

The Resurrection of Jesus: Too Good to be True?

“Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead” (Acts 17:30,31).

“Faith does not mean a leap in the dark, an irrational credulity, a believing against evidences and against reason. It means believing in the light of historical facts, consistent with evidences, on the basis of witnesses.” George Eldon Ladd.

“Faith” is believing in light of history, not in spite of history.

“If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain” (Cor.15:14).

“If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins” (Cor.15:17).

The historic position of the Church: Jesus rose from the dead on the 3rd day.

“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as it were to one untimely born, He appeared to me also” (1Corinthians 15:3-8).

The Jesus-arose theory presents an ultimatum, not just another option.

Six Major Alternative Theories of the ‘Resurrection’ of Jesus.

1. The Stolen Body Theory (Also: Missing Body/Vanishing Body Theories.)

The ‘resurrection’ was a case of grave robbery and deception.

The disciples turned an empty tomb into a ‘risen Lord.’

2. The Swoon Theory (Also: The Faked-death Theory.)

The great ‘resurrection’ was really the great ‘resuscitation.’

3. The Imposter Theory

The ‘resurrection’ was really a case of mistaken identity.

4. The Hallucination Theory

The ‘resurrection’ was merely the wishful thinking of despondent disciples.

5. The Wrong Tomb Theory

The ‘empty tomb’ was simply the ‘wrong tomb.’

6. The Myth Theory

It was never a question of hoax or history; rather, it was hope or history!

The ‘resurrection’ stories are mythologies of hope.

Sixteen Key Pieces of Evidence

Evidence surrounding his death:

1. The Scourge 2. The Cross 3. The Spear 4. The Death Certificate

Evidence related to his burial:

5. The Seal 6. The Guards 7. The Stone 8. The Wrappings

Evidence from the days following his burial.

9. Empty Tomb 10. Women Witnesses 11. Appearances 12. Martyr's Deaths

Evidence related to historical sources.

13. The Gospels 14. The Story-Clock 15. Saul of Tarsus 16. Sundays

"Indeed, taking all the evidence together, it is not too much to say that there is no historic incident better or more variously supported than the resurrection of Christ. Nothing but the antecedent assumption that it must be false could have suggested the idea of deficiency in the proof of it." B. F. Westcott, Regius Professor, Cambridge

Want to go deeper? Try these sources:

Jesus: Fact or Fiction DVD. Free today to all sincere skeptics!

Lee Strobel: The Case for Easter or The Case for Christ.

Josh McDowell: The Resurrection Factor.

Gary Habermas: The Resurrection of Jesus – A Rational Inquiry.

Habermas: Did Jesus Rise from the Dead? The Resurrection Debate.

William Lane Craig: Knowing the Truth about the Resurrection.