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Jesus' Death By Crucifixion - Fact or Fiction: Michael Licona vs. Yusuf Ismail

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Risen Jesus - Mike Licona

If Jesus did not die by crucifixion, there was no atonement for sin, and Christianity is a false religion. If he did, Islam is the erroneous faith. In this episode, Dr. Michael Licona debates Muslim apologist Yusuf Ismail at the University in Potchefstroom, South Africa. Dr. Licona tackles Ismail's claims of an absence of eyewitness accounts of Jesus' death in the gospels, Jesus' time on the cross being too short to have killed him, evidence of individuals surviving modern-day crucifixions in the Philippines, and documented occurrences of live people being mistaken for dead. He also provides six reasons why Jesus' death by crucifixion can be taken as a historical fact.

Transcript

Welcome to the Risen Jesus podcast. For today's episode, we have a debate between Dr. Licona and Muslim apologist Yusuf Ismail. Ismail provides several arguments in favor of the Quran's claim that Jesus did not die on a cross.

Dr. Licona refutes these while offering six reasons for believing that the Bible provides the historical truth on the top of the Bible. Tonight's debate is politically very incorrect because in a time such as we are living in, where you don't believe in an absolute truth, we should just live and let live. We shouldn't, a debate such as tonight is just pushing Christians and Muslims further away from each other.

Instead, many people would argue we should just hold hands and sing kumbaya and that's how we should approach these things. We shouldn't talk about these things. Now, the purpose of tonight's debate, ladies and gentlemen, is to better understand one another's positions.

And it's going to be a civilised discussion. I hope it's going to be a civilised discussion. But I want to say that you shouldn't look at fancy rhetoric or cute slideshirts.

Try and look at the facts and then take these large words for it, and study these things

afterwards for yourself. And I want to say that tolerism and the fact that we can tolerate one another presupposes truth and it tolerates that which you don't agree with. And the basis for tolerance, the fact that we can live with one another, the fact that we can have Muslim friends and if you're a Muslim Christian friend and if you're a skeptic, you can have friends as well.

The reason for that is mutual respect and love. The reason for that is not relativism. Although that's what the postmodern age wants us to believe, I would not agree with that.

So I just want my argument. I want to encourage you guys afterwards, after the debates, to, in the foyer, just interact with one another. If you're a Muslim, try and get five new Facebook friends which are Christian.

You guys can poke each other. Try and do it like that. So I really want us to interact between Muslims and Christians.

And once again, if you're a skeptic over here, if you're an atheist, agnostic, you're more than welcome to also have a Facebook friend or two. And I want to encourage you guys as well. Thank you for the laughter and that's only allowed when the moderator is speaking.

But when these guys speak, let's try and keep our appreciation for ourselves until they're finished and then you can clap your heart out with your hands, you can clap your heart out after they are finished. But please don't shout anything whilst these guys are busy. Now, how it's going to work, both of them are going to have opening statements.

Then there's going to be a first rebuttal, a second rebuttal, a third rebuttal. And then a Q&A where you guys are going to have a chance to ask a couple of questions. But I'm going to explain that to you as we approach that.

I'm going to introduce Yusev later. Since Mike is speaking first, I'm quickly going to introduce Mike Lykona to you. Mike Lykona has a PhD in New Testament Studies from the University of Pretoria.

And we will forgive him for that. He serves, it gets better. He serves as a research professor of New Testament at Seven Evangelical Seminary.

And as an external research collaborator at Northridge University, Portugal, I think you can give him a hand for that. That's pretty impressive. Mike was interviewed by Lee Strobel in his book, *The Case for the Real Jesus*, and appeared in Strobel's video, *The Case for Christ*.

He's the author of numerous books, including *The Resurrection of Jesus*, a new historiographical approach. Paul meets Muhammad, he co-authored with Gary Habermars, the award-winning book, *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus*, and co-edited with William Damesky, *Evidence for God, 50 Arguments for Faith from the Bible, History, Philosophy and Science*. Mike is a member of the Evangelical Philosophical Society, the Institute for Biblical Research and Society for Biblical Literature.

He has spoken on more than 50 university campuses and has appeared on dozens of radio and television programs. Ladies and gentlemen, Dr. Mike Lykona. Well, good evening.

As-salamu alaykum. May all praise, honor and glory be to God the Father and to His Son, Jesus Christ, through whom we receive grace and mercy and forgiveness. I want to thank Northwest University here at Putch for hosting tonight's debate.

Now tonight's debate question concerns Jesus' death by crucifixion in the first century. Was it a historical fact or is it fiction? Now there are two major reasons why tonight's topic is of interest. First, the early Christians made it something that was the heart of their proclamation of the Gospel.

If Jesus died on the cross, then according to Christianity, that means our sins can be atoned for. But if Jesus didn't die on the cross, then that means there's no atonement for sins. Moreover, if Jesus didn't die on the cross, there's no resurrection from the dead.

Jesus didn't rise from the dead. And the Apostle Paul said, if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless. You are still in your sins and those who have died as Christians already.

Our family members, our friends, our loved ones are forever lost. So the bottom line is, if Jesus Christ did not die by crucifixion in the first century, Christianity is a false religion. There's another side of the coin.

The Quran is clear in its assertion that Jesus did not die by crucifixion. Surah, 4 verses 1, 57 and 58 read that they said in boast, we killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the messenger of Allah, but they killed him not nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them. And those who differ therein are full of doubts with no certain knowledge, but only conjecture to follow for of a surety, they killed him not.

Nay, Allah raised him up and to himself, and Allah is exalted in power, wise. Now I realize that Muslims have a number of different ways of interpreting this text, and that's fine, that there's ambiguity involved. The biblical text has ambiguity involved in certain places as well.

That's no consequence in tonight's debate. What is important is that the Quran is crystal clear here, and saying that Jesus did not die by crucifixion. Thus, if Jesus actually died by crucifixion in the first century, Islam is false because the foundation upon which it rests collapses.

So whereas tonight's debate will not confirm either Islam or Christianity, it certainly has importance in terms of disconfirmation. If Jesus died on the cross, it disconfirms Islam. If he did not die on the cross, it disconfirms Christianity.

So how should we proceed? Muslims and Christians have fundamental differences when it comes to Jesus. Muslims base their view on the Quran while Christians base their view on the Bible, arguing that my book is correct and yours isn't really going to get us very far, unless we can give evidence why one report is accurate and the other isn't. Well, I intend to do that this

evening, and the way I'm going to do that is through historical investigation.

Now, we can do this aside from assuming that any particular book is inspired by God. So for example, I don't believe that God had any part whatsoever in the composition of the Quran. Nevertheless, as a student of history, I can still learn from it.

For example, in Surah 551 it reads, O ye who believe, take not the Jews and Christians for your friends and protectors. They are but friends and protectors to each other. And he amongst you, that turns to them for friendship, is of them.

Verily, Allah, Gidith, not a people unjust. Now again, I do not believe that God had any part in the composition of the Quran. Not withstanding, as a student of history, it's easy to conclude, and everyone would agree even Muslims.

Of course, that in the seventh century, when the Quran was being penned, we can know that Muslims were strongly discouraged from having friendships with Christians and Jews. Now, in a similar way, scholars who reject the Gospels as accurate biographies of Jesus can still learn about Jesus from them and do it all the time. Atheists, agnostics, liberal Christians, Jewish scholars, doesn't matter.

They still can mind through them even though they don't believe it has been inspired by God in any sense and learn things about Jesus and the early church. So, I personally believe that the Bible is God's word, but I'm not going to take a position such as that this evening. I'm not going to presuppose that the Bible is inspired by God or that it's even generally trustworthy.

I'm going to bear the burden of proof as a historian to prove with reasonable and adequate historical certainty what I'm claiming. But tonight, I'm going to defend two major contentions. Number one, I'm going to say defend and argue that there are good reasons for holding that Jesus died by crucifixion.

And number two, there are no good reasons for denying Jesus' death by crucifixion. Now, since Yusuf hasn't presented his case, I'm going to wait to hear what he has to say and address his arguments in the rebuttal periods. Thus, in my opening statement, I'm going to focus on my first major contention that there are good reasons for believing that Jesus died by crucifixion, and I'm going to provide six.

Number one, the reports, and this is the longest one, the reports of Jesus' death by crucifixion are early. Jesus' death by crucifixion appears in numerous times in the carigma or the official apostolic teaching found in the oral formulas peppered throughout the New Testament. Perhaps the earliest report of Jesus' death is found in the tradition in 1 Corinthians 15 verses 3 and following.

And this reads, Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures and that he was buried and that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures and that he appeared. Now, virtually all scholars who have written on the subject agree that Paul here provides tradition

about Jesus that he had received from others. There is likewise widespread agreement that it was composed very early, reflected what was being taught by the Jerusalem Apostles, and is the oldest extant tradition pertaining to the death and resurrection of Jesus.

So it's really quite amazing that what we are looking at here is certifiably an official and formal proclamation of the disciples on the death and resurrection of Jesus. Now, let's put a bookmark here and we'll return in a moment because I'd like to take a brief look at Paul. Prior to the 1980s, it was popular among some scholars to hold that Paul radically altered the teachings of Jesus and his apostles to the point of offering doctrines that contradicted with theirs.

That position has been largely abandoned by modern scholars, and let me show you why from three different angles. First, Paul was a young Jewish leader who hated Jesus, hated Christianity, and was persecuting the church. Then one day in the midst of his persecutory activities, Paul had an experience that he sincerely believed was of the risen Jesus appearing to him.

That experience radically transformed his life from being a persecutor of the church to one of its most able defenders. Now, just to give you a little idea of where this all falls, many scholars believe that Jesus was crucified. Well, we know he was crucified either in the year 30 or 35, and so it really doesn't matter which one, it's a matter of a toss of a coin historically speaking.

The evidence is pretty good for either one, so it's indeterminate. Let's just take the year 30 for this evening's debate. Many scholars likewise believe that Paul had his conversion experience one to three years later, so let's just call it two years later and say the year 32.

Then in one of Paul's undisputed letters, Galatians 1, Paul says that three years after his conversion, or let's say 35, he went up to Jerusalem and he met with the leader of the church, Peter, and he said he also saw James the brother of the Lord. Now, it's interesting to note that the Greek term Paul uses here for meet or visit with Peter is *hysteresite*, from which we get the English term *history*. This suggests that Paul's objective for going to Jerusalem was not to just sit there and talk about the rugby games going on in first century Jerusalem, but it was to talk about what actually happened with Jesus.

Paul had not been a disciple of Jesus during his ministry, and so he wanted to get the whole nine yards from those who had been and who better than Peter, at least one of the three closest disciples. Then Paul says, in Galatians 2, that 14 years after that, he returned to Jerusalem for a second visit. Now, we don't know if this is 14 years after this first visit or 14 years after his conversion, but basically what we're looking at is 16 to 19 years after the crucifixion of Jesus.

And he set his purpose for going up there, and he met with Peter, James, and John, the pillars of the church, and he went up there to run the gospel he had been preaching these years past them to ensure that he hadn't been working in vain all these years. He wanted to make sure he's preaching the same thing they were. Imagine being in that room, Peter, James, John, and Paul talking theology.

Wouldn't that be cool? Now, here you got them talking about that, and Paul says they added nothing to what I had to say. In fact, they extended to me the right hand of fellowship. In other words, they were saying, you're good, Paul, keep up the good work, the good work, brother.

Now, if that's all we had on it, of course that's Paul's story, but if that's all we had on it, it would be difficult to know whether Paul was telling the truth or lying. Fortunately, we have some corroborative evidence. Clement of Rome and Polycarp.

Hey, some pretty cool names for you students. You get married and you want to have kids someday. Just remember those names, Clement, Polycarp.

You can name your sons that. So Clement of Rome and Polycarp were probably disciples of the Apostles, Peter and John, respectively. And had Paul's essential teachings then been in contrast or contradictory to that of Peter and John, we would have expected Clement or Polycarp to chide and correct Paul in their letters.

And we have their letters, but we don't find them chiding and correcting Paul. Instead, we find Clement referring to the Blessed Paul. In fact, in another chapter, he put places Paul on par with his mentor Peter.

