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THE EVIDENCE FOR JESUS' RESURRECTION IS SHOWN TO BE WORTHLESS WHEN YOU COMPARE IT TO OTHER CASES

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.

As impressive as that sounds the account in John 11 where dead Lazarus is a day longer than Jesus in the tomb and he was smelling and yet he rose and was seen coming out of the tomb is better. Jesus told him to come out and he emerged with grave clothes and all on him. That Jesus is named in the story does not mean you can deny the following. That the story of Jesus' resurrection was loosely based on this legend. Jesus tells the apostles he is glad he did not go to Lazarus earlier so that he might die and he might raise him so that the apostles might believe. This shows that truth as Jesus has it is claimed to be so important that it is worth somebody dying. If belief was that important then how much then did the apostles want to believe that Jesus himself rose? How reliable then were they?

The Lazarus story looks like an attempt to argue, "Okay nobody says Jesus was seen coming out of his tomb alive. But the Lazarus story makes that sort of not matter. If Lazarus was seen coming out at Jesus' call then Jesus should be assumed to have done something similar though there was nobody around." Evidence wise, the Lazarus tale is just nothing more than hearsay or an invention of the writer of John. No effort at least mentioning witnesses who were still alive is made. That such an important story is so poorly corroborated actually makes it defeat its purpose. The defeat is in how we cannot rely on the Jesus resurrected account when a story like this is intended to give it plausibility!

If the New Testament is thinking of Isaiah 26:19 which predicts that the dead will rise and those who are in the tombs shall be alive then we see why Matthew has several resurrections happening at the one time of which Jesus' was one. Anybody could have done a bit of spin and presented one of these people as the true saviour. For all we know, somebody could have been raiding tombs and the people assumed the bodies had risen from the dead.

There have been cases where bodies have been taken just to start a resurrection story. The Mormons for example tried that game.

1832, Resurrection men in Pomfret

It seems these miserable fanatics [Mormons] have made a few converts in Pomfret, Chautauqua county. One of their number died and the night after his burial, a party of "resurrection men" were disturbed while disinterring the deceased, and one of the offenders taken and bound over for trial—The editor of the Censor gives a very flattering account of the intellectual endowments of the community in which he resides, when he says, the Mormonites have selected "a suitable field for operation, where nothing is too absurd to gain credence."

"Mormonism," Buffalo Patriot, Jan. 17, 1832.

Drugged child dies

The Mormons announced that on a certain day, at the house of my husband's uncle, Isaac Morley, they would raise the dead. Joseph, the prophet, made protracted efforts to restore to consciousness a child to whom they had administered a soporific, but the scheme failed because they had given an overdose, and the child died.

"Mrs. S. W. Hanson's Statement," NTAM 1, no. 2 (Apr. 1888)

John Gould's child drugged, dies

I married John Gould's daughter Harriet. Her father had been thirty years a Free-will Baptist minister in New York, and I knew Jo Smith there. He became a Mormon and moved to Kirtland in the spring of 1832. I have often heard my wife and her parents tell about Joseph, the prophet, attempting to restore to consciousness their child which they claimed had been drugged. The child was buried.

"James Thompson's Statement," NTAM 1, no. 2 (Apr. 1888)

Such attempts were in response to prophecies that the Mormons would be able to raise the dead. Jesus' resurrection story paved the way for such credulity and evil. No religious tale is worth one grave robbery or the manslaughter of a child.

Orson Pratt raises corpse

During the same summer [of 1832], it is said, a young girl whose parents, David Rosenburger and wife, lived near Hyde Lake, not far from Theresa, [New York], apparently died after a short illness. Her parents, converts to the new faith, kept the body for three days unburied, until the arrival of Orson Pratt, who, after praying beside the corpse and anointing the brow from the strange vase of ointment asked that all leave the room, and a moment later, recalled the weeping friends to show them their daughter, restored to life. Even the adherents to the new faith doubted this miracle, it is said, and there was a falling off in attendance at the Mormon meetings.

Watertown Daily Times, Dec. 10, 1898, qtd. in Jefferson county genealogy 12, no. 1

Believers would say, the parents were new converts and had no reason to be so deeply into the faith that they would engineer a miracle. They would say that the body was known to be dead when it was three days dead. They would say people saw the dead body in the room and then saw the girl alive in the same room. They would say doubts always accompany such claims and that we read of doubts even in the gospels.

The case for her resurrection is better than that for Jesus'. The parents and the girl were named. Nobody really knows much about anybody who was at Jesus' burial. It is not said why there were doubts. The Jesus case is weakened by the gospel assertion that the authorities thought Jesus' friends stole his body and more importantly had the courage to act on that assumption. It is weakened too by the assertion that Jesus' resurrection was predicted by Jesus. The story was recorded years after the events like the gospel story. But there is a huge difference between a few decades in the dark ages and a few decades in the nineteenth century. Moreover, the story is not interested in promoting the belief that the girl rose. It is unbiased. And the gospels try to promote the belief that Jesus rose. They do not give the evidence and ask the believer to draw her or his own conclusions.

After first conference (June [3]–6, 1831)

At a meeting of the tribe on the 3d. inst. the fact was made known to them that 28 elders must be selected and ordained, to start immediately, for Missouri. Jo accordingly asked the Lord in the assembly whom he should select, and the Lord named them over to him, as he made them believe. The ceremony of endowing them with miraculous gifts, or supernatural power, was then performed, and they were commanded to take up a line of march; preaching their gospel, (Jo's Bible) raising the dead, healing the sick, casting out devils, &c.

