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RUF Bible Study – The Gospel According to Peter
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Your Biggest Surprise – John 20:1-18

1-2 Early in the morning on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone was moved away from the entrance. She ran at once to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, breathlessly panting, "They took the Master from the tomb. We don't know where they've put him."

3-10 Peter and the other disciple left immediately for the tomb. They ran, neck and neck. The other disciple got to the tomb first, outrunning Peter. Stooping to look in, he saw the pieces of linen cloth lying there, but he didn't go in. Simon Peter arrived after him, entered the tomb, observed the linen cloths lying there, and the kerchief used to cover his head not lying with the linen cloths but separate, neatly folded by itself. Then the other disciple, the one who had gotten there first, went into the tomb, took one look at the evidence, and believed. No one yet knew from the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead. The disciples then went back home.

11-13 But Mary stood outside the tomb weeping. As she wept, she knelt to look into the tomb and saw two angels sitting there, dressed in white, one at the head, the other at the foot of where Jesus' body had been laid. They said to her, "Woman, why do you weep?"

13-14 "They took my Master," she said, "and I don't know where they put him." After she said this, she turned away and saw Jesus standing there. But she didn't recognize him.

15 Jesus spoke to her, "Woman, why do you weep? Who are you looking for?"

She, thinking that he was the gardener, said, "Mister, if you took him, tell me where you put him so I can care for him."

16 Jesus said, "Mary."

Turning to face him, she said in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" meaning "Teacher!"

17 Jesus said, "Don't cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go to my brothers and tell them, 'I ascend to my Father and your Father, my God and your God.'"

18 Mary Magdalene went, telling the news to the disciples: "I saw the Master!" And she told them everything he said to her.

This week we're focusing on the resurrection. Next week, we'll look at the way Jesus reconciles with Peter after the resurrection, but this week I want us to know that the resurrection really happened and that it really does matter that it really did happen.

Now, that may seem entirely obvious to you. Of course, of course, you say, and you nod your head yes.

But, it isn't really. How many people have you ever seen raise from the dead. Think back to the last funeral you've gone to. Have you seen that person lately? Dead people don't come back. If they do, that's called a scary movie. If you don't believe that dead people can be raised, then you are a naturalist. And there are many of those around. You'll find them all the time – they are your professors for the most part. They are scientists, psychologists, linguists, doctors, plumbers and just about every kind of person. What you see is what you get. What you can observe, measure and document is what there is in the world.

And another kind of person who can think this way are theologians and pastors. There are many of them who do not believe in the resurrection. Don't be surprised, don't be fooled.

When I was in college, I went to the bookstore to browse one day, and found a book called *The Real Jesus*. I bought it and thought this would be great since I hadn't really read anything scholarly about Jesus. This book looked at who he was historically, as a real person. Fine. And I read about how he would have been killed on a cross as a common criminal. No problem. And that, since he had no real friends, he would have been cut down and left for dead, most likely eaten by dogs. End of story.

No resurrection. Nothing.

Why not? Because the scriptures are not to be believed, and because miracles don't happen.

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For this series, I used commentaries all throughout the gospels. I also used as my base text Michael Card's book, *The Fragile Stone*. I consulted sermons by Rev. Tim Keller found out www.redeemer.com and RUF Campus Minister Les Newsom in many instances. The reader should assume that none of the ideas expressed are original to me.

Those are the fundamental tenants of liberal thinking, of naturalism, and when they are applied to Christianity, they wipe away the roots of the faith. And yet these people still often want to be called Christians. They think that worshipping in the Christian “tradition” is fine as long as you realize that much of what is said is really not true after all. Jesus “resurrected” in our minds. He did miracles of understanding and guided people into a different way of thinking.

I’m concerned about this. I’m putting at the end of this a few adapted sections from Prof. Dan Doriani’s lectures in his Life and Teachings of Jesus course. These can be found and downloaded for free at www.covenantseminary.edu, which is a tremendous resource.

But you have to realize that a precondition of naturalism and a at-all-costs marginalizing of the Scriptures makes discussion near impossible. Anything you say about the Bible, the other person will say, well the Bible is filled with bias, error and the product of people who wanted you to think that. Smart people get outside the text and see how and why it was written and when you do that it is impossible to believe.

