

TOUGH QUESTIONS

**DID THE RESURRECTION
REALLY HAPPEN?**

WHAT'S AT STAKE: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:14-19

- ▶ Proclamation: What we proclaim has no substance
- ▶ Faith: The object of our faith is not true, and thus it falls apart and is futile
- ▶ Integrity: We claim to represent God when we say this, so if he didn't rise, we misrepresent God.
- ▶ Condemnation: We are still in our sins
- ▶ Reputation: We are foolish and ought to be pitied

WHAT THE SKEPTICS SAY

- ▶ Hallucination
 - ▶ Why? People don't rise from the dead!
 - ▶ How it would work: Someone mourns so much that they have visions of the person and come to believe that they're alive
 - ▶ Why it can't work:
 - ▶ Visions of mourned loved ones don't turn the world upside down
 - ▶ People don't die for dreams
 - ▶ You can't make up a religion like that

WHAT THE SKEPTICS SAY

- ▶ Early Christians disagreed about it
 - ▶ Paul wrote first (which is true) and didn't believe in a physical resurrection according to 1 Cor 15:44
 - ▶ The later stories of physical resurrection were made up
 - ▶ Why it can't work
 - ▶ Must understand the language of 1 Cor 15
 - ▶ Paul didn't redefine resurrection language
 - ▶ It would have taken something REAL to convert a guy like Paul

TOUGH QUESTIONS: DID THE RESURRECTION REALLY HAPPEN?

WHY IT'S REASONABLE

▶ The Empty Tomb

- ▶ If Jesus wasn't raised, then the bones would have obviously disproved it. Christianity wouldn't have survived a week if the tomb wasn't empty.
- ▶ Some say wrong tomb (They would have figured that one out)
- ▶ Jesus was only passed out (really? so a 99% crucified man moved the stone, slipped past the guards, and appeared to his disciples in a way in which communicated that he was powerful and resurrected?),
- ▶ Disciples stole body (they were way too cowardly, what makes you think they all the sudden became courageous?)
- ▶ The most (super) natural explanation, given all the evidence of meetings of Jesus, is that he rose.

▶ The Language of Resurrection

- ▶ Jewish resurrection was explicitly physical, they never used the language for anything else.
- ▶ When it's spoken of, it's not about being in Heaven, but the SECOND stage of life.
- ▶ Wasn't even used for Enoch or Elijah.
- ▶ BUT, IT WAS ALWAYS AS A LARGE GROUP OF PPL AT THE END OF TIME. Suggesting that the disciples and Paul made up this new idea that one single man raised as the first fruits of the rest of his people is highly unlikely.
- ▶ You need both the empty tomb and resurrection language to historically get to the place where the early Christians believed the stuff they believed

WHY IT'S REASONABLE

- ▶ The Early Church's Emphasis on Sunday
 - ▶ The early church's emphasis on Sunday is inexplicable unless something radical happened.
 - ▶ YOU DON'T CHANGE THE SABBATH! IT'S IN THE 10 COMMANDMENTS!
- ▶ Women in Narratives
 - ▶ According to Greek and Roman thought, women were considered a completely different class of human.
 - ▶ They certainly were not to be regarded as witnesses in a trial, and they were not esteemed to positions of power in society.
 - ▶ If all four gospel writers were making something up, they certainly would never have women as the primary witnesses to the most important event in history!

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

▶ Reference books:

- ▶ "The Resurrection of the Son of God" by N.T. Wright,
- ▶ "The Resurrection of Jesus" by Mike Licona,
- ▶ "The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict" by Josh McDowell

▶ Shorter books:

- ▶ "Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church" by N.T. Wright,
- ▶ "Did the Resurrection Happen?: A Conversation with Gary Habermas and Antony Flew"