LDRA004: Living Daily in Reality - A Divine Man ?

If reality is that you and I were made by a fatherly creator who actually cares about us and made us inside his only son, it's essential that we know why we believe that is reality. First, it's necessary to know that such a person as this son actually exists. Many of us have read the Greek and Roman myths that were written by the great poets and philosophers about their gods but we don't believe for a moment that that is reality. When you see movies like Jesus of Nazareth or read fiction like the Code you begin to doubt that there's any truth in even believing there was a human being called Jesus of Nazareth. What is the evidence for his existence?

As we're discussed during the past few conversations, the evidence is similar to but immensely more solid than the evidence we have for the historical figures that form the basis of our laws and philosophy and national histories. Most of our universities regard any evidence that is within 200 years of an event as eye-witness – even though it is 200 years later than the eye-witnesses actually lived. This is the way we treat the lives of men like Julius Caesar, Plato, Aristotle, Genghis Khan, Alexander the Great, and Nero.

This man Jesus lived in the first century and was executed in 29 a.d.; four of his followers wrote their accounts of his words and actions and circulated them throughout Palestine, Greece, and Rome during the next sixty years while hundreds of people were alive who had seen what they saw. Many like Clement, Papias, Pliny, and Irenaeus referred to these in their own writings and scores of people were executed during those years because they talked about this Jesus of Nazareth, yet his existence and life were never questioned by either the authorities or the ordinary

people. In fact, the opposite is true – there are many official government documents and references to the trouble this Christ talk was causing.

Here's an old Bible of my grandmother's – she was in the Salvation Army, was born in 1860 and died in 1945. I'll read you the little presentation page: ------- Now I knew her during the first 11 years of my life, and she could remember what happened in Ireland from about 1870, so if someone during that time had risen from the dead and the whole thing was shown to be a hoax or a kind of Houdini illusion, she would have been able to tell me about it. Moreover, if hundreds of books had been written about the lie, she would certainly have protested. But think about it – she therefore could guarantee the events during her 75 conscious life time, but I'm still alive 60 years after she died, so events that occurred 135 years ago can be corroborated by hundreds of people who are still alive and had the kind of direct contact that I had with an eye-witness. This Jesus died in 29 a.d. so people who had spoken with eye-witnesses of his death and resurrection would still be alive in 165 a.d.. There were thousands who are in this category – who were alive during the period from 29 to 165 a.d. while hundreds of books and letters were being read and circulated about these momentous events.

Of course, what makes the historical facts so certain in the minds of historians is that the eye-witnesses themselves and those who believed them gained nothing by their talk. They did not become famous or rich or powerful through their speaking or their writing. The opposite was true – they died in their hundreds in the mouths of lions, at the hands of gladiators, for the pleasure of Nero and the Roman emperors. They led their children into lion arenas because they knew this Jesus was divine. They had

no doubt that he had power to die and to live again. Were they deceived? Let's talk briefly about this.