

MODERN REFORMATION

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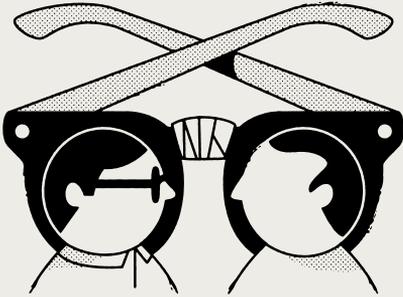
PART 2 | THE RESURRECTION

MARCH-APRIL 2016



The RESURRECTION





Answering Objections to the Resurrection

by Shane Rosenthal

1

BIASED SOURCES

Those who wrote the NT documents were “believers” and therefore biased. These texts are not historical documents but articles of faith.

REBUTTAL

- 1 Everyone is biased. A lawyer building a case is biased in favor of his client, but that does not invalidate the evidence.
- 2 What accounts for the particular “faith” of these early disciples and the rise of early Christianity? Why were they willing to die for this faith?

2

HALLUCINATION

Though they may have thought they saw Jesus, perhaps it was just in their minds.

REBUTTAL

- 1 The disciples were skeptics who needed to touch Christ’s wounds.
- 2 What about the appearances to non-disciples (James and John)?
- 3 What about Christ’s appearance to over five hundred witnesses at once?
- 4 This theory does not explain the empty tomb.



STOLEN BODY

Jesus really did die on the cross, but the disciples stole his body. This is the oldest objection (Matt. 28:11–15; Justin Martyr, *Dialog with Trypho*, 108).

REBUTTAL

- 1** How did the disciples overcome the armed guards? (Matt. 27:65; Acts 4:1). Alfred Edersheim says that a temple guard consisted of “ten men.” Were all really asleep? Did no one awaken? (Matt. 28:13).
- 2** What was the motive for their actions and later fabrication? Why did they suffer persecution for the rest of their lives knowing it was all a hoax?
- 3** This theory does not explain the eyewitness accounts of Christ’s resurrection from numerous sources and the conversion of doubting members of Jesus’ family or of Saul.
- 4** Why did so many Jews begin worshiping on Sunday?



THE JESUS MYTH

Jesus never existed. His story is an attempt to historicize ancient pagan myths about dying and rising gods.

REBUTTAL

- 1** What accounts for the fact that so many first-century citizens of Jerusalem believed this account to be true, given that many would have known that these things never happened? Why are they corroborated by so many sources?
- 2** Why were the NT texts written the way they were? Why multiple versions? Why women eyewitnesses? Why was Jesus thought to be insane? Why didn’t he have perfect foreknowledge?
- 3** Why would the authors of this myth continue to spread this lie in the face of great suffering and death?
- 4** Even skeptic Bart Ehrman finds this theory to be without merit.



SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION

Jesus was not raised from the dead bodily but spiritually (in the hearts of the disciples).

REBUTTAL

- 1** This is not the claim of the earliest witnesses. Thomas needed to touch Christ’s wounds. Also, what about the empty tomb?



TWIN / LOOK-ALIKE

Jesus died, but a twin or look-alike later claimed he was the risen Christ. Conversely, someone who looked like Jesus may have been killed by mistake. According to the Quran: “They never crucified him—they were made to think that they did” (Sura 4:157–158).

REBUTTAL

- 1** This theory does not explain the empty tomb.
- 2** James and other members of Jesus’ immediate family are skeptics in the Gospels (Mark 3:21; John 7:5), and only become believers after reports of the resurrection (Acts 1:14).
- 3** Thomas, who was a twin, refused to believe in the resurrection unless he could put his hand in Jesus’ wounds (John 20:24–30).



CANCELLED OUT

All religious traditions make miraculous claims.

REBUTTAL

- 1** Making claims and vindicating those claims are different things.
- 2** The resurrection, if true, merits a reconsideration of Jesus’ claims.