Polycarp speaks of the glorious Paul who taught the message about the truth accurately and reliably. Polycarp then also quotes Paul's letters and refers to them as part of the sacred scriptures. Now, that's not the kind of things that you say about someone who's a heretic, but it is precisely the kind of words we say about, they would say about Paul if he had been preaching what their mentors Peter and John were preaching.

We can also test Paul on the matter in 1 Corinthians 7, a chapter about marriage. The Corinthians asked Paul three questions. First question, hey Paul, is it okay to get married? And Paul says sure.

I can tell you he says that if you remain single, there are some advantages to it. You'll have more time and resources in order to devote to the kingdom. But hey, this is my opinion, do what you want on it.

Alright Paul, second question. Can I get divorced? And Paul says not I, but the Lord. In other words, this is no longer my opinion.

I'm going to tell you what the Jesus tradition says, what Jesus said that's been passed along to me from the Jerusalem apostles. And then he gives the same teaching that we find in Matthew and Mark. Unless your spouse cheats on you, you can't get divorced.

Alright Paul, third question. I'm married to a non-believer. Can I get divorced? And then Paul, he makes that strange statement that has baffled so many of us for so long.

He says not the Lord, but I. What do you mean by that Paul? Is this not the red letter edition of

the Bible we're reading? Are you saying that we don't have to pay attention to what you're saying if we don't want? That's not what Paul's saying. Paul's saying that Jesus didn't teach on this, so there's no Jesus tradition. After all, before the church was formed, there was no being married to a non-believer.

I suppose everybody was a non-believer at that point. So new issues come up that Jesus didn't deal with during his ministry. And so Paul's saying there's no Jesus tradition on this, so let me give a ruling.

And he basically says, if you're married to a non-believer and they want to get a divorce, you can get a divorce. But if they want to remain married to you, you got to remain married to you. And he says, this is my command, pass it along to the other churches.

It's what does marriage stuff have to do with Paul? What's really neat here is where we can test Paul, we see that he refuses to do what skeptical theologians for many years now have accused him of doing. When he needed authority behind one of his teachings inventing words of Jesus and saying that Jesus taught it instead. Now, we see Paul refused to do precisely that.

That when it came down to keeping the Jesus tradition there, he kept it pure. He would not commingle the Jesus tradition with his own teachings. And he made it clear when it was Jesus tradition and it was his own teachings.

So let's come back to our bookmark. We now have three reasons for concluding that Paul's teaching did not contradict those of Jesus or his disciples. First, Paul reported that the Jerusalem apostles certified that his teachings were right in alignment with what they were teaching.

Second, disciples of Peter and John reported that Paul was teaching the message of Jesus accurately and reliably. And third, where we can test Paul, we find him being painfully careful to preserve the Jesus tradition that had been handed down to him. And it's just Jesus tradition that we just read in 1 Corinthians 15 verses 3 through 5. Therefore, we can be entirely confident that when we're reading this kind of oral tradition, Paul's letters, we're hearing the voice of the Jerusalem apostles on these core issues.

So, reason number one for holding that Jesus died by crucifixion is that the reports are early and originate with Jesus' apostles. Number two, Jesus death by crucifixion is attested by sources unsympathetic and even hostile toward Christianity. Josephus, Tacitus Lucian, and Marr Bar-Sorapian are all aware of Jesus' execution.

Lucian adds that Jesus was crucified in Palestine while Tacitus and Josephus report that it was Pilate who had him crucified, just as reported in the Gospels. Number three, Jesus death by crucifixion is multiply attested by a fair number of ancient sources. In addition to those unsympathetic sources just mentioned, Jesus' execution is widely reported in the early Christian literature.

All four canonical Gospels report Jesus' death by crucifixion as do numerous other books and letters of the New Testament. Jesus' death is also abundantly mentioned in the non-canonical Christian literature. Reports of Jesus' death by crucifixion also appear in multiple literary forms, being found in annals, historiography, biography letters, and traditions in the form of creeds, oral formula, and hymns.

This is the strongest form of multiple attestation historians can ever hope for. Number four, the reports of Jesus' death by crucifixion in the Gospels satisfy the criterion of embarrassment. This criterion states that when an author reports embarrassing content that could serve to discredit a cause he embraces, this ways in favor of the truth of the report.

This point is seldom appreciated when we read the passion narratives in the synoptic Gospels. In numerous accounts in ancient Jewish martyrdom literature, the Jewish martyrs act bravely under extreme execution and torture. The book of Second Maccabees reports of seven brothers who had the skin peeled off their heads, their tongues cut out, and then their hands and their feet cut off.

Finally, when they refused to break the Jewish law, they were placed in a red-hot pan and fried alive. While enduring their tortures, the brothers deride their cruel kings, and their body parts will be restored to them, but for you, there will be no resurrection. Their courage and resolve are remarkable, but just as remarkable is the fact that several of the brothers are deriding the king after their tongues had been removed.

Thus we know that there can be some fictitious details in these martyrdom accounts. In the book of Fourth Maccabees, Eleazar is whipped until his flesh is stripped. He then communicates that more painful than torture is the thought of compromising his character and becoming a poor example for the young and thought of coward.

He was then burned to the bone and about to die when he praised the God, informing him that he had endured to the end in spite of the fact that he could have saved himself by breaking God's law. There are similar stories about the martyrdoms of several rabbis. The early Christian literature reports similar stories, such as the martyrdom of Polykarp, whom I mentioned a moment ago.

Polykarp is brought into the arena and threatened with death by being fed to the wild animals or by being burned alive. He's told that in order to avoid this fate, he must curse Christ and swear allegiance to Caesar. To this he replies in effect, bring it on.

And then he prays and praises God and thanks him for counting him worthy of martyrdom. Well, the Roman official condemns him to the flames. But to everyone's surprise, the flames won't consume him.

When the executioner sees this, he takes a spear and stabs Polykarp killing him. When he pulls out the spear, all this blood, so much blood comes out of Polykarp that it extinguishes the

flames. Now, it appears in these stories of martyrdom that historical recollections are sometimes mixed with embellishments in order to honor the martyr as well as to provide encouragement to readers who may be facing a similar situation.

In these accounts, the martyrs are valiant and strong to the very end. But when we come to the synoptic gospels, reports of Jesus' arrest and execution portray a Jesus who is weaker and far less valiant than the martyrs. In the garden, Jesus anguishes over his impending treatment and wants to avoid it if at all possible.

This would certainly not inspire those to whom Jesus had told a little earlier that if you want to be my disciple, you've got to take up your cross and follow me. Jesus' request for God to remove the cup from him if possible stands in sharp contrast to the defiant words of the martyrs may break my bones, but resurrection awaits me. Rather than proclaiming like the Jewish martyrs that he will not forsake God's law, Jesus cries out, my God, why have you forsaken me? Now, given the embarrassing nature of these comments for first century Christians, they are very unlikely to be inventions of the early church, but are instead accurate recollections.

Accordingly, the embarrassing elements in the Passion narratives weigh in favor of Jesus' death by crucifixion. Number five. There was a very low probability of surviving crucifixion.

Crucifixion and the torture that usually preceded it were very brutal processes. In fact, only one account exists of a person surviving in crucifixion. In that account, Josephus reports of seeing three of his friends crucified, so he ran to his friend, the Roman commander Titus, who has a favor to Josephus, ordered that all three be removed immediately and provided the best medical care Rome had to offer.

In spite of this, two of the three still died. Thus, even if Jesus was removed prematurely and medically assisted, his chances of survival were very bleak. But to complicate things, there's no credible evidence that Jesus was removed while alive or that he was provided any medical care whatsoever, much less Rome's best.

These five arguments I've just provided make a very strong historical case for Jesus' death by crucifixion. And notice that none of them required that the Bible be inspired or without error. The historical evidence for Jesus' death by crucifixion is so strong that it has persuaded nearly 100% of even skeptical scholars today to regard them as a certain fact of history.

Now that's my historical case for Jesus' death by crucifixion. But I want to provide a sixth argument that has a theological component. Although Christians regard Jesus as God's divine son, we also regard him as a prophet, as do Muslims.

Christians and Muslims also agree that the prophecies of a true prophet are always fulfilled. Thus, my sixth argument for Jesus' death by crucifixion is this. Jesus is a true prophet of God, and he prophesied his imminent death.

The canonical gospels portray Jesus prophesying his imminent death on several occasions. And although historians can't approve Jesus that Jesus uttered each of them, they can establish that Jesus did indeed prophesy his imminent death. Let's look at three key texts.

The first is Mark 8:31-33. And Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. And he was stating the matter plainly.

And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning around and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, Get behind me Satan, for you are not setting your mind on God's interests but man's. Now there are a number of reasons for regarding this exchange between Jesus and Peter as historical.

First, we find two statements that are unlikely inventions of the early Church given their embarrassing nature. Peter has the audacity to rebuke his master, Jesus, who in turn rebukes the disciple who would become the lead apostle in the post-Easter Jerusalem Church, even calling him Satan. The disrespect shown to Jesus by Peter and Jesus' stern rebuke are certainly not inventions of the early Church but are very probably authentic recollections.

Both rebukes are also strongly linked to Jesus' prophecy of his death and resurrection, since there's no occasion for either rebuke without Jesus' prophecy concerning them. There also appear to be Semitic elements and the parallel text in Matthew 16, 21, 23, specifically the terms Kingdom of Heaven and flesh and blood. This suggests pre-Matthean tradition independent of Mark.

Thus we have multiple attestation. Third, we find Jesus' use of his favorite self-designation Son of Man, which is dissimilar to how the early Christians referred to him. Thus the authenticity of Jesus' say in Mark 8:31 is supported by the criteria of embarrassment, multiple attestation and dissimilarity.

Mark 9:31 is a second text in which many scholars have recognized that Jesus' saying concerning his imminent death is probably quite early. And that's given the presence of a pun when translated into Aramaic. The Son of Man is handed over into the hands of men.

And the Greek *paradidotai* is handed over, which may be traced to the Aramaic participle in the divine passive. Moreover, once again we find Jesus' self-designation as the Son of Man. So the authenticity of Jesus' say in Mark 9:31 is supported by the criteria of early attestation and dissimilarity.

In the third text, Jesus institutes taking the bread and cup as a reminder to his disciples that his body and blood were about to be broken and poured out for them. These statements from the Last Supper are supported by primitive tradition preserved in the pre-Pauline material in 1 Corinthians 11 and Luke 22, appearing nearly word for word in the Greek. So you can see up here in 1 Corinthians 11 and Luke 22, it's word for word except that Luke has added the word

given.

And Mark and Matthew has a little different tradition, and you can see the word for word except Matthew adds the word eat. Other than that, you can see Matthew and Mark have one tradition while Luke and Paul use a different one. It's still the same message, but the words are different.

And so this suggests that each of Luke and Paul drew on a common tradition independent of Matthew and Mark. Accordingly, the authenticity of Jesus saying concerning his death uttered at the Last Supper is supported by the criteria of multiple attestation and early attestation. So in summary, Mark 8:31 is multiply attested and contains features that are embarrassing as well as dissimilar to the teachings of the early church.

Mark 9:31 you can see and the Last Supper have these. Therefore, our three sayings of Jesus have a strong claim to originate with Jesus, and accordingly we can have a high degree, a very high degree of historical certainty that Jesus prophesied his violent and imminent death. And if he was a true prophet of God as both Muslims and Christians believe, we can be confident that his prophecy was soon fulfilled.

Now this creates a horrible dilemma for Islam. Because if Jesus died a violent and imminent death as he prophesied, then the Quran is mistaken because it says he didn't. On the other hand, if Jesus did not die an imminent death as he said as he prophesied, then the Quran is mistaken because Jesus would be a false prophet and the Quran refers to him as a true prophet of God.

Either way, the Quran is mistaken. It is not the word of God. Now this is an appropriate place to draw an important distinction between Islam and Christianity.

Because as an evangelical Christian, I believe the Bible is God's word without error. However, different from Islam, such a belief is not part of one may call the essentials of the Christian faith. In other words, the truth of Christianity is not contingent upon the doctrine of biblical inerrancy.

