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#36 Has the resurrection been debunked?

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Ask NT Wright Anything - Premier

It's Eastertide so Tom is answering questions on the resurrection, including one listener who believes that the evidence of the women at the empty tomb has been debunked by modern scholarship.

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Transcript

Hi there, before we begin today's podcast I want to share an incredibly special resource with you today. If you're like me, life can get pretty hectic pretty quickly, but one thing that helps me slow down is connecting with God in new ways, and I'd like to share a resource that has really helped me do that. It's called Five Ways to Connect with God, and you can download it for free right now at [premiere insight dot org slash resources](http://premiereinsight.org/resources).

I think you'll find refreshment for your soul. So go right now to [premiere insight dot org slash resources](http://premiereinsight.org/resources) and download your copy. That's [premiere insight dot org slash resources](http://premiereinsight.org/resources).

The ask nty anything podcast. Well, hello friends and welcome to another edition of the show with me Justin Briley, apologetics and theology editor for premiere Christian radio and brought you as ever with SBCK and NT right online, bringing you some shows that we had recorded before lockdown began. And so you'll hear myself and Tom essentially in close quarters on today's program, which is answering your questions on the resurrection today.

And don't forget you can send in your questions if you are registered over at the website

that's ask nty right dot com. We will be making sure to keep you supplied and up to date with editions of the ask and to write anything podcast, both from stock that we got recorded and new stuff that we're going to be recording over the line together from lockdown. So you won't be left wanting.

Hope that you are surviving your lockdown, whatever it brings to you. And we had a lot of love for that special coronavirus response episode that we did with Tom from his home in Oxford several weeks ago. Now do go and check that out in the back catalog of the podcast if you haven't already.

And of course, you can find more videos from ask and T right anything over at the premiere YouTube channel. You can also find them over at the website to ask nty right dot com. And that's also the place to go to get yourself subscribed so that you are part of the prize draw taking place at the end of this month.

Three signed copies of Paul a biography. One of them could be yours if your name gets drawn, but you have to be part of our newsletter. Now we haven't actually sent out much on the newsletter in recent weeks since lockdown began.

We haven't had opportunity to really update you much, but we will be making sure that that happens again in the near future. So if you'd be missing some interactions from Tom and myself over on the newsletter, don't worry, it will be there. Do sign up for all the bonus content to enter into the prize draws.

And of course, to ask your own question, that's quite enough from me. Let's join the conversation with Tom looking at your questions today on the resurrection. Well, Easter is nearly upon us, Tom.

It's going to be obviously a great celebration. How do you generally celebrate Easter if you're not already preaching on the on the morning? Fair is enormously according to where I am and each year seems to be different, but I love to be at an early morning celebration and in a previous job where I was doing an Easter vigil very early in the morning, starting in total darkness and reading the great chunks of the Old Testament and then having the bonfire and the candles and the proclamation and Christ of San Jose Christ has risen and everything, the whole place going wild and then having the great hymns and the Eucharist and processions. It's as though something exuberant is happening at Easter.

This is about new creation. And if you don't do it exuberantly, then it's almost as though you don't really mean it. Oh, he's raised from the dead, isn't that nice? Whatever.

So for me, it really is about new creation bursting through after God's victory over all the powers of evil. How about this for an opener, then? This is a good general question to start off with. Finn in Wigan says, "In the simplest way possible, could you summarize

your views on the resurrection? I'm studying Christianity at A-level and you're one of the people we study.

I really admire your work." Thanks. Thanks Finn. Well, enjoy your A-level, but the first thing to grasp is that resurrection, the Greek word is anastasis, which means standing up.

Resurrection in the ancient world was always about actual bodies, about people being physically alive, having been physically dead. It's not about dying and going to heaven in the sense of the soul, escaping the body, leaving a body behind. They had other words for that and resurrection isn't that word.

So the early Christian claim is that Jesus of Nazareth, having been thoroughly dead, really was thoroughly alive again. Now, this made the sense that it meant within a Jewish world where the majority of Jews, not all at the time, believed in resurrection, but what that meant was that they were looking forward to a time. They called it the age to come.

