



Miracles and the Resurrection of Jesus
APOL9425 / PHIL9425
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Division of Theological and Historical Studies
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Mission Statement

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

Course Description

A seminar examining classic and modern arguments against the miraculous with special attention to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Student Learning Outcomes

All students will understand the issue involved in coming to a position on the reality of miracles past and present, with particular attention given to evidence and objections to the resurrection of Jesus.

Students will identify key *a priori* features of the recent and ongoing analytic philosophical debate on the nature and provenance of miracles, evidencing the development of critical thinking techniques

Students will evaluate *a posteriori* alternative attempts to explain the resurrection in naturalistic terms, further indicating critical thinking skills.

Students will define and defend in historical terms the major aspects of the “Minimal Facts” argument for Jesus’ resurrection.

Integrate key aspects of the resurrection of Jesus with major theological doctrines and/or areas of practice, hence further developing a Christian world view.

Required Texts

All students must read all the assigned reading in the following books in preparation for the seminar.

Geivett, R. Douglas & Gary R. Habermas, Editors. *In Defense of Miracles: A Comprehensive Case for God’s Actions in History*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1997.

- Habermas, Gary R. *The Risen Jesus and Future Hope*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003.
- Keener, Craig S. *Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts*, Volume 1. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011.
- Larmer, Robert A. *Dialogues on Miracle*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015.
- Licona, Michael R. *The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2010. (Read at least sections 1, 3, 4 [pages 277-464], 5.8, & “Summary and Further Conclusions.”)
- Swinburne, Richard. *The Resurrection of God Incarnate*. Oxford: Oxford University Press [Clarendon], 2003.
- Wright, N.T. *The Resurrection of the Son of God*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003. (Read at least Part I.1; Part II.5, II.7-8; Part III.9; III:12; Part V:18-19.)
- *Class notes: Gary Habermas, *Philosophy of History, Miracles, and the Resurrection of Jesus*, Third ed. (Virginia Beach, VA: Academx, 2012).

Recommended Texts

Students are strongly encouraged but not required to read the following texts.

- Brown, Colin. *Miracles and the Critical Mind*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994.
- Davis, Stephen T. *Risen Indeed: Making Sense of the Resurrection*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993.
- Davis, Stephen T., Daniel Kendall, and Gerald O’Collins, Editors, *The Resurrection: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Resurrection of Jesus*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Keener, Craig S. *Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts*, Volume 2. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011.
- Schaaffs, Werner. *Theology, Physics, and Miracles*. Translated by Richard L. Renfield. Washington, D.C.: Canon, 1974.
- Swinburne, Richard. *Miracles*. N.Y.: Macmillan, 1989.
- . *The Concept of Miracle*. London: Macmillan and St. Martin’s Press, 1970.
- Wenham, David and Craig Blomberg, Editors, *Gospel Perspectives: The Miracles of Jesus*, Vol. 6. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2003.

Assignments

1. Pre-Class Reading and Preparation Assignments.

It is crucially important that the student be prepared thoroughly to begin the initial class by having assimilated some of the basic content of the class notes (Habermas, *Philosophy of*

History, Miracles, and the Resurrection of Jesus). In particular, concentrate on Section One, Part III and Section Four, Parts II and III of these notes. Be prepared for rigorous class discussions as well as being called on without warning to respond to the various issues.

- Parts 1 & 2 of the edited volume by Geivett and Habermas,
- Required reading from Licona
- Chapters 1-3 of Habermas, *The Risen Jesus and Future Hope*.
- Class notes (Habermas, *Philosophy of History, Miracles, and the Resurrection of Jesus*)

2. Class Participation.

Class participation is absolutely essential in this course and will contribute to the "Class Participation" portion of the grade. Emphasis is placed on the quality of oral responses and the preparedness of the student, not the number of responses.

3. Research Paper.

A research paper is designed to indicate the student's competence in a relevant, affirmative area of resurrection scholarship. Develop a creative, positive argument for a significant theme drawn from a "Minimal Facts" perspective for Jesus' resurrection. Examples might include historical interactions between the earliest Christian leaders specifically on the subject of the gospel data, on identifying or ascertaining the date of the early creedal passages, especially 1 Corinthians 15:3ff., or the same regarding the early Acts sermon summaries, evidences for the empty tomb, or defending one of the specific Gospel resurrection accounts.