Christianity is true because Jesus rose from the dead, not because every word in the Bible is true. So it's not an all or nothing matter when it comes to the Bible. Christians believe that God inspired the biblical writers, but we have no idea really how this occurred.

We find a different situation, however, when we examine the relationship between the Quran and Islam. Since Muhammad claimed that the Quran had been dictated to him word for word, there's no room for any historical errors. If there are errors, then we can be assured that the Quran was not passed along from God.

Now the reason for this is relevant for this evening's debate. Aside from the Quran, there are no reasons for holding that Jesus did not die a violent and imminent death. Since we can know that the Quran is mistaken on the matter of Jesus, we are left with no reason for rejecting the abundant historical and theological evidence that Jesus died by crucifixion.

Moreover, since the truth of Jesus' death by crucifixion is not contention on the Bible being inspired by God, drawing attention to some alleged problems posited by skeptics carries little if any weight. Since it fails to address the six arguments I presented for Jesus' death by crucifixion that are based on knowable historical facts. In summary, I provided six reasons for concluding Jesus died by crucifixion.

One, the event is reported by early sources, some of which can reasonably be traced to the Jerusalem Apostles. Two, the event is reported by unsympathetic sources who were not biased toward a Christian interpretation of events. Three, the event is multiple tested by numerous ancient sources and in multiple literary forms.

Four, the passion narratives are credible since they fulfill the criterion of embarrassment. Five, the probability of surviving crucifixion was very low. And six, Jesus was a true prophet who prophesied his violent and imminent death.

When opened to possibilities, historians must be guided by probabilities. Given these six arguments I presented by Jesus' death by crucifixion, a very strong burden of proof falls on anyone who would deny it. Accordingly, given the very strong evidence we have for Jesus' death by crucifixion, without good evidence to the contrary, the historian must conclude that Jesus was crucified and that the process killed him.

Thank you. Our next speaker that's going to represent the Islamic case is Mr. Yusuf Ismail. He's qualified as an attorney, as an MLB at the University of Natal.

He was admitted as an advocate in 2005. He occasionally lectures on law at UNISA, and he has debated a couple of other prominent Christian apologists with the likes of William Lane Craig and John Gilchrist. He's an independent researcher and debating comparative religion, and tonight is the IPCI's representative.

Ladies and gentlemen, let's give a warm round of applause to Yusuf Ismail. Hello, everyone. Good evening, or should I say, is it Huanand? There was a delightful presentation by Mike, and thank you again once again to Johann and the rest of the team.

This is a great program that we're basically having. I want to start off with a positive contribution of my own, and from my own thoughts, why I firstly accept the Quranic position in Jesus, and why I have reservations on the Biblical position. Let's begin with where we agree.

Muslims and Christians generally do agree that Jesus was one of the mightiest messengers to walk the earth. He was a servant, a prophet, a messenger. The Qur'an, for example, refers to Jesus as the Messiah, a title very dear to Christians when referring to Jesus.

For Muslims, Jesus performed many miraculous deeds. The Qur'an does not differ on the enunciation of Christ as given to Mary and as recorded in Luke's Gospel on one essential point. And for this reason, generally, Muslims do believe in the virgin birth and his miraculous deeds.

A Muslim must have necessity in his faith in the Qur'an believing Jesus. A Muslim cannot remain a Muslim without, of course, believing in Jesus. So at least we agree that Jesus was a great man of God and that the message he preached was the message of God.

Now, we do have slight differences on the end of his life, but even there, there are agreements. Muslims and Christians generally can proclaim that God exalted Jesus. There is a sense that a prophet may be rejected in his community, he may be persecuted, and he receives a final vindication from God that God is on his side.

And God will actually make that known even in this life or in the life hereafter. In Surah 4, verse 158, you read the expression Bar-Rafah al-Lahu-Ilei, but God raised Jesus up unto himself. And that corresponds to the biblical idea of exaltation.

You find one particular example about Enoch in Surah 19 mention his Idris. In the book of Genesis, we are told that he walked with God and was no more because God took him. In the Qur'an, you'll find a similar passage.

What if I am a kind and Aliyah, that God will obviously exalt him up unto himself. And so in a similar way, God exalts Jesus. Now, we have listened to Mike's presentation with Kei, and we know how it's important it is for Christians to believe in the crucifixion.

What does the Qur'an say? In Surah 4, verse 157, you read the expression Bar-Rafah al-Lahu-Ilei. They said, in boast we kill Christ, Jesus the son of Mary, the apostle of God, but they kill him not nor crucified him, but it was made to appear unto them. And those who differ there in are full of doubt, having no certain knowledge, but only conjecture to follow.

For over surety, they killed him not. May God raised him up unto himself. Now, many people will say that, look, maybe the Qur'an is in error because the crucifixion is a historical fact, as Mike purportedly suggested.

And the resurrection is obviously attested in Christian literature and the teachings of Paul. So isn't the Qur'an wrong on this particular point? Well, I think not. It's important that there are actually two issues that we need to be looking at here.

One, the claim that Jesus died, and second, the claim that Jesus rose from the dead, and they are interlinked. A book has basically just been written a couple of years ago by an evangelist in the United States called Norman Geisler, and this book is called The Battle for the Resurrection. In this book he writes that it is essential that we prove that the person who basically appeared to his disciples and resurrected in the post-crucifixion appearances is the same person who died in the first place.

Otherwise, you can have a situation where one person allegedly dies, the body goes missing, another person comes and appears and resurrects, and they say, oh, he was crucified, he died, and now he's risen from the dead. So, in that case, in terms of which you would then have an issue of mistaken identity, and that basically is a problem. How does one prove from the gospel

material that Jesus basically died and he rose from the dead? In other words, there has to be a confirmation of the supposed identity of the individual, and this is where the problem occurs.

If you look at the post-crucifixion appearances that are shown in the gospels, generally they some degree of question on the identity of the person. If you take one particular example in the gospel of Matthew, it has it when Jesus appeared to his disciples on a certain mountain in Galilee, they saw him, they worshipped him, but they doubted. Some translators would have it that some doubted, but it seems that the new American Bible and the RSV in Matthew 28 17 would say that the more accurate translation is that the disciples of Jesus doubted when they saw Jesus in the post-crucifixion appearances.

Mark's gospel does not have an account of the post-crucifixion appearances of Jesus or the resurrection, which begs the question. Why not? It looks gospel. In Luke's gospel, you have a question where Jesus appears to two of his disciples on the road to Emmaus.

He joins them, he engages in a conversation with them, and he walks some miles, and then afterwards he joins them to break bread. And when they break bread, that is when they recognize them. Now, why is it that in the long journey the disciples of Jesus could not recognize him, who he was? And then they started to say to each other, didn't how our hearts burn when we walked on the actual road? So in other words, it's significant that not from seeing his face or from hearing the voice print that they in fact recognized Jesus, but in the manner in which he broke bread, which means there was an element of doubt.

What about Luke's gospel? In the upper room, when Jesus appears unto them, they were terrified and a frightened because they thought he was a ghost. Now, why would the disciples of Jesus think that the man was a spirit? Did Jesus look like a ghost? Did he look like a spirit and the answer is no. So he then basically shows them his hands and his feet and he says, it is really me.

So what's the point that Jesus is trying to prove here? What's the idea? Flesh and blood. Touch me and see a spirit has no flesh and bones as you see me have. So it seems then that the continuing motif in all these narratives is that Jesus is trying to prove his identity to the disciples through some other means.

In other words, look at the alleged crucifixion wounds and believe that it is me. What about John's gospel? On chapter 21, Jesus appears to his disciples on the lake of the show of Tiberius. And when he appears to them, they sat and had breakfast with him, but none of them dared to ask who he was because they were sure it was Jesus.

Now, why should the writer of the gospel say that? Why should anyone have any doubt? Why should anyone doubt that this is Michael Kona, that this is brother Johann Erasmus and this is Yusuf, if he was there with them at that particular time? Mary, we are told when she comes to a tomb and Jesus appears to her, what does she think? She suspects that he is a gardener. Now, why would Mary think that Jesus is a gardener? And we are told that the way in which Mary

Jesus mentioned her name Mary, that's when she recognized that this in fact is really Jesus. So it seems then that there is some distinction and problem in terms of the narratives.

And I'm told quite interestingly that women are quite good with hearing and identifying voices. And interestingly enough that when Jesus mentioned Mary, that's when she recognized who he was. So, Mike basically needs to show clear evidence of positive identification of Jesus in all his post-resurrection crucifixion appearances.

And this is where the problem occurs for all apologists because they seem to rely on a few sayings of Paul as if that would basically vindicate their particular position. It's interesting to note that Mike has not dealt with the issue of the resurrection and yet that is a critical point for Christian belief. If we as Muslims, all of us today, are simply left with the belief that Jesus died by crucifixion, then what are we saying? We are saying that he died the death of a blasphemer because in Galatians 3.13 we are told that Christ died being made a curse.

He died as a curse. And so therefore you'd have Paul saying if Christ be not risen from the dead, our preaching is vain and our faith is vain. So, of course, if Jesus did not die in a cursed death, then there is no problem in believing in him.

Hence, what you'd find, the Quran which causes Muslims to believe in that Jesus did not die the cursed death, is not the problem but in fact the solution. If Mike wants Muslims to believe in Jesus, then the best way is for him to encourage Muslims to keep on believing in the Quran. Because if a Muslim were to disregard the Quran, then logically he has no reason to believe in Jesus.

If we are saying that Jesus died a blasphemous curse, he died as a curse, as a blasphemer, Mike must be prepared to prove whether he's debating Muslims, former Muslims or anyone else, that Jesus was in fact dead that he rise from the dead and not simply appeared to be dead from a distance before he came back to life. It's interesting to note on this particular point that if we believe the Gospels, the disciples obviously expected the resurrection, but no one has yet been able to point out a single passage in the Old Testament which foretold the resurrection narratives. The Jews never held such a belief, and it's true that there are passages in the New Testament which speak according to the Scriptures, but there's no reference.

What do the Gospels tell us, Matthew and Mark, at the most critical juncture of Jesus' life, what happened? What happened? They all forsook him and fled. Al-Malhat al-Farat. And the point is that if the disciples had witnessed the crucifixion and the resurrection and written down the impressions, then much of what remains obscure would basically become clear.

The earliest testimony that of Paul was written about 25 years after the event, and you find a development. Very soon the disciples, confused by the grain, Christological distortions, became incapable of restoring it in its original form. Let's look at the earliest source, which Mike pointed out.

First Corinthians chapter 15 verse 3 to 8, where he says, first of all, I deliver unto you that which I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. And he was buried, and he rose again from the dead, and he was seen of Cafus, then of the twelve, then of five hundred, of whom the greater part remained unto this present but have fallen asleep. Now there's a problem here.

Paul, particularly in this particular narrative, has no personal knowledge, and he's delivering first what he actually received at Jerusalem from James and Peter. The list of appearances that he presents here seem to be chronological, but it's noteworthy that Paul does not mention any appearance to Mary Magdalene or any other woman, nor does he mention the appearance to Ananias. Now if he had known of all these appearances, surely he would have mentioned them, but why does he not mention them? It follows as a matter of course, and James and Peter themselves must also be ignorant of this fact.

Paul speaks of Jesus having appeared to Peter by himself, but of this the gospels are silent, and then to the twelve apostles Judeas having killed himself, only eleven were left, and Matthias was selected subsequently. We know that none of the evangelists witnessed the resurrection of Jesus. We have the apostles of Peter, James, John and Jude, all of whom are said by the evangelists to have seen Jesus after he rose from the dead, but in none of their persons is there any mention.

Much lesser Jesus was seen. Now coming to this particular issue on the crucifixion, and I said they are both intertwined together, the death according to Jurgen Mokman, the death of Christ is a center of all Christian theology about creation, about some rest or their focal point rest in the crucified Messiah. Now it's quite interesting that even the idea of the cross or the crucifixion, you have a slide where Egyptians and Egyptian illustration where, what are they wearing? They were in crucifixes, thousands of years before Jesus, something which was borrowed by the Catholics.

