

Chapter 8, The Resurrection

The central doctrine of Christianity is that Jesus came back from the dead - he rose as an example and sign of God's promise to save us in body and soul if we consent. The New Testament says Jesus was buried and his tomb was found empty and soon he began to appear to his followers in visions. Paul said that the faith is useless if Jesus has not really risen. As Paul makes it clear that he spoke for all the Churches this is a standard doctrine of the Church.

The Handbook of Christian Apologetics gives various arguments against the visions being hallucinations but it deliberately ignores how the gospel writers had the power to straighten the stories out. Hallucination is still an open question.

Handbook of Christian Apologetics Says

The resurrection is not a vision for visions are subjective and secret forces of the mind can cause them but Jesus was able to eat and drink after the resurrection so he was not a mere vision.

Reason Says

You stress this point. True you are right to but the problem is that the gospels do not emphasise Jesus eating and drinking. Matthew devotes just a few paragraphs to the resurrection appearances and seems to want to say as little about it as possible which is impossible to explain. Why is he embarrassed? He must be. It is like somebody who writes a lot in their diary every day and writes a few lines only about the visit of the queen to him.

Mark said nothing about the resurrection and mentioned men in white at the tomb who he significantly never said were angels. The rules of interpretation say we must assume they were men. Did they take the body? Luke mentions Jesus eating in passing. He doesn't make a big deal of it at all. The problem with Luke is that the Jews law tells us to dismiss the testimony of one witness and he is the only one testifying that this happened or that he was told it. John doesn't mention very much about the resurrection appearances either. That the gospels failed to attach any importance to the evidence against the apparitions being mere visions shows that their evidence is made impotent.

It is interesting how the Gospel of John says Jesus offered to let Thomas touch his wounds and put his hand in his side and fails to tell us if Thomas actually did so. We would have been told if he had. The opportunity to get the best evidence that Jesus was more than just a vision had been lost.

Handbook of Christian Apologetics Says

The idea that Jesus survived the cross by natural means is wrong for :

The Romans made sure their victims were dead – they had to or they were put to death. Jesus' legs were not broken on the cross to kill him for they were sure he was dead.

Reason Says:

Doctors make sure their diagnoses are right but still make mistakes. Roman law executed only those who knowingly let capital punishment victims survive.

And all laws and people make mistakes.

Even the New Testament does not say that every means possible was taken to make sure Jesus was dead. It merely takes it for granted that he was dead.

Christians cannot know that Jesus' death was certain. How can the authors of the Handbook know that Jesus' survival was impossible thanks to the Romans? The arrogance does not attract us to their faith.

Handbook of Christian Apologetics Says

An eyewitness saw blood and water come from the pierced side of Jesus

Reason replies:

But we only have the anonymous gospel attributed to John saying that an eyewitness saw the blood. It doesn't give us a clue as to who the eyewitness was. Christians are the ones that tell us to ignore anonymous testimony and then they accept this! Since when did a gospel that had Jesus producing wine to give to a drunk wedding party be believable?

Nothing is said in the gospel as to this blood and water having anything to do with showing Jesus died on the cross.

Handbook of Christian Apologetics Says

The body was wrapped up in cloths and buried in a tomb

Reason says:

The gospels say this happened but give no eyewitness testimony that the body was closely seen being put in the tomb. We are told that the place where he was laid was witnessed but that isn't enough. And there are no independent witnesses even mentioned in the New Testament. Since when did being wrapped up and buried mean you were necessarily dead?

Handbook of Christian Apologetics Says

A half dead survivor could never convince the apostles that he rose from the dead miraculously

Reason says:

True – unless he told them he was an apparition and that God only made him appear as sick to impress upon them the suffering of the cross and that he wasn't really sick.

It is possible that the witnesses both hallucinated Jesus at times and saw him glorious and that what helped make them hallucinate was actual meetings with the real Jesus.

Many things can trigger such illusions. The best thing for doing it would be seeing the person you thought was dead for real even if he is in a bad way. As long as the meeting is brief it would be enough.

They might have reasoned that Jesus' bleeding and suffering was only a vision for God wanted to impress upon them that it was the real Jesus. So if they met Jesus when he was a half dead survivor of the cross they might still have regarded him as resurrected and healed.

Handbook of Christian Apologetics Says

Did Jesus or unnamed disciples overpower the Roman soldiers who were guarding the tomb so he could escape?

Reason replies:

But you know the gospel says that after the stone rolled back the soldiers were gone. The stone might have been moved by some trick or by an earthquake but it was left for anybody to take the body.