I hope that a few of these questions will be furthered in your mind when you look at the resources below.

Here are a few thoughts about why this matters.

Notice that when you read the accounts of Jesus’ crucifixion, you really don’t have much detail. The gospel writers take you through the various places of the story, and they tell you what happen to a degree, but there are a stark lack of physical details in the story. I know that now, in 2006, you cannot help but thinking of Mel Gibson’s the Passion of the Christ, but why didn’t the gospel writers do that for us?

Because the Bible wants you to know *why*. Why is the important thing here, the thing that the movie totally leaves out.

What does the Bible focus on? It seems to hone in on the mocking and humiliation. You have to ask yourself, Are we reading a story about the biggest loser in history? No one likes him. Everyone wants him dead. He has no friends. No family really. What he stood for has crumbled.

This is every person’s greatest fear. You cringe at the thought of being a reject, a social loser. Especially by those who are losers themselves but don’t know it. Abandoned by the weak, sure. But abandoned by those who think they have it all together? Ouch that is really hard. Can you believe the restraint of Jesus to hold back judgment when he’s receiving mocking from those who think they are all that. To maintain his feebleness and shame in that situation when he could have opened up a can on them is incredible.

The Bible also appears to focus on the darkness and forsakenness of the cross. The worst moment is when Jesus cries out, “My God, my God why have you forsaken me?” That right there is he center of the whole Bible story, the center of the center of the cross – and you can only understand it if you know about the rest of the story. Of how we were created to be in perfect relationship. Of how sin mars that, destroys our peace, our shalom with God. How because of that sin we deserve death and condemnation. And now we see the perfect Son of God being separated on our behalf. We see that Jesus cracks under the full weight of the wrath of God. Jesus is in the plague of darkness so that his people could see the light.

One illustration of what is happening, and again what the movie The Passion of the Christ doesn’t explain, is what we know here in Oklahoma about the grass fires. These have been major trouble around here because of the dry last few years. We’ve been in drought conditions for a long time, and it just takes a little spark to get one of these going.

One technique to combat these you’ll see is that of the controlled burn. People will go out and burn around the perimeter of the place they want to keep safe. The fire, as it approaches, finds it already burned and goes around to somewhere else.

Jesus was scorched, burned by the wrath of God, the fires of God’s judgment on the cross. For you. Therefore now no condemnation, nothing left to consume. Your life is hidden in the death of Christ. He protects you. Jesus is spiritually bearing the darkness we’re supposed to receive. The fire meant for us. This is the scandal of the cross.

That he died for your worst night. He died on the death as a liar, a murderer, a pervert, an adulterer, a pornographer, a committer of incest, a genocide promoter, a white collar crime committer, a thief, a gossiper, a cheater, a rapist, a doubter – a whatever you can think of. He died for all of that. He was that on the cross. That is why he was forsaken, why he cried out, why he was crushed. Why he knows pain and suffering. Why he’s had the very worst of it.

Do you see yourself in this? Do you see your worst night here? Do you see his story as your story?

If you cannot, then you don’t understand Christianity. If you do then, you can put yourselves in the midst, in the company with those who “got” Jesus – the victims of forsakenness. The marginalized of society. The social, political, sexual outcasts. The marginalized. They clicked with Jesus’ message. They had tasted the forsakenness.

I want to tell you something, all of us, no matter which category we fit in. I hope you can relate to me in this. I’m tired. I believe I can do it. I can manage myself and my identity. My greatest temptation is to be an awesome campus minister, to fool my peers, my friends, my children, my wife. I so badly want you to like me. I try to pass it off and laugh it off, but I desperately want to be cool and witty, funny and profound, tender and provocative at just the right times. I want to have the best campus ministry at OU and in the world.

But I can't keep it up all the time. If you get to know me, no matter how hard I try to keep you from it, you're going to find out that I'm a huge idiot and I screw up all the time. I've already disappointed many of you. I know it. I'm going to fail you, won't I? I'll disappoint whomever gets close. My wife and kids find this out all the time. You will too.

The beginning of the semester is filled with self-promotion. Not only for me, but for you too. Aren't you tired? I put on a good face in front of you – is that all I've got?

