

RESURRECTION OF JESUS

The Resurrection of Jesus is a fairy story

The evidence for the Church's chief doctrine, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, is simply so bad its embarrassing

The Christians say that the empty tomb alone would not be evidence that Jesus rose. It says the visions of the risen Jesus alone would not be evidence that he rose. But it says the two together make evidence.

But it is not true that the empty tomb of Jesus was evidence. The gospels themselves say that the tomb was open when nobody was about and before the visitors to the tomb came. It simply does not

Plus the risen Jesus told the disciples that there were many scriptures that predicted the resurrection of the

The gospels do not give evidence for the resurrection. They give evidence that people were saying they witnessed the empty tomb and saw visions of the resurrected Jesus.

We do not accept evidence that people believe things as evidence that the beliefs are correct so why should we make an exception for the resurrection of Jesus?

Their faith in the resurrection is based on arguments from silence.

They cannot point to any New Testament assertion that the apostles gained nothing financially from their story.

The apostles did preaching work but there is no record of their good works in feeding the poor etc.

The Church says that Jesus after his resurrection was not the same as before. His body has the power to live forever in perfect health and to pass through walls. It is a real body but is described as a spiritual glorified body as it is like a spirit in many ways.

A photograph of a ghost that is stated by experts to show no sign of tampering is more credible than the testimony of the apostles that Jesus rose. Christians are too dogmatic to care about that.

CONTEXT

The New Testament is a set of books considered to be authored by God and by men that record the doctrine and teaching and life of Jesus Christ who is regarded by Christians as the Son of God. Jesus is said by the New Testament to have worked miracles - acts similar to magic. It says he rose from the dead and now reigns in Heaven ever since.

We may doubt the miracle stories of the New Testament because the stories were recounted by believing disciples of Jesus and so their tales were not objective. They were biased and they saw what they wanted to see. Christians respond that this objection is unfair. They say the disciples saw the miracles and had to speak about them. But we want the testimony of people who saw the miracles and did not believe. Where is it? It does not exist.

The Church follows the Bible in teaching that Jesus died for our sins and rose again to give us that salvation and to prove that he was the saviour. They conclude that if Jesus did not rise then the faith is a delusion and the believers are to be pitied. This follows the teaching of the apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 15:12-19). They say that Jesus returning from the dead was the most important thing he did.

At least they imply that critics of religion like Richard Dawkin's author of The God Delusion should accuse them of delusion and deserving pity if they think the faith is rubbish.

And they repudiate the notion that if people have a religious faith that is wrong and it makes them happy then we should be happy for them. Good!

JESUS' EMPTY TOMB

Jesus was put to death by crucifixion and buried after being taken down from his cross. The tomb had a stone rolled across

to seal the entrance. Jesus' body allegedly disappeared from this tomb three days after he died.

The Gospel of Matthew says that the tomb was watched over by guards who were amenable to bribes. Who knows then what went on? Arguments such as that, "The guards were against Jesus and would not have helped in a hoax", are just guesses not arguments. They are voiced to fool the unwary.

The gospels say that nobody saw the resurrection. The witnesses only saw the risen Jesus. They did not see him rising or his body turning from a corpse into the body of a supernatural resurrected and immortal being. Nobody saw the body of Jesus becoming alive again. An empty tomb and Jesus appearing saying he rose is not the same. This is very serious. Christians dishonestly gloss over it.

Nobody can say there is any evidence that he rose. There are countless cases of visions that cannot be proven to be hoaxes or hallucinations. The only reason the Church ignores them is because it frowns on something they teach or because the Church doesn't like to promote too many apparitions. But the implication is that apparitions by themselves prove nothing.

The more honest Christians say that an empty tomb by itself proves nothing. The dishonest ones seem to argue that though bodies have vanished and nobody nobody knows why or how or who took them, Jesus' disappearance proves he rose.

The Christians admit that apparitions prove nothing by themselves. They dismiss the apparitions experienced by Muhammad for example.

But the believers say the empty tomb and the apparitions happening together show that Jesus probably rose.

Christians say the tomb was sealed and when it was opened Jesus' body was found to have impossibly disappeared. The tomb was secure so Jesus could not have been stolen or gotten out except by miraculously rising from the dead and vanishing. They even lie that the gospels say all this. They do not.

THE TRUTH ABOUT ATTEMPTS TO SHOW THERE IS EVIDENCE FOR THE RESURRECTION

Jesus did not teach that you must examine the evidence for his resurrection and base your belief on that. No. He claimed to be the Jewish Messiah. He said we must look for prophecies of it in the Old Testament for it points towards the coming of the Messiah and prepares for him. He also said that if his doctrine is false that the resurrection didn't happen.