For that particular reason you find the Jehovah's Witnesses would say that Jesus was not crucified but was placed on a stake, because of the fact that in prehistory predating Jesus by thousands of years there were many individuals who were similar to Jesus. And were purportedly crucified and rose from the dead. One particular example is this individual, of course, you have individuals like Bacchus, sun gods, Mithra, Mithraism, look at the background of Mithraism, similar accounts paralleling that of Jesus.

Conventional Christian understanding of the crucifixion is derived from the Gospel accounts, but we need to ask ourselves how accurate is a source, and in what grounds should we basically accept them. Is a source reliable? Matthew was written in about 100 AD, John 110 according to higher criticism, look in the year 75 and mark in the year 60 to 65, decades after the event, because many of these authors were even apparently dead at the time of the compilation. And we need to understand that the above date sign theory only, as a manuscripts date later, the Jester B.T. papari dates much later, you look at the major Codex, Saniticus,

Alexandrianus and Vaticanus, third and fourth, fifth, sixth century.

This is basically the relationship between the Synoptic Gospels, and what you'd find is that Matthew and Luke would use Mark's account, and there's a triple tradition between all the Gospels, there's a double tradition, there's accounts which are unique only to Matthew, accounts you need to look, and accounts unique to Mark. And it's important that we understand this when particularly looking at the narrative accounts. The books, known as the Gospels, are not heard of until 160 AD, no writer makes mention of them at all.

Before Gospels were unknown to the early Christian father, such as Justin Martyr and Tatian. What about Paul? When Paul wrote his epistles, there was no such thing as the Gospels, and so the accounts of the crucifixion and resurrection were largely unknown. The earliest documents of the epistles of Paul, written allegedly in 55 to 64.

No evidence exists that Paul wrote Hebrews, one and two Timothy. When Paul wrote, there were no Gospels, and this is universally accepted by the vast majority of scholars. This is Robert Walter Funk from the Jesus Seminar, that the earliest gospel Mark, which Mike obviously accepts, was not an eyewitness.

He was reporting information, basically sent to him by a third and outside party. And so the information that we have, if your source is in question, then how can we use that source as a means in terms of which to rely on particular accounts? Now, I would submit that the idea of the crucified Messiah is a contradiction in terms. Look at these passages, 1 Chronicles 16:22, 2 Chronicles 6:42, Psalms 28, 8, all these give the indication that the Messiah is not to be touched.

Do not touch my Christ. Oh Lord God, do not reject your Christ. The Lord is their strength.

The Lord saves his Christ. Hebrews 5, 7, who in the days of his flesh when he offered up prayers to him who could save him from death, and his prayers were heard, or his prayers were answered. That begs the question.

Let's move on further. What about the definition of crucifixion? I'm not going to spend too much of time on this, but all I can say that the act of nailing or binding a person to a cross for execution or exposing a dead corpse according to the Oxford Companion of the Bible, the method of execution used by the Romans, crucified can therefore mean to put to death by fastening on a cross, crucifixion is thus death by being handed on a cross. Some would argue that even being impaled on a cross without dying is a form of crucifixion, but I'm not going to argue on that particular point.

There were two methods for crucifixion, the fast method and the slow method. The Romans never confused the two. I'll come to that in a short while.

In the narrative that you find on the crucifixion, according to Matthew and Mark, it was about the ninth hour that Jesus complained of having been forsaken by God, and that it was shortly after this that he apparently yielded up the ghost. Mark gives us a time that when Jesus was put

on the cross, it was the third hour. Therefore, according to these two, Jesus was then on the cross for six hours.

Luke fixes the sixth hour as the time when Jesus actually gave up the ghost, and he mentions the darkness from the sixth to the ninth hour. On the other hand, John says that it was about the sixth hour that Pilate set in judgment of Jesus. Even if we assume that Jesus was put on the cross instantly after the sentence, Jesus could not have remained on the cross for more than three hours.

And the atrocity of crucifixion pierced no vital organs. In other words, a person could stay on the cross for a long time and basically survive. The bleeding of the hand stopped and was never fatal.

The real cause of the death was the unnatural position that the person basically was placed on. I mean, the exhaling was unable to exhale the carbon dioxide, and so he basically suffocated. But to make the death quick what they would do, the Romans would break the legs.

They'd break the legs and then you have a quick fast death. If they don't break the legs, you have a long lingering death. William Hannah, in his life of the Christ, asserts that a victim almost always survived the first day, lived generally over the second day and occasionally even up to the third day.

Those who assert that Jesus did not die on the cross cite many instances of person crucified, and one is called Josephus, who I believe Mike had made mention of. He says he sees three people being crucified, and he asks the ruler Titus Caesar to bring them down, and they all brought down alive. They then give a medical treatment.

Two of them die anyway, but one basically survives. And so it cannot be pointed out that Jesus has a Jew as such, and that particular point you have a case where people are surviving the crucifixion. We also further told in Deuteronomy 21 verse 23 that in Jesus's case, his body shall not remain on the tree, but thou shalt any wise bury him that day, for him that his hand is a cursed of God.

So the Jews, as much as they were in a hurry to put Jesus up on the cross, they were in a hurry to bring him down. So it means that he would be for a lesser time on the cross, and there would be lesser reason for Jesus to have actually died. Further we are told that there was darkness from the sixth hour to the ninth hour, the like of which we have not seen.

It was also intense that even the sun was darkened, and the sun ceased to be basically visible. In these circumstances when confusion prevailed, the body of Jesus was basically removed. The bones were not broken.

The bones again was a fulfillment of prophecy. The bones of Jesus would only be basically of use if he was alive, not if he was dead. It's interesting to point out that in John's gospel, and I'll come to this shortly, that when the spear thrust occurs, according to Encyclopedia Biblical,

Jesus was still alive.

That's why today many Christians, in fact, there is no consensus at what particular point did Jesus die? What point? And therefore in the rebuttal, Mike needs to come up and tell us when exactly did Jesus die? If he can point out a specific point in time when Jesus died, then we'll be obviously willing to hear him. But there is no consensus in terms of when Jesus died or not. There was doubt about Jesus's death at the time from the gospels.

Dean Farah writes that the ducetic sect of the Gnostics, Jesus only seemed to have died. Tatullian, for example, had his doubts, and so had Oregon, who basically said, you know, they questioned whether Jesus died or not. Pilate himself marveled.

How is it possible for Jesus to have died in such a short time period? And so we are told in Deuteronomy 21, 23, the body shall not remain on the cross. So to sum up, Jesus was on the cross even all for three hours, according to some gospel accounts, nine hours. According to John 19:14, Jesus was before Pilate at the sixth hour, which means he had been a shorter time on the particular cross.

The crossmates were still alive at the ninth hour. The legs of the crossmates were broken because they were alive. Jesus' legs were not broken.

Pilate marveled. Now why would Pilate marveled? He knew from the past that no man could die in such a short period, and so the crucifixion needed to be resorted to. Pilate accepted, expected Jesus to be alive and not dead.

For that particular reason, we are told, but before I come to that, we are then subsequently told that as a result of that, the Pharisees, thinking that they had been cheated, they come and they then say, command that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples steal him by night and see unto the people he has risen from the dead. So the last error shall be worse than the first. Now what was the first error and what was the last error? The first error could not therefore be other than Jesus had been taken down from the cross much earlier than was necessary, and that his bones had not been broken.

And as a result of which, Jesus according to them had not been killed. That was the first error. They therefore prayed that if he wasn't killed on the cross, they needed to keep the sepulchre secure so that he would eventually die inside the tomb, but they were day late.

They were day late because Jesus could have been removed from the tomb even on the Friday evening. So there is one peculiar feature about the alleged death of Jesus. No way in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John is a positive statement of an eyewitness recorded that Jesus died on the cross, or that he was dead, or that they removed him from the cross of placed him in the tomb.

None of the disciples was present on the spot, and the Jews as we already know had their own particular doubt. Now, my gives us the indication that crucifixion, there's a very low chance of

surviving crucifixion. Well, let me tell you this, in the Philippines annually, people are crucified.

They are nailed to the cross, and they hung up, and they are tied. This is one example. These are mass crucifixions that take place in the Philippines where they are tied.

And forget about the Philippines. Here is the Afrikana mince, Peter Funderberg. This South African didn't want one better than the Filipinos.

And this is from a town in Cozzolan, a town called Newcastle, where this individual had a six-inch nail driven through him, and he was basically put up and hanged up and kept there. And what happened did he die? Did he die through crucifixion? Of course not. A four-inch nail was driven through Mr. Funderberg.

An eight-inch spike was piercing his thigh, and basically many people thought that the ceremony was disgusting. But the point is, he was crucified. He didn't die.

So there is a high chance of surviving the particular crucifixion. In the market account, Pilate, when first requested to release the crucified body of Jesus for burial, expressed amazement that Jesus had died. Now, it's obvious that Luke and Matthew make no mention of this.

Why not? Raymond Brown thinks that the reason that Matthew and Luke omitted mention of this is that the readers of Mark, learning of Pilate's initial doubt, may also exercise the same doubt. So in Mark's Gospel, you have the doubt of Pilate, Pilate marvelling. And if Matthew and Luke had those particular narratives, then we'd have a situation where basically the readers of Matthew, Luke, and subsequently John would have those same particular doubts.

The next question Brown addresses was the length of time that Jesus had hung on the cross so short that his death might have amazed authority. I mean, let's look at it from this angle here. The fact that Jesus is believed to have been seen alive after the crucifixion may mean that he survived the attempt on his life.

Unless we have clear evidence that he died in the process. Let's look at Pontius Pilate. He was a man of influence.

Did he want Jesus dead? Did he? No. According to the Bible, Pilate wanted to do free Jesus, but the Jews said, well, blackmail you if you free him and you no longer a friend of Caesar's. So if there was a way to let Jesus escape without him being blackmail and without a case to present to Caesar, in that particular case, basically Pilate would let him go free.

Pilate's wife was another person of influence. According to the Bible, she was having nightmares on account of Jesus. Due to this nightmare, she told him no harm should come to Jesus.

By the way, Mike could perhaps answer where was the governor's wife on the night of Jesus' entombment? We may suppose she was with her husband. But then again, where was he

husband? The centurion who was apparently in charge of the crucifixion proceedings was another person of influence declaring Jesus dead. But he believed in Jesus.

He said, truly this man is the son of God. He believed in Jesus before making the declaration that Jesus is dead. So after he believed in Jesus, what interest would he have in completing the act of killing Jesus? So if people thought that Jesus was dead and he knew that that was not the case, well, in that situation, let Jesus go free.

But he had escaped death by the skin of his teeth. And again, where was the centurion on the night of the entombment of Jesus? We don't know. To sum up then, given the claim that Jesus appeared alive in the flesh to his disciples, a share analysis of the gospel records about the death of Jesus coupled with a little common sense leads us to suspect that his death was a gross misdiagnosis from a distance.

In conclusion, Mike obviously cannot tell us when Jesus actually died. I want to skip these passages, but it's interesting that in the garden of Gethsemane, I mean, before he goes to Gethsemane, Jesus prepares his disciples. He says, sit ye here while I pray ye yonder.

And he took with him Pete and the two sons of Zebedee. And before going to Gethsemane, he tells them, how many of you have swords? Those who don't sell your garments and buy swords. Now, why would Jesus ask these disciples to buy swords? We know they never used them because of the Roman soldiers, but he was preparing to defend himself.

In the garden of Gethsemane, he began to be sorrowful, and Mike concedes this point where Jesus says, take this cup away from me. Take this burden away from me. Help me.

Now, if someone asks God for help, will God not help? Look paints it clearly. He says in Bing and Agony, he started sweating, and his sweat was as if great drops of blood fell on the ground. The effectual fervent prayer of a rightful man availeth much.

A cynic once remarked that it would even bring God down from his particular throne. We would say when it says that God heard Jesus' prayer, it means that God accepted Jesus' prayer. And they appeared an angel, strengthening him.

So the Jews had miscalculated regarding the enthusiasm demonstrated by these disciples. And what happened at the most critical juncture? All these disciples forsook him and fled. We further told that the centurion saw that he was dead.

Now, what does it mean? Did they have stethoscopes to verify that he was dead? Of course not. How could you witness 2,000 years ago? But even today, people who are certified dead in post-mortem reports are said to be living. Look at this.

