

4 Theories That Try to Debunk Christ's Resurrection and Why They Don't Add Up

Atheists and doubters of Christianity want the world to believe Jesus did not rise from the dead. Thanks to historians from Jesus' era, we have documentation of the crucifixion, how Christ's body mysteriously disappeared and the resurrection.

This is important because Christianity's power hinges on the fact of the resurrection. And that's why detractors for centuries have been coming up with scenarios to explain away the reality of the resurrection.

Wrong Tomb Theory

One is the wrong tomb theory. Everyone just went to the wrong one – an empty one – and assumed Christ had resurrected.

Indiana doctor Joseph Bergeron studied the crucifixion of Christ and its aftermath for 10 years, writing about it in *The Crucifixion of Jesus: A Medical Doctor Examines the Death and Resurrection of Christ*.

"Going to a wrong tomb and finding it empty doesn't present to anybody's mind that the person resurrected from the dead," Bergeron told CBN News. "Nobody thinks that an empty tomb means somebody's resurrected from the dead. That's a nonsensical notion."

One's first thought would more likely be that someone took the body, Bergeron suggested, saying, "Mary Magdalene, when she found the empty tomb, she ran to Peter and said, 'They've stolen His body; I don't know where they've taken it.'"

Alex McFarland, another top defender of the Christian faith at events like Bible camps and apologetics conferences, pointed

out another well-known fact.

"Pilate had dispatched a cadre of Roman soldiers to guard the tomb," he stated. "Clearly they knew which tomb it was."

"Everybody knew where the tomb was. It belonged to Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy man; it was new," Bergeron explained, saying of the authorities and the tomb, "They placed soldiers there, after all, to make sure that nobody took the body. So everybody knew where it was."

McFarland believes much more had to have happened to the disciples other than just finding an empty tomb to explain their sudden fierce belief in a resurrected Christ – a belief so sure that all but one of them would face a martyr's death for it.

As McFarland put it, "Suddenly they begin to preach Christ is alive, and they're willing to die for their faith. It just doesn't add up that they mistakenly went to the wrong tomb."

Swoon Theory

There's also the swoon theory, which wants you to believe instead of dying on the cross, Jesus only passed out, woke up in the tomb a couple of days later, rolled away the huge stone and escaped.

McFarland branded that "impossible."

First of all, people just did not survive crucifixion. McFarland referenced the historian Flavius Josephus, alive just after Christ's time on earth, saying, "Josephus documents that there were no survivors of Roman crucifixion. In all of the decades of Roman crucifixion, there was one person who ever came down from the cross alive, says Josephus, and this person died within 24 hours."

Quite a few people, both friends and foes, saw Jesus' body come down from the cross, and they would definitely know this

wasn't just an unconscious man.

This Theory Makes the Lord a Liar

So after all that, McFarland explained the swoon theorists present this unlikely scenario: "He was laid in the tomb, He revived Himself, He moves a two-and-a-half-to-three-ton stone and He overcomes a dozen Roman soldiers in peak physical condition. Incognito, He gets across town, regathers His scattered disciples, and He says 'I am the Resurrection and the Life.'"

And that presents McFarland's biggest problem with the swoon theory: what it would say of Jesus' morals if He'd so blatantly lie.

Because the swoon theorists would have you believe of Christ, "He told His disciples He'd risen, and He allowed them to go forth and preach what was false and die for what really wasn't true. This compromises the moral, righteous nature of the person Jesus."

Stolen Body Theory

The stolen body theory proposes that the very disciples who fled in terror after the crucifixion then risked death to steal Christ's body from the tomb and made up the whole resurrection story.

First off, McFarland pointed out these scared, cowering men in such a scenario would be taking on the toughest, most feared soldiers of the ancient world.

He said, "Their master has been arrested; their messianic hopes are dashed. Yet they sufficiently regather and summon up enough bravery to overcome Roman soldiers? I mean, this could have been at best arrest if not execution and death."

The theory has it that the disciples beat or bribed the soldiers or sneaked past their sleeping bodies. Bergeron and

McFarland both highly doubt this band of disciples could have ever fought and bested or bribed or sneaked past the dozen or more Roman soldiers assigned to guard the tomb.

“History tells us that if a Roman soldier failed at an assignment, they would be executed,” McFarland stated. “I doubt any of these disciples, this little band of insurrectionists could have bought off a Roman soldier, overcome physically a Roman soldier. I don’t think they would have been asleep.”

Bergeron added, “Roman military discipline was austere. If you were caught nodding off when you were on watch, you would be beaten to death.”

Hallucination Theory

Another popular idea is that everyone who saw Jesus alive after His death was just hallucinating.

But Dr. Bergeron pointed out that in the rare documented cases of group hallucinations, everyone sees different things.

Because it’s all in their minds.

 “People who hallucinate are very sick. They have a physiological problem with their brain: maybe a tumor, something like that. A biochemical problem with their brain.”

Christ’s followers don’t appear to have suffered from any such debilitating conditions.

“The disciples were intelligent and organized,” Bergeron contended, pointing out how swiftly their movement expanded: “Christianity spread rapidly through the Roman Empire. By A.D. 64, there were enough Christians that Nero launched mass persecution against Christians.” {eoa}

For the rest of this story, visit our content partners at .

Bring *Charisma* magazine home with a subscription today!