"Mormonism on the Wing," PT , June 14, 1831.

We conclude that there is nothing special about the resurrection of Jesus and that it is based on hype.

FURTHER READING

Christianity for the Tough-Minded, Ed John Warwick Montgomery, Bethany Fellowship Inc, Minneapolis, 1973

Evidence that Demands a Verdict, Vol 1, Josh McDowell, Alpha, Scripture Press Foundation, Bucks, 1995

He Walked Among Us, Josh McDowell and Bill Wilson, Alpha, Cumbria, 2000

Jesus: The Evidence, Ian Wilson, Pan, London, 1985

The First Easter, What Really Happened? HJ Richards, Collins/Fount Glasgow, 1980

The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail, Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln, Corgi, London, 1982

The Jesus Event, Martin R Tripole SJ, Alba House, New York, 1980

The Jesus Inquest, Charles Foster, Monarch Books, Oxford, 2006

The Passover Plot, Hugh Schonfield, Element, Dorset, 1996

The Resurrection Factor, Josh McDowell, Alpha, Scripture Press Foundation, Bucks, 1993

The Resurrection of Jesus, Pinchas Lapide, SPCK, London, 1984

The Unauthorised Version, Robin Lane Fox, Penguin, Middlesex, 1992

The Second Messiah, Christopher Knight and Robert Lomas, Arrow, London, 1998

The Turin Shroud is Genuine, Rodney Hoare, Souvenir Press, London, 1998

The Virginal Conception and Bodily Resurrection of Jesus, Raymond E Brown, Paulist Press, New York, 1973

The Womb and the Tomb, Hugh Montifiore, Fount – HarperCollins, London, 1992

Verdict on the Empty Tomb, Val Grieve Falcon, London, 1976

Who Moved the Stone? Frank Morison, OM Publishing, Cumbria, 1997

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Still Standing on Sinking Sand, Farrell Till,

www.infidels.org/library/magazines/tsr/1997/1/1sink97.html

Why I Don't Buy the Resurrection Story by Richard Carrier

www.infidels.org/library/modern/richard_carrier/resurrection/index.shtml

A Naturalistic Account of the Resurrection, Brian Marston

<http://www.phlab.missouri.edu/~c570529/PhilosoStop/resurrection.html>

This site argues that somebody unknown stole the body to stop the apostles stealing it or venerating it and lost it and argues that the witnesses of the risen Jesus were lying because no effort was made by them to preserve first hand reports of what was seen and how and when. It argues that since the apostles had followed Jesus at great personal sacrifice and now he was dead they invented the resurrection to save face. Also the inclination of people at the time to believe in dying and rising gods may have overwhelmed them and made them lie to themselves that Jesus had risen. It is like a wife who deludes herself that her husband is forever faithful though she has seen him with another woman in bed. He answers the objection that a lie like that would need a large-scale conspiracy for lots of lies start off with a small group of people and if the lies are attractive other people will believe them. Plus he says that Jesus could have rigged events to make sure he would fulfil Old Testament prophecy so the Christians should not be saying the gospel story is true for it fits old prophecy. I would add that owing to the total absence of evidence that Jesus was nailed to the cross and the fact that the gospels never say any of his friends were close to the cross that Jesus might have been tied to it and the Christians later assumed he was nailed because the psalm seemed to say so.

The Case For Christianity Examined: Truth or Lies?

www.askwhy.co.uk/awstruth/ChristianCase.html

Historical Evidence and the Empty Tomb Story, A Reply to William Lane Craig by Jeffrey Jay Lowder

www.infidels.org/library/modern/jeff_lowder/empty.html

The Resurrection, Steven Carr

www.bowness.demon.co.uk/resr.htm

Did Jesus Really Rise from the Dead? Dan Barker versus Mike Horner

www.ffrf.org/debates/barker_horner.html

Craig's Empty Tomb and Habermas on the Post-Resurrection Appearances of Jesus

www.infidels.org/library/modern/richard_carrier/indef/4e.html

Did a Rolling Stone Close Jesus' Tomb by Amos Kloner

www.bib-arch.org/barso99/roll1.html

Who Moved the Stone? Review by Steven Carr,

www.bowness.demon.co.uk/stone.htm This tells us that if you assume that two contradictory books are true in all they say and try to make them fit you will manage it but the result will be contrived. You are really still assuming they are true and have no proof for it. This observation should be a warning to the fundamentalist Christians who say there are no contradictions in the Bible. They have no faith in the Bible at all for they are only assuming it is right. If they really believed, they would not need to work out and produce laughable far-fetched ways of reconciling Bible contradictions. They wouldn't do that with anything else but the Bible.

Morison claims that Peter's clever and unbiased mind was behind the first Gospel, that of Mark. But Morison only assumes this for there is no evidence that the gospel is clever and unbiased or that Peter had much if anything at all to do with it.

Morison then tries to make out that the claim of Luke that the apostles waited seven weeks before saying Jesus had risen from the dead is too detrimental to the evidence for the resurrection to be true. In other words, the evidence for the resurrection is right and any evidence against it is wrong! That is bias if I ever seen it. He then makes out that these things which undermine the pro-resurrection evidence prove it happened. So the evidence against the resurrection makes the evidence for it stronger! How ridiculous.