

Despite the Arguments, the Resurrection Happened

In Israel, Easter Sunday was just another workday. If not for Facebook, I would not even know about it.

Of course, we still celebrated Passover here, and the first believers, even the gentiles, used Passover to commemorate the Resurrection. In 325 CE Constantine, the first 'Christian' Roman emperor put an end to this practice.

"And truly, in the first place, it seems to everyone a most unworthy thing that we should follow the customs of the Jews in the celebration of this most holy solemnity, who, polluted wretches! having stained their hands with a nefarious crime, are justly blinded in their minds. It is fit, therefore, that rejecting the practice of this people, we should perpetuate to all future ages the celebration of this rite, in a more legitimate order, which we have kept from the first day of our "Lord's" passion even to the present times. Let us then have nothing in common with the most hostile rabble of the Jews." (Constantine, the supposed Christian Emperor [Council of Nicea, pg. 52.])

However, without getting into an argument over the origins of Easter, I do love the idea of a special day each year to focus on one of the greatest miracles in history. Paul teaches that *the Resurrection* is a crucial tenet of our faith.

"If Messiah has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Messiah from the dead." (1 Corinthians 15:14-15)

Not only is our faith in vain, but also the original disciples were all charlatans. Either He appeared to them or He

didn't. And if He didn't, what would be their motivation to leave everything and preach the gospel?

It is not like they were getting rich off the gospel (like some today)—they all die a martyrs' death (except John who survived being boiled in oil)! Remember, after his death, they were not devising schemes on how to keep this thing going—they were hopeless and dejected.

Paul also established the fact that Yeshua was seen by many people after His resurrection.

"For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Messiah died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to [Peter], and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born." (1 Corinthians 15:3-8)

Imagine that—while Paul was writing his letters, nearly 500 people who had witnessed the resurrected Messiah were still alive! It is an historic fact that He was seen. The skeptic has several theories:

1. **He wasn't really dead.** Okay, let's consider this. He is nailed to a cross, with spikes in His wrists and feet. He faints from pain. They assume He is dead and a soldier even stabs Him with a spear, as blood and water flowed (by the way, proving He was dead). Being flogged earlier in the day, His back was raw flesh and the pain was just too much, so He passes out. People assume He is dead, but no one checks. He is then placed in a tomb for three days. The tomb is sealed and guarded. While He is in this tomb, instead of succumbing to His wounds, He

wakes up. He is in unbelievable pain (having been flogged and crucified). But in just a couple days, without food, water or medicine, He recovers. Oh ... and then he pushes the stone away and fights off the Roman guards. If that is true, then that is even more impressive than the Resurrection!

2. **His disciples stole the body.** This one is so good that the chief priests immediately thought of this and offered large sums of cash to the guards to tell everyone that his followers stole His corpse. Here is the problem. And let me say it again, the same disciples who stole His body all died as martyrs—*for something they knew was a lie*. Peter was crucified upside down. John was boiled in oil. It is highly unlikely that these men would have suffered as they did for a lie.
3. **Someone impersonated Yeshua.** Do I really have to answer that? My wife and her sister look a lot alike. In fact, there have been times over the years when I walked into a room and briefly have mistaken her for Elana. However, never has that lasted for more than a few seconds. The disciples spent three years following Yeshua. And then some impersonator fools over 500 witnesses for forty days that he is Yeshua. Come on, people!

And according to these deceived disciples, this impersonator can appear and disappear at will (as he appeared to them in a locked room), has holes in his hands and a wound on his side and ascended into heaven. This guy was good! So good that Thomas cries out to him after seeing his wound, “My Lord and my God!”

No, my friends, Yeshua rose from the dead. Death could not keep Him. Compelled by compassion, He became our Passover Lamb.

Through Him we have eternal life. His blood is on the doorpost of our hearts and the angel of death cannot touch us. Thanks be to God for sending His Son, Yeshua, the Messiah of Israel

and the nations.

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