When God would raise all his people from the dead because God is the good creator who wants to put the world right. So resurrection is what you get when you have the goodness of creation and God as the judge in the sense of the one who wants to put everything right. So resurrection always assumes that people will die, then they will have a period of being dead and they have different ways of describing that.

Are you in a spiritual existence or an angelic existence or what? It's not clear. And then resurrection is not life after death. It's life after death.

In other words, you die. There is a period of being maybe alive with God in some sense or other. They don't explain that.

But then resurrection is a new life, a second stage. So when we're talking about resurrection, we're talking about bodies and we're talking about a two stage post-mortem reality. Unless, as the early Christians said, when Jesus comes back, then those who have not died will be transformed.

So you still have to be transformed because it will be a new sort of body. If there'll be a body that's very clear, don't be fooled by the translations that say in 1 Corinthians 15 that it'll be a spiritual body. The word spiritual there doesn't tell you what it's made of.

It tells you what it's animated by. It's a new sort of physicality, what I and others call trans-physicality. But it's still, in our sense, physical because God loves bodies.

He loves his creation. He wants to remake it. So that's what the early Christians are talking about.

And many people haven't understood, even what I've just said. And so, in the way, God

also gets very muddled as to what, in fact, is being claimed at Easter. So why, then, do I and others believe that this related happened to Jesus? It wasn't what was expected.

They were expecting God to do it for everybody at the end of time. And suddenly this happened to one person in the middle of time. And that and various other things about it were so unexpected that you have to say, "Why would they say that?" Because there were many other Jewish resistance movements, messianic movements, prophetic movements.

At the time, Josephus, the Jewish historian, talks about several of them through roughly a hundred years, either side of the time of Jesus. Routinely, the leaders of those movements were picked up and killed by the authorities. And if your leader of such a movement got the chop from the Romans, you didn't go around saying, "Oh, maybe God's raised him from the dead." You either gave up the movement, if you were lucky enough still to be alive yourself, or you found yourself another leader.

And we have evidence of an entire dynasty, a family, through two-thirds of the first century, who each time the would-be Messiah got killed, the next one steps up. Now, here's the thing. Who's the great leader of the church in Jerusalem for the generation after Jesus? It's Jesus' own brother, James.

Great amount of prayer, great teacher, great leader, highly respected. Nobody ever said that James was the Messiah. They should have done.

If Jesus had just died, oh, well, we thought he was the Messiah, but the Romans killed him. So, oh, here's his brother, James. Maybe he's the Messiah.

They always said he's the brother of the Messiah, Jesus. Even Josephus, the Jewish historian, says, "He's the brother of the so-called Messiah." And those and many other arguments have convinced me and many others that, historically speaking, it's the best possible explanation for why Christianity got going and why the stories in the Gospels, which are very strange, those stories at the end, the way the form, the different details will talk about some of that in a minute, I suspect, why they are what they are. It looks as though, as Ed Sanders, who's a great New Testament scholar from this last generation, said, "Looks as though they're trying very hard to say something they really want to say, but for which they don't have very good language." I think that's exactly right.

But at the heart of it all is this extraordinary belief that God has promised to renew creation, the Psalms say, the sea and the mountains and the sheep and the trees will rejoice because Yahweh is coming to sort out the world. And the answer is he's done it now in advance. The resurrection body of Jesus is the beginning of new creation.

And as a result of that new creation has been launched, it will be completed and we live

between the one and the other. That's what Easter really is all about. Fantastic.

Let's turn to Norway, from Wigan to Norway. And I will fail to pronounce this name correctly, so forgive me. I think it's trivvy, possibly.

I don't know if you want to have an attempt at that one, Tom. But, uh, uh, uh, trig-trig-trig-v, I think, says, what I find puzzling is why Jesus says that he'll rise after three days when it barely goes to, "I don't accept the explanation that counting Friday you get three days," since Jesus says that as Jonah was three days and three nights inside the fish, so the son of man will be. Some Bible scholars like David Paulson think there was a special Sabbath the year Jesus died.