The evidence can be very good for some event and it could still be possible that the event never took place. Jesus Christ commanding us to believe in his resurrection is just ridiculous. It is simply someone trying to violate us by telling us what to think. His bossy boy antics would indicate that he knew fine well the evidence could be dismissed by a rational person.

If the evidence was that only a ghost could have committed the Jack the Ripper murders we would certainly ignore the evidence. If the evidence was that only Queen Victoria could have been the murderer, we would ignore the evidence no matter how watertight it was if it were proven that she was in Buckingham Palace during the killings. You might say that the proven alibi shows the evidence is not watertight. Actually it doesn't. If it had not been for the alibi, she would be convicted.

The Old Testament contains no clear prophecy of the resurrection of Jesus. Psalm 16 is offered by the apostles as a prophecy but it never claims any link with the Messiah. It could be predicting the resurrection of Lazarus for all we know. Or a recovery from serious illness – it never clearly speaks of a man coming back from the dead.

The New Testament authors certainly lied about the prophetic evidence for the resurrection of Jesus. They had no respect for what they called the word of God and set about contriving a new faith.

And Jesus spoke a lot about religious teachings as distinct from ethical teachings. He was dogmatic expecting people to believe in God, that God wrote the Old Testament and that he was the Messiah and that he would die for sins. Most people get by without dogmas. They prefer to believe in doing good for others and enjoying how good it makes them feel. Stressing dogmas is merely a form of bigotry. And the less evidence there is for the dogmas the more bigoted it is to make them important.

Desperate Christians say that the apostles and witnesses of the resurrection were persuaded against their wills that Jesus rose. The believers say the witnesses didn't want to believe that Jesus rose so we can't surmise that they wanted him back so bad that they imagined he appeared to them after his crucifixion. This is horrific reasoning.

We read only that one time Jesus appeared some still had doubts. But having doubts about your impending marriage does not mean you go and get married against your will! Believing because you want to actually leads to having doubts.

And the notion that they didn't want to believe is a lie. If they loved Jesus they wanted him to be alive again.

OLDEST GOSPEL: EMPTY TOMB NON-MIRACULOUS?

In Mark, Jesus dies on the cross and is buried. A few days later women come to anoint the corpse in the tomb and they found it open and the stone rolled back. A man in white tells the women that Jesus is not there and is risen. The women take the man in white's word for it that the tomb is empty. It does not say they looked inside. The Church will say that maybe they did look inside. That is speculation. We have to stick to what's there!

The man's presence is not explained. He seems to be there just to tell the women that the tomb is empty and Jesus has gone. When Mark has this man at the tomb who may himself have stolen the body it is so strange that it can only indicate that he was merely put into the story to convey information about Jesus to the visitors. Mark ends with the women leaving the tomb and saying nothing to anybody. The endings for Mark are not authentic. Some believe that Mark intended to finish on that note. This would indicate that whatever early Christians thought about the alleged apparitions of Jesus, the only thing considered to be evidence for the resurrection was the testimony of the man in white who was presumably there when Jesus rose and who got the mandate from him to spread the news.

Mark chose a Greek term used to describe the man in white. It is Neaniskos. This is the same term used to describe the young man in a towel who ran naked away from the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus was arrested. The man was an ordinary man despite attempts to portray him as an angel.

The young man being mentioned in the garden seems so pointless and amenable to a scandalous interpretation that Mark must have had some reason to put it in. The best explanation is that the man at the tomb and the nude man in the garden were one and the same person.

Mark's gospel teaches that miracles only happen if you already believe they can happen. His Jesus does not cure or heal or do miracles where there is no faith. The miracles do not happen to convert you. If so, how should we view the resurrection of Jesus and the empty tomb? It has been suggested that the tomb is actually a symbol. It indicates that death has been emptied of its power. But I don't want to get into that. It's really speculation anyway. But one thing is for sure, Mark seen the resurrection of Jesus not as a sign for unbelievers or even believers. It is not evidence. It is all about faith.

All about faith means the empty tomb was not about proving Jesus rose at all. Mark seems to indicate this by refusing to note if the tomb was actually checked by the women or anybody else. The body could still have been in it and taken after the women left.

THE IMPLICATIONS

Some Catholic scholars state that the resurrection evidence is not very good. They however say that there is circumstantial evidence that it happened. For example, the saints had a relationship with the risen Jesus and this transformed them indicating the power of the risen Jesus. This indicates he really is risen. But there are people who behaved like saints while opposing the idea of resurrection. The evidence for the resurrection of Jesus should be as good as the evidence for the existence of Nero Caesar or Abraham Lincoln.

The resurrection is at the centre of the Catholic faith.

It holds that Jesus is the risen Lord and the sign that God wills to save us in soul and body.

It holds that his risen body and blood are present to us in communion to be our food and drink.

All this falls apart if the evidence is inadequate. It needs to be excellent in order to justify staking so much on it.

In other words, if the resurrection really happened the evidence would be convincing.