Be creative, rigorous, and strive to break some new ground. Do not include lengthy summaries of the arguments of others, but spend the majority of your essay composing a strong case for your chosen area of research. Summarize and document the essentials of the case, then spend the remainder of the paper interacting with the material. The essay should follow the prescriptions of the latest edition of Turabian, as per Seminary specifications, be double-spaced, with proper margins, including endnotes or footnotes (footnotes preferred). Be sure your essay is scholarly, signifying original thinking. Be sure to maintain consistency throughout in the proper citing of your references, in order to document your research and develop cognate ideas. When you have not used the actual source being cited, always include the work in which the reference was mentioned, but keep these secondary references to a minimum. Avoid summarizing any class notes or class discussions. Avoid the use of any but the most indispensable Internet sources, and only when they were written by recognized authorities. Grading will be based chiefly on the quality of your research, your response to the chosen topic, and the originality and creativity of your insights. Endeavor to write all your papers such that they are publishable. *Strict maximum* length for this essay, counting all materials: 15 pages (double-spaced).

4. Argument Summaries.

Write the following four, one page each (maximum), *argument summaries* on these topics:

1. A half-dozen responses to the critique that the Pre-Pauline NT Creeds are non-evidential and hardly more than hearsay;
2. An additional list of critiques (beyond class discussions) *specifically of collective hallucinations*;
3. An additional list of critiques of general “copycat” legend hypotheses that are based on ancient pre-Christian mythology;
4. Provide a series of page numbers only for at least the following subjects from Keener’s first “Miracles” volume:
 - a. Keener’s chief themes;
 - b. historicity of Jesus’ miracles;
 - c. David Hume and similar claims are mistaken;
 - d. answers to the problem of analogy;
 - e. naturalism is not the predominant worldview/a shift is occurring at present;
 - f. uniqueness of Jesus’ resurrection;
 - g. extraordinary (“the best”) recent healing cases;
 - h. enough evidence to move from clear miraculous testimony to actual supernatural intervention;
 - i. miracles as authenticating signs;
 - j. public and/or professional polls regarding current beliefs in miracles;
 - k. any personal hesitations and/or cautions regarding Keener’s comments.

Throughout the four summaries, be creative whenever possible and do not repeat or summarize class notes or discussions. Always list your source’s author, title, and page numbers but only whenever citing a specific source.

5. Reflective Essay.

Write a reflective essay that demonstrates your ability to integrate the truth of Jesus’ resurrection with one of the following areas of Christian belief or practice: formulating a Christian world view, God’s existence, the essentials of the gospel data, eternal life/heaven, the foundation of Scripture, Christian ethics, the religious disciplines, religious tolerance, the compassionate use of wealth/finances, evangelism, counseling, personal philosophy of ministry or life, or any of life’s major struggles (our fears, lack of motivation, grief, outlook on the world), etc. *Assume* the best apologetic for the resurrection for this essay, and emphasize how the truth of this event is capable of informing our most treasured areas of belief, contemplation, and application, especially in terms of practical insights. Grading is based more rigorously on the creativity of your applications. *Strict maximum* length for paper #3: 7 pages (double-spaced).

6. Reading Record.

A statement of the final amount of reading completed specifically for this class, including the additional assigned reading, is required, and is also a part of the “Class Participation” grade. All

the required reading listed under part IV, A above must be completed and included, as part of the total of 3,000 pages drawn from your relevant class research or outside reading of the student's choice. Identify the authors and texts from which the 3,000 total pages were read and be sure to include a total count of pages read.

Course Grading and Policies

The final grade will be calculated as follows:

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|--|------------|
| Research Paper | 35% |
| Total Argument Summaries | 35% |
| Reflective Essay | 20% |
| <u>Quality of class comments & reading</u> | <u>10%</u> |
| TOTAL | 100% |

Grading Scale will be the NOBTS grading scale.

Suggested Select Bibliography

Allison, Dale. *Resurrecting Jesus: The Earliest Christian Tradition and Its Interpreters*. New York: T&T Clark, 2005.

Atkins, J. D. *The Doubt of the Apostles and the Resurrection Faith of the Early Church: The Post-Resurrection Appearance Stories of the Gospels in Ancient Reception and Modern Debate*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019.

Bryan, Christopher. *The Resurrection of the Messiah*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Carnley, Peter. *The Structure of Resurrection Belief*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1987.

———. *Resurrection in Retrospect: A Critical Examination of the Theology of N. T. Wright*. Eugene: Cascade, 2019.

Charlesworth, James et al. *Resurrection: The Origin and Future of a Biblical Doctrine*. Faith and Scholarship Colloquies. New York: T&T Clark, 2006.

