

# What Difference Does it Make? More Evidence for the Resurrection

## NOTES

May 19, 2013

Luke 24:39-43

Acts 1:1-3

**Fact 1-** Jesus was dead by crucifixion

**Fact 2-** The tomb was discovered empty

Last week we talked about the alternative suggestions for the empty tomb. If the body wasn't stolen and hidden away, if Jesus didn't swoon and then resuscitate, and if his body wasn't relocated, we're left with the fact that the tomb was truly empty.

### **Fact 3- Post-Mortem Appearances to the Disciples**

1. Emmaus appearance- Luke 24
2. Upper room appearances- Luke 24. John 20
3. 500 followers of Jesus:

*"I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me—that Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, as the Scriptures said. He was seen by Peter and then by the twelve apostles. After that, he was seen by more than five hundred of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died by now. Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles" (1 Corinthians 15:3-7).*

Author C.H. Dodd has observed, "There can hardly be any purpose in mentioning the fact that most of the five hundred are still alive, unless Paul is saying, in effect, 'The witnesses are there to be questioned.'"

**Alternative Theories** as to all of these resurrection appearances.

#### 1. The Hallucination Theory

This theory suggests that those who "saw" Jesus Christ after his death and burial were actually hallucinating. They may have thought they saw Jesus alive, but such appearances were the results of hallucination or the power of suggestion.

Hallucinations do occur, but they are highly individualized and extremely subjective. It is very rare for even two persons to experience the same hallucinations simultaneously.

The accounts of Jesus' resurrection appearances do not bear the marks of a hallucination.

- They occurred at different times.
- The witnesses were not expecting an appearance and were often puzzled or skeptical at first (see Luke 24:16; John 20:14,24-25).

- Most of those appearances were to groups of people (see Mark 16:14-18; John 21:1-24; 1 Corinthians 15:6).
- Jesus appeared at least 11 different times following his resurrection:
  1. to the women returning from the tomb (Matthew 28:9-10)
  2. to Peter (Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5)
  3. to two followers on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-33)
  4. to the disciples and a number of others (Luke 24:36-43)
  5. to the disciples, including Thomas (John 20:26-29)
  6. to seven disciples by the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1-23)
  7. to more than five hundred followers (1 Corinthians 15:6)
  8. to James, his brother (1 Corinthians 15:7)
  9. to Mary of Magdala (Mark 16:9; John 20:11-18)
  10. to the eleven disciples at his ascension (Acts 1:4-9)
  11. to Paul (Acts 9:1-9)
- Jesus' invitations to verify his flesh-and-blood presence with them (Luke 24:39-43).
- The people who saw Jesus were not the kind of people most likely to suffer delusions.

2. Another theory to debunk the Resurrection: The Spiritual Resurrection Theory. Jehovah's Witnesses espouse a form of this theory.

But this "spiritual resurrection" theory has insurmountable problems.

- First, to have any meaning, a resurrection must entail the physical. In the view of Palestinian Judaism, a spiritual resurrection without the physical body would not be a resurrection at all.
- Second, Jesus himself completely demolished the spiritual-resurrection theory.
- Paul also demolishes the spiritual-resurrection theory in his discussion of the resurrection body in 1 Corinthians 15:29-58.

**Fact 4- The conversion of skeptics.** James, the brother of Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:7) and Saul, renamed Paul after his meeting with the resurrected Jesus.

**Fact # 5- The Disciples were transformed...** they went from frightened, hiding away to boldly proclaiming, all over Jerusalem, that Jesus was alive! And that fact of the transformation of the disciples, undisputed by the scholarly world, is further powerful evidence for the resurrection.

**So what difference does the resurrection make?**

- Power over death, yes. We will talk more about that next week.
- Even more... power over evil.

"Where o death is your victory?

Where o death is your sting..." 1 Corinthians 15:55