



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: LESSON 140

Evidence for the resurrection of Christ – The resurrection account of Christ has always come under vehement opposition throughout church history. The following are some of the most common theories put forth by those who attempt to dismiss or minimize the veracity of the resurrection.

Muslim theory – Majority of Muslims believe that Allah made someone look like Jesus, who was then crucified; but Jesus was saved by God and taken bodily to heaven. Such a theory would require God and Jesus to be involved in deception, being contrary to their character. Also during His earthly ministry Jesus had at many times clearly taught that it would be Him who would die and be resurrected (Mark 8:31; Luke 24:39). This is the fundamental principle of salvation that only Christ, the perfect Son of God, could have lived and died to accomplish salvation for sinners, and none other (Matthew 20:28).

Watch Tower theory – The Jehovah's Witnesses deny the physical resurrection of Christ, teaching that God raised Him as a spirit being, and His physical body was taken by God. This is unacceptable as Jesus taught that His resurrection would have been a physical resurrection (John 2:19-21). Christ in essence rose in the same body in which He died (Luke 24:39, 42-43; John 20:25-27).

Swoon theory – The swoon theory states that Jesus never died on the cross, but merely fainted and was later revived. Those who claim this will not only need to explain the severe nature and extent of Jesus' injuries, and how people were mistaken about His death, but also the conduct of the disciples, who instead of feeling sorry for Jesus' pitiful state, were willing and zealous to boldly proclaim Christ's resurrection and victory over death (Acts 2:22-32), to preach the gospel, to anticipate that someday they would also have a resurrection body like Christ's, and even to die for their Lord! Such actions make no sense for those who would have seen a disgraced and pathetic Jesus, on the verge of death.

Also to think that even the disciples who prepared the body of Christ and placed it in the tomb were mistaken, and that Jesus later regained consciousness and in that extremely sick and frail condition was able to get Himself free from the stiff cloths (John 19:38-40), roll the heavy stone covering the tomb's entrance (Matthew 27:60), and then evade the guards and escape (Matthew 27:62-66), and in that terrible condition appear to His disciples, is an even more ridiculous and nonsensical notion. Believing in a swoon theory requires much greater faith than believing in the true evidence of the resurrection.

Theft theory – Another theory is that the disciples stole the body and declared that Jesus had risen from the dead. Actually the Jewish leaders came up with that falsehood (Matthew 28:11-15). How could the faint-hearted and fearful disciples have risked going against the powerful Roman soldiers, and steal the dead body, in order to proclaim Jesus' resurrection, and then to preach and even die for such a message?

Hallucination theory – Another theory states that some people had hallucinations of seeing Jesus. First, hallucinations are individual incidents, and not things imagined by many people. But the New Testament declares that Jesus appeared to many people, at different places and times, and over a forty day period (1 Corinthians 15:6-8). Secondly, someone cannot simply trigger hallucinations in others. Also, subjective visions are generally experienced by those with high expectations, but Jesus appeared to people who were fearful and in a state of despair. They were not anticipating seeing a resurrected Jesus. Moreover, though Jesus had taught them about His death and resurrection, the disciples had failed to understand this (Matthew 16:21-22; Mark 9:9-10, 31-32; Luke 18:31-34). Thus it is clear that they did not expect an imminent physical appearance of Christ. Finally, these so called hallucinations cannot explain the disciples talking with Jesus, touching Him, walking with Him, and eating with Him (Luke 24:13-43; John 20:27; 21:9-13). The evidence that Jesus actually died on the cross, was buried and rose physically the third day is overwhelming. There would be no Christianity without the physically resurrected Christ!