

# 26-0513wc Neighborly Apologetics

Dr. Del Tackett's Neighborly Apologetics Webinar Series

## **26-0513wc - NA- 9-Jesus Resurrection, Part 4, Dr. Del Tackett**

This detailed summary by Grok / X, (Transcription by TurboScribe.ai)

Del's site: [deltackett.com](http://deltackett.com), [Neighborly Apologetics Series Video link](#),

Class Resources: [NA-links](#), Our website: [wschurchofchrist.org/education.php](http://wschurchofchrist.org/education.php)

See the transcript: [Transcript HTML](#) - [Transcript PDF](#)

## Neighborly Apologetics Summary

**Title:** Christ's Death, **Facilitator:** Scott Reynolds

### **26-0513-Summary: 9 - Jesus Resurrection, Part 4 (0:04 - 1:01:31)**

#### **(0:04 - 5:03) Opening Greeting and Purpose of Neighborly Apologetics**

Del Tackett opens the webinar by thanking facilitator Marc Fey and all participants for attending. He references Marc's prayer and expresses hope that the session will benefit attendees and their neighbors. The series operates under the banner of Neighborly Apologetics, emphasizing the Christian's role in fulfilling the royal law (or Jesus law) to love one's neighbor as described in James. The goal is to build deep, trusted relationships with neighbors, enabling opportunities to share the reason for the hope within, per 1 Peter 3. This equips families to address specific doubts, such as a neighbor like Mrs. Smith who may question whether Jesus truly died due to personal experiences or ideas.

Tackett outlines the broader context of the Neighborly Apologetics topics, focusing on three key questions: Does God exist? Is the Bible reliable? Who is Jesus? These discussions are valuable not only for evangelism but for family conversations around the table or wayside. The current series examines "Who is Jesus?" having previously covered Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah and Jesus' life and works. After a one-month break, the session addresses Christ's death and resurrection, noting the material is extensive. Tonight focuses solely on the death of Jesus and the question "Did Jesus really die?" Tackett identifies two primary contrary theories—the swoon theory and the substitution theory—as key to addressing most objections. The outline includes historical documents on Jesus' death, Roman crucifixion and scourging practices, evidence of death, common-sense considerations, and ethical issues from opposing views.

#### **(5:13 - 12:03) Historical Evidence for Jesus' Existence and Death**

Tackett notes a recent British survey showing 22% of people believe Jesus was not real but a myth or deception, a view that may increasingly apply to neighbors. The webinar prepares Christians and families to respond thoughtfully. Significant non-Christian historical references affirm Jesus:

Tacitus records that Jesus suffered the extreme penalty under Tiberius at the hands of Pontius Pilate (Annals 15); Josephus describes James as the brother of Jesus called the Christ; Pliny the Younger, Celsus (who viewed Jesus as a villain but did not deny his existence), the Jewish Talmud (stating Jesus was hanged on a tree on the eve of Passover), Lucian (Christians worshiping their crucified sage), Mara bar Serapion (on the Jews executing their wise king whose teachings lived on), Justin Martyr (referencing the Acts of Pontius Pilate including miracles and resurrection), and Phlegon (mentioning the earthquake and darkness at Jesus' death). These build impressive extra-biblical evidence for Jesus' existence and crucifixion.

The Gospel accounts, supplemented by Paul's extensive writings and those of Peter, Jude, and James, provide the most compelling testimony. While some discount these as biased (written by followers), Tackett counters that dismissing all non-neutral historical sources would eliminate most history. Paul, initially hostile, converted after encountering the risen Jesus and consulted eyewitnesses Peter and James. All four Gospels attest to Jesus' death: Matthew and John state He "gave up His spirit"; Mark and Luke say He "breathed His last," echoed throughout the New Testament. Tackett acknowledges the slides contain much text, provided as PDFs, to allow reflection on the eternal weight of Jesus' death rather than mere physical cessation. There is no lack of historical evidence; Jesus was tried by Pontius Pilate and sentenced to crucifixion.

### **(12:13 - 19:02) Why the Pushback Against Jesus' Historicity? Heart Issues and Motives**

Tackett questions why there is strong pushback against the well-supported evidence of Jesus' existence and death. Societies like the Jesus Project, books, annual media features (e.g., Time and Newsweek at Easter), and campus clubs exist specifically to debunk Jesus as myth or legend—unlike any equivalent efforts against Plato, Aristotle, or even the more questionable King Arthur. This is telling. He draws a parallel to Holocaust deniers, whose position stems not from evidence but from an a priori desire or motive despite overwhelming counter-evidence. Similarly, neighbors like Mrs. Smith may have a deep need to deny Jesus' existence or death because accepting it undercuts the resurrection and the core of redemption—Jesus paying the penalty for sins.

