

Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus

NOTES

May 12, 2013

John 19:30b-42

Review: The actual, historical Resurrection of Jesus is absolutely critical to our salvation. Without it, our faith is foolish and we are to be pitied for believing we are saved from sin. (1 Corinthians 15:14)

Jesus' historical, physical Resurrection is extremely well-studied and attested by sound scholarship, biblical and secular alike.

The biblical account from Luke 24:1-11

The Tomb was discovered empty.

- The disciples claimed it was empty and then went right back to the city of Jerusalem to proclaim the resurrection.
- Both Jewish and Roman sources and traditions acknowledge an empty tomb
- Women discovering and telling of the empty tomb gives credence to the gospel account.

Alternative Theories & their flaws:

1. The Stolen-Body Theory (Matthew 28:11-15).

- First problem- Sleeping sentinels can't reliably report what happened while they slept.
- Second problem- Roman soldiers were executed for sleeping on guard duty!
- Third problem- What would it take for thieves to remove the body from the tomb?
- Fourth problem- How could the disciples have done it?
 - (see Mk 14:50; Luke 22:54-62; John 20:19) and then begin telling the whole community that Jesus was resurrected!
 - the disciples were skeptical when they heard the news of the empty tomb.

- Fifth problem- The enemies of Jesus had every reason to produce his body, but they couldn't.

But if the disciples did not steal the body of Jesus from his tomb, where did it go?

2. The Swoon Theory - Jesus wasn't quite dead and revived

Fatal flaws:

- First- Jesus had undergone a crucifixion. He was dead.
- Second flaw- The Roman governor demanded confirmation of Jesus' death.
- Third- We have extra-biblical evidence from first-century historians. Flavius Josephus and Cornelius Tacitus.
- Fourth problem with the swoon theory- Even hostile critics don't buy it.

3. The Relocated Body Theory suggests that Jesus did not rise from the dead, but his body was temporarily stored in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea on Friday night before being relocated to a criminal's tomb.

So, as we begin to build our case for the resurrection, we know two very important facts from biblical and secular sources:

1. That Jesus was dead from crucifixion.
2. That the tomb was discovered empty.