



# THE SINNERGISTS PODCAST

## Episode 16: Starting With Jesus:

### The Historical Reliability of the Gospels and the Resurrection

In episode 15, we started a new project that we're calling "A Christian Theology," and we asked the questions, "What is theology, and where do we start?" We said **theology is the study of God and that we should start with Jesus.**

Starting with Jesus, however, raises some interesting questions like, "Since everything we know about Jesus comes from 'the Bible,' don't we first need to establish the inspiration and authority of scripture?"

In this episode, we make the case that the answer to that question is "no," because **the historical reliability of the gospels and the resurrection can be established *even apart from belief in the inspiration of scripture.***

#### **Grounds the historical reliability of the New Testament gospels:**

- **Verisimilitude:** The gospels accurately reflect what historians know about life in first-century Judea.
- **Eyewitness accounts:** The gospels contain named persons who provided eyewitness accounts that could have been verified within living memory of the events.
- **Manuscript Evidence:** We have, by far, better manuscript evidence for the New Testament documents than any other document from antiquity.

In short, even most atheistic and agnostic historians recognize that the gospels are *generally* historically reliable documents and that, at minimum, **Jesus really did exist, preach about the kingdom of God, and get crucified by Pontius Pilate.**

#### **Evidence establishing the historical probability of the resurrection:**

- **Exhibit A: The empty tomb.** The easiest way to disprove the resurrection would have been to produce the body of Jesus.
- **Exhibit B: The post-resurrection appearances.** More than 500 different eyewitnesses claimed to have seen, spoken with, touched, or eaten with Jesus after his crucifixion.
- **Exhibit C: The transformation of the disciples, James, and Paul.** All these people experienced major life transformations after having claimed to have seen Jesus alive.

Taken together, this means that **we can trust that Jesus was who he said he was, that what he said about God was true, and that what he said about scripture was true.** In short, the resurrection Jesus proves the existence of God and the truthfulness of scripture.

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