**BEST SUNDAY MORNING EVER! Easter 2024 Rev Thomas Parrish**

I am forever amazed at how many people have made up their mind about life and death, heaven and hell, Jesus, the validity of the Bible without **checking the evidence** to see if it is true or not.

**This Easter morning** I want to unveil the weakness of that approach to Jesus and show you the overwhelming data about the Resurrection.

I want to ask you to **serve on the jury.** Imagine this sanctuary as a courtroom and each of you are sitting in the jury box.

**Opening Argument: Jesus crucifixion and resurrection from the dead are one event!** We cannot separate one from the other. Why? Jesus’ death and resurrection broke the strangle hold of sin over our lives. **Hebrews 9:22 *Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.***

Ultimately, what is of **supreme importance is whether or not Jesus rose bodily from the dead.**

Members of the jury, the claim I am making: ***is that Jesus Christ died for our sin and rose bodily from the dead.***  ***1 Corinthians 15:17: “If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless.”***

**This morning I want to show you proof** that Jesus Christ did exactly what He predicted He would do died as the bible said he would, and that on the third day He rose bodily from the dead.

**Exhibit A: Predictive Prophecy**  What are the chances that you could make up a specific prophecy today about an event 700 years in the future and then have the details of that story work out precisely as you predicted? Mathematically the odds are: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

King David Psalm 22:16-18:*"For dogs have surrounded me; A band of evildoers has encompassed me; They pierced my hands and feet. I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me. They divide my garments among them, and my clothing for lots."*

**Prophet Isaiah, 700 years before Jesus.** Isaiah 53:5-10 states: *"But He was pierced through for our transgressions, (nailed to the cross)
He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging (wounds, beating) we are healed. (forgiven) All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.*

Zechariah, 500 years before Jesus, Zechariah 12:10: *"And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; ..."*

**The Bible specifically mentions** •piercing of the Messiah and piercing His hands and feet (John 19:18), •dividing up His garments by using lots (Matthew 27:35), •He did not fight His torturers or cry out because of the injustices being done to Him (Matthew. 26:50-56,62,63; 27:14), •He was unjustly tried and condemned (Luke 22:54-23:25) •He was killed with criminals but buried among the rich (Matthew 27:38,57-60). • Isaiah 53 prophecy even predicts why the Messiah would die, *to be a guilt offering for sin*

**Exhibit B: The Empty Tomb. A very large stone**, estimated to weigh about 2 tons, was then rolled in front of the entrance to the tomb.  **16 Roman soldiers** was assigned to secure the tomb. They understood their role: ***if anyone tampers with this tomb you will forfeit your life.***  **(Roman Seal)**

The late **Chuck Colson, aid to President Nixon,** and one who went to prison for his involvement in the Watergate cover-up said: ****** *“I know the resurrection is a fact, and Watergate proved it to me. How? Because 12 men testified they had seen Jesus raised from the dead, then they proclaimed that truth for 40 years, never once denying it. Everyone was beaten, tortured, stoned and put in prison. They would not have endured that if it weren't true. Watergate embroiled 12 of the most powerful men in the world-and they couldn't keep a lie for three weeks. You're telling me 12 apostles could keep a lie for 40 years? Absolutely impossible.” –Charles Colson*

**Exhibit C: Multiple Witnesses.** ***“We saw Jesus alive!”***  *Acts 1:3 says that, “After His suffering, He showed Himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that He was alive. He appeared to them over a period of 40 days and spoke about the kingdom of God.”*  Jesus gave unquestionable proof that He was alive!

*1 Corinthians 15:3-6: “For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, He appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.”*

Peter, who was one of those eyewitnesses, got up one day and preached his first sermon. *Acts 2:32: “God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact.”*  *2 Peter 1:16: “We did not follow cleverly devised tales when we make known to you the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.”*

Finally EXHIBIT D: THE MOST COMPELLING--- CHANGED LIVES Those who met the Resurrected Jesus have had their lives totally transformed. The Resurrection continues to be validated by the million and millions of changed lives of His followers.

What motivated them, at the risk of their lives, to go everywhere and proclaim the message of the risen Jesus Christ?

 JESUS CHRIST PHYCIALLY ROSE FROM THE DEAD!

**CLOSING ARGUMENT**  **First, how do you handle ancient prophecy that is so detailed and verified? Second, how do you explain away the empty tomb? Third, how do you argue against multiple witnesses? Fourth, the Resurrected Jesus changed lives then and for the past 2000 years!**

Members of the Jury, what is. Your verdict?

He is Risen, He is Risen Indeed.