

Trinity Tribune

Trinity Lutheran Church ✠ Paola, Kansas



From the Pastor



"The evidence [Jesus] existed is surprisingly shaky." Richard Dawkins

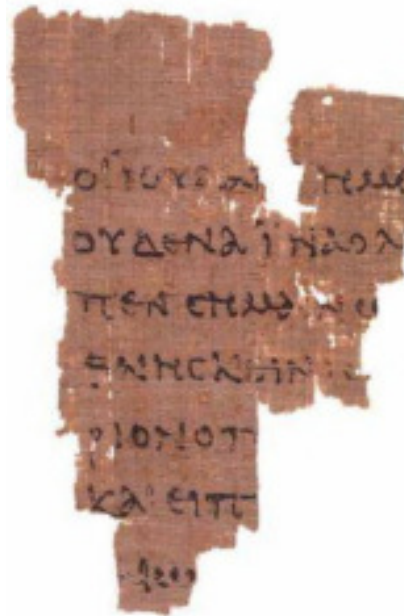
The assertion quoted above was made several years ago by British atheist Richard Dawkins in an interview with an American magazine. Dawkins, however, is a biologist, not a historian. Perhaps he should stick to biology, because from a historical standpoint the assertion that "the evidence [Jesus] existed is surprisingly shaky" is ludicrous.

New Testament Manuscripts

First of all there is the overwhelming evidence of the New Testament manuscripts. There are presently known about 5,800 such ancient handwritten copies of portions of the New Testament in Greek. If you add in quotations from the New Testament found in other ancient writings and ancient translations of the New Testament into other languages the number of New Testament manuscripts jumps to over 25,000. And through the efforts of archaeologists and other experts additional ancient portions of the New Testament are continually being discovered.

How does the number of New Testament manuscripts, testifying to the existence of Jesus, compare to other ancient historical persons and their writings? Instead of thousands of ancient

manuscripts, we have only *seven* copies of works by Plato, the oldest dating to 900 A.D., some 1200 years after Plato; *ten* copies of works by Caesar, the oldest dating to 900 A.D., some 1000 years after Caesar; *49* copies of works by Aristotle, the oldest dating to 1100 A.D., some 1400 years after Aristotle; and it is the much same with other ancient authors. Yet no one doubts the historical existence of figures such as Plato, Caesar, or Aristotle, or says that the evidence they even existed is "surprisingly shaky."



The John Rylands Papyrus contains a portion of the Gospel of John and dates from about 125 A.D., only about 30 years after the Gospel was written.

In contrast to the very late dates for the existing manuscripts of these ancient authors' works, the oldest known manuscript of the New Testament is the John Rylands Papyrus, on display at the John Rylands University Library in Manchester, England. It contains a portion of the Gospel of John and dates from about 125 A.D. Assuming the Apostle John wrote his Gospel in about

95 A.D., toward the end of his long life, that would mean instead of hundreds or even thousands of years only about 30 years separates this copy from the original text, a proximity unparalleled in any other ancient writing. And, though their work has yet to be published, last year a team of scholars announced the exciting find of what is probably the oldest portion of the New Testament yet discovered, a fragment of the Gospel of Mark dating from the 1st Century, just decades after the events it records.

Josephus and Other Ancient Writings

One of the most prolific writers of the ancient world was the Jewish historian Josephus. Much of what we know about this era stems from his extensive writings. Though born in Jerusalem he became a favorite of and aide to the Roman Emperor Vespasian, also of Vespasian's son and successor Titus, to the extent that Vespasian virtually adopted him and allowed him to take their family name Flavius.

There are a number of references to Jesus Christ and early Christianity in Josephus' writings, in particular this passage:

"Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was the Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day."

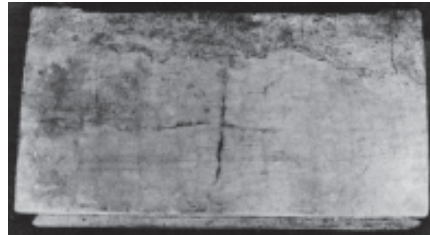
There are many other references to Christ and Christianity by other ancient authors, including Pliny the Younger, Tacitus, and Suetonius. Perhaps most interesting is the Talmud, a Jewish writing which preserves the actual text of the arrest notice for Jesus of Nazareth: "He shall be stoned because he has practiced sorcery and enticed Israel to apostasy."