These are reports. A little girl who dies tells us she came back to life. Man died for two hours, still lives.

He died for four minutes. Man's heart stops, but he lives on. Back from the dead after being thought dead for two days.

Corpse wink at undertaker. Was he dead or alive? This is a society of people. Their challenge to having being dead and coming back from the dead.

They were actually not dead, but they were certified dead by post-mortem reports. 2,000 years ago, there were no post-mortem reports, no specializations. We don't know what really happened.

And the probability of Jesus surviving was exceptionally high. I do understand that I'm giving a time to stop. I'll just conclude on this particular point, that Daniel Smith, in the post-mortem vindication of Jesus in the same queue, argues that there was a Christian concept according to which Jesus was assumed into heaven.

And according to Smith, this view is supported by the pre-market narrative. But whereas Smith insists that Jesus was taken up dead in the manner of Moses and Isaiah, his study also highlights that the cube gospel, which serves as a source for Matthew and Luke, do not speak of the death and resurrection of Jesus. The German scholar, Dieter Zeller, argues on the base of the cube gospel that the early belief entailed the assumption of Jesus alive into heaven as was the case of Enoch and Elijah.

And this position is the exact position, as I've argued when the Quran says that they kill him not, no crucified him, but it was made to appear so unto them. And that is basically what the Quranic position states. So I'll be interested in hearing what Mike suggests in the rebuttal, and I hope we can continue in this meaningful and amicable format.

Thank you, and God bless you. Okay, we now get to the interesting part of this discussion, where there's going to be chance for a rebuttal. Mike is going to have a 15-minute rebuttal now, although he's going to get a minute and a half extra, because Yusuf refused to acknowledge my authority as moderator, and went a minute and over, one and a half minutes over, so Mike, you've got 16 and a half minutes.

Ladies and gentlemen, Mike. Well, thank you for that opening statement, Yusuf, and since you're interested in hearing, I'll say, I won't keep you waiting. Now, in my opening statement, I said that I was going to defend two major contentions.

Number one, there are good reasons for believing that Jesus died by crucifixion, and two, there are no good reasons for denying it. So now I'd like to review those two major contentions in light of what Yusuf just argued. Let's start with my first major contention.

There are good reasons for holding that Jesus died by crucifixion, and here I provided six reasons. First, I said the reports of Jesus' death by crucifixion are early. Yusuf did not respond to this.

Second, I said they appear in unsympathetic and even hostile sources. Yusuf did not respond to this argument. Third, I said that there are reports of Jesus' death by crucifixion appear in multiple independent sources, such as the unsympathetic sources, many of those that are independent of themselves, much in the early Christian literature, and even if we look at the gospel sources, you're looking at Mark, ML, John, and plus there's multiple literary forms.

This is the strongest kind of multiple attestation historians can hope for, period. Yusuf didn't respond to this. I said that the early reports of Jesus' death by crucifixion appear in sources that are embarrassing, such as I mentioned the Jewish and Christian martyrdom literature and compare that with the passion narratives and the synoptics.

Yusuf didn't respond to that either. Fifthly, I argued that there is a very low probability of surviving crucifixion. Yusuf did respond to this.

First of all, he said that Pilate was surprised. This is in Mark 15:44. He was surprised that Jesus had survived.

Yes, but we have to look at the text too. This is called the cherry picking fallacy, because the cherry picking fallacy is like when you pick, the cherry picker picks a few really ripe cherries out the tree and presents them is that's what the whole tree is saying. But if someone looked at the cherries on the tree and found that the rest of them weren't anywhere near being ripe, in other words, presenting those ripe cherries gives a distorted view of what the tree is all about.

And that's what we have here. Pilate, yes, he was surprised that Jesus died quickly. But same chapter, in fact, within just a couple of verses, because that's 15:44 of Mark 15:37, Jesus breathed his last.

15:39, the centurion saw how Jesus breathed his last. 15:45, Pilate ascertained from the centurion that Jesus was dead. What about he says, well, the centurion saw Jesus was dead.

Did he see him dead or did he surmise he was dead? And then he says there's multiple accounts in modern times with people who were presumed dead, but they were really alive after all. Yes, that's correct. But none of the instances involve an executed person.

And there's a big difference there. Roman executioners would know when the victim was dead, because they weren't pushing up for error. And Yusuf is correct here.

They would die of too much carbon dioxide built up in the lungs from being in the down position, and they would have to pull up or push up on their legs to expel that excess carbon dioxide and then go back. And of course, they keep doing this. You break their legs so they can't push up anymore.

They die of very painful death of convulsions, painful convulsions of too much carbon dioxide. So it was fairly easy to tell when a person was dead. He said, well, Pilate was reluctant to have Jesus crucified.

Yes, but we have to look at history here, because Pilate had a protector in Rome named Saginas. And just recently, Saginas had been executed by Tiberius Caesar on suspicion of treason. So of course, Pilate knows that Caesar's got his eyes on him, and Pilate's not going to do any missteps that's going to cause suspicion.

So as soon as the Jewish leader said, if you release this man, Jesus, you are no friend He says, well, people in the Philippines are crucified and hung up all day, and they don't die. That's correct, but they aren't scourged beforehand as the Romans scourged their victims. The Roman philosopher and lawyer Seneca, perhaps the brightest mind of the first Roman mind of the first century, described crucified victims after scourging as being maimed, misshapen, that does not sound like the way folks are in the Philippines.

The folks in the Philippines aren't nailed in the same spots in the hands and the feet. They have something to stand on, which the ancient victims of crucifixion in Rome didn't have. They didn't have these little platforms that they put the feet on.

That didn't come until the third or fourth century. So it's not at all the same process. Okay, he also said that it was shown in antiquity that victims could last up to three days.

That's correct. Outside of Jerusalem. You see Josephus in his Jewish wars, book four, section 317 talks about that in the day just before the fall of Jerusalem, and this would have been a couple of years before, maybe in the year 67, 68, that the Romans hired some missionaries.

They came into Jerusalem, they killed some of the Jews, and it says that the Jews were outraged because they refused to bury given proper burials. It was the practice of the Jews in Jerusalem to remove the crucified and the condemned prior to sunset and give them a proper burial. So irrespective of what the Roman policy was outside of Jerusalem, they did make exceptions in Jerusalem according to extra biblical ancient historians.

He also said that Jesus bones weren't broken and Jesus was alive. It said that Jesus was alive when he was pierced. Well, no, he wasn't either.

John 19:33 says, so the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and the other who had been crucified with them, verse 33, but when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. So we see that's mistaken.

He says, there were no eyewitnesses in any gospels that saw Jesus died. Yes, there were. The Gospel of John.

And even many skeptical scholars like Elaine Pagels and others will say that even James Charlesworth did Princeton. Elaine's Pagels at Princeton will say that the Gospel of John does contain eyewitness testimony. They dispute whether the author of the Gospel of John was John the Apostle or a minor disciple that would be the beloved disciple.

But most scholars today agree that there is eyewitness testimony in the Gospel of John and that the crucifixion scene comes from an eyewitness. Argument number six, I argue that Jesus is a true prophet who prophesied his imminent death. And here I provided three texts for which we can show with very strong, very high degree of reasonable historical certainty that Jesus prophesied his imminent death.

And I showed that there is a catch 22 involved here because if Jesus died an imminent death, as he prophesied, well then the Quran is mistaken because it says he didn't. On the other hand, if Jesus did not die an imminent death as he prophesied, well then the Quran is a true prophet and he would have been a false prophet if he didn't. In either sense, the Quran is mistaken, it is not the word of God.

Now, Yusuf provided eight arguments of his own then for rejecting Jesus' death by crucifixion. Number one, he said God exalted Jesus instead of having him die. He didn't provide any text and support.

But you know what's interesting, you can find some text in the New Testament, for example Philippians chapter two, the kenosis hymn, in which Jesus is exalted and it doesn't mention his resurrection. But he does mention Jesus' death there and because Paul mentions Jesus' resurrection in numerous other ways and we see it in the early Karigma, that is the official apostolic preaching, we know that resurrection would have been involved in that. It's maybe like talking about the World Cup now and let's say South Africa wins, let's hope they do.

And let's say they win, maybe you don't talk about this blowout that happened today. What was the score? It was amazing. It was huge, you guys kicked some butt, it was amazing.

So these would certainly include death as the Philippians two hymn does. Number two, he said Jesus died, would have had to have died then if the Scriptures of the New Testament is correct as a blasphemer and as a cursed one. Well, the Jewish charge was of blasphemy because of Jesus' statement before the high priest that he claimed to be the Messiah, the Son of God and the apocalyptic Son of Man in Daniel 7, who would be worshiped and served as only God is served.

In other words, he was saying, my father and I have the same DNA. We're made of the same stuff and I'm going to come back as a cooccupant on his throne. That's why he was charged with blasphemy.

It doesn't mean he's a blasphemer. It only means you're a blasphemer if what you're saying is false. The Jews, leaders didn't believe it.

Did he die as a curse? Yes. So he could be an atonement for our sins. Number three, he argued about parallels in other dying and rising gods.

And he mentioned two, Mithras and Orpheus. But this is mistaken. There is no reference to a death or resurrection in Mithras anywhere.

I challenge him to produce a primary source, not an internet infidel who's published on there and your only credential to publish on the web is you got to be able to breathe. Publishing on the web does not make you a world-class scholar by publishing on the world-wide web. I want a primary source from antiquity that predates Christ that mentions a death of Mithras.

He mentioned Orpheus. Orpheus did not die, but entered the underworld to rescue his wife. But he emerged without her that that isn't a resurrection and there was no crucifixion.

Orpheus was killed later when attacked by some women and torn to pieces. His hand sang as it floated down the river. So I don't see where this really has anything to do to call into question the crucifixion of Jesus.

He says, well, the gospels were unknown before Justin. That's false. Pappius around the year 110, perhaps even earlier, mentions the writing of the gospels of Mark, Matthew and John.

And then later on, it's Justin who mentions Luke. He says that Mark was not an eyewitness. No, but Pappius does record that Mark recorded the memoirs of Peter.

And this is multiply attested. It's a unanimous voice within the early Christian literature. Then he said, well, a crucified Messiah is a contradiction.

And he said, you know, don't touch my anointed ones and do my prophets no harm. This is God's command. But just like in the Quran, there's no promise that people are going to keep God's commands.

He says, now I know that the Lord saved his anointed. Yes, his anointed was saved from God's final and never ending punishment. Well, then he quotes Hebrews 5, 7. And I understand that this is a confusing verse for a lot of Muslims, where it says that Jesus offered a prayers to God who could save him from death and his prayers were answered.

Ladies and gentlemen, I want to submit to you again that Yusuf has once again committed the cherry picking fallacy because if you continue to read through Hebrews, you find in the letter of Hebrews, you find numerous verses that talk about Jesus death. For example, in chapter 2, verse 9, remember, this is the same letter of Hebrews 5, 7. Hebrews 2, 9. Jesus, because of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor so that by the grace of God, he might taste death for everyone. 2, 14, just 5 verses later.

Now, since the children have flesh and blood in common, Jesus also shared in these so that through death, he might destroy the one holding the power of death. That's the devil. Hebrews 13, 20, and 21, now made the God of peace who brought up from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant.

Jesus our Lord. So we see that Hebrews 5, 7 is probably referring to God's lifting of his final and never ending judgment. Number 6, he presents some sort of conspiracy theory between Pilate's wife and the centurion.

Well, used as an attorney, so I'm just going to challenge him. You can't just make some kind of a wild conspiracy theory. Where's your first century evidence? Give us some.

And until we see that, we can't take this seriously at all. 7, he says, you can't say Jesus died. I can't say it's a problem because I can't tell the specific hour in which Jesus died.

Well, if Yusuf, is that really a big thing for you? Then tell me the precise hour that Muhammad received surah 4. Finally, he talked a lot about the appearances and gave all these different kind of arguments and saying about the appearances and the disciples doubted what's seeing him or they didn't recognize him and look listen, I'd be happy to address these. The resurrection of Jesus, the historical evidence is my area of expertise. I published a volume with IVP academic last year that's over 700 pages on this topic.

