

Jesus, the Last Days

Feb. 21, 2010

1. Earliest formal creed, probably developed around the 3rd century is the Apostle's Creed.
"I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord;born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; descended to hell, Third day he rose from the dead....."
2. We will focus on: the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. 3rd part of Creed is one that is most often attacked. But in recent years it is also fashionable to raise objections against the first two elements, the historical reality of Jesus death and burial.
3. Bibles, see St. Paul. Earliest expression of the Creed. (1 Cor. 15:3-5).
4. No one seriously doubts Jesus existence. But some have written books about his faking his own death, with the help of Roman governor and a few others, and then fleeing to Egypt.
5. Death of Jesus is not only affirmed in New Testament, but by Jewish, Roman writers as well.
Josephus, 1st century Jewish historian writes in his (Antiquities 63-64), "**Jesus, having been accused by the Jewish leaders, was condemned to the cross by Pilate**"
Tacitus: Roman historian (Annals 15.44) "**Jesus...suffered the death penalty during the reign of Tiberius, by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilate.**" Pilate was only a prefect, not procurator.
Lucian of Samosata: mocks early Christian by saying their leader was "**the man who was crucified in Palestine.**" Also "**that crucified sophist**" (Passing of Peregrines ~11)
Finally, Mar bar Serapion, the Syrian, in a letter written to his son perhaps toward the end of 1st century, refers to the death of Jesus, the Jewish "**wise King.**"
6. Confirmation of Jesus death is found in the fact that the disciples DID NOT anticipate it happening. See (Mark 8:31-33) Peter / Jesus rebuked him.
See (Matt. 19:28; Mark 10:35-40) Jesus' right and left
See (Mark 1:15, 3:11,22-27) Satan's rule coming to end.
7. Death, source of embarrassment for Jesus' early followers. See Rom. 1:16 "not ashamed of the gospel" In Roman world sons of God, heroes and saviors don't die on crosses. The Cross was horrifying symbol in Roman antiquity. Death would not have been termed "good news- gospel" for Jews or Gentiles alike.
8. No one would make up such a preposterous story. Thus story is not fiction. It was a demoralizing event for the disciples/ ongoing embarrassment to the early church. **So what were the reasons for the death of Jesus?**
9. *****ASK : Why do you think Jesus died? What were some of the reasons for his death?
SMALL GROUP discussion.
10. Many people do not know why Jesus was executed....some say, "He died because he was a good man OR hypocritical Pharisees feared him. Not true.

