

What we know

- Jesus' disciples believed that he appeared to them after he was resurrected. Before the resurrection they were frightened ~ very soon after, they boldly and publicly preached the resurrection of Jesus.
- Jesus was tortured and crucified. Evidence: Christian sources plus Josephus, Tacitus, Lucian, Mar Bar-Serapion, & the Talmud.
- Many were martyred for their faith. e.g. Paul, previously Christianity's chief persecutor. James, Jesus' brother, who was previously sceptical about Jesus' claims. Nero martyred many Christians in 64AD.
- Paul cited over 500 witnesses to the resurrection, who saw the risen Jesus.
- Christianity very quickly spread throughout the known world.
- Jesus' tomb was empty. No body was produced.

Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?

How some explain away Jesus' resurrection

It's only a Legend ~ *The story gradually developed over a period of time.*

A Christian's response

- The New Testament is **narrative, not** myth.
- It does not explain Paul's early conversion nor Christianity's **early** success against strong opposition.
- Strong claims of the truth of the resurrection were made well within the lifetime of witnesses. If the claims had been recently fabricated, they would have been readily refuted.

It's a lie ~ *Disciples stole the body while the soldiers slept and claimed he rose from the dead. This was the earliest Jewish claim.*

A Christian's response

- Would the disciples allow themselves to be **martyred** for an elaborate hoax?
- To steal the body, the disciples would have needed an elaborate plan, including motive, bribed guards, a place to dispose of the body, false witnesses — with **everyone** taking the secret to the grave with them.
- There is **no** evidence that the body was stolen. The Jewish authorities claim that the disciples stole it while the guards slept.
- Professional soldiers were guarding the tomb. Falling asleep on duty carried the death penalty. In any case, the noise of the moving stone, would have woken them. The Jewish authorities covered for the soldiers. This wouldn't have happened if they had slept on duty.

Swoon Theory ~ *Jesus didn't die, but fainted on the cross and later revived*

A Christian's response

- Roman soldiers, expert executioners, oversaw the crucifixion and pronounced him dead.
- How could Jesus, after being flogged, crucified, speared and buried, unwrap himself, move a stone, defeat the soldiers, walk 11 kilometres and convince his doubting disciples that God had resurrected him to immortality?

Wrong Tomb ~ *Confused by grief, the disciples went to the wrong tomb*

A Christian's response

- Joseph of Arimathea's involvement and testimony, makes this impossible. Joseph wouldn't forget his own tomb.
- Multiple witnesses saw where Jesus was laid.
- If the disciples went to the wrong tomb, Jewish authorities would have quickly pointed out the right tomb.

Hallucination ~ *Jesus' followers saw him in their imaginations*

A Christian's response

- On multiple occasions, different individuals and groups, heard, saw, talked and ate with Jesus ~ **after his resurrection.**
- Hallucinations would have been easy to disprove ~ the Jewish authorities could just produce the body.
- Jesus' disciples had lost their faith at Jesus' crucifixion, yet this totally changed to **unflinching belief very shortly after.** Christianity **quickly** took the Roman world by storm.