

The Big Picture

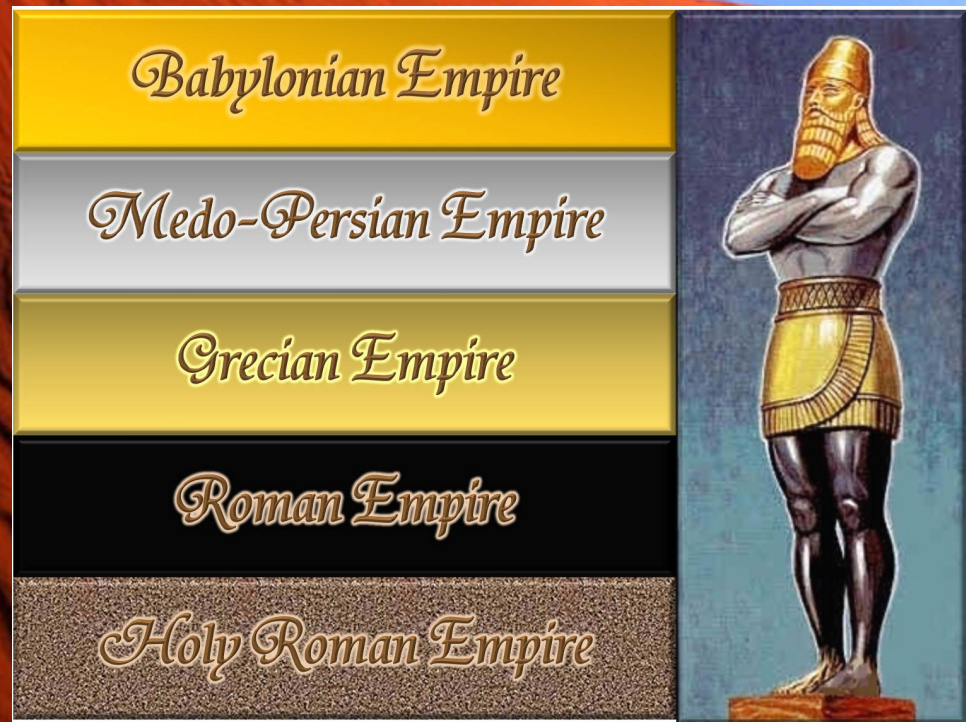
– Historical –

Menucha 2013



Tyranny

- Cain
- Nimrod
- Egyptians
- Sennacherib
- Nebuchadnezzar
- Alexander
- Caesars



Animals, or Man?



Bucephalus

- Zechariah 9



The Historicity of Jesus

Jesus and the Historian

“But, above all, if we apply to the New Testament, as we should, the same sort of criteria as we should apply to other ancient writings containing historical material, we can no more reject Jesus’ existence than we can reject the existence of a mass of pagan personages whose reality as historical figures is never questioned.”

Historian Michael Grant

Michael Grant, *Jesus: An Historian’s Review of the Gospels* (New York:

Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1977), pp. 199-200.

The Reliability of the New Testament Versus Shakespeare

“It seems strange that the text of Shakespeare, which has been in existence less than two hundred and eight years, should be far more uncertain and corrupt than that of the New Testament, now over eighteen centuries old, during the nearly fifteen of which it existed only in manuscript....With perhaps a dozen or twenty exceptions, the text of every verse in the New Testament may be said to be so far settled by general consent of scholars, that any dispute as to its readings must relate rather to the interpretation of the words than to any doubts respecting the words themselves. But in every one of Shakespeare’s thirty-seven plays there are probably a hundred readings still in dispute, a large portion of which materially affects the meaning of the passages in which they occur.”

A literary review cited by John W. Lea, *The Greatest Book in the World* (Philadelphia, PA: n.p., 1929), p. 15.

The Resurrection of Jesus: No Controvertible Evidence Exists

“Accordingly, if all the evidence is weighed carefully and fairly, it is indeed justifiable, according to the canons of historical research, to conclude that the tomb in which Jesus was buried was actually empty on the morning of the first Easter. And no shred of evidence has yet been discovered in literary sources, epigraphy or archaeology that would disprove this statement.”

Dr. Paul L. Maier, professor of ancient history at Western Michigan University

Paul L. Maier, *In The Fullness of Time: A Historian Looks at Christmas, Easter, and The Early Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1991/1997), p. 203.

Proofs of the Resurrection of Jesus

- Historical reliability of the burial account supports the empty tomb
- Gospel accounts of resurrection are reliable in two respects:
 - eyewitnesses are mentioned by name; therefore, not fictionalized characters but real people
 - written within generation of occurrence
- Preaching would have been silenced if tomb wasn't empty or body of Jesus was produced
- Earliest Jewish propaganda against Christians presupposes empty tomb
- That Jesus' tomb was not venerated as a shrine indicates that the tomb was empty
- Appearance of Jesus to all his disciples
- Appearance of Jesus to 500
- Appearance of Jesus to his brother James
- Change in Jesus' family (Galatians 1:19; 1 Corinthians 9:5 cp. Mark 3:21, 31-35; John 7:1-10)

1 Corinthians 15:6 -- 500 Witnesses

- 1 Corinthians is generally believed to have been written in A.D. 55

• William Lillie, head of the Department of Biblical Study at the University of Aberdeen, notes:

“What gives a special authority to the list as historical evidence is the reference to most of the five hundred brethren being still alive. St. Paul says in effect, ‘If you do not believe me, you can ask them.’ Such a statement in an admittedly genuine letter written within thirty years of the event is almost as strong evidence as one could hope to get for something that happened nearly two thousand years ago.”

William Lillie, “The Empty Tomb and the Resurrection,” in D.E. Nineham et al., *Historicity and Chronology in the New Testament* (1965), p. 125.

Proofs of the Resurrection of Jesus

- Change in disciples' behaviour and disposition
- Improbable that 11 men would give up pursuit of happiness to lead life of poverty and persecution
- Disciples could not have stolen the body even if they wanted to

Without resurrection, nothing else reasonably accounts for the early growth of Christianity in the heart of Israel and its persistence in spite of severe persecution

A full moon is visible in the upper left portion of the image, set against a clear, deep blue sky. Below the moon, a large, smooth sand dune rises, its surface covered in fine, rhythmic ripples that catch the light. The dune's color is a rich, warm red. The overall scene is serene and evocative.

John 20:24-31