No. It's not all I've got. Not all you've got. Every now and then, there are moments when I get caught, I mess it up and I think about spinning this and there is a moment of freedom – and I hear My God, My God, why have you forsaken me – and they are words from someone else who took my forsakenness. I don't have to perform, be strong, be funny, be witty, be smart, go with my agenda. I can be a regular guy. I can admit my weakness. I can actually believe the gospel.

Friends, this is only possible through death. Do you see the death of Jesus for you? But you HAVE TO believe in the resurrection. The bodily resurrection of Jesus is essential to the faith.

Sometimes you'll get beaten and battered by doubt. You'll wonder if it's true. I have those times. And I come back to the resurrection every time, and I think it through. If Jesus really did come back to life, as absurd as that sounds, then I think he really was the Son of God and everything he said or did is validated and immensely important.

If not, then I'll have to throw it all out.

Christ died for our sins.

He was buried.

He rose on the third day.

He appeared to his disciples.

The Apostles' Creed matters. The drama of redemption is not complete until the resurrection takes place. That is Jesus' victory. He did not just die for our sins; if He merely died, then death has the last word. He rose in victory over His foes -- over sin and over death. That is the good news of the resurrection.

Five “Other” Reasons Why the Bible Is Trustworthy

1. In Bible times, **training was largely memory work**. Jewish students were required to memorize the words of their rabbis. They graduated when they could quote verbatim the essential teachings of the rabbis under whose training they sat.
2. **No fabrication**. It was acceptable to paraphrase a story, to condense, to explain, but the standards of historical writing of the time said you may never add to a story. You can summarize it, you can epitomize it, you can condense it, but you can never add to it. Tertullian said that you can make up an edifying story out of love for the Gospel and love for the apostle Paul, but if you say something that isn't true, you're expelled from office. It is against the rules to fabricate.
3. **People kept written records**. A great scholar today named E. E. Ellis records the words of a particular rabbi who said, 'if your rabbi is teaching and you have no paper, write it on your sleeve.' The average person in the ancient world probably had about seven garments total and the rabbi said if you've got seven garments and you don't have a piece of paper, write it on your sleeve. So there certainly was writing in those days.
4. **Jesus spoke in memorable ways, using poetry and parables**. These stay in people's memories.
5. **Jesus did things that were memorable**. Memorable events emblazon themselves on our minds the rest of our lives. Aren't there stories that you can remember that you could not forget if you tried. The Gospel accounts were written by people who gave their lives for them and there's nothing that would make them forget. They are reliable accounts.
6. There are **signs in the Gospels themselves** that show that Jesus' words were preserved very faithfully by the church. For example, in I Corinthians 7 there is a section that troubles people. Paul says about divorce, "The Lord says....," then, "Not I, but the Lord....," and then he says, "The Lord says, not me but the Lord." He's not saying that Jesus' words count more whereas when he's talking, he's just Paul and therefore his words don't matter. Rather, when he says "The Lord says....," he means, "I am quoting Jesus," and when he says, "Not the Lord but I," he means, "It's me, the apostle." The words have equal authority.
7. **The phenomena of living witnesses**. If Jesus' story got out through the Gospel of Luke, or Matthew, or Mark to the city of Capernaum, or some other city where Jesus performed a miracle, and if the story were not true, people would know it. They would know if there had been a man named Jairus whose daughter was raised from the dead ("Jairus? There's never been anybody named Jairus who lived in this town!"), or a widow whose only son was raised ("There's never been a widow whose son was raised!"). The Gospels would be ruined, wouldn't they? Their credibility would be completely undermined. Probably close to a million people lived in Palestine at that time and many thousands of them could verify or disprove the Gospel stories. The Gospels would not have been accepted as widely as they were if they could easily be undercut by reporting things that everybody knew to be false.
8. The people who lived as disciples of Christ **gave their lives for the truth of these stories**. People do not give their lives for what they know to be a lie. Therefore, the Gospels claim to be historically reliable.

Even a secular historian would have to admit that there was a man named Jesus of Nazareth, who had a popular ministry, gathered crowds to Himself, got in trouble with the authorities, and was crucified. The Gospels tell the rest of the story. There are many ways to confirm the rest of that story. I've given you some of them from the culture of the day. I have not even mentioned the area of **archeology**. There are hundreds and hundreds of archeological proofs for the historicity of the Gospel accounts. We read that Jesus healed somebody by the Pool of Siloam, or that a certain event took place by Solomon's Colonnade; you can go see the Pool of Siloam, or the ruins of Solomon's Colonnade to this day. We read that Jesus stopped by a well, Jacob's well, near a mountain, and talked to a woman; there is indeed a well there and it is near a mountain.

