

Did the Resurrection of Jesus Christ Happen?

Lesson 4 – Is Jesus’ Resurrection the Only Explanation?

D – **Died**, Jesus died by Crucifixion.

A – **Appearances**, Jesus’ disciples believed that he rose and appeared to them.

J – **James**, the skeptic James, half-brother of Jesus, was suddenly changed.

E – **Empty**, the tomb was empty.

P – **Paul**, the church persecutor Paul was suddenly changed.

or

F – **Fatal** wounds, Jesus died by Crucifixion.

E – **Empty** tomb.

A – **Appearances**, Jesus’ disciples believed that he rose and appeared to them.

T – **Two** Testimonies, James and Paul.

Now that you know the five facts that are well attested to by believing and non-believing scholars, what answer would you give to the following theories or objections?

1) “It’s all just legend.”

2) “It’s all just a story; the Gospels were intended to communicate principles, not history.”

“When we read the NT accounts of Jesus’ resurrection, we must recognize that the disciples never intended for their readers to believe that Jesus actually rose from the dead. They were just honoring their leader. They were just attempting to communicate a deeper message. Most of Jesus’ parables are just fictitious stories. If we focused on whether the story in the parable was an actual historical event, we would miss the message Jesus was trying to tell us. It’s the same with Jesus’ resurrection. To focus on whether it was historical or not misses the point. He was a great man who changed the world and His teachings will live forever.”

3) Fraud Theory 1: “The Disciples lied or stole the body.”

4) Fraud Theory 2: “Someone other than the disciples stole the body” or:

- The grave was not visited at all and the story about the women was added later; or
- Joseph of Arimathea secretly removed the body to a more suitable resting-place; or
- The body was removed by order of the Roman government & the body was removed by the Jewish authorities to prevent the possible worshiping of the tomb.

- 5) The witnesses went to the wrong tomb.

- 6) Apparent Death or Swoon Theory: “Jesus didn’t die on the cross, He fainted or went into a coma and revived in the cool of the tomb.”

- 7) Hallucination explains the accounts: “It is common for a person to experience grief hallucination following the death of a loved one. Just like today, people use wine and drugs to soothe emotional pain. Too much of either might cause people to see things that are not there.”

- 8) The disciples were deluded: “Think of Waco. Think of Jim Jones. People get fooled and believe almost anything. That’s what happened to the disciples.”

References:

- *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus* by Gary R. Habermas & Michael R. Licona
- *Did the Resurrection Happen? A Conversation with Gary Habermas and Antony Flew*, edited by David Baggett
- *Who Moved the Stone?* By Frank Morison
- *The Case for the Resurrection; A First-Century Reporter Investigates the Story of the Cross* by Lee Strobel
- *Resurrection* by Hank Hanegraaff
- *The Resurrection of the Son of God* by N.T. Wright
- *A Shot of Faith to the Head* by Mitch Stokes, PhD
- *Evidence for God; 50 Arguments for Faith from the Bible, History, Philosophy, and Science* by William A. Dembski & Michael R. Licona