

## The Resurrection

There are non-fundamental doctrines that as Christians we might disagree upon – what clothes to wear, what type of music is good – but these differences don't mean we aren't Christians. However, there are some on which we can not disagree upon. The resurrection is one of them.

Some cults have some very strange beliefs that range from outwardly strange to a mix of the truth along with some false beliefs.

### I. The Uniqueness of the Resurrection

Death is something that is so overpowering and unavoidable for us. It is like man's greatest enemy. Your power, your riches, and everything about you changes nothing – you will face it. Therefore mankind likes to speak about it.

○ 2<sup>nd</sup> law of Thermodynamics ... every living thing will break down.

A. No other religion has anything like the resurrection! Of the world's major religions that are based on a personality:

- i. Confucius
- ii. Buddha
- iii. Mohamed

### II. The Possibility of the Resurrection

People try to explain away the resurrection, but it is possible because of the power of God.

A. God is the God of all creation ... Gen 1:1 ... and there is no one greater

B. If God could create life in the first place out of nothing, the resurrection of Jesus would not be a hard thing for Him to do (Acts 26:8, John 10:17-18)

### III. The Significance of the Resurrection

A. The Resurrection provides the answers to questions like:

- i. What's so special about Christianity?
  - a) It's founder is the only one in history to conquer death
- ii. Wasn't Jesus just another great teacher like Buddha, Mohamed and Confucius?
  - a) No, he was more. He was the Son of God which was proved by His resurrection
- iii. How can you believe Jesus was the son of God--or that He was right and all these others wrong?
  - a) The resurrection is the answer.

B. Jesus' Resurrection was the proof that the things He said were true!

C. It's the basis of the Christian faith – There are two fundamentals: the crucifixion and the resurrection.

D. It's the source of our hope

### IV. The Resurrection was Predicted

A. At the beginning of His ministry

B. Last six months of His life

C. It was also mentioned in O.T. -- written BEFORE Jesus was even born

## V. Precautions were Taken Against the Resurrection

- A. The Tomb -- solid rock.
- B. The Stone -- at least 1 and 1/2--2 tons (Mark 16:4 "very great")
- C. The Seal -- cord with sealing clay. Death penalty for removal.
- D. The Guard -- probably four men, though some think many more. Death penalty for guards if they slept on duty.

We know more about the burial of Jesus Christ than of any other person in ancient History!

## VI. Gospel Accounts of the Resurrection (Read them!)

- A. Cannot have been made up independently - Too many agreements
- B. Cannot have been made up together - Too many differences
- C. Apostles were eyewitnesses. 1 John 1:1-3, Acts 1:21-22

## VII. The Empty Tomb

- A. The disciples could not have preached the resurrection for even 1 hour in Jerusalem if the tomb was not empty! The first thing people would have done when they heard that Jesus had risen from the dead was go to the tomb and check.
- B. No one, not even His enemies, ever denied that the tomb was empty (All ancient Jewish writings grant that the tomb was empty). None of the Jews, Pharisees, Romans, or any enemies of Christianity say that the tomb was actually occupied.
- C. There is no evidence (even in writing) that tomb was not empty.
- D. Why didn't Jesus' tomb immediately become a holy place like Confucius' or Mohammed's? Because He wasn't there!

## VIII. The Aftermath of the Empty Tomb

(what happened after it was found empty?) Mt. 28:1-15

- A. The Guards--needed protection from Pilate so they went to the High Priest. Matt 28:14
- B. The Seal--It was the death penalty for breaking it so why weren't the disciples arrested?
- C. The Stone--you couldn't exactly roll it quietly! And if they were asleep, how did they know *who* took the body?
- D. The Priests--they gave "large money"-- politics--motivations John 11:48-53

## IX. Post-Resurrection Appearances

They didn't *only* see him ... (see handout)

- A. He was not just a spirit -- "flesh and **bones**" instead of "flesh and blood" Luke 24:39; Lev 17:10-11
- B. The disciples saw hands and side John 20:20
- C. Thomas John 20:24-28
- D. He ate and drank Acts 10:41

## X. Other Evidences

- A. Change in the disciples
- B. The fact of the Christian Church.
  - i. Foundation was the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.
  - ii. The Christian Church still exists though many have tried to wipe it out.
  - iii. The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church
- C. The fact of the Christian day--Sunday the first day of the week
  - i. Christians have always gathered on Sunday because Jesus rose from the dead. The day the church began was Sunday morning and so it has continued on.
  - ii. 1 Corinthians 16:2 - Offerings taken on the first day of the week when the church gathered
  - iii. Acts 20:7 - Gather on the first day of the week

XI. Attempts to Explain Away, or to Discredit the Bodily Resurrection of Jesus

- A. Strongest argument against is that no one has ever done it *before* or *since*.
- B. Naturalistic theories (see handout)
- C. Linking to Pagan Mythology. (vegetation cycle - a god who dies and is resurrected annually)

A Refutation of the Naturalistic Theories Explaining the Resurrection and Empty Tomb

Presumably no one would resort to the hypothesis of a divine raising of Jesus if a reasonable naturalistic explanation could be found. However all of the alternative explanations for the resurrection and the empty tomb have been refuted .

