at least a year or two of the resurrection.

(36:17 - 38:48) Purpose, Timing, and Historical Impossibility of Early Myths

Tackett explains the creed's purpose: it declares that Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to many people, directly challenging the claim that He did not rise—the very polemic that arose immediately after the resurrection. This very early, well-formed creed is what Paul quotes and passes on to the Corinthians. He draws attention again to the statement about the appearance to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom were still living (though some had fallen asleep). This places the creed's formation within the lifespan of living eyewitnesses, not many years later, allowing verification by asking those people. Myths and legends do not arise this early—unless, of course, the events are true. Tackett cites Dr. Sherwin White, an Oxford University historian, who declared that even after two generations there is too much historical truth embedded in people for a legend to commence; one cannot even start forming a myth or legend

until beyond two generations. He also references Julius Mueller, a 19th-century theologian, who issued a standing challenge to find any legend or myth that developed this early relative to the events it claims—a challenge no one has met, because myths cannot arise that quickly. These facts are essential knowledge for believers.

(38:48 - 43:27) Why People Attempt to Debunk Jesus and the Spiritual Resistance

Tackett poses the question of why people invest so much effort trying to prove Jesus never existed or did not rise from the dead. He mentions societies of mythicists whose sole purpose is to demonstrate that Jesus is merely a myth or legend. The Jesus Project was founded to debunk the historical Jesus, with the resurrection at the heart of such efforts. Numerous books aim to deny His historicity. For years around Easter, magazines like Time and Newsweek seemed obsessed with debunking Jesus. Tackett speculates that Jesus has likely appeared on Time magazine covers more than anyone else, not in honor but for debunking articles. This should be eye-opening for "Mrs. Smith" and one's neighbors. He encourages asking why societies and campus clubs exist to debunk Jesus but not Plato, Aristotle, or even the historically dubious King Arthur. What is unique about Jesus that provokes such intense effort to deny His historicity and resurrection despite strong evidence? It is easy to claim the appearances are legend, but such charges lack valid basis, and believers will encounter people who accept them. This leads back to the earlier question of "why," especially given the impossibility of forming myths and legends so quickly when a polemic and creed already existed within years of the events, verifiable by living witnesses. The root reason is a spiritual desire within fallen human nature to do away with Jesus, to put Him aside, perhaps by building a "paper wall" called myth. This mirrors the Pharisees' desire to eliminate Jesus because He threatened to upend their lives and accumulated power.

(43:27 - 47:35) Modern Parallels, Application, and Importance for Apologetics

Tackett draws a direct parallel to today: believers and culture are in the same situation, though not called Pharisees. Modern culture has accumulated power called "homo deus," desiring to live as gods, with the heart as the center of truth and the universe. People want the world to affirm them, use their pronouns, and bow to their will, but Jesus stands in the way. Jesus calls followers to take up their cross, deny themselves, say no to self, and put to death the deeds of the flesh. People prefer a crafted Jesus who fits their desires, and this dynamic is evident now with a flood of internet content whose titles and images clearly aim to convey certain messages, some claiming Jesus would approve of or even love current cultural trends. Believers live in the same kind of world where the Pharisees sought to remove Jesus. Neighbors may not want Jesus either, which is why diligent prayer in the priestly role is essential—bringing their names before God's throne so He grants repentance, they come to their senses, and escape the devil's trap. This is the priestly duty Jesus assigned. Understanding the early nature of the resurrection creed and polemic is therefore vitally important for giving a defense for the hope within believers.

(47:35 - 49:08) Preview of Next Session and Closing Remarks

Tackett concludes that this is the importance of the early polemic and creed. For the next session, they will address charges of contradictions in the resurrection accounts—timing, events, and places. For example, Mark and another account differ on whether the disciples were told to go to

Galilee. He plans to use a map to show how all events fit together exactly as Scripture describes, providing increased hope and assurance that God's Word can be trusted and relied upon, even against claims of numerous contradictions in the resurrection story. With that, he stops sharing his screen and turns the session back over to Marc to close.

(49:08 - 54:34) Closing Reminders, Prayer, and Benediction

Marc Fey thanks Dr. Tackett and provides reminders: the live stream was recorded and will be available in inboxes (possibly by morning) for those who arrived late or wish to share it. Dr. Tackett's slides PDF will be included, along with any helpful links Marc noted. Questions can be sent by replying to the email. Marc then invites Tackett to close in prayer. Tackett prays, thanking the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for the Word given. He recalls Jesus' words to Thomas about those blessed who believe without seeing, noting this applies to believers today who have not physically seen the wounds as Thomas did, yet believe because of God's Word and the record provided. He thanks God for the evidence, affirming that faith is not a leap in the dark but founded on the surety of declared truth. The prayer intercedes for those trapped in skeptical thinking (including possibly some listeners), asking God to remove obstacles, open hearts and minds, and work as He does with neighbors through loving relationships and the fruits of the Spirit that draw people to ask questions. It petitions preparation for the body of Christ and families to answer gently and lovingly, not to win arguments but to help remove scales from eyes as God works. The prayer asks God to stir His people, grant national and personal repentance, strengthen and reform the church amid difficult times, and enable readiness to flourish for His glory alone (*Soli Deo Gloria*) in Jesus' name. Amen. Tackett and Marc offer final thanks and blessings, wishing everyone a good evening.