So we can give an answer to a secular person, to a university trained person and say, "There is reason to believe that this is true." All we're doing when we say the Gospels are historically reliable is clearing the ground for an additional conversation. We're not going to argue anybody into the kingdom by saying, "The accounts are reliable so you ought to be a Christian." All we're doing is getting people to give us a hearing. If somebody says, "It's all a bunch of lies, and fabrications, and dreams," you can say, "Not so fast!" There are serious reasons to believe that these things rest on solid historical grounds, reasons that even a secular person ought to notice and pause over. In the final analysis only the Holy

Spirit can persuade so you need to ask God to bless your conversation, but at least you can make it clear to a secular person that they can't throw the Gospel stories out as a bunch of fables.

Five Theories As To Why the Resurrection Is Bogus

1. The first theory is called the "**Swoon Theory**," which says that Jesus did not really die, but he lapsed into a coma after the beating and was put on the cross. He gained consciousness in the cool tomb, and was revived. There are many problems with this theory.

One, Romans were trained executioners; they would have known when their job was done.

Two, there are striking eye-witness testimonies to his death, not only from Christian sources but also from Roman sources that say Jesus was executed.

Three, it is ridiculously improbable. It says that after Jesus received two beatings, a lighter one from Pilate and a more severe one from the Roman soldiers -- a beating which sometimes killed people before they even got to the cross -- he fainted, was nailed to a cross, speared in the side, taken down and wrapped head to toe in cloth, and laid in a tomb that was sealed with a 500 pound stone. The theory asks us to believe that after all this physical trauma, and after having no food or drink for days, Jesus was revived by the cool temperature of the tomb. Somehow he had not been suffocated by the grave clothes and even though his hands were wrapped up too, he was able to unwrap himself. Then, he somehow pushed the 500 pound stone away, despite his unbelievably weakened and feeble condition, and overpowered the entire guard of Roman soldiers who were watching the tomb, soldiers who knew that if Jesus escaped they would be killed. Then, if he somehow did all of that, he would have to give people the impression that he was an other-worldly being, so glorious that they would fall to their feet when they saw him.

2. The second theory refuting the resurrection is that **the body was stolen**. The disciples have been accused of overpowering or bribing the Roman guards at Jesus' tomb and stealing the body.

The first problem is that, again, the Roman guards could be charged with a capital crime for failing in their duty on their watch.

The second problem was that the disciples were in no mood for such an escapade. They were crushed, not energetic. When they first heard the women's accounts of Jesus' resurrection, they did not believe them. So if they could not believe it when they heard it, why would they plot it?

Another problem is how this could account for the change in the disciples, from cowardice to bravery. Something had to make them change. They did not change on their own. They were not prone to change.

But the biggest problem is that if they stole the body, eventually one of them would have confessed. They were getting no fame, position, or money; they were being hounded and killed, and eventually one of them would have admitted he made it up. It is true that people die for lies. But they do not die very often for lies that they know to be lies, especially if the lie has brought them nothing but pain. People do not do that. There may be one or two who would, but not eleven out of eleven who would die for a lie that got them absolutely nothing.

3. The third theory against the resurrection is that **the disciples had a hallucination**. After all, they remembered Jesus and remembered their hopes, but somehow they passed from the idea of hoping he was still alive to the idea that he does live.

The problem with that view is that people have hallucinations one by one, not in masses of up to five hundred. It is not common for five hundred people to have the same hallucination at the same time at the same place. In fact, it has never happened. In 2 Corinthians 15:6, Paul says 500 people saw Jesus at one time, and most of the 500 were still alive, as if to tell the Corinthians that they can ask about it themselves. If it was a hallucination, it could be easily disproved. The Romans could get the body as proof.

Today you will not encounter scholarly people or serious professors who accept these first three alternative views. More often, people just avoid the subject or blatantly attack the reliability of the Gospels.