So, I would love to talk about this. If Yusuf wants to debate about the resurrection and the appearances, let's take a half hour break after this debate and I'm ready to go. But that is not the topic we agreed upon this evening.

More than a month ago, we have an email trail that says that Yusuf agreed to tonight's topic. Did Jesus die by crucifixion in the first century? And so, I am not going to go off topic tonight. I'm going to stick to our topic, the one that we agreed upon.

He said, well, they're linked. Yes, Jesus' death and resurrection are linked because they're linked because Jesus' resurrection would be of indication. Well, vindication of what? Of what Jesus claimed about himself.

Well, I guess that can lead to another debate too. In fact, after we're done the resurrection debate, we can break for half an hour and I'll be ready to go on that one as well. We can be here all night.

That's why we had to focus on this one. Did Jesus die in the first century by crucifixion? And remember, the importance of this debate is if he did, then Islam is false. If he did not, Christianity is false.

I think it's become rather clear already this evening where the evidence points. Thank you. For me, the main issue is as for the main contention of the debate in terms of the crucifixion and the resurrection, the two issues cannot be separated.

Mike wants to basically separate them so that he can call to witness the fact that the world of scholars have no hesitation in pronouncing Jesus' death by crucifixion. But if in the world of scholarship per se, it is taken for granted that Jesus did not rise from the dead. Now, Mike wants to have it both ways.

First, he wants to use the scholars to pronounce that Jesus was dead and then to assert that Jesus arose. He has to believe that because Paul says if Christ be not risen, then our faith is vain and our preaching is vain. You have nothing to believe.

So the point, Mike, is you cannot have your cake and eat it at the same time. If a doctor pronounces a man dead and turns around, only to be told that the man is still moving, would he still maintain his verdict? The only reason the scholars maintain the verdict that Jesus died by crucifixion is their firm conviction that the gospel narratives about Jesus' resurrection are either fictional or otherwise speak of a spiritual resurrection or alternatively speak of an indication that Jesus had in fact survived and had appeared alive to his particular disciples. But Mike hosts a physical resurrection as a historical event.

And I think that you should maintain that as a Muslim, if we believe that Jesus is a true prophet, but if we are to forsake this belief, as Mike would want us to have to do, then we'll have to conclude with the scholars that Jesus did not rise from the dead as a historical event, whereas he died as a historical event. And since the death, according to Mike and his fellow apologists, would immediately we would conclude that Jesus was a false messiah and he died as a curse. It's quite interesting that Mike says that I haven't dealt with the early accounts, but Mike, I did deal with it.

I mentioned quite clearly that Paul has no knowledge and he's delivering, first of all, what he received from James and Peter. And the list of appearances that he basically presents are not in chronological order. I dealt with that, Mike.

The second issue about the fact about the passion narratives being particularly credible. Well, let's look at this. Let's turn to the authenticity of the gospels.

Look at the evolution of the gospels. Mark ends with verse 8, chapter 16, verse 8, verse 9 to 20 is thrown out as a fabrication, the account of his resurrection. There is no description of Jesus' reappearance.

Matthew adds a reappearance to his disciples, but the latter doubt. Luke has them make sure. John increases a number of appearances to the extent of removing Thomas from the Easter scene so that Jesus could appear the following week.

Thus we see that as we move from one gospel to the next, from earlier to later, the number of incidents and the number of witnesses increase. What about the crucifixion narratives? Mike says that the passion narratives are all credible. Are they? Look at this.

It is at the crucifixion scene, for example. If you look at one gospel going to the next, you'd see that the number of Jesus' followers increase. His mother, for example, together with a male disciple is mentioned only in John.

Whereas in Mark and Matthew, the woman looked from afar. In Luke, not only the woman, but all is acquainted to the standard of distance. But in John, Jesus talks to his mother and disciple, and hence the eye within earshot.

So in some, the later the gospel, the more the writer tries to show evidence of the death and resurrection of Jesus, and we need to basically deconstruct that. It's important in evaluating

debates, Mike, that we bear our mind and objective in debating. You see, the purpose of debating is simply for the purpose of scoring points.

Then that could be a barrier to establishing the truth. If we want to, now, cobble and say, look, the topic is the crucifixion or crucifixion, but it's not just a crucifixion or crucifixion. What was the first century fate of Jesus? For a Christian, the belief is that Jesus died, and if he died as a curse, therefore Paul makes it intrinsic, that he needs to arise from the death.

And again, as I mentioned, you can't have your cake and eat it at the same time. Mike cannot now refer to those particular scholars, and then assert that the resurrection of Christ is historical. Because those scholars who he basically relies upon to say that Jesus died do not accept that Jesus would resurrect from the dead.

Or that if Jesus appeared, we need to basically ask, was he dead in the first place? Mike's proof, for example, on the crucifixion. He says that Jesus died for crucifixion, and he says all historians agree with it, and it's multiple tested. I didn't have time to deal with that in my opening issue.

But my specific response is that the historians who agree on the death agree that his death is complete and final. Every homicide detective and historian knows that a person must be presumed to have died only after he was alive. If we tell these very historians that Jesus was seen alive after the event of his death, then they would either disregard our claim that Jesus was seen alive, or they would conclude that Jesus was not really dead in the first place.

On the other hand, Mike cited the historian Josephus, who wrote on the return that he found three of his friends hanging alive. Now, Jesus was by all accounts no more than a few hours, and how did he die so soon? It's interesting that Mike cited the Josephus story as an evidence of the effectiveness of crucifixion in death for the two men died. But he seems to have ignored, Mike seems to have ignored the other logical implications of the story.

The story supports a view that crucifixion takes days to kill its victims. And by the way, Mike, in the Philippines, they just are not crucified, the people are scourged, they scourged themselves. Some of them, you know, you've seen the Da Vinci Code.

You remember the Da Vinci Code, the story about the Opus die, where people would flagellate themselves, and they'd beat themselves, and that's what they're doing, the Philippines, and then they'll crucify themselves, and they survive. Same thing that happened to Peter Funderberg. Mike, conveniently, does not discuss the spear thrust.

The spear thrust recorded in John's Gospel could have killed Jesus if the wound was fatal, and he was historical. But most biblical scholars believe that this was not a historical incident. My demand from Mike is that he himself, does he believe whether this was a historical incident or not? I did not deny that this could have happened in some crucifixion, but all I want to know is did Jesus himself receive such a spear thrust or not? In the end, what many scholars postulate is that the spear thrust in John's Gospel is taken by scholars to be an apologetic addition on the

part of John for theological purposes.

Why? Because if Jesus did not die, as you find the doubt in Mark's Gospel by Pilate, then John says, well, look, let me introduce the spear thrust to say that since crucifixion pierces no vital organs, perhaps he could have died by the spear thrust. But even there, according to Encyclopedia Biblical, at the time of the spear thrust, Jesus was apparently still alive. And again, Mike has not answered the question when exactly did Jesus die? It's inconsequential for a Christian to now wanting to know when did Muhammad receive Surah 4 was 157, because that dates Christianity 600 years later.

The theological distrust that Muslims have for Christians and Christianity is not the same as the theological distrust that a Christian can have for Christians. So it's a weak argument to now say, well, I don't know when Jesus was actually killed or when he died, but now by implication, can you tell me when Surah 4 basically came up? That's a poor argument. Mike went on to say that the Romans were expert executioners.

But even so, at the time mistakes were made, I gave you the post-mortem reports where people were certified dead, where their post-mortem reports conducted in the first century, were there any doctors to feel the status scope of Jesus to see he had died? Did the centurion feel his pulse? Mike said he surmised. A case in point was given from Acts 14 of the Bible where Paul was stoned and he was left for dead. But when the executioners left, what happened to Paul? What happened to Paul? Did he die? He got up and walked away.

There were, of course, not Roman executioners, but the story nevertheless points to the inadequacy of the post-mortem executions at that time. You can also cite the historian, Pliny the Younger, who complained of the human situation being as it is that we often fail to know if a person is really dead. One may add the gospel description of the Roman centurion having expressed his conviction in the innocence of Jesus, and this would indicate that the centurion had no reason to complete the act of killing.

Jesus, the centurion, believed in Jesus. Why would he now want to go out of his way to ensure that Jesus be killed? Why would Pilate want to go out of his way? Yes, initially he didn't want Jesus to be killed. He found no fault in this man.

His wife was having nightmares, and they threatened to blackmail him. But there was a thunderstorm. There was an earthquake.

And Mike, again, has not dealt with the issue of what I had suggested. When they came to the governor, and they said, secure the sepulchre. Let the last error be worse than the first.

What was the first error, Mike? And what was the last error? Deal with the issues at hand. In respect of the idea of the gospel of the accounts being multiple, a test. Again, I've dealt with this particular issue.

The unsympathetic reports. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Well, if on the one

hand, Jesus prophesies his death. And you've given the particular accounts, I believe, in Mark's gospel and a number of other passages where Jesus says he's going to die and be raised on the third day.

And he prophesies his death. Then why is it that at the time of his alleged death, he asks God, or he tells him, God, why have you forsaken me? What was he suggesting? Why does he go in the garden of Gethsemane and plead to God to take this cup away from me? Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt, submitting his will to the will of God. In addition to the question about the death of Jesus, I've also mounted a serious objection to Mike's other points, which he has not acknowledged.

The appearances, the belief of the disciples in Jesus' resurrection and crucifixion from the death, despite their having a predisposition against such a belief, and that this belief was essential for reversing their recent belief that the crucifixion proved Jesus to be a false Messiah. You see, Mike, what you're doing tonight, let's assume all of us were to leave with the idea that Jesus was crucified, and he died. Then what? He died as a blasphemer.

That's it. Finish it for me. It's like this, Mike, you need to deal with both the issues at the same time.

You're using the historians to cite the historicity of the crucifixion, but you're not completing it. You don't want to deal with the issue of the resurrection, which is intertwined, because historically, you cannot prove the resurrection. That's a point that we basically deal with.

You have to have the two. It's like playing football or playing rugby, and each side is playing soccer and playing rugby against each other, and no side wants to score a try, or no side wants to score a goal. Excuse me.

The point I'm trying to say is you cannot have your cake and cannot eat it at the same time. In one of his previous examples in his books, I believe Craig has cited Michael Grant and Hudd Luderman in support of one of his particular views in terms of the later appearances. But these scholars hold that the appearance to the disciples was anything nothing less than a subjective belief in that particular point.

What about the Quranic depiction of the crucifixion? Mike argues that one of the most egregious areas in the Quranic is its denial of the crucifixion, and in response, I have argued that the Quranic cannot be proven incorrect on this particular score. On the other hand, I have offered a plausible interpretation on this particular verse, one that takes into consideration the multiple uses of the term crucifixion, in which the Quranic says that they kill him not in the ordinary sense, nor did they kill him by means of crucifixion. It's important, Mike, that Mike thinks that he has early evidence in respect of the claim of Paul, but it should be noted that it's only a scholarly guess that Paul got the information a few years after the crucifixion event.

Even Paul himself declares that he does not get the teachings from any man but by a

revelation, and so hence we cannot confirm or be certain that he's reporting certain facts as historical and distinct from revelatory information. Much of what Mike basically argues presupposes a gospel account, and he says that the passion narratives are credible and a test. But look at the passion narratives.

They contradict one another. They evolve from one account to the next account. Mike argues that historians agree that Jesus died, but the historians and the historians agree that his tomb was found empty, and the historians agree that Jesus appeared to his disciples.

But the further we go up in the list, we find that the fewer historians will tend to agree. Moreover, it's not the same historians except for a few conservative scholars who will hold on to all three claims. That Jesus died, that the tomb was found empty, and that historians appear to his disciples.

And to be quite frankly, anyone, any historian would conclude that Jesus died because it's quite common knowledge. Anybody who lived 2000 years ago, and he's no longer here, where is he? He's probably dead. And so on that basis, historians would conclude that Jesus probably died.

But my argument is that there was strong evidence to indicate which Mike hasn't dealt with that Jesus had in fact survived. So in summary, I find it strange for Mike to suggest that I haven't dealt with any of his points in the issue of the earlier report. I've stated that Paul hasn't had personal knowledge, and he's delivering what he receives at Jerusalem from James to Peter.

