

JEWISH SCHOLAR WHO THINKS JESUS ROSE

Lapide is a Jew who believes Jesus was a Jewish saint who really rose from the dead. As a Jew, he does not believe Jesus was the Messiah or claimed to be. Christians like to mention his book on the resurrection. The details of the book are, *The Resurrection of Jesus*, Pinchas Lapide, SPCK, London, 1984. They say it shows that even objective unbelievers in Christianity can find the evidence for the resurrection persuasive!

The book says on page 38 to 40 that the empty tomb of Jesus made it harder for some people to believe that he rose and that even those who saw the visions of Jesus risen had problems believing in the resurrection. This is bizarre logic. A body disappearing and transforming into an immortal and supernatural body would help you believe. If it doesn't the problem is in you. If you think the body vanishing makes it harder for you to believe the truth is that the problem is in you and nothing else. An empty tomb can never be to blame.

Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 gives a brief overview of how Jesus rose on the third day and appeared to Peter and then to the twelve and to five hundred plus and then finally to Paul. The Christians argue that this appeared quite quickly after the event and so indicates that the resurrection was not legend for there wasn't enough time for such a big legend to develop.

In the Lapide book page 98 to 99, we read evidence that the account of the Resurrection appearances in 1 Corinthians 15 is not authentically the work of Paul,

Vocabulary sentence structure, and diction are clearly un-Pauline.

The parallelism of the three individual statements is biblically formulated.

The threefold "and that" characterises the Aramaic and Mishanic Hebrew way of narration.

The "diuvien passive" of "being raised" paraphrases God's action of salvation in order not to mention God, in accordance with the Jewish fear of the name.

The Aramaic form of the name "Cephas", not Simon, as Luke gives it in the parallel passage 24.34 sounds more original.

The double reference "in accordance with the scriptures" supports twice in three lines both the death and the resurrection of Jesus- as it probably corresponds with the faithfulness of the early church to the Hebrew Bible.

"The twelve" as a closed group of the first witnesses includes also Judas - this both agrees with the consciousness Jesus had that his men were to be all of Israel - and it consists of twelve tribes - and contradicts the supposed suicide of the apostate apostle Judas (Matt. 27.5).

Finally, the statement, which in its basic features is repeated almost in all later reports of the resurrection, narrates the course of four events which were understood as salvation bearing: He died for our sins ... was buried ... was raised ... and appeared ..."

On page 100, Lapide remarks that nowhere in the earliest accounts is the resurrection event designated as a miracle. He says this "testifies to an honesty which makes the exaggerated miraculous of the post-canonical authors even more questionable". That is nonsense. Lots of accounts of miracles only encourage us to see the supernatural at work in them but do not explicitly mention the supernatural. For example, in the Lourdes apparition accounts we don't expect to read of Bernadette say, "I experienced the miraculous vision." She just tells us stuff that is interpreted as supernatural.

On page 113 Lapide states that when we read that Jesus was to appear in Galilee in the Mark gospel that this was possibly a mistranslation. He thinks that the words for region or environs which are Galil and Galilah were mistranslated Galilee. The only grounds for belief in a mistake is that no other account says Jesus appeared or was to appear in Galilee. Mark fits the other gospels better if we have Jesus appearing in Galilia meaning the environs of Jerusalem.

Mark would fit the gospels anyway. They do not deny anything in the Mark gospel.

When Paul says Jesus appeared to him last of all as if he were an abortion (untimely born is the usual translation and refers to miscarriage) why does he talk as if this appearance was poorly timed? Some say he thinks of the regular apostles being meant to be the witnesses and as he is outside that group he is like an afterthought. They are the babies and he is the

miscarriage. Whatever he meant, the hint is that his vision was not equal to that of the other apostles thus we cannot consider him to be a great eyewitness of the risen Jesus.

In the book of Acts, when Paul meets the risen Jesus on the way to Damascus he sees nothing but a light and is blind after for a while. Never did he say or does it say that he saw the form of Jesus as a man. Paul is not really a witness to the risen Jesus. Were Paul's eyes damaged which caused his vision? Did he look at the sun or something and hallucinate or see an illusion? Its virtually a refutation of the resurrection when the only real witness we know has something as poor as that to present. Is Paul conscious of that and is that why he calls his experience an abortion and denies it belongs much in the pecking order?

Lapide is hard to understand in the sense that when he regards the New Testament as unreliable he still says Jesus rose. This cannot be more than an opinion. It is too much to say he really believes it.