He didn't die on a Friday, but on a Wednesday. I know this is a big bone of contention. What does Professor Wright believe? I think it's highly unlikely that Jesus died on a Wednesday not a Friday, but, um, you know, it's possible the Christian tradition might have got that wrong, but actually there are several passages we say on the third day rather than after three days.

And it seems to be a bit confusing there. I don't have an explanation for that saying about Jonah, um, but it is very interesting that that sits there in the tradition, which does seem in some tension with, uh, very early on the Sabbath morning, you know, the first day of the week, et cetera. And particularly in John's gospel, it's rather important that it's on the Friday that Jesus dies because John makes a great play of the numbers, that this is the sixth day of the week, um, hold the man, and then they rest on the Sabbath day.

And then it's the next day when the women go to the tomb. So there is a surface tension, but it seems to me that the quotation of the prophecy from of treating Jonah as a, as a, as a prophecy there, um, is, is very typical of how prophecy works, that it's, it's not trying to be mathematically precise. And it's so again and again in scripture, you get that sort of surface tension.

And when you go underneath, I think most people would say this is a standard Jewish way of speaking. Um, and that three days and three nights, it's actually not a big deal. It basically means on the third day.

I hope that's not trivializing the objection. Um, but it seems to me that the problem is there in the text. And like many things, as I say, it's like how often did the rooster crow on the night when Peter was denying Jesus, um, or the morning when he was doing it.

Um, the only way you can reconcile the four accounts in the gospels is if the rooster actually crowed nine times, which is what none of the accounts say. So, but you know, I don't lose any sleep about that. Yeah.

Um, I think these are surface things rather than the deeper meaning. Let's talk about some of the historical arguments that you have traditionally used for why the, the

resurrection makes sense of the evidence. Um, and Grant in Wilson, um, has asked this.

It's, he puts it rather straightforwardly. I suspect Grant himself may be something of a skeptic, but says, Tom, why are you still trotting out apologetics about women's testimony supporting the historicity of the resurrection accounts? The argument has been soundly debunked with evidence. And at this point adds a link to an article by Richard Carrier, who's a well known skeptic.

In fact, to Jesus, mythicist. Um, I think someone you probably have bumped into the writings of before. Um, and I know you've had a chance to just briefly look at this article that's mentioned.

Um, first of all, maybe sketch out the way you have seen a significant, the fact of the women and the empty tomb in that historical setting. And then if you would sketch out what, what you believe to be the, the, the problems that carry out with them. Right.

Yeah. Uh, I have to say, I, I have looked at one or two of Carrier's things. I hadn't looked at this one until you sent me these questions and I thought, what, what's the on about this time? And he, um, you know, it's fair enough to poke and prod at the historical arguments.

I would always be up for that. Uh, history really, really, really matters. And if he says that the texts don't mean what I say, they mean, then I really want to know about that.

I don't want to sweep that under the carpet in any way. Um, what I have tended to say as one of several reasons for supposing that the store, the resurrection stories in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are really early. This is even though the gospels were probably attaining their final form by the 60s or 70s or 80s.

We really don't know that. But let's assume that they were the resurrection stories themselves do not show all the signs you might expect of being from that period. They show the signs of being really early.

One of that, the reasons is, um, the absence of Old Testament exegesis there, whereas in the crucifixion story, there's a lot of that. Another is the absence of the Christian future hope ever elsewhere in the gospels, it says Jesus is risen from the dead. Therefore we will be raised from the dead.

The resurrection stories don't say that. They say, Jesus risen from the dead. Therefore, oh my goodness, this was unexpected.

Maybe he's the Messiah and we have a job to do. Um, but then one of the other reasons is that in all four stories, especially in John, the women are front and center. And the problem with that is that in the ancient world, women were not regarded as credible witnesses, um, for all sorts of reasons.

And that's what Carrier is pushing back at. But in order to contextualize that, we need to contrast those stories in the gospels with the official formula, which Paul quotes in 1 Corinthians 15 when he says the Messiah died for us in accordance with the scriptures was buried, was raised on the third day according to the scriptures and was seen by and we say, well, Mary Magdalene, the other Mary Joanna, no, no, gives us a list of the people who saw them. They're all men.

