

The Resurrection Effect – 1 Corinthians 15

This week: [Did Jesus' resurrection actually happen? Verses 1-8](#)

Two Key Elements:

1. The Empty Tomb

- Presented in the gospels (e.g. John 20:1-9)

What other explanations could there be?

The Wrong Tomb?

- The women had seen where Jesus' body had been laid (Mark 15:47)
- The same women went to the tomb on the Sunday morning (Mark 16:1) so they are unlikely to get the wrong tomb.
- Also, it wasn't a random tomb - it belonged to Joseph of Arimathea (Matthew 27:57-61) so if they had gone to the wrong tomb he would have corrected them.

Body Stolen?

- Stolen by who? Disciples are most likely candidates...
- A guard of Roman soldiers was sent to make the tomb 'as secure as you know how'. These were trained killers. (Matthew 27:62-66)
- After the resurrection the guards were bribed to say the disciples had stolen the body when they were asleep (but how would they know it was the disciples if they were asleep?) Matthew 28:11-15.
- The disciples were not in a state to mount an attack on a Roman guard - they had fled for their lives when Jesus was arrested.
- Why would they steal the body and claim Jesus had risen? They weren't expecting Jesus to rise. It would only put them in the firing line (which is what happened in Acts)

Not Dead?

- Remember all Jesus had gone through:
- Flogged (a torture designed to bring the victim close to the point of death)
- So weak he couldn't carry his own cross
- Crucified for 6 hours
- Soldiers checked he was dead by shoving a spear in his side.
- Blood and water came out where the spear had gone in - a sign that Jesus was dead
- He was wrapped in linen cloths
- He was placed in the tomb

Then he would have needed to:

- Recover
- Somehow unwrap himself from the cloths
- Roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb (it was so large the women wondered who would move it for them)
- Overpower the guard!
- Be seen so fit and healthy on the Sunday that he could convince people he was resurrected

Even non-Christians conclude that the tomb was empty.

2. The Witnesses

Paul records in 1Corinthians 15 a list of people who saw the risen Jesus. He says over 500 people saw him.

What other explanations could there be?

Gullible?

- Chronological snobbery = we are superior to those who have gone before
- The disciples weren't expecting the resurrection - Jesus tried to tell them it would happen but they didn't take it on board
- The disciples needed to be convinced
- Thomas in particular (John 20:24-31) wanted to see not only the risen Jesus but the distinctive crucifixion marks of the nail marks and the spear mark (which would have been unique to Jesus).

Hallucinating?

- 500 people don't have the same hallucination at the same time!

Myth?

- Myths take a long time to develop
- The resurrection was being proclaimed weeks after the events in the place where they occurred.
- In 1Corinthians Paul says some of the witnesses have died (fallen asleep) but others are still alive - in other words go and ask them!
- If it was a myth the body would have been produced and there would be no eye-witnesses - i.e. it could easily have been disproved.

Made up?

- Again - the appeal to many eye-witnesses stands against this.
- In the gospel accounts many names are given - this is so people could find the witnesses and ask them
- You wouldn't make it up the way it occurred. e.g...
- Women were the first witnesses - but women's testimony was not considered reliable back then, so why have them as the first witnesses if you are making it up?

Conclusion

The evidence is really good for both elements: the empty tomb and the witnesses who saw the risen Jesus. Both needed to be true for anyone in Jerusalem to believe - and thousands did believe!

So if you are still sceptical there are questions you would need to answer for instance...

How did the church start with such power if there was no resurrection?

To follow up more on this have a read of Tim Keller's 'The Reason for God' - there is a helpful chapter on the resurrection of Jesus. Or look up bethinking.org where there are many helpful articles.

Next week...the life changing implications of the resurrection of Jesus.