(a) The Roman or Jewish authorities took the body. If the authorities had the body, then it does not make sense they accused the disciples of stealing it. The resurrection story could have been stopped by the authorities' producing the body.

(b) The disciples stole the body when the guards fell asleep. If this were true, the apostles persisted in this hoax and died for what they knew to be fraudulent (especially since they taught about honesty). If true, the guards would have been "ordered" rather than "bribed" to spread the story. And if they fell asleep, how would they have known who stole the body?

(c) The tomb was never visited. the gospels clearly report that several people went to the tomb. This theory could not explain: the post-resurrection appearances; the transformation of the disciples; or the mass conversions of people only a few weeks later.

(d) Jesus didn't die, but fainted from weakness (resuscitation theory). First, there was no doubt that He died on the cross, as was reported to Pilate by the centurion (Mark 15:43-45) and as was evidenced by the spear thrust into Jesus' side. In His weakened condition (from spikes beatings and a spear), how could He disengage from the heavy wrappings, break the Roman seal, and roll away the giant stone--apart from a miracle.

(e) The women went to the wrong tomb. If true, then why didn't the authorities just go to the right tomb and show the body, and why would all of the tomb visitors have made the same mistake? They knew it was the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea (Mat. 27:60 etc.).

(f) The "Passover Plot" theory (by Schoenfield). This theory argues that Christ plotted to fulfill the prophecies about the Jewish Messiah and only appeared to die on the cross; that He was killed by the unplanned spear thrust into His side; and that someone else was mistaken by Mary and the disciples to be Jesus. But Schoenfield picks and chooses the details from the gospel accounts, such as rejecting the guard unit at the tomb. And the plot would involve Jesus in a colossal hoax contrary to everything written about Christ in history, etc. The post-resurrection appearances could not have been cases of mistaken identity, as too many people saw Jesus, on twelve occasions, over forty days, and they heard and touched Him and ate with Him.

(g) Hallucination Theory. The appearances of Jesus could not have been merely hallucinations. It is not possible for more than five hundred people to have the same hallucination at the same time. Hallucinations are based upon past experiences and a subjective or subconscious situation, etc.

Sources Cited:

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3. McDowell, Josh. The Resurrection Factor. San Bernardino, California: Here's Life Publishers, Inc., 1981.
4. Morris, Henry M. Many Infallible Proofs: Evidences for the Christian Faith. El Cajon, California: Creation-Life Publishers, 1974, rev. 1988.
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Forty Days – From Resurrection to Ascension

SUNDAY MORNING

1. An angel rolled away the stone from Jesus' tomb before sunrise (Matthew 28:2-4)
2. Women who followed Jesus visited his tomb and discovered Him missing (Mark 28:1, Mark 16:1-4, Luke 24:1-3, John 20:1-2)
3. Mary Magdalene left to tell Peter and John (John 20:1-2)
4. The other women, remaining at the tomb, saw two angels who told them about the Resurrection (Matthew 28:5-7, Mark 16:5-7, Luke 24:4-8)
5. Peter and John visited Jesus' tomb (Luke 24:12, John 20:3-10)
6. Mary Magdalene returned to the tomb and Jesus appeared to her alone in the garden (Mark 16:9-11, John 20:11-18). *First appearance*
7. Jesus appeared to the other women – Mary (mother of James), Salome, and Joanna (Matthew 28:8-10). *Second appearance*
8. Those who guarded Jesus' tomb reported to the religious rulers how the angel rolled away the stone. They were then bribed (Matthew 28:11-15)
9. Jesus appeared to Peter (1 Corinthians 15:5). *Third appearance*

SUNDAY AFTERNOON

10. Jesus appeared to the two men on the road to Emmaus (Mark 16:12-13, Luke 24:13-32). *Fourth appearance*

SUNDAY EVENING

11. The two disciples from Emmaus told others they saw Jesus (Luke 24:33-35)
12. Jesus appeared to the 10 apostles, with Thomas absent, in the Upper Room (Luke 24:36-43, John 20:19-25). *Fifth appearance*

THE FOLLOWING SUNDAY

13. Jesus appeared to the 11 apostles, including Thomas, and Thomas believed (John 20:26-28) *Sixth appearance*

THE FOLLOWING 35 DAYS

14. Jesus appeared to the seven disciples by the Sea of Galilee and performed a miracle of fish (John 21:1-14) *Seventh appearance*
15. Jesus appeared to 500 (including the Eleven) at a mountain in Galilee (Matt 28:16-20, Mark 16:15-18, 1 Corinthians 15:6) *Eighth appearance*
16. Jesus appeared to His half-brother James (1 Corinthians 15:7) *Ninth appearance*
17. At Jerusalem, Jesus appeared again to His disciples (Luke 24:44-49, Acts 1:3-8) *Tenth appearance*
18. On the mount of Olives, Jesus ascended into heaven while the disciples watched (Mark 16:19-20, Luke 24:50-53, Acts 1:9-12)