4. The scholar E.P. Sanders said, "I do not regard deliberate fraud as a worthwhile explanation of the resurrection account." So theft is impossible to him. "That the Jesus followers had a resurrection is, in my judgment, a fact. What the reality was that gave rise to the experiences, I do not know." Sanders is evasive here. **He says they believed it; he does not think they made it up, but all he can say is that they believed it.**

5. The other view that people take is that **the Gospels are grossly unreliable**. The person most identified with this position is John Dominic Crossan (most known from the Jesus Seminar). He offers this criticism, "The Gospels are fundamentally

unreliable. They have virtually nothing you can count on. You can count on the Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of Q [which is a compilation of sayings of Jesus]. And all we really know about Jesus is what he did."

Crossan and his friends are radical anti-supernaturalists. For them, all we know is that Jesus was influential as a teacher.

Crossan says this about Jesus' body: "Those who cared did not know where it was. And those who knew did not care." Those who cared, the disciples, fled. And for those who did know, it was just another body to be disposed of. Most likely, they say, Jesus' body was devoured by ravaging dogs. That is really close to what I would call blasphemy, although it is not ludicrous to say that a dead body might not be buried. It took great courage for Joseph of Arimathea to care for the body of Christ. Crossan is not a fool. He is an anti-supernaturalist, and therefore is against the Christian faith. In a book entitled *Cynic, Sage or Son of God?* Gregory Boyd [who has his own problems] writes that nothing counts as evidence for the supernatural life of Christ. Once you rule out the possibility of Jesus being God and the possibility of miracles, then you have to come up with something else as an explanation as to why so many people thought that the supernatural happened.

Twelve Ways Jesus Implicitly Claimed he Was God

People will often claim that Jesus was a good teacher, an influential rabbi. They would say that he never really claimed to be God, but the terms Son of God and Son of Man are general terms for wise, holy people. They claim Jesus never in fact thought he was God; it was only later that this was attributed to him by his followers. Here are twelve ways in which Jesus implicitly acted as if and taught that he was God.

1. ***Jesus claims to judge mankind***, not just on one occasion but on several occasions. Jesus claimed to know the thoughts, the inner attitudes, and the hypocrisies of men. Furthermore, he predicted that he will judge mankind on the last day. In the Sermon on the Mount, right at the beginning of his ministry, he said, "On the last day many of you will say, 'Lord, Lord,' but I will say 'I never knew you.'" Then in Matthew 13 Jesus tells a parable in which "the Son of Man will send his angels to remove the evildoers from his kingdom." And in Matthew 16:27 Jesus says he will reward each person according to what he has done. In Matthew 24 and 25, Jesus is going to summon the nations before his glorious throne and he is going to say, "Depart from me, you who are cursed, you evildoers." To others, to his sheep, he will say, "Come into the blessedness prepared by my Father." Jesus says not once or twice but on a number of occasions that he knows men's hearts, that he will judge the world, and that he will call everyone to account for everything they have done. All those things require deity. Only God can judge a person for everything he has done. And Jesus says he will do it.

2. ***Jesus assumes the ability to forgive sins***. When the paralytic was lowered through the roof, Jesus told him his sins were forgiven (the man had not sinned against Jesus; Jesus was forgiving *all* his sins). In claiming the ability to forgive sins, Jesus is claiming deity, for God alone has the ability to forgive sins in this way. There is also the story of the woman in Luke 7 who came to Jesus, to anoint him, and then she started to weep at his feet and wipe his feet with her hair. Jesus also forgave her sins. In the parable of the tax collector and the publican, Jesus tells a story of the Pharisee who stands there saying, "I thank you, Lord, that I am not like other men." And then he says there is also a publican who is beating his breast saying, "Lord, have mercy on me a sinner." Jesus then says the publican went home justified. Only God can say who will be justified before him. Only the Judge can say how the judgment will turn out.

3. ***Jesus bestows eternal life***. This is perhaps most closely associated with John's Gospel, but we could also think of the rich young ruler who asks, "What good thing must I do?" Jesus says, "If you want to know what good thing to do, then sell everything, come follow me and then you will have eternal life." So Jesus gives the conditions for life. And also we can think of the Beatitudes which begin, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom." Jesus, in other words, declares who will have the kingdom. Jesus declares who will see God.