Debates on these topics reveal weak, contrived rebuttals often descending into conspiracy theories, signaling underlying heart issues rather than strong evidence. The vast majority of honest historians, believer or not (including references to Gary Habermas), affirm the overwhelming evidence for Jesus' existence and death. Tackett urges focusing prayers on neighbors' hearts—asking God to open eyes, soften hearts, and open ears—while building trusted relationships. He cites Rosaria Butterfield's experience of worldview questions arising only after trust was established. Mystics and skeptics attack via Scripture's veracity or conspiracies; undercutting the resurrection (the "grand jewel" of apologetics) often begins by denying Jesus existed or truly died (as the Quran claims). This leads into the swoon theory (Jesus only swooned into a coma and revived) and substitution theory.

### **(19:02 - 32:46) Theological and Narrative Foundation: Jesus' Predictions and Path to the Cross**

Tackett stresses the big picture's importance for families, connecting back to the protected seed line and prophecies culminating in Jesus' birth (the first Kairos moment with heavenly activity). The vast majority of known details about Jesus concern His final three years, especially the last week. He reviews the early creed (1 Corinthians 15) as critical evidence against myth or legend, formed within years in the lifetime of eyewitnesses: Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

was buried, and was raised on the third day. This underscores the gospel's core—that Jesus truly died for sins, was buried because He died, and rose—undermining swoon or substitution ideas.

Jesus' mission was to give His life as a ransom for many (Matthew 20). Tackett describes the narrative arc using an imagined musical metaphor: the disciples experienced joyous, thrilling anticipation during Jesus' miracles (healings, raising dead, calming storms, authoritative teaching) and expected Him to overthrow oppression and restore Israel. This builds to a hoped-for Hallelujah chorus. Abruptly, Jesus shifts the tone to a somber dirge by repeatedly predicting His suffering, death, and resurrection. Examples include: predictions of betrayal, arrest, denial, trial before Pilate, mocking, flogging, and crucifixion (Matthew 16, 17, 20, 26). Peter rebuked Jesus ("This shall never happen to you"), earning the sharp response "Get behind Me, Satan" for minding human things over God's. The disciples were greatly distressed. Jesus knew and allowed the betrayal (Judas for 30 silver pieces after the anointing at Bethany), arrest in Gethsemane (healing the servant's ear, submitting voluntarily, declaring "I am" causing soldiers to fall), all because of the eternal ramifications of His death to redeem from sins.

### **(32:48 - 40:49) Predictions of Denial, the Trials, and the Horror of Roman Crucifixion**

Tackett continues with Jesus' predictions that His disciples would deny Him and fall away. Peter boldly declared he would never fall away, but Jesus foretold Peter would deny Him three times that very night. Peter and all the disciples insisted otherwise, yet they all abandoned Jesus. Peter denied knowing Him to a servant girl. The historical record then details the trials: Jesus first appeared before Annas (the informal high priest), then Caiaphas the official high priest, and the Sanhedrin. False accusations flew, but Jesus remained mostly silent. Frustrated, Caiaphas demanded if He was the Messiah; Jesus affirmed it, prompting Caiaphas to tear his robes and secure a death sentence from the Sanhedrin.

Jesus then stood before Pilate, who sensed the trial stemmed from jealousy. Warned by his wife's dream, Pilate offered to release Jesus, but the crowd demanded Barabbas instead. When Pilate asked what to do with "Jesus who is called the Messiah," the mob shouted "Crucify Him!" Despite Pilate's protests and symbolic hand-washing, he yielded and ordered the crucifixion. The documents clearly lead to this point. Tackett emphasizes that the body of Christ must grasp the historical reality of Roman crucifixion. Invented by the Persians and perfected by the Romans around 300 BC, it executed thousands (possibly hundreds of thousands). It was designed as a public deterrent—brutal, cruel, and humiliating. The English word "excruciating" derives from "out of the cross." He warns that medical descriptions of scourging and crucifixion are sickening and deeply uncomfortable, yet essential to confront.

