

I've decided to take a day or so off from my discussions of Reza Aslan's Zealot, both for my sanity and yours. Here, for a bit of variety, is a video of a debate that I had a few years ago with Mike Licona on the topic of whether historians can \*prove\* that Jesus was raised from the dead. Mike thinks the answer is "yes"; I think the answer is "no way." It's important to note: the debate was \*not\* about whether Jesus was raised from the dead. The debate was about whether historians can \*prove\* that he did (if he did).

Mike Licona has burst onto the scene as a conservative Christian apologist. He did a master's degree at Liberty University (that's Jerry Falwell's place) and then a PhD in New Testament at the University of Pretoria in South Africa. Someone may be able to correct me on this, but I \*think\* that is the kind of degree where instead of taking PhD seminars and so on, as at an American university, it involves finding a faculty member willing to work with you, and writing a dissertation on a topic of your choice. If it passes muster, so do you.

Mike now is an Associate Professor at Houston Baptist University, which I know nothing about except, well, that it is in Houston, is Baptist, and is a university.

Mike's major area of interest — by far — is with the resurrection of Jesus. He thinks that it can be proven to have happened, historically. His dissertation was on that topic, and I believe that this was what was revised (slightly?) in his 2010 book [The Resurrection of Jesus](#). It's a monster — over 700 pages. In it he talks about how historians do their work, and then spends the bulk of his time showing that on purely historical grounds, one can demonstrate beyond reasonable doubt that Jesus was physically raised from the dead on the third day.

As you might imagine, there is very little in the book that I agree with. Mike and I have had several debates. The video here is of a debate we had at Southern Evangelical Seminary in 2009. I enjoyed the debate — Mike is one those people I have debated over the years whom I think is a really nice guy (I absolutely cannot and will not say that about everyone I debate!). I did not enjoy the aftermath. After we were finished with our back and forth we were taken out of the auditorium — I \*thought\* (as I had been told) that it was to sign books. But we just sat around for a half hour or forty minutes. Later I was told why. The seminary had arranged that immediately after our debate faculty members from the school would get up for ten minutes each to explain to the audience why I was wrong in everything I had just said — in my absence!! Ai yai yai. I don't know what it is about these evangelical schools, but sometimes they drive me crazy. Anyway, it wasn't Mike's fault.

Here's the debate on whether Historians can "prove" that Jesus was raised from the dead.

Please adjust gear icon for 720p High-Definition. Some video angles are not high quality.



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