Of course the "sorcery" Jesus was accused of was His miracles (Luke 11:15), and the "apostasy" He was accused of was His declaration to be the Son of God (Matthew 26:63-66). We know from other sources that Caesar had recently reserved to Rome alone the right to carry out executions, as alluded to in the New Testament (John 18:31-32). So, ultimately, rather than being stoned by His fellow countrymen, which was their traditional punishment for apostasy as this arrest warrant indicates, Jesus was instead executed by the Romans in their preferred manner: crucifixion (Acts 2:23).

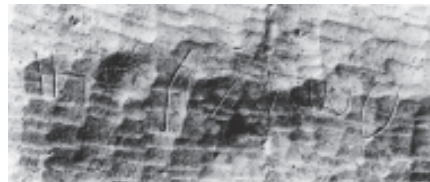
Inscriptions

There are numerous ancient inscriptions testifying to the early Christians' faith in Jesus. In 1945 the highly respected Jewish archaeologist E.L. Sukenik discovered in the Jerusalem suburb of Talpioth a virtually undisturbed ancient tomb. Its contents were intact,

including coins which dated the burials to approximately 50 A.D., and five stone ossuaries, or bone caskets, which are now on display at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. (It was the common practice in ancient times to rebury the bones in a small casket after the fleshy portions of the body had desiccated.)



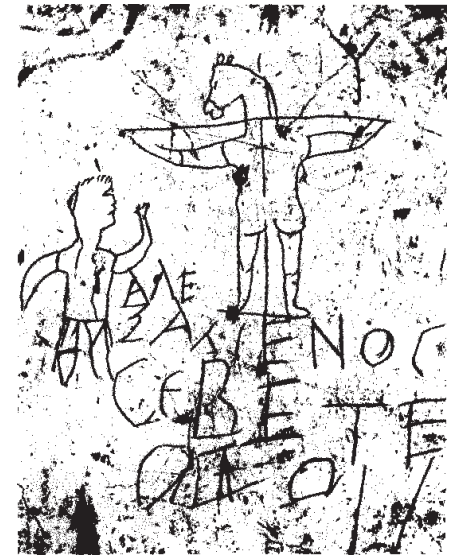
The Talpioth ossuaries dating from 50 A.D. are inscribed with crosses (above) and inscriptions dedicated to Jesus, including, "Jesus, let him arise" (below).



On two of these ossuaries the name "Jesus" is clearly legible. One reads in Greek *Iesu lou* ("Jesus, help"), and the other in Aramaic *Yeshu 'aloth* ("Jesus, let him arise"). These ossuaries are also clearly marked with large charcoal crosses. Sukenik concluded that in these rough, scratched letters and charcoal crosses we have the earliest known allusions to Jesus by Christian believers outside the Bible. The implications are staggering, for they show faith in a Jesus who can bring help even when a loved one has died, and a Jesus who can raise the Christian dead to be with Him—and all within 20 years of the first Easter!

A very poignant ancient inscription was discovered in 1857, a bit of graffiti scratched on the wall of an imperial barracks in Rome, probably toward the end of the 1st Century or beginning of the 2nd Century A.D. It is the first known portrayal of Christ upon the cross—although meant as mockery, and He is blasphemously pictured with a donkey's head. He is worshipped by a Roman man in a toga, who is kneeling and

raising his hand in an act of worship. The Latin inscription declares mockingly, "Alexamenos worships his God."



Though intended as blasphemy against Christ and an insult to their fellow soldier who worshipped Him, this graffiti scratched on the wall of an ancient barracks in Rome depicting Christ with a donkey's head is actually the earliest known depiction of Christ upon the cross, and a powerful testimony to the faith of an ancient brother in Christ, identified by the inscription which mockingly reads, "Alexamenos worships his God."