And quite interestingly, in Luke, I believe 1933, we are told specifically that a prophet cannot be killed outside of Jerusalem. It's important. A prophet cannot be killed outside of Jerusalem.

Where was Jesus killed? On this particular point alone, the crucifixion and the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ would be falsified. I thank you, and God bless you. Okay, thank you, Yusuf.

Well, in my opening statement, remember, I said tonight I would be making two major contentions. Number one, there are good reasons for holding that Jesus died by crucifixion. And number two, there are no good reasons for denying it.

I'd like once again to review those two contentions in light of what Yusuf has just said. Let's start with my first one. There are good reasons for holding that Jesus died by crucifixion.

And here I provided six reasons. First, the reports are early. Now, he replied now that Paul had no knowledge, first hand in this creed in 1 Corinthians 15, he got it from Peter and James.

I appreciate that, because we got eyewitnesses. He's mentioned that Peter and James would have been eyewitnesses if they'd seen Jesus. They were his original disciples.

They're the ones that passed the information, and it says he appeared to Kaphas or Peter, then

to the 12, then to more than 500, then to James, then to all the apostles, and then Paul has his own name to the list. So, we got Peter and James on there. We've got eyewitnesses that they saw Jesus risen from the dead.

Then he said that the appearances in 1 Corinthians aren't in order, and Mary's omitted. Well, the reason that Mary's omitted is because this is Karigma. This is the official formal proclamation of the disciples.

And when you're talking publicly like this, the view of women in the first century was very low. It's different than it is today. So, for example, Josephus says, blessed is the man whose children are male.

Whoa! To him whose children are female. He also says, better the law of God, or this is what the Talmud says, better the law of God be burned than placed in the hands of a woman. Burn it all.

So, the view of women was quite low. And in fact, even when you get to the Gospels, like the Gospel of Luke, Luke reports that when the women came back and said from the empty tomb and said they saw angels and that Jesus had been raised, that the disciples didn't believe them. Why? They thought the women were telling frivolous tales.

The Gospels report that Jesus had brothers, four of them, and they named them. He reports that they had sisters as well. But we don't know how many sisters he had and we don't know their names.

Why? Who cares? They were women. Now, when you take that into consideration, of course, when you're going to give the official and formal proclamation publicly, you realize that you're not going to get any kind of mileage by mentioning the women. So, you just brush them out.

You don't mention them. Well, what about, so that's why you don't mention Mary. If the creed came from Peter and James, then why would you, since he's just said that the Gospels were propaganda that were increasingly trying to prove the death and resurrection of Jesus, so he's going to undermine those.

Look, I mean, we could argue on that. I said in my opening statement, I wasn't here to defend the historical reliability of the Gospels. That's another debate.

We can have a fourth one this evening as well. But I'm not going to debate that and defend that right now. All I can say is I'd say to them, well, if you don't like the Gospels, go with the earlier material.

And this creed is very early. It's the earliest thing we have. He says, okay, only a scholarly guess on when this thing was done.

Well, not really, because we know that Paul started the church in Jerusalem in the year 51 around that time, and he's writing Corinthians at the latest, 55, 56. And so when he says, I

delivered to you in the past tense when 51 when he started the church, what I also received before that, so he gets this material before 51. So it's within 17 to 20 years of Jesus' crucifixion.

So it's very early, and he's getting it from the Jerusalem apostles who would have been eyewitnesses. This is quite early stuff. In fact, this creed is the stuff.

It's the kind of stuff historians drool over. It's so based in history. Paul said he did not receive the gospel from man, but from God, from Galatians 1, use of argued.

That's correct. He received the gospel from God. But when he says, I delivered to you what I also received, he's talking about the actual form of the oral tradition, the way it been put in this formula, then the parallelism and all of this that we can see in white scholars acknowledge or grant this as oral tradition.

Like we could get into that. That's, well, it is a lot of fun. He said, well, okay, Mike mentioned Josephus and War's book for section 317 where it was different in Jerusalem.

He said, well, Mike said Josephus is evidence for Jesus' death. No, I didn't. His argument, I had argued that it's a very low probability of crucifixion.

He came back and he said, victims last up to three days. I came back and said, no, not in Jerusalem. So that had nothing to do with me arguing for Jesus' death there.

It's a response to his argument that crucified victims would have lasted a long time. Jesus only lasted a short time. And so there, where we should have doubt that he actually died.

He said, well, people in the Philippines, people scourge themselves like in the Da Vinci Cup. Wow, what a great source to appeal to. Come on.

Do you really think that these guys are going to put all the gusto into it that the Romans did to the point where after scourging someone, they're going to look like they're maimed, misshapen, deformed? And you have others that report, like, for example, Josephus reports that when the Romans scourged people, they came out with their intestines showing. In fact, he reports of a guy who the governor, a couple of times successors after Pilate, scourge the guy, another guy named Jesus who just before the temple was destroyed. One around proclaiming that the temple was going to be destroyed.

And so they filleted him to the bone with scourges. This is not the kind of stuff that you see in Da Vinci Code or what the Filipinos do. Well, I said, number six, Jesus' prophet is a true prophet who prophesied his imminent death.

And so he said, well, why did Jesus say, God, why have you forsaken me if he knew that he was going to die that way? Well, I think when it comes down to it, I mean, you can prophesy something, but when you know you're going to go through a lot of pain and agony and suffering, you may not like it. And Jesus, I think here, was sensing a distance from God. I think

there's more here to the eye than just the physical pain if the atonement is really correct.

All right. So then back to his argument there. So my six arguments still stand.

Now, what about the second major contention that there are no good arguments here against Jesus' death by crucifixion? He argued that Jesus died of blasphemous curse. And I responded that the Jewish charge of blasphemy means that Jesus claimed deity for himself. And he says, the charge of blasphemy.

Mike, finish it. Don't just stop it. Finish it.

If Jesus rose from the dead, then show that he rose from the dead. He's not pulling me off on that rabbit trail. This debate is not on the resurrection of Jesus.

This was clearly articulated and agreed upon by both of us. I'm not going off track. I will wait around.

And if he wants to have a debate a half an hour after this one, I will be here and very happy to do it. Now, then he says, well, Paul left, sorry, I can't read my writing there. I'll have to skip that one and maybe.

Oh, Paul was left for dead, but he wasn't dead. Well, it was illegal for Jews at that point to kill. Only the Romans could kill.

Remember, they said that at the trial with Pilate, it's unlawful for us to kill someone. It didn't come until later on that the Jews were allowed to do this much later, decades later. So this was an illegal stoning that was going on, and it was just a botched or failed attempt.

No one was there to certify this guy was dead because they knew what they were doing illegally. He said, well, the spear thrust was not historical, and many historians agree. Yeah, many historians do question it, but quintillion.

A Roman historian from the latter part of the first century talks about how the Roman executioner should not be forbidden to pierce the crucified. So we see that there is historical precedent to show that this could have occurred. And because John was an eyewitness to this, or whoever the author, whether it was John or the beloved disciple, minor disciple, there's no reason to question this.

Yes, there's some theological implications, but that's okay. So what? That there's theological implications. So what if this is a fulfilled prophecy? Now, he argued when it came to the resurrection, he says, Mike used scholars to confirm Jesus' death, but I didn't use them for the resurrection.

Well, of course, there's not a whole lot of scholars who are going to agree on the resurrection or else they'd all be believers, wouldn't they? But I think that this isn't a lack of evidence. It's because they're allowing their metaphysics, their worldview to guide their historical

investigations. Besides, I'm not arguing that Jesus was dead because scholars agree.

Don't misinterpret me there. I'm saying that the evidence for Jesus' death by crucifixion is so good that it has led scholars to agree that he was dead, even a very skeptical stripe. The secure tomb, he said, well, Mike has the answer.

What about the secure tomb? Well, the disciples were, they secured the tomb so the disciples would not steal the body. Not so Jesus could get up and kind of walk out and show himself around. So it's totally different there.

So it looks like I've got a little bit of time from the other one left over because I know I didn't. No, I didn't. I didn't go over in the last one.

I had some time remaining. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mike.

Thank you once again for that delightful rebuttal. Now, Mike, coming back to this issue about the earliest stride of evidence, the earliest documents of the New Testament, I mentioned this clearly, Mike, and you haven't dealt with this, are the epistles of Paul. And most scholars would suggest that they were written in about the year 55 to 64 of the common era.

How many years later would that be after the crucifixion? Let's assume someone dies now. Or someone is shot. Or someone is killed or hanged.

30 years from now, would a person writing 30 years have the exact same account in terms of the person who resides or was present at the particular incident? Of course not. So when Paul wrote the accounts, they were further no gospels present. This means that the accounts of Jesus's crucifixion and his resurrection were by and large unknown to Paul and his particular readers.

And Mike hasn't particularly dealt with this particular point. Mike, it's no good saying that we can have another debate maybe in the next half an hour. Deal with issues here.

You cannot separate the issue of the crucifixion and the resurrection. If on the one hand you suggest that Jesus was crucified and he died, then he died as an accursed death. And if you want Muslim to just simply believe that he died in a cursed death, then we are going to basically believe he died a reject, a blasphemer.

And he was basically eliminated as a result of which there's no reason to basically believe in Jesus. So I would suggest that Mike needs to basically stand up and encourage Muslims to believe in the Quran. Because by believing in the crucifixion and by accepting the fact which Mike accepts it, Jesus died and accursed death.

He's actually asking Muslims not to believe in Jesus. It's no issue now coming and saying, well, let's deal with the issue of the resurrection later. This is just the issue of the crucifixion.

The topic is what was the first century fate of Jesus? Was he crucified? Did he die? Did he

survive? Did he rise from the dead? The issues are intertwined. Deal with issues at hand, Mike. Don't say let's come back and have another debate on the particular point and then basically appeal to other issues at this point in time.

I believe they intertwined and so on that basis I would submit that we're dealing with the same thing. Now Mike mentions the issue of scourging and so as a result of that because of the scourging Jesus died. But that's interesting, isn't it? Because this issue of Jesus being scourged and beaten up so badly as you saw in Mel Gibson's narration, *The Passion of the Christ* would give you an indication that someone who received such forms of beating and torture would have died in any event.

Rather, a more accurate depiction of Jesus's crucifixion is what we could see probably in the video which is distributed by campus crusade, *Jesus of Nazareth*, basically which gives a far more accurate account. But it's interesting that Mike has to appeal to the issue of the scourging in order to postulate the idea that Jesus died by crucifixion. Why appeal to scourging? Why appeal to scourging? He's basically saying well he's subjected to extreme torture therefore the probabilities of him dying were higher.

But that's not exactly what the gospel is basically. In order to postulate a position you want to introduce a new narrative to say he's subjected to torture as a result of which the probabilities of his death were increasing and so he on all probability died. Now let's look at one particular issue which I'd probably draw people to.

If you look at, I haven't brought my Bible, I've got my Bible here. If you look at one Corinthians where Paul asks a rhetorical question, someone may ask how are the dead raised and with what body do they come? And he gives the rhetorical answer that so is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a natural body, it is sown in corruption, it is raised in corruption.

It is sown in dishonor it is raised in glory. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body, a spirit. There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body.

Now if you look at just one particular post crucifixion appearance, the appearance of Jesus to the upper room in Luke chapter 24 verse 36. And Mike hasn't dealt with any of these points, Mike hasn't dealt with any of the issues pertaining to the appearances where I said that the disciples express a significant amount of doubt. It's intertwined and linked to the particular topic but let's deal with this specific issue.

When Jesus goes to the upper room and he tells his disciples, peace be unto you, we were told that they were terrified. Now why would the disciples of Jesus be terrified? The writer says because they thought he was a spirit. My question is did Jesus look like a spirit? Did he? And the answer is no.

So why did the disciples of Jesus think that the man is a spirit when he didn't look like one? Why? And the answer is quite obvious that the disciples of Jesus were not eyewitnesses or ear

witnesses to the happening. They had heard from hearsay that the master was hanged on the cross. They had heard from hearsay that he had given up the ghost.

They had heard from hearsay that he had died and was buried for three days. All their knowledge was from hearsay. And so naturally at the last juncture of his life in Mark 1450 we are told that at the most critical juncture all his disciples forsook him and fled.