Uh, excuse me, this is written and it's summarizing a tradition in the early 50s. If that's already the tradition which Paul says, this is what we all preached, then this is a tradition which has taken shape by the late 40s at the earliest. Now, if that was the earlier tradition, and this is, this is the point that I'm making, which I think Carrier doesn't quite understand, then if you were writing up resurrection stories later and you wanted to beef up this tradition a bit, would you invent stories about women? Would you introduce them at that stage? Would you introduce them at that stage? And historically, it is far, far more likely that they were in the story from the beginning and that because of anxieties about how credible this would be, they got a bit airbrushed out of the tradition.

And a passage that Carrier doesn't mention as far as I can see in that article, maybe he's discussed it somewhere else, is that in the middle of the second century, there's a skeptic called Kelsus who is opposing Christianity. And we know about him because the great church father called Origen wrote against him, *Contra Kelson*. And Kelsus says sneeringly, oh, it's all based on the testimony of one hysterical woman.

And it's quite clear and various people have pointed out that the language used there is not just hysterical in general. Historical is a word people used about women. But then the other things which Carrier goes for, which Grant here, I'm not sure whether Wilson is where he lives or his surname.

I can't. Anyway, he's not high. He entered it as the place.

Okay, right. But anyway, Grant, what Carrier does is to pick up three passages from the rabbis, which I had referred to. By the way, when I made this point in the resurrection of the Son of God, I gave it precisely two pages because the book was already 700 pages long.

You could have expanded it a lot more. And there's been since I wrote that book, which is 17 years ago now, there's been a lot of work done on Jewish law courts and so on. And it appears that particularly later on in the rabbinic period, women could be admissible for giving evidence.

But there's one, there's one passage where it's in the technical term is in the Mishnah, which is roughly 200 AD. And then the Mishnah tractate called *Rosh Hashanah*, the New Year's Day, one eight, Carrier agrees that for many people as evidenced by that passage, he says a woman's judgment was inherently questionable, but not her honesty. And I

want to say, but that's exactly the point.

It was her judgment that would make people say, no, we mustn't do that. So he's carrier is implying that I'm saying that a woman's honesty was in doubt. And I say, no, no, it's just that people constantly said you can't trust women.

And the passage which he he does quote and discuss, but which seems to be the direct disprove of what he carrier says when he says that there is no such tradition about women's testimony not being acceptable is from Josephus. Josephus is writing just after Paul around the same time as most people think the gospels are being written. And in Antiquity's book four, when he's describing the legal processes in Deuteronomy, he says three things very clearly.

First, the testimony of one person isn't valued, you must have two or three witnesses. Second, women are not acceptable witnesses in a law court. And he gives a reason.

And then thirdly, slaves are not acceptable in a law court because they may be afraid or they may be being bribed. So what are the reasons for why the women are not acceptable? And Josephus says very explicitly that the Greek is *Günneikön*, *Demé esto Martirea*. No evidence from a woman or from women.

And he says, because of two things, their levity and their boldness, levity, *kufertace* in Greek, and *thrasos*, which means over boldness or *rasnus*. And carrier tries to say, oh, this doesn't mean that their evidence isn't acceptable. It just means that if you let women in a law court, they'll be giggling and laughing and scolding and so on.

And that flies in the face of the very careful, the legal way that Josephus has laid that out. And what it clearly means is that Josephus regarded, and Josephus' day, regarded women, as empty-headed, trivial people who couldn't think straight, and always liable to jump to rash conclusions and to blurt things out. So you couldn't trust them.

And at the same time, the other great Jewish writer of the time, Philo, discussing a passage in Genesis and allegorizing it, he says, "The female sex is irrational, akin to bestial passions, fear, sorrow, pleasure, and desire from which instuen curable weaknesses and indescribable diseases." And I have to say, I quoted some of this to my wife last night over supper. And it kept her angry for the whole of the meal. I said, that's not the point.

I said, the point is this is what people thought at the time, and yet the gospels put the women front and center. And there are other passages as well, and carrier is quite rude about me and other apologists at this point and says, oh, you don't bother to check your sources. But actually, I refer in the passage in question to a discussion by my friend Richard Borkham in his book, *Gospel Women*, where he discusses this issue.

