

DO THEOLOGIANS SAY THAT JESUS DID NOT RISE PHYSICALLY FROM THE DEAD?

The writings of the apostle Paul who supposedly seen Jesus risen from the dead seem to draw many to affirm that Jesus if he rose did not rise bodily from the dead.

An orthodox Catholic book says that Paul “clearly rejects the idea that it is a physical body that is risen. But what does this mean? In its glorious state, the resurrected body would be transformed in such a way that, unlike a physical body, it would not longer be bound by the limitations of space and time. In its transformed state, then, it would not have extension, and so the body would not be in itself tangible” (page 66, The Jesus Event). “It would be correct to assert the resurrection of the body in Jesus’ case, even if the tomb were not empty, for by the resurrection of the body, Paul means the identity of the risen Christ with the historical Christ - the same person in both cases” (page 68, The Jesus Event). Body or soma to Paul means the whole person (same page and page 74). It was his word for person. Paul knew that the body replaces itself when alive so the whole person can be restored without reviving a dead body. The person of Jesus died on the cross so the body which was not Jesus anymore for it was not a person. Jesus rising from the dead means the return of the person Jesus but not necessarily using the dead body to do it. Pages 67-68 state that Jesus could have risen without the body being raised and that this is acceptable to Bible believers. Pages 86-89 of The Virginal Conception and Bodily Resurrection of Jesus say that Jesus had a body but not one as we know it. It says that it is best to deny that the resurrection body is physical and that Paul implies it is no longer flesh and blood (page 128).

Fundamentalist tripe, He Walked Among Us, argues that Paul uses the word soma which means physical body for body as we know it so he viewed the resurrection as the return of the whole body to life (page 280). This is nonsense for he says that it is a spiritual physical body and if a body was barely physical it would still be physical but not a body as we would know it. He said that the man who wondered how the dead could be raised and what kind of body they could have was a fool for the seed dies and then becomes completely changed. He then drew our attention to there being different kinds of flesh hinting that the new body is different from the old. He said that the new body is incorrupt and is spiritual. We could have the same kind of flesh we have now and be incorruptible but we cannot have the same if it becomes spiritual. The difference then is like the difference between the seed and the tree it becomes, completely different.

The Virginal Conception and Bodily Resurrection of Jesus (page 84) claims that when Paul said that we have to be buried in baptism and rise to a new life like Christ that it proves that he believed that the body had gone from the tomb. But this baptism is only a rough picture of the death and resurrection of Jesus. For instance, the living person is buried in water and rises up out of it. But with Jesus a dead person was buried and a living one rose. Baptism would fit a Jesus who went into a grave and had the clay all around him and touching his body and then rose again far better than a Jesus who was put into a cave. What Paul wrote fits the idea of Jesus been laid in a real grave and not a tomb.

The book also says that the references to Jesus being the firstborn from the dead say the body was entirely raised (Romans 8:29; 1 Corinthians 15:23). However, these verses do make a link with the body but do not say it need all be revived. Paul said that Jesus was the first to rise. That would mean that the resurrections of the dead reported prior to his in the New Testament were fakes if he meant this was a physical rising.