### **(40:52 - 46:26) Medical and Historical Evidence Confirming Jesus Truly Died**

After severe scourging, Jesus carried His cross to Golgotha (the Skull), was stripped, nailed through wrists and feet to the rough beam, and raised up. He hung naked, exposed to elements, birds, and insects. Cicero called it the most extreme punishment; Josephus the most pitiable death. The SB Study Bible explains how suspension caused suffocation unless the victim pushed up on nailed feet, eventually leading to death from trauma or asphyxiation. Roman soldiers, professionals under orders, executed this flawlessly. Comparing survival to Ted Bundy or Timothy McVeigh surviving the electric chair highlights the absurdity of denial.

Evidence of death includes soldiers preparing to break legs for quicker death before Sabbath;

seeing Jesus already dead, they skipped His legs (fulfilling prophecy) and thrust a spear into His side. Blood and water flowed, indicating coagulation and a pierced heart. Professional executioners confirmed death. Tackett shares Louis Lapidès' analysis: Jesus was already dying from the brutal flogging before reaching the cross. Most did not survive scourging. Romans did not remove victims for medical care—they left them to die. The spear thrust and resulting flow confirmed a burst heart. Jewish burial customs further affirm belief in His death; preparing a living man would be cruel. The Gospels record Jesus crying out and giving up His spirit (Matthew), breathing His last (Mark), committing His spirit (Luke), and declaring “It is finished” (John).

Gary Habermas notes near-unanimous agreement among skeptical scholars: John Dominic Crossan and Marcus Borg affirm Jesus' crucifixion death as one of the strongest facts of antiquity. Bart Ehrman lists eleven independent ancient sources, some from the early 30s AD, calling the evidence overwhelming and “untouchable.” Questioners are typically non-specialists seeking attention, not data-driven scholars. Scholars across the spectrum—evangelical, critical, skeptical, even atheist—do not dispute the crucifixion death.

### **(46:31 - 53:59) Common-Sense Issues, Burial Details, and Problems with Contrary Theories**

Tackett applies common sense: surviving Roman scourging, full crucifixion, spear to the heart, wrapping in linen with 75 pounds of spices (like a mummy), placement in a cold sealed tomb guarded by professionals, then reviving and escaping is beyond credible. Pilate, surprised Jesus died quickly, summoned the centurion for confirmation. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus handled the body for hours as rigor mortis set in. The women, including Mary Magdalene, witnessed the burial. Supernatural signs accompanied the death: darkness (sun stopped shining), earthquake splitting rocks, tombs opening, and the temple veil torn. The centurion declared, “Surely He was the Son of God.” These events do not fit a mere swoon.

Ethically, the swoon theory makes Jesus a despicable liar who deceived Mary Magdalene, the women, Peter, James, the 500, and others by claiming resurrection instead of admitting a coma. This contradicts Jesus' entire truthful life. The substitution theory (popular in the Quran) claims someone else died in Jesus' place. This fails because Jesus was under constant guard after trial; no one could swap unnoticed. Mary at the cross would recognize her son's voice and appearance. These theories expose heart issues rather than evidential ones—resistance to accepting Jesus as Lord in a culture promoting self-worship (homo deus). Respond to neighbors with grace and wisdom. Lestrom reinforces that even atheist scholars like Derek Ludeman call Jesus' crucifixion death indisputable, corroborated by New Testament and five external sources (Josephus, Tacitus, Talmud).

### **(53:59 - 1:01:31) Theological Significance of Christ's Death and Closing Prayer**

Tackett stresses the criticality of Jesus' death went far beyond visible events. Jesus paid sin's penalty—separation from God—crying “My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?” This was the true agony He anticipated in Gethsemane, not merely physical suffering. Without His death there is no forgiveness, reconciliation, or salvation. He was pierced for transgressions, crushed for iniquities; by His scourging we are healed. “It is finished” (telestai) meant “paid in full.” Disciples were devastated, believing it was over—the promised Messiah betrayed, tried, crucified, and buried. Tackett invites listeners to reflect in the disciples' position before the next session on the resurrection, the “Hallelujah chorus.”

Marc Fey thanks Tackett, notes the recording will be emailed and posted on [deltackett.com/webinars-2](http://deltackett.com/webinars-2) along with prior sessions. Tackett closes in prayer, thanking God for demonstrating love through the cross as propitiation for sins. He asks the Spirit to open eyes, hearts, and minds for skeptics and those loving neighbors. The session ends with thanks and contact information for questions.