

HYPNOPOMPIC HALLUCINATIONS OF THE RISEN JESUS?

The gospels say that a miracle healing man called Jesus Christ lived. They say he died by crucifixion and three days later he rose again. The tomb he was placed in was found wide open with the stone that had been across the entrance moved back and the tomb was mysteriously empty. His body was gone. Certain witnesses claimed that Jesus appeared to them as a resurrected being. Famously Jesus appeared to anti-Christian Paul and turned him into the main apostle!

The resurrection of Jesus is one of Christianity's core doctrines. It is essential. It is at the root of what Christianity is all about.

Christians claim psychiatry shows that the witnesses should not be suspected of suffering hallucinations.

The phenomenon of hypnopompic hallucinations is conveniently left out of Christian apologetics. This is a form of hallucination that sometimes happens before sleeping people are ready to waken up. They can see ghosts or even aliens (page 96, *Why People Believe Weird Things*). There are no rules though since it is a hallucination and not a dream it is necessary for the person to think they have woken up already.

The gospels tell us that the apostles slept the night Jesus was arrested and he could not get them to stay awake so stress did not affect their fondness for sleeping. We read that Peter, James and John had fallen asleep and then thought they saw Jesus' face change its features and Moses and Elijah appear (Luke 9:32). Hypnopompic hallucination suffices as an explanation for this. When the three main men were prone to such hallucination what does that say about the other apostles and the women?

Were some of the visions of the risen Jesus just hypnopompic hallucinations?

Contagion could be caused by say Magdalene being asleep or drowsy at the tomb and having a vision. If you are in a group that thinks somebody had a vision then it is easier for the group to imagine it has had visions too. It is easy to assume the stranger who is just a stranger is an angel appearing. So Mary's hypnopompic experience could start the process.