Chilton, Bruce. *Resurrection Logic*. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2019.

Copan, Paul and Ronald Tacelli, eds. *Jesus' Resurrection: Fact or Figment? A Debate between William Lane Craig and Gerd Lüdemann*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2000.

Craig, William Lane. *Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Historicity of the Resurrection*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1989.

———. *The Historical Argument for the Resurrection of Jesus During the Deist Controversy*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1985.

Davis, Stephen T. *Death and the Afterlife*. Library of Philosophy and Religion. New York: St. Martins, 1989.

———. *Faith, Skepticism, and Evidence: An Essay in Religious Epistemology*. Plainsboro, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1978.

———. *Risen Indeed: Making Sense of the Resurrection*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993.

- Davis, Stephen T., Daniel Kendall and Gerald O'Collins, eds. *The Resurrection: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Resurrection of Jesus*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- D'Costa, Gavin, ed. *Resurrection Reconsidered*. Oxford: Oneworld, 1996.
- Fuller, Reginald. *The Formation of the Resurrection Narratives*. New York: Macmillan, 1995.
- Gant, Peter. *Seeing Light: A Critical Enquiry into the Origins of Resurrection Faith*. Durham: Sacristy Press, 2019.
- Habermas, Gary. *The Risen Jesus and Future Hope*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003.
- . *The Secret of the Talpiot Tomb: Unravelling the Mystery of the Jesus Family Tomb*. Nashville: Holman, 2008.
- Habermas, Gary and Mike Licona. *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2004.
- Harvey, A. *Jesus and the Constraints of History*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982.
- Hengel, Martin. *Crucifixion in the Ancient World and the Folly of the Message of the Cross*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1997.
- Keener, Craig S. *Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011.
- Komarnitsky, K. *Doubting Jesus' Resurrection: What Happened in the Black Box*. Second edition. Draper: Stone Arrow, 2014.
- Lake, Kirsopp. *The Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*. London: Williams & Norgate, 1907.
- Larmer, Robert. *The Legitimacy of Miracles*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013.
- Levering, Matthew. *Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?: Historical and Theological Reflections*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.
- Lewis, C.S. *Miracles*. New York: HarperCollins, 2001.
- Licona, Michael. *The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010.
- Litwa, David. *How The Gospels Became History—Jesus And Mediterranean Myths*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019.
- Loke, Andrew. *Investigating the Resurrection of Jesus Christ: A New Transdisciplinary Approach*. Routledge New Critical Thinking in Religion, Theology, and Biblical Studies. New York: Routledge, 2020.
- . *The Origins of Divine Christology*. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- Lüdemann, Gerd. *The Resurrection of Christ: A Historical Inquiry*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2004.
- . *The Resurrection of Jesus: History, Experience, Theology*. Translated by John Bowden. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994.

- Mack, Burton. *The Christian Myth: Origins, Logic, and Legacy*. New York: Continuum, 2003.
- Marxsen, Willi. *The Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth*. Translated by Margaret Kohl. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970.
- McKnight, Scot. *Jesus and His Death*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2005.
- Miller, Richard. *Resurrection and Reception in Early Christianity*. London: Routledge, 2015.
- Novakovic, Lidija. *Resurrection: A Guide for the Perplexed*. London: Bloomsbury, 2016.
- Peters, Ted, et al., eds. *Resurrection: Theological and Scientific Assessments*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002.
- Price, Robert and Jeffrey Lowder, eds. *The Empty Tomb: Jesus Beyond the Grave*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2005.
- Smith, Daniel. *Revisiting the Empty Tomb: The Early History of Easter*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010.
- Stewart, Robert B. *The Resurrection of Jesus: John Dominic Crossan and N. T. Wright in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006.
- Swinburne, Richard. *The Concept of Miracle*. London: Macmillan, 1970.
- . *The Resurrection of God Incarnate*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Vermès, G. *The Resurrection: History and Myth*. New York: Doubleday, 2008.
- Vinzent, Markus. *Christ's Resurrection in Early Christianity: And the Making of the New Testament*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2011.
- Wallace, J. Warner. *Cold-Case Christianity: A Homicide Detective Investigates the Claims of the Gospels*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2013.
- Wedderburn, A.J.M. *Beyond Resurrection*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999.
- Wenham, John. *Easter Enigma: Are the Resurrection Accounts in Conflict?* Second edition. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992.
- Wright, N. T. *The Resurrection of the Son of God*. Volume 3, Christian Origins and the Question of God. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003.