And he points out a very interesting passage in the book we call *pseudo-Phylo*, which is

like Josephus, a summary of biblical history, where at one point, Miriam, the older sister of Moses, has a dream. And in her dream, she dreams that her mother is going to give birth to a son who will redeem Israel. And when she tells her parents in the morning, they don't believe her.

Even though it was true, and pseudo-Phylo knows it's true. And as Borkham says, this shows this is the normal assumption. And guess what? In the parallel passage when Josephus is describing the birth of Moses, it's Moses' father who has the dream, and he is believed.

And so it's not so much, is there a strict law here? It's that the widespread assumption. And so again, I say, granted the tradition in 1 Corinthians, if you were going to make up stories later, would you do it like that? And the answer is absolutely no. Those must be original, very close up to the fact.

Well, I have no doubt that Carrier will respond to that. That's the best of luck. We'll see how much tennis gets going in the process.

But thank you. Really, really helpful. Really interesting to hear it explained in those terms.

Let's go to another question. Lonnie is in Alberta, Canada, and wants to know why did Jesus allow Thomas to touch him? We all need to rely on our God-given faith, for we don't have the luxury of touching Jesus' wounds in order to believe. So why was it a different case for Thomas? Yeah, it's a good question.

And that chapter in John chapter 20, things happen differently all the way through. Mary Magdalene sees Jesus through her tears, which is very interesting in itself. And then the disciples in the upper room suddenly hear his.

And then Thomas is grouchy and grumpy. And I'm not going to believe unless I actually put my finger in the door. And Jesus, okay, go ahead, be my guest.

And actually, we're not told that Thomas did reach out and touch him. But the invitation was there. And it seems to me that that is a classic example, which then resonates out into what apologetics is all about, of God meeting people where they are.

And Jesus does say in a kind of a smiling rebuke to Thomas, okay, you've seen so you believe, blessed are those who've not seen any yet believe. And that's pretty much the end of John 20, except for the final summary. And I think this is a way of saying we can't over rationalize and say, it must all be by faith.

So it should never have any of this kind of evidence. And I want just gently to challenge Lonnie and to say, we don't rely on our God given faith. You don't rely on faith.

Faith is like a window. The point of a window is not, I love having this bit of glass in the wall of my house. It's so that we can see out and so that light can get in.

Faith is trusting not, faith doesn't rely on faith. Faith relies on God. And that's really rather important.

And God is the creator and God is the re-creator. And God does different things with different people and wants sometimes to assure people that actually this is for real. And it's like apologetic arguments that they work differently in different contexts.

It's always interesting to me because the sense I get from the question here from Lonnie is, well, at least those first followers had the physical evidence and therefore they were at an advantage. But interestingly, if you go to something like Matthew 28, where Jesus is with him at the end of the gospel and when they saw him, they worshipped him. But some doubted, even people who were apparently in the presence of Jesus had that Matthew at that climactic point at the end of his gospel actually puts that in.

It says, though, there's something very mysterious here, which we can't, we haven't got the categories for it. It's rather like, you know, in Orthodox icons, the perspective works backwards. Instead of normally you look at a painting and the perspective is doing that away from you, the icons are doing so just coming towards you.

And it's as though the thing we're being asked to think about and believe in the resurrection stories in the gospels isn't something that we can pick up and put into our mindsets the way we currently are. It says, sorry, you need to put your mindset into this story and it will reshape it. And within that, I think part of the point of Thomas actually touching Jesus is this is real.

Jesus says in Luke, a ghost doesn't have flesh and bones as you see, I have. And that's so important. New creation is real and it's transformed reality, but it's still reality.

We'll try and fit in two more times against us always, never enough time. But Mary, Marilyn, sorry, in Lakeland, Florida says, hi, Justin, Tom, really appreciate the show and the willingness to take questions. I have a three in one question.