Just decades after Jesus was crucified this ancient brother in Christ had such faith in Him to endure this ridicule from his fellow soldiers for worshipping Jesus as God. "The evidence [Jesus] existed is surprisingly shaky"? Tell that to Alexamenos!

Pastor Kevin Vogts

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Trinity Lutheran Church
34868 Block Road
Paola, Kansas 66071

Rev. Kevin Vogts, Pastor
Stacey Elkinton, Church Secretary

Church: 913-849-3344
Pastor's Study & Parsonage:
913-849-3711
Pastor's Cell: 913-594-9865

trinitylcms.org
facebook.com/trinitylutheranblock
pastorvogts@gmail.com
trinitylutheranblock@gmail.com
March, 2021



Lent Devotional Booklets

Devotional booklets for Lent from Concordia Publishing House are available at the church. Titled "Return to the Lord" the devotions are based on Joel 2:13: "Return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love."

Maundy Thursday

Holy Week begins on Palm Sunday, March 28. A special service of Holy Communion commemorating the Last Supper will be held on Maundy Thursday, April 1, at 7:00pm. Pastor Vogts' message will be *"Live from Jerusalem: The Upper Room"* based on Mark 14:12-26.



GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE

On Good Friday, April 2, at 7:00pm we will have a traditional Tenebrae Service. "Tenebrae" (TEN-uh-bray) is the Latin word for "darkness" or "shadows."

The Tenebrae Service is marked by a gradual extinguishing of candles and other lights, symbolizing the death of our Lord, interspersed with readings, prayers, hymns, and other musical selections related to His Passion. Our Tenebrae Service will feature seven candles, gradually extinguished as we read Christ's seven last words from the cross.

Pastor Vogts' message will be *"Live from Jerusalem: The Place of the Skull"* based on JLuke 23:33. Bring your family to meditate upon our Savior's sacrifice for your salvation!



Drive-In Easter Sunrise Service April 4

Because it all went so beautifully last year, there have been many requests to have a "Drive-In Sunrise Service" again this year, which we hold in our parking lot at 7:00am on Easter Sunday, April 4.

This year we are blest with our new local area broadcast system that allows those in attendance to listen to the service on their car radios. The drive-in service this year will also include



2021 Lent Sermon Series

Wednesday Evenings, 7:00pm
Beginning Ash Wednesday, February 17

February 17 – Ash Wednesday
"The Triumphal Entry"

February 24 – Lent Service II
"The Temple Courts"

March 3 – Lent Service III
"The Garden of Gethsemane"

March 10 – Lent Service IV
"The Trials"

March 17 – Lent Service V
"The Humiliations"

March 24 – Lent Service VI
"The Way of Sorrows"

April 1 – Maundy Thursday
"The Upper Room"

April 2 – Good Friday
"The Place of the Skull"

Holy Communion, with communicants coming from their cars to receive it in a continuous manner.

A second Easter service also with Holy Communion will be held inside the Sanctuary at the regular time of 10:00am. Though the orders of service will be different, both services will feature the same sermon.

Sunday Sermons for March



Complete videos of all our services, as well as audio and printed text of the sermon only, are available on our church

website at www.trinitylcms.org/sermons. Printed copies of that day's sermon and several of the most recent sermons are also available in the Gathering Room.

March 7
"Destroy This Temple
and I Will Raise It Again"
John 2:18-22

March 14
"A Way Out of Temptation"
1 Corinthians 10:11-13

March 21
"On the Way to Jerusalem"
Mark 10:32-45

March 28 (Palm Sunday)
"Spread Your Cloaks Before Him!"
Mark 11:1-11



We have again arranged for Easter Lilies to be ordered through the Church Office from Price Chopper, for \$8 each. Sign up on the counter in the church office indicating that you wish to have these plants purchased for you, and put your payment in the offering plate marked "Easter Lilies."

The deadline to sign up for ordering through the Church Office is Palm Sunday, March 28. You are also welcome to bring your own plants, if you wish to purchase them elsewhere or receive them as gifts. Please still sign up on the list indicating that you will provide your own plants and drop them by the church the week before Easter Sunday. You are also welcome to take your plants home any time after Easter Sunday.

