

Scientific Truths of the Bible Part 3: **Evidence for the Resurrection**

By Mark Jurkovich

Did Jesus really rise from the dead? Our whole faith hangs upon his death and resurrection. Even the apostle Paul declared "for if Christ did not raise from the dead, our faith is in vain and we are still in our sins" (1Cor. 15:17) There have been a number of people over the years who have set out to prove the resurrection could not have happened, or at least try to find out what really happened (not believing the resurrection itself). A number of them ended up becoming convinced that indeed it did happen, and became followers of Jesus themselves. One such person is Frank Morison who wrote Who Moved the Stone? in 1930. Not being a believer in miracles, yet fascinated by Jesus, he set out to write about Jesus' last days before the crucifixion. But in his studies he became convinced by the evidence, and ended up writing about the resurrection instead.

If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, what happened to his body? Many were strongly opposed to this new 'sect' including Paul himself. But no one came forward producing his body, or pointing out where it is buried.

Some claim the disciples stole his body. But the tomb was guarded by Roman soldiers. How could the disciples have stolen the body without their knowledge? The guards would have been executed for letting that happen

(especially if they all fell asleep). The Bible actually gives some insight into this. When the soldiers told the authorities what happened, they were paid to say the disciples stole the body, and were assured they would be protected from reprisal. (Matt. 28:11-15).

Then what of the disciples? Were they even capable of stealing the body? They scattered when Jesus was arrested. They were still in hiding on Sunday (John 20:19), and were still in disbelief even after several told them they saw Jesus alive (Mark 16:10-13). It is highly improbable that they would have gotten up enough courage to attempt to sneak in and try to steal the body, let alone try to overpower the soldiers in the attempt.

On the other hand, it is the dramatic turn around that occurred in these disciples that is one of the strongest evidences for the resurrection. Though they were in mourning and fearful on Easter morning, less than two months later they were boldly proclaiming His resurrection on Pentecost (Acts 2). In fact, they were changed so much that over the next several decades, all but one of them were put to death for that claim. That last disciple, John, was sentenced to death, but survived and was then exiled. It is just inconceivable that every one of them would be willing to die for something they knew to be a lie. In fact, the Bible says there were over 500 (1 Corinthians 15:5-8) who had the privilege to see him alive before his ascension into heaven. The fact that none of the 500 plus came forward to say it isn't true again attests to the fact that the resurrection

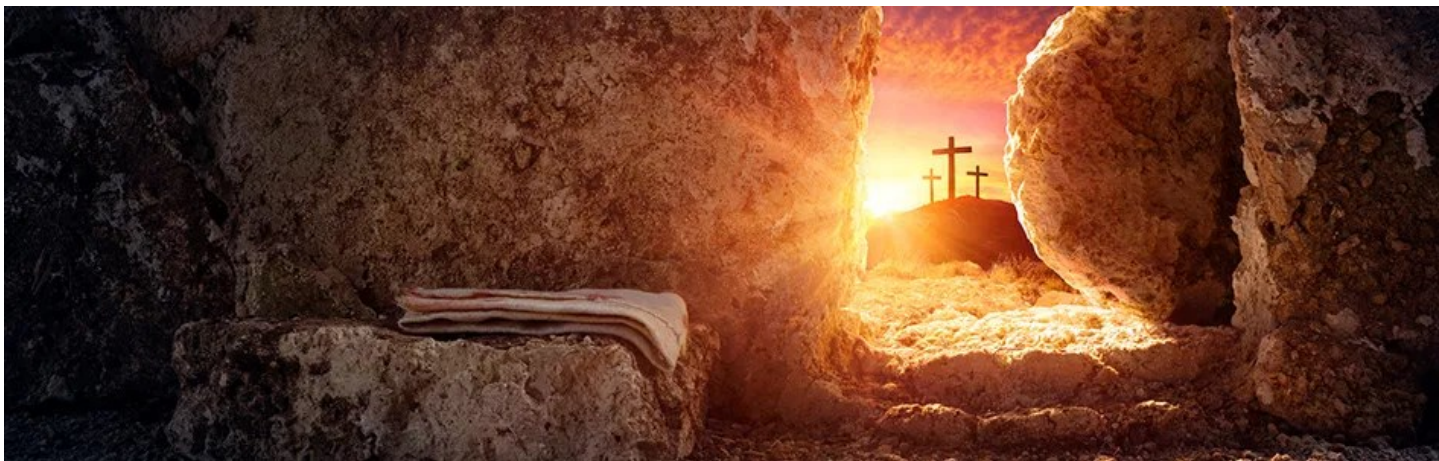


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indeed did happen.

So what other theories have people proposed? One is that he faked his death (normally called the swoon theory). But this one is even more unlikely than the disciples stealing the body. Jesus would have to pretend to die while on the cross (or go into a death like faint), and convince the soldiers he was dead (who would have broken his legs to speed death if they found him still alive, John 19:31-37). It is more likely he would have died later of his injuries anyway (crown of thorns, whipping which literally tore open his flesh, the crucifixion itself, and the spear in his side). If he did manage to survive, he surely would have not had the strength to roll away the stone without collaborators (which again goes back to the disciples/collaborators willingly dying for a lie.) Finally he would have had to fake his ascension, and spend the rest of his life in hiding to keep the lie going.

A variant of the swoon is if someone else pretended to be him, and die in his place. That person would have had to convince his captors he was Jesus from the arrest on, then willingly die this excruciating death in Jesus' place. That would still leave Jesus somehow disposing of the other person's body, fake the resurrection, then again fake the ascension and hide the rest of his life.

Then there is the legend theory, that the belief of his resurrection came into vogue only years after Christianity got started. But those who study ancient history, mythology, and legend say that it takes several if not many generations for a legend of such magnitude to take hold and be believed. There is more than ample evidence that a strong belief in the resurrection was already well established within that first generation, while eye witnesses were still alive (both who would attest to its truth and who would attest to its falsehood if it was false).

To restate, all of these arguments are trying to explain why Jesus' body was never produced. If he did not rise from the dead, where is his body? No one ever came forward saying "here is his body".

There are even more evidences, and more complete arguments to the points I have raised, but I leave that up to the experts.

The bottom line is, you do not have to blindly believe and hope the resurrection is true. In fact, the evidence for his resurrection is so overwhelming it's inspiring. He went through that agonizing death just for us, but then he truly rose again, and has promised he will come back for us. If you have not yet embraced this truth, I encourage you to do so today, and discover new life for yourself.

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