4. ***Jesus' presence is God's presence***. This came up in Matthew 12 in a disagreement he had with the Pharisees. Jesus was questioned for why he let his disciples thresh the grain and eat it on the Sabbath. "Why are you doing what's unlawful?" they ask. Jesus answers, "Do you not remember David and his men, and how they went into the temple and they took the show bread?" And then he adds, "But I tell you that something greater than the temple is here." The temple is the dwelling place of God. It is not as though God literally dwelt in that one spot and no other, but the temple made it clear to the Israelites that God's presence was with them. Jesus is saying that something greater than the temple is here -- manifestation of God among them, but God himself is here. That is another claim to deity. Along the same lines would be when Jesus said, "Whenever two or three of you gather to pray about any matter, there I am in your midst." That is a claim of omnipresence, and only God is omnipresent. Again at the end of the Gospel of Matthew Jesus said, "I am with you always,

even to the end of the age." When Jesus says "I am with you always," he is saying "I am God." he is not saying it explicitly; he is saying it implicitly. He is making a claim that only God has the right to make.

5. *Jesus says that the eternal destiny of humans depends on their response to him.* Matthew 7 indicates that if you know Jesus, you go to heaven. In Matthew 10:32-33 Jesus says, "Whoever acknowledges me before men I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. Whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven." So if you acknowledge him, he will be your advocate and you will go to heaven. Then there are statements in which Jesus claims that if we do not love him more than our father and mother, or if we do not take up our crosses and follow him, we are not worthy of him. We must love him more than anyone else. Jesus also says, "You must keep *My* commands even if it costs you your life." For Jesus to say that, either he is God or he is insane. There is no middle ground on this. When he says we must give up everything for his sake, and we have to die for him, he is saying that his life is worth more than ours. Since we are all God's creatures, only his life is worth more than ours. This is a claim Jesus makes many times over in each Gospel.

6. *Jesus equates actions toward him with actions toward God.* To know him is to know God. To see him is to see God. To believe in Jesus is to believe in God. To hate him is to hate God. To receive him is to receive God. To welcome him is to welcome God. In these ways Jesus is saying that if you do something unto him it is as if you have done it unto God.

7. *Jesus taught the truth on his own authority.* At the end of the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew says he taught not like the scribes, but he taught with authority. At the very end of the Gospel, Matthew gives his disciples all authority and says that what he has taught them must be taught to the nations. His teaching becomes the content of what the nations need to know in order to be disciples. Not only does he say that, but he also teaches in a way that no one else teaches. In the Old Testament the prophets introduced their remarks by saying, "The Lord says." Jesus taught by saying, "I say." And on 70 occasions Jesus prefaced his remarks by saying, "Truly, truly." he also takes the Old Testament deeper and says he does so on his authority. Usually when someone is going to say something controversial, he quotes an authority, and in that way he establishes his credibility through theirs. Jesus never does that. he is the authority, so he only quotes himself. Furthermore, Jesus says in Matthew 24:35, "Heaven and earth will pass away but my words will never pass away." So Jesus' words outlast creation, just as in the Old Testament God often claims eternity for his Word. And Jesus repeatedly ignored reams of rabbinic teaching on the Sabbath, because he said the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.

8. *Jesus performed miracles on his own authority.* In the Old Testament whenever an agent of God describes how he does God's work, he always ascribes his miracle to God's will and God's power. When Jesus performs miracles, however, he never ascribes them to God. When the paralytic fell at Jesus' feet and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean," Jesus reached out and touched him and said simply, "I am willing, be clean." And when Jesus was going to heal the centurion's servant, Jesus said, "I will go and heal him." He does not say something like, "If God is willing I will go heal him." Then when Jesus performs a miracle, he does not say, "Do not praise me, praise God." We are allowed to praise him.

9. *Jesus receives obeisance.* This comes up in several of the miracle scenes. This isn't worship per se, because to offer him worship, you have to know who he is, and people often knelt or bowed before Jesus to give him great honor. A better word would be obeisance, as it is a very strong word for giving honor to someone as to a king. It means something stronger than bowing, but it is weaker than worship. When an ordinary human being has somebody kneel on the ground before him, it feels uncomfortable. But when Jesus healed ten lepers, and only one came back to kneel before him, he asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" This scene shows that it is okay to bow at Jesus' feet and praise God. When other biblical characters have someone kneel before them -- such as an angel, Peter, Paul, and Barnabas -- they are horrified. But Jesus lets somebody fall at his feet and bow before him and praise God, by which he is implicitly claiming deity.