Why does the church celebrate the resurrection of Jesus only once a year at Easter yet proclaim his death weekly through the sacrament of the Lord's Supper? Paul said Christ is our Passover who was sacrificed. So wasn't he honoring Jesus' death rather than his resurrection on the annual feast in conjunction with the Lord's Supper? And finally, Marilyn asks, do you know if the daily slash weekly gatherings to break bread mentioned in Luke and Acts and so on were eventually replaced with the Lord's Supper when the church outlawed observance of the Passover and began distancing themselves from their Jewish roots? So there's a few things to try and tighten up. It's very interesting.

I mean, the church celebrates the resurrection of Jesus every Sunday. I mean, it

celebrates every day, but every Sunday is a celebration of the resurrection of the creation. Because it is on a Sunday.

Because it's on a Sunday. And one of the things I sometimes stop and think about is quite remarkable that every Sunday, since the first day of Jesus being raised from the dead, Christians have celebrated the beginning of the new week, the beginning of the new creation. That has gone on.

There's never been a stop and we're still doing it. And it's a great shame when Christians think of Sunday as, oh, it's the day you could go to church if you wanted to sort of thing rather than saying, no, we ought to be celebrating. This is the beginning of, we are Sunday people.

We are new creation people. And of course, Paul says, as often as you eat the bread and drink the cup, you proclaim his death until he comes. But the proclamation is a matter of doing it, announces to the principalities and powers of the world that Jesus has overcome all their evil and that he is the Lord of the world.

But the death of Jesus by itself wouldn't say that without the resurrection. So as you discover, if you're a theologian, it's very difficult to say everything all the sort at the same time. You always have to say the death of the one who was then raised or the resurrection of the one who had been crucified.

So, and when Paul talks about Christ our Passover being sacrificed, yes, but Passover is an entire narrative, which is the Paschal Lamb coming out of Egypt, getting the commandments and then building the tabernacle. It's the entire thing. And Paul embraces that whole story and he sees that whole story as a microcosm and invites people to share it.

And I would be surprised to be told that the Lord's Supper replaced the bread-breaking when the Church outlawed observance of the Passover because you've already got it. In 1 Corinthians 10 and 11 references to the Lord's Supper and using Passover language and using the Passover story in that way about the children of Israel coming out from Egypt. So there's no sense there of Paul distancing himself from his Jewish roots.

It may be that later on by the third, fourth, fifth centuries when there was still some puzzlement about, because a lot of Jews did become Christians in the succeeding centuries. Were they still supposed to attend synagogue? And sometimes the church said, no, that's just going to be misleading. You shouldn't do it.

And Ignatius says things about that. Chrysostom says things about that. It's obviously an ongoing puzzle, but I don't think it's a distancing from Jewish roots.

The idea of the Lord's Supper is the last Supper repeated because Jesus told us to. And that means what it means within the context of the great story of Israel, which is as

Jewish as it comes. Final question.

Jacob in Oregon wants to know, how can we portray the resurrection hope in our art? Our work? Do you have some examples of people or things that do this? And in Parenthese says, I'd also appreciate it if you could discuss where the Lord of the Rings does this well and where it doesn't, since I'm pretty familiar with it. But I understand not everyone is. It would just be a helpful example for me.

Thank you very much. I've greatly enjoyed the podcast so far. I want to think about the Lord of the Rings.

One of my sons is really quite a Tolkien expert or an erach. And I might put that to him, but I don't have a good answer for that myself at the moment. I think the Lord of the Rings is about the defeat of evil, but you don't see very much of the new life that happens as a result.

Well, I suppose I've always sort of assumed, or maybe Tolkien with the resurrection of Gandalf, who dies and then appears again. And is actually dressed in a sort of different sort of character. Fair enough.

There's a sort of resurrection motif going on there. Maybe I need to think about that. But in terms of what Frodo has to do in getting rid of the ring and the ring being, and Gollum grabbing it and then falling down into the fiery pit, etc.

I'm not sure how that would generate a resurrection. There is one bit. I've seen it quite often quoted in sermons and things around Easter.

And I don't have it to hand. So I'll probably not do a justice. But it's a bit C.S. Lewis like it.

It's a bit narnier like where Frodo says something along the lines of Or Sam or someone says, has it all been undone when they're back in the shire? And it's sort of waking up from a bad dream. And it's very much a sort of resurrection. All the evil has been worked backwards again.