And now he appears before them. And so naturally they think he's a spirit. So what does Jesus say? He says, behold my hands and my feet that it is I myself.

Why would Jesus say such a thing? Behold my hands and my feet that it is I myself. Handle me and see for a spirit has no flesh and bones as you see me have. Now in somebody's language if someone says that a spirit has no flesh and bones does it mean that it has flesh and bones? In other words if we are to look at this particular account and I'm not atomizing the text look at it in its particular context.

Jesus was saying that the body that they were seeing was not a translated body was not a metamorphose body. It was not a resurrected body because the resurrected bodies are spiritualized. Who says so Paul? Who says so Jesus? When the Jews come to question him about the lady with seven husbands what's going to happen in the afterlife when they all want to have her there? Jesus says neither shall they die anymore because they shall be equal unto the angels.

They will be angelized they will be spiritualized they will be equivalent to spirits. And here Jesus is saying a spirit has no flesh and bones as you see me have. Mike what's he trying to say? Why is he saying specifically that? And not only that he goes on further they said while they yet believe not for joy and wondered what does he then say? Have you had anything to eat? And they gave him a piece of broil fish and a honeycomb and he took it and he ate to prove what? What was he trying to prove? Albert Schweitzer in his book in quest for the historical Jesus said that if Christ had only eaten to show that he could eat it would be something docetic and make pretense.

What was he trying to indicate here? And they gave him a piece of broil fish any honeycomb and he took it and he ate before them. A spirit has no flesh and bones as you see me have. What about John's account? In John's account we are told that when Mary Magdalene comes to the tomb we are told that she goes to anoint him.

And she goes up to the tomb and when she comes there she knew not that it was Jesus. Now why could Mary not identify Jesus? Was there an issue about not identifying resurrected bodies? Why is it that Mary Magdalene one woman was not afraid? She was there at Golgotha at Calgary when Jesus was crucified. But 12 men were terrified or 11 men were terrified.

Why is it one woman was not afraid but 11 women were terrified. And then Jesus said unto her woman why we was thou whom seekest thou? She supposing him to be the gardener. Do

resurrected bodies or people who have died by crucifixion and raised from the dead? Do they look like gardeners? Is it possible that he could have been disguised as a gardener? Why was he disguised as a gardener? Is it possible that he didn't die and therefore had to be in constant disguise? And she then says sir if you have borne him tell me where has thou laid him? Not where have you buried him where has thou laid him so that I might take him away? How would Mary take Jesus who was dead away? How? One woman? And then Jesus said unto her Mary and then she recognized as the voice print.

And she lunges out to grab him and what does he say? He says touch me not why not? He says for I am not yet ascended unto my master. In other words in the idiomatic expression of the Jewish language he is saying I am not dead yet. Could she not see that he was in front of her? I am not yet ascended unto my master.

He is in front of her there. Why should he say that? Unless he is implying that he is not dead yet. And not surprisingly then a few passages later John introduces the Easter appearances of Thomas which is not to be found in any of the other particular gospels.

So it's interesting that Mike hasn't dealt with any of these particular issues. I can give more than 30 reasons and we've got half a minute left. More than 30 reasons to show that the truth shines out right through.

More than 30 reasons. From the time of inception, from the time Jesus being reluctant to die having worked out a strategy of defense to his beseech for God for help, to his prayer, to the angel of God strengthening him, to Pilate finding him not guilty, to Pilate's wife being shown a dream, to supposed to be on the cross for only three hours, right up until the prophecy foretold by Jesus, where he says that his miracle would be the miracle of Jonah. My miracle, the only miracle is the miracle of Jonah.

As Joseph or Jonah was, so shall the Son of Man be. Thank you. All right, we will now have Michael have a chance to give his closing statements.

He'll have five and a half minutes for his closing statements because he had the first word after that useful have the last word. Well, thank you. You said this has been very enjoyable this evening.

Again, remember in my opening statement, I said I would be defending two major contentions this evening. First, there are good reasons for holding that Jesus died by crucifixion. And second, there are no good reasons for denying it.

So I just want to kind of wrap this up. I presented six reasons. Now, the only ones that's six that I need to address is the early one, because Yusuf hasn't responded to this others after my rebuttals.

The early, he came back in his second rebuttal here and said that the gospels were unknown to Paul and because they hadn't yet been written. That's right. That just shows how early this was.

And here he is talking about how the gospels had legend and stuff and it, well, I'm giving him the earliest information and he doesn't seem to like that either because it doesn't agree with the legendary stuff later on. I don't get that. The gospels were based on the traditions about Jesus, but Paul got his information from the eyewitnesses who would later form this tradition.

So again, it's pre-Pauline, which means it's very early. He still didn't answer my sixth argument, too, about the Jesus was a prophet who prophesied his death. If he actually died by crucifixion, then Islam is a false religion.

If he died by, I'm sorry. If Jesus did not die by crucifixion, Christianity is a false religion. If Jesus died by crucifixion, Islam is a false religion.

Now, about some of the arguments he gave on the other side here about arguments to deny Jesus' death by crucifixion, he said that Jesus tells Mary not to touch him because he had not yet ascended, so he wasn't dead. Well, take it within the context. Stop committing the cherry picking.

Ladies and gentlemen, there's enough cherries being delivered here this evening. I hope you like them because there's enough to go around for everyone. When you look at the statement here in the context, this is immediately after the angels said that Jesus has been raised from the dead.

So, if you're going to take this thing about Jesus saying, I haven't sent it to my father yet, why are you going to accept that but not the proclamation of the angels that he's been raised from the dead? Now, the one I did forget that I didn't see in my last one that I couldn't make out is that when Jesus died, he wants to know for me when Jesus died, and he said he didn't like my argument that, well, you tell me when Siraphore was written, and he says that's a poor argument, I agree. I'm giving it to show the ridiculousness of his argument there. It doesn't really apply.

Okay, he says there's an issue with, did Jesus die? Did he rise? No, this isn't an issue. I showed how we can deal with these separately. And I checked with Johann a little bit, just before the debate, and he confirmed that he sent an email to Youssef confirming that this is what the topic of tonight's debate was going to be on Jesus' death by crucifixion.

The natural versus the spiritual body, and he says, look, the disciples thought that this was a spirit. Why would they think it was a spirit? They thought Jesus was dead, but he appeared to them in body. No, that would have been a resurrection body.

Every single account that mentions this, like Luke, like Matthew, like Mark, like John, like Paul, they talk about the bodily resurrection of Jesus. And in 1 Corinthians 15:44 that it's sown in natural body and raised the spiritual body, I look through all the extant Greek literature from the 8th century BC through the 3rd century. That's 1,100 years, 11 centuries.

There are 846 occurrences of the term *sukakas*, which means natural. There are 1,130, I think,

occurrences of the term *pumatikas* for spiritual. *Sukakas* does not mean physical.

He was right in saying it's natural. So it's not a contrast between physical and spiritual. Material versus immaterial.

That's not what Paul's saying here. He uses the term a little bit earlier. The same two terms in 1 Corinthians chapter 2 verses 14 and 15.

Again, a few chapters earlier than 15 here where Paul says the natural man doesn't understand the things of the spirit, for they are spiritually discerned. In other words, it's kind of like a, you know, Paul is giving out free t-shirts to the members of the church at Corinth saying the wisdom of God here, and then when you look on the other side, it says you wouldn't understand. It's a spiritual thing.

So that's what's going on here. It's not, again, comparing the material with the immaterial. That's a misreading of the text.

So it looks like I've answered all of them here. I appreciate your attention this evening and you guys sitting through this. But I think it has become abundantly clear where the evidence points.

Jesus died by crucifixion in the first century. But I do want to say, since Yusuf does want to deal with the resurrection, I will say this. It didn't end there.

There's some really good news. Jesus did rise from the dead. And I'll wait because there will be, I'll wait around for 30 minutes.

And if Yusuf wants to debate on it, I will be here. Thank you. Thank you, Mark, and it's been great having this debate this evening.

I really enjoyed it. I just want to start by this by saying that it is true that Muslims, I indeed, Muslims due to the Quran, and there would have been no Muslim Christian debate without the Quran. It's also true that Muslims have become interested in denying that Jesus died by crucifixion on the base of Surah 4 was 157.

But if this verse did not exist, neither Quran did not deny the crucifixion. And if the Quran asserted that Jesus died without specifying that he died by crucifixion, I would still debate, Mike, on whether or not Jesus really died at the time that the gospel say that he did. And quite not quite interested in it.

He hasn't given us up to now exactly when Jesus died, and he's bringing up a whole lot of other red hearings. For even in that case, he could have survived the cross and died later. The question by his death is raised not only by the Quran, but by the claim that he was raised from the dead, and by the failure of the gospels to present convincing evidence that Jesus was really dead to begin with.

And it's not a question of, I understand we might have had a miscommunication. I accepted

email communication, but it's Paul that has compounded the problem. Paul made the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, the crux of Christianity.

For him, everything stands or falls on one question. Did Jesus really arise from the dead? Paul, however, declared that Jesus died as a curse for us, which means he is admitting that Jesus died under the curse of God. Now, if Jesus died under the curse of God, what reason do we have to believe that God would vindicate a person who died under his curse? None.

Atheists have no reason to believe this because they start with a hypothesis that there would be no God to vindicate the curse persons. Believers have no reason to suppose that God would want to vindicate a person who was under his curse. If anyone says, as Mike had just concluded, that the accursed person actually rose and came back to life after he was once dead, and he was vindicated by God, we should be prepared to examine the records of the extraordinary event and not just simply say, well, that's not the discussion.

It's not, it is intertwined. I made specific reference to Raymond Brown, who in his two-volume work, *The Death of the Messiah*, writes that crucifixion pierces no vital organs. We must therefore wonder what was the physiological death or cause of the death of Jesus.

Mike hasn't dealt with this issue. Moreover, Brown notes that Mark's gospel, the earliest of the four, indicated that there was some doubt in the part of the Roman governor's pilot that Jesus could have died at that time when the gospels indicate to the time of his death. Again, Mike has not dealt with this particular issue accordingly.

Brown points out that Matthew and Luke both rewrite the episode in their own gospels in such a way as to omit mention that Pilate had that particular doubt. Mike has not dealt with that. The obvious reason for rewriting, according to Brown, is that the readers of Mark's gospel would start entertaining the same doubt that Pilate had, and Matthew and Luke wanted their own particular gospels not to encourage that particular doubt.

Now, on all these points, Mike hasn't dealt with any of these issues. I want to conclude on something positive, and I'll give you a quotation by Gregory Boyd, who posits a whole host of difficulties that plague the penal substitution review. And he says, how we to understand sin and guilt literally being transferred from a guilty person to an innocent person or to animals with the Old Testament sacrifices, what sort of justice is it that punishes an innocent person for what another person did? How are we to reconcile the idea that the father needs to exact payment from, or on behalf of his enemies with Jesus' teaching, an example that we are to love unconditionally and forgive without demanding payment? Along the same lines, how do we reconcile the idea that God cannot be reconciled with sinners without his wrath being satisfied with blood with a pervasive scriptural description of God forgiving people? Again, who died on the cross? Why could God have not chosen an innocent man to pay the price? To which many people will say it's not a perfect sacrifice.

It's not a perfect sacrifice. God had to come down and die for the sins of mankind, to which I

then always ask. Do you then literally mean that God died? Because if that was a case, then who would look after the affairs of the world? And they would say, no, that is not the case.

God didn't die, but then we back to square one. Was it the man? Was it the God? What was the actual deal? How is the view that God requires a kill to have his rage placated, essentially different from the pagan or magical understanding of divine appeasement found in primordial religion throughout history? So having exercised our reason, we should not neglect our faith. The Muslim belief is that it was God's will to save Jesus instead of letting him die at the hands of his enemies.

The person of the greatest power and influence in this was God himself. He has a power to influence the minds of people and God should surely have given Jesus the endurance to live through the pain being affixed to a cross. I'd like to end with a scriptural quotation.

The soul that sinneth it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son. The righteous of the righteous shall be upon him and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

But either wicked will turn from all the evil and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live. He shall not die. That is Islam.

You pay for your sins and I pay for my sins. Thank you. Thanks for joining us today.

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