

## Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?

To get at historical facts...must do historical investigation.

Historians have developed a 4-step process in determining what has happened in the past

- 1) Early Sources
- 2) Multiple Sources
- 3) Lacks Legendary Embellishment
- 4) No other Competing Story

4 Things about the fate of Jesus that can be established as historical truth.

B.E.A.T.

- 1) Burial of Christ
- 2) Empty Tomb
- 3) Appearances of Christ
- 4) Transformation of the Disciples

### **1) Burial of Christ**

Fact-After Jesus died, he was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

5 reasons why we know this is true.

i) Jesus died

March 21, 1986 article entitled "On the physical death of Jesus" written in the Journal of the American Medical Association Vol. 255, No. 11

In summary...Jesus died before He was removed from the cross.

ii) Recorded in early sources

a) Paul talks about it in 1 Corinthians 15:3-5...this dates within 5 years of the life of Jesus.

b) Mark talks about this in Mark 15:37-47...Mark is the earliest Gospel written.

iii) Joseph of Arimathea

He is unlikely to be a Christian invention...Joseph of Arimathea was on the Sanhedrin of the Jewish council. He could have spoken against Jesus being buried in his tomb.

iv) Lacks signs of legendary embellishment

v) No other competing story

### **2) Empty Tomb**

Fact-Tomb was found empty

Know that this early tomb narrative is true because there are early and multiple sources (1 Corinthians and Mark)

Early opponents of the Christian movement admitted the tomb was empty by stating the disciples stole the body.

Tomb was discovered by women...Given the status of women in the early 1<sup>st</sup> century, if the disciples were lying about the empty tomb they would not have said it was discovered by women...they would have said it was discovered by men, this would lend itself to more credibility in the 1<sup>st</sup> century.

### **3) Appearances of Christ**

Fact-Individuals and groups of people experienced Jesus alive from the dead.

Appearances of Christ narratives are multiple and varied

Appearances to 12 disciples are found in Luke, Paul and John's writings.

Appearances to the women...recorded in Gospel of Matthew and John

Appearances in Galilee...recorded in Matthew, Mark and John

"The appearance narratives are historically certain."

Gerd Ludemann

### **4) Transformation of the Disciples**

Fact-Disciples suddenly and sincerely came to believe that Jesus rose from the dead so they were willing to die for that belief.

The disciples had reasons not to believe in the Resurrection

- i) Jewish belief in afterlife did not include any resurrection of the dead prior to the end of the world.
- ii) Politically defeated – Jesus was crucified as a criminal.
- iii) Religiously defeated – Deuteronomy 21:23 states "he who hangs on a tree is cursed by God". Jesus hung on a tree.

Now that historians have provided the facts, they now need to give their best explanation

2 conditions for providing the best explanation:

- 1) Explanatory Scope: It must explain all the facts.
- 2) Explanatory Power: It must explain each of the facts adequately.

So, there is a series of options to explain the 4 facts of the resurrection, but the best one will explain all of them and each of them satisfactorily.

### **Proposed Explanations concerning the Resurrection**

1) Conspiracy Theory – The disciple either lied or stole the body of Jesus.

i) This explains the empty tomb.

ii) If disciples lied, then they know the resurrection did not happen. So, why would they die for

a

lie?

iii) No one dies for a truth they know is a lie.

2) Apparent death/Swoon Theory – The idea that Jesus didn't die on the cross, but only passed out. He was buried in the tomb and then revived. He managed to get out and appear to His disciples who mistakenly thought He rose from the dead.

i) First fact states that Jesus died and was buried...explanations should explain facts not explain them away.

ii) Jesus had to move the stone with hands, feet and side pierced; He had to sneak past the guards

and then appear before His disciples as someone who defeated death...I dare say this would not compel His disciples to fall on their face and worship Him as God.

3) Wrong Tomb Theory – The disciples and the women went to the wrong tomb.

i) If they went to a tomb that was empty, this would explain the empty tomb.

ii) This doesn't explain the transformation of the disciples, just because they found the tomb empty.

iii) The first fact states we know where Jesus was buried; in the tomb of Arimathea. If went to wrong tomb, then opponents of Jesus could go to the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea and get the body of Jesus; therefore, explaining the resurrection as false.

4) Hallucinations Theory – The disciples hallucinated Jesus alive from the dead.

i) There are cases of bereavement experiences where people hallucinate their loved ones still alive.

ii) This might explain the appearances of Jesus to others, but not the empty tomb. If Jesus was still dead and only hallucinating, then the opponents would only need to expose the dead body of Jesus.

iii) Hallucinations are highly individualistic, like dreams. Appearances occurred to groups of People, not just individuals.

5) God raise Jesus from the dead

i) If God raised Jesus from the dead, then that admits Jesus was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

ii) If God raised Jesus from the dead, that explains why tomb was found empty.

iii) If God raised Jesus from the dead, it explains why Jesus is appearing alive from the dead.

iv) If God raised Jesus from the dead, it explains why the disciples were willing to die for the belief

that God really did rise Jesus from the dead.

So, the best explanation that explains all 4 facts is God raised Jesus from the dead.

**Jesus is Alive!!**