And death has been turned inside out. Yes. But the shire is not a happy place when they get back.

No, that's true. And I mean, there's various things going on there. Now, I would say resurrection hope in art, in the early medieval period, they did sometimes paint, and even some frescoes you can see in some churches in Italy, the Ezekiel 37 scene of the earth, writhing and the bones coming up and being put back together, etc, etc.

It's never a very easy thing to portray. And there's a famous 20th century painter who I'm just forgetting his name at the moment, who did the crookum resurrection scenes,

which are kind of jockey of here's an ordinary English churchyard, and all these people standing up again, very ordinary villages and greeting each other as a way of saying, is that really what it's about? And I would want to say, I look at other things. I look at the work of some of our great contemporary composers, people like James McMillan or Paul Spicer, who I've worked with.

We wrote this Easter oratorio together 20 years ago, where actually you can feel in the music that something is coming through, or in Handel's Messiah, that wonderful aria, which starts part three, I know that my redeemer lives. Very interesting that Handel puts that in E major in parallel with comfort in my people right at the beginning of the aria, whereas his great hallelujah chorus is in D major, which is kind of a martial thing. Yeah, great.

We've won the victory terrific. Isn't that fantastic? But then there's something mysterious about E major. I know that my redeemer lives, and this is new.

We've gone up a key as it were. And I think as well, one of the, and again, I'm quoting friends of mine, but we call O'Sheel the Irish poet, O apostrophe S-I-A-D-H-A-I-L, pronounce Sheel, Mihall O'Sheel. Yes, you're great fan of his poetry.

Well, his new book is called Five Quintets. You've spoken of this before and have recommended it. Well, I want to recommend it again, because the point of the Five Quintets is he says in the preface, I always felt that Eliot lacked in the four quartets.

He lacked the sense of a fresh joy out beyond. And Mihall gives it us in abundance. There's a rich celebration of new life, which is really quite remarkable.

But I think as well, there are many, many things that the church does. And again, I probably quoted some of them before, which are bringing new life to communities. I think of, you know, some of the communities I know in the Northeast that really battered by industrial recession and the shutting down of traditional industries, where the church has got in there and has started new projects for literacy training, for working with the homeless, for enabling, for credit unions, to enable people whose money is in chaos to get going again and so on.

And when you see that happening, and you see the look on people's faces, you think that this is new life, this is resurrection. And it isn't the ultimate resurrection, but it's a genuine sign and fortaste of it. So I want to say in every possible way, an art in music and poetry and dance and drama, and in those many social projects, this is what we should be doing and what in the power of the spirit we can do.

Yes. I had the privilege of going to see the on-stage dramatization of the line, the witch and the war-driven London. Oh really? Yes.

Yes. Over Christmas actually. And again, it brought back to me the power of that

particular way in which Lewis dramatized the resurrection at the Stone Table and so on.

Yes, one of my grandchildren went to see that and came back absolutely. Oh, it's an extraordinary production. I don't know if it's still running at the moment, but if you get the chance to see it, I mean obviously they play around with certain elements of it, but I think overall very faithful to the idea of the book.

And yeah, but there are many, many ways we can obviously evoke the resurrection story. Absolutely. Lovely.

Thank you so much, Tom. Thank you. Your time again on this key issue in Christianity.

And I hope that if you're listening and you heard something that was helpful that it's blessed you as well. For the moment, we wish you a very happy Easter and we will see you on the other side. Yep.

Thanks for being with us on the show today, an episode on the resurrection that was at least in time for Eastertide, if not for Easter itself. But next time, a couple of weeks time, we'll have another set of questions coming from you for Tom to answer. And if you want to get subscribed, now's a good time to do it because you will be entered into that prize draw for three signed copies of Paul, a biography.

That's being drawn at the end of April. So you've only got a few days to do that now if you want to be entered for that prize draw. And of course, getting yourself subscribed means you get access to all the bonus content and indeed get to ask a question yourself if you would like to.

So for now, thank you very much for listening and we'll see you next time. You've been listening to the Ask, Enty, Write, Anything podcast. Let other people know about this show by rating and reviewing it in your podcast provider.

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