10. *Jesus assumes that his life is a pattern for ours.* Jesus denied his family; he says the disciples have to deny their families. Jesus lived without a home; the disciples have to live without a home. Jesus refrained from fasting; so his disciples refrain from fasting. Jesus went to the cross; he says his disciples will go to the cross. Jesus went to eat with rich and poor, with Pharisees and tax collectors; he says we should associate with rich and poor and Pharisees and tax collectors. He does not argue it; he just assumes it. He understands it; it is natural.

11. *Jesus applies Old Testament descriptions of God to himself.* For example, Psalm 8 begins, "Oh, Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name and all the earth." It is a psalm to God. Then in 8:2 it says, "From the lips of children and infants, you have ordained praise for Yourself." Yet when Jesus enters Jerusalem and the children cry, "Hosanna," he explains that this statement about the way children praise God applies to him. He knows that in saying this he is claiming to be God. It is the same with the statements about his words. Isaiah 40:8 says that "the Word of the Lord stands forever," and Jesus says his words stand forever.

12. ***Jesus puts himself repeatedly in his parables as the divine figure.*** He puts a divine figure in most of his full-size parables and if you examine them carefully, you will notice that not only does the divine figure do things that God would do, but the divine figure also does what Jesus does. For instance, in the parable of the lost sons, the father is like God seeking the lost so there is rejoicing with the angels in heaven. In other words, in God's presence, there is rejoicing when the lost are found, and if this is true of the sheep and the coin, then it is true of the father. In the same way Jesus is seeking the lost -- the lost sinners and the lost self-righteous Pharisees. In the parable of the banquet, the king is welcoming people to his banquet. Jesus also welcomes all sorts of people to himself.

If you put all these points together, you do not have merely twelve claims, but twelve claims each appearing several times. He uses the words "truly, truly" 70 times. Jesus is a divine figure in his own parables ten times. Jesus forgives sins about five times. There are well over 100 here, on a conservative count. Jesus is constantly operating on an awareness of who he is. Everything he does, everything he says, all of his miracles, all of his teaching, his atonement, the idea that he can give his life as a ransom for many, all assume that he is God. The Gospels themselves constantly assume that these are not the good teachings of a good man, but rather this is God with us. This is Immanuel; this is the Lord whom we ought to worship. That is the foundation for the faith of Christianity, and we need to be ready with answers not only to encourage ourselves, but also for those who see it otherwise and would reduce Jesus to mere goodness or greatness.

Three of the Things the Resurrection Shows Us About Jesus

He said he was a prophet and teacher. The resurrection validates who he is because he said he would die and rise on the third day. As a prophet, he interpreted his work on the cross, saying things like, "Today you will be with me in paradise," and, "It is finished," and "Into your hands I commit my spirit," and so forth.

The resurrection shows that ***Jesus is fulfilling the great and central task of a priest*** by offering pleasing sacrifices for sin. What Jesus proves by his resurrection is that the penalty for sin is exhausted on him. The Old Testament priests had to offer sacrifices over and over, because they never finished dealing with sin. Those sacrifices were a temporary covering. But when Jesus dies and rises, he exhausts the penalty. He bears it and then it is done -- there is nothing left. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. He died for the sins and rose for their justification. That is what his resurrection proves.

His resurrection also teaches us that ***he is king***. We hear references in the beginning of the Gospels to him being a king, such as the words in Matthew that the king of the Jews has been born. But then for a long time, his kingship was hidden; it hardly came up throughout most of the Gospels. At the crucifixion, however, it starts to rise again. "Are you the king of the Jews?" Pilate asked. Then Pilate put the title over the cross, "The King of the Jews." When Pilate presented Jesus to the Jews he said, "Behold your king." He was mocking and jesting, but was actually saying the truth. The soldiers put a crown on his head and a regal purple robe around him, and mock him. But Jesus really is king, as is proved by his death and then by his resurrection. By his resurrection, he defeated Satan, sin, and death. He protected his people from the great danger of sin and death. He provided for their welfare by providing eternal life for them. He continued to lead them after his resurrection. So Jesus proves through his resurrection that he is, indeed, King of the Jews.