When you sign up, please indicate whom your plants are in memory or honor of, the way you want it printed in the newsletter.

Missionaries of the Month

Each month we remember in prayer in our worship services—and you are encouraged to remember in your personal prayers—specific missionaries around the world who are supported by our congregation through our mission offerings to our Synod.

March 7

Deaconess Sandra Rhein
Taiwan

March 14

Rev. Hans & Gretchen Trinklein
South Korea

March 21

Rev. David & Joyce Erber
Ghana

March 28

Rev. Eric & Johanna Stinnett
Ethiopia



Bierock Sale

The Trinity Lutheran Youth are selling bierocks for \$3 each after church on March 7, 14, and 21. Stop by the Gathering Room to make a purchase and pick up your bierocks at the same time. If you can't make it to church but would like some set aside, call Pamela Peckman 913-449-4852 to place your order and arrange for pick-up.

All proceeds are going towards the funding attendance of our youth at the LCMS National Youth Gathering July 9-13, 2022 in Houston, Texas. A special "Thank You" to Linda Prothe and her Bierock Team for all the volunteer time they devoted towards this project! Thank you Trinity Lutheran and all our youth group supporters!



Our records of birthdays and anniversaries may not be complete. If your information is missing or inaccurate, please accept our apologies and notify the Church Office at 913-849-3344 or email Church Secretary Stacey Elkinton at trinitylutheranblock@gmail.com.

March 1 Devan Boydston
 March 1 Vera Kaiser
 March 1 Guylene Klein
 March 1 Johnny Prothe
 March 1 Dave Trickett
 March 2 Lance Elliott
 March 2 Zella McCully
 March 3 Justin Hieber
 March 3 Addison Kettler
 March 5 Lorranda Baldrige
 March 5 Billy Green
 March 5 Joshua Pemberton
 March 5 Aaron Maisch
 March 6 Gary Prothe
 March 6 Sandra Schultz
 March 7 Andrew Thompson
 March 7 Jackie Thompson-Dillon
 March 8 Megan Prothe
 March 9 Faith Ordonez
 March 10 Jim Mueller

March 11 Diana Deering
 March 12 Dylan Shoemaker
 March 13 Karen Garrison
 March 14 Darrel Rodewald
 March 15 Allyssa Henry
 March 15 Jacob Henry
 March 15 Kyle Kettler
 March 15 Judy Parks
 March 15 Randy Rausch
 March 17 Steve Cook
 March 17 Breanna Prothe
 March 17 Marcia Raines
 March 17 Roger Smith
 March 17 Robyn Weatherbie
 March 17 Emersyn Chapman
 March 18 Johnny Grother
 March 18 Jennifer Rethman
 March 18 Chris Smith
 March 19 Jordan Harper
 March 20 Paul Haley
 March 21 Rusty Morton
 March 21 Harry Stubbs
 March 21 Becky Stutzman
 March 23 Arnold Debrick
 March 23 Karla Debrick
 March 23 Elizabeth Kettler
 March 23 John Schlegel Jr.
 March 25 Laura Prothe
 March 26 Loren Windler
 March 28 Joyce Brown
 March 28 Zach Holtz
 March 28 Justine Prothe
 March 28 Tyler Tesar
 March 29 Wilda Bunch
 March 29 Lauren Wood
 March 31 Alvin Thoden
 March 6 .. Steve & Bobbi Debrick (22)
 March 7 Dave & Suzie Prothe (29)
 March 9 Rich & Sally Wood (30)
 March 10 ... Jim & Shelisa Mueller (42)
 March 20 ... Mike & Linda Giager (35)
 March 21... Sean & Robyn Weatherbie (23)
 March 28 Tom & Nancy Green (42)
 March 28 Arlin & Venita Prothe (56)



Bible Class on Titus

Our current study in Adult Bible Class is "Titus: The Conduct of the Christian and the Life of the Church." Join in Sundays at 9:00am in the basement Fellowship Hall!