Handbook of Christian Apologetics Says

The Jews got the Roman soldiers to say Jesus was stolen as they slept which is crazy for they would be put to death for that

Reason replies:

Matthew alone tells us this but why not believe that he made this up? The Jews would not have asked the soldiers to say something like that. Why not tell them to say the Devil appeared and took the body? After all the Jews claimed Jesus was in league with Satan.

Handbook of Christian Apologetics Says

If Jesus did survive then why is there no record of his life after the fake resurrection?

Reason says:

If Jesus lived and was popular why is there no record from his being found in the temple at 9 to his appearance before John

the Baptist for baptism at 30? Jesus could have retired from ministry and went into anonymity had he survived the crucifixion.

Arguments from silence are weak.

Handbook of Christian Apologetics Says

The apostles told the truth and didn't make up the story about the resurrection because it only brought them torment and not even persecution made any Christian admit that the resurrection was just a fable

Reason replies:

There is no evidence that the apostles' lives were that bad. It's just a Christian lie and they know it for don't soldiers put their lives at risk for causes they don't believe in? Maybe the apostles believed their own lies. It is just like a battered wife being convinced that her husband is a good man. They found Jesus to be a very captivating person so he might have had incredible influence over them. We believe the lies today of politicians and public hospitals and risk our lives for it when we have the money to go private and be safe from the superbugs that thrive in and incompetence surrounding many public hospitals.

Handbook of Christian Apologetics Says

The apostles told the truth and didn't make up the story about the resurrection for if they made up the story they were better than Shakespeare or Dante or Tolkien. They were only simple men so their story was true.

Reason replies:

The gospel stories aren't that great. And they were written down long after the event so there was plenty of time to improve and embellishing the story.

There is not a shred of evidence that the apostles were as good at telling stories as these gospel writing people were. The gossellers were editors and you know that.

Handbook of Christian Apologetics Says

The apostles told the truth and didn't make up the story about the resurrection for they lived holy lives and never told lies.

Reason replies:

We don't know much about them. And not all in the early Church considered them good men. Peter was condemned for betraying the gospel by Paul and

Paul was accused of hypocrisy and deceit

Handbook of Christian Apologetics Says

The apostles told the truth and didn't make up the story about the resurrection for they had no motive to lie

Reason replies:

Pious fraud is a human reality. It involves trying to get people to believe something to make them better people. We know that the apostles did handle and control vast amounts of money from converts.

Handbook of Christian Apologetics Says

The apostles told the truth and didn't make up the story about the resurrection for if the resurrection were a lie the Jews would have produced the corpse of Jesus

Reason replies:

This argument is a trick. How do the authors know that the Jews could have got the body? It's interesting that nobody could have taken the body from the tomb according to Christianity while plenty could have got it afterwards had it been stolen!

Handbook of Christian Apologetics Says

The apostles told the truth and didn't make up the story about the resurrection for the disciples couldn't proclaim the resurrection among people in a time and place full of eyewitnesses of Christ unless it really happened.

Reason replies:

Joseph Smith despite his bad reputation was able to start a world religion among the people who knew him to be a cad and a profligate

Handbook of Christian Apologetics Says

The apostles told the truth and didn't make up the story about the resurrection for the adversaries of Jesus would have found out that the apostles were lying if they were

Reason replies:

Nonsense. People today get away with crimes because they lie in court. And today people are cross-examined better than the Jews ever could have done it.

Handbook of Christian Apologetics Says

The chapter is confident that no objection to the resurrection of Jesus is could be correct. On page 171 the authors boast that no reason for condemning anything in the Christian faith has ever worked!

Reason replies:

As if they could have heard all the reasons! Where in their book have they refuted the idea that an earthquake moved the rock of Jesus' tomb and the women stole the body? Their belief is founded on arrogance and insulting those who disagree with them.

Handbook of Christian Apologetics Says

The chapter is confident that no objection to the resurrection of Jesus is could be correct.

Reason replies:

Their point shows an irrational obsession with an alleged historical fact.

The fact that a historical claim cannot be refuted does not in fact make the claim correct. Absence of evidence that refutes the claim is not evidence that the claim is true.

Most believers argue that if there are errors in the Old and New Testaments, these errors are not central. They say that if the ridiculous miracles of the Old Testament such as Jonah surviving in the belly of the fish are false this does not affect the central Bible doctrine that Jesus rose from the dead for our salvation.

But even if Jesus did rise from the dead for our salvation, logic would say that it is more important to sense that somebody needed to rise to save us and indeed rose to save us than to worry about details such as the following:

It was Jesus who did it for us.

The Bible record is true when it says he rose.

The historical claims are not central at all. The New Testament says they are which is nonsense.

Anyway even if they were central, how can you trust a Bible even one written by God that makes errors? God letting errors happen makes his book more untrustworthy than any human book that contains errors. Why? Because God should know better.