

## GAP - WEEK 7

### **Why Study the Resurrection?**

1. To have a foundation and *confidence* in your faith.
  - READ 1 Corinthians 15:12-14
  - READ Hebrews 11:1
2. To know the apologetics of your faith - why you believe what you believe and being able to provide an explanation for it.
  - READ 1 Peter 3:15-16
3. Be able to recognize lies you may hear regarding Jesus and His resurrection.
  - READ John 14:6

### **5 Historical / Minimal Facts (*that require an explanation!*)**

(Many more exist - Gary Habermas video - will post)

- 1) Jesus died by crucifixion.
  - Discussed further in the swoon theory.
- 2) His disciples believed he rose from the dead and appeared to them.
  - Discussed further in the conspiracy and hallucination theories.
- 3) Paul was suddenly and drastically changed and became a Christian.
  - Recorded in Acts 9.
- 4) James was suddenly and drastically changed and became a Christian.
  - Brother of Jesus (Matt. 13) who did not believe He was the Christ until after the resurrection; wrote the book of James and went on to lead the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15).
- 5) His tomb is empty.
  - Jesus's body was placed in a tomb:
    - a. Bodies were released to those who requested them.
    - b. Jesus died in Jewish land, so the likelihood of Him being buried and not left on the cross is great, because of Jewish burial customs.
    - c. Romans generally respected Jewish burial laws during times of peace.
  - The location of that tomb is known:
    - a. All four Gospels record Joseph of Arimathea requesting the body of Jesus to bury in *his* tomb; he knew where it was, and according to Gospel accounts, so did Jesus's followers.
    - b. As a member of the Jewish Council, who delivered Jesus over to Roman authority to be crucified, they were responsible for His burial.
  - The Jewish response to the resurrection claim assumed the tomb was empty.
    1. The chief priests did not argue that the tomb *was* empty, but rather the reason *why* it was empty; i.e. they claimed the disciples stole the body (as recorded in Matt. 28:11-15).
  - Discussed further in conspiracy theory.

## **Theories**

1) Swoon Theory (Jesus didn't die, but passed out):

- Not medically accepted and no known cases of *completed* crucifixion survivals are recorded.

### **VIDEO: DID JESUS REALLY DIE ON THAT CROSS? IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS - THE CASE FOR CHRIST MOVIE (4:50)**

2) Conspiracy Theory (The disciples lied, or they, or someone else stole the body):

- If the disciples had lied about the resurrection and stolen the body like the chief priests (and others have) claimed, they would have had to do the following:

1. Steal the body

a. The Roman guard(s) at the tomb would not have been willing to help, because grave robbery was punishable by death.

b. The disciples would then have to do move a hundred to thousand pound stone and carry off the body without being noticed!

2. Carry out a long-lasting and complex conspiracy that would have required:

#### **(PHOTO: 5 WAYS FOR SUCCESSFUL CONSPIRACY)**

a. Small number of people/conspirators - There were >500 people + His followers who claimed to have seen Him after the resurrection.

b. Great communication - They were widely dispersed and had no means of quick communication.

c. Short time span - Several apostles lived decades after the resurrection.

d. Close friendships - A few were brothers, but most were from diverse areas and backgrounds.

e. Low pressure - They were under a lot of pressure because it was an unpopular idea and their lives were at stake.

### **VIDEO: DID THE DISCIPLES LIE ABOUT THE RESURRECTION? - J. WARNER (3:56)**

- Women were the first reported eye-witnesses.

1. In Jewish culture during the first century, testimony of women were not seen as reliable, so if the disciples were trying to create a lie, they would not have recorded women to be the first eye-witnesses.

- The disciples truly believed Jesus appeared to them in His physical resurrected body.

1. People have been known to die for what they believe to be the truth, but rarely will die for what they *know to be a lie* (saying Jesus was resurrected while knowing they had really stolen his body).

2. They were willing to suffer, and many were killed, because of their testimony about the risen Jesus.

3. There is no record of any of them denying Jesus' resurrection at any point.

3) Witnesses went to the wrong tomb:

- His burial in Jerusalem would have made an empty tomb claim easy to disprove.

1. The location of the tomb was known, so it would have been easy to check.

4) Hallucination Theory (The witnesses were all "seeing things"):

- Medical condition; highly unlikely that *all* the witnesses of Jesus had the same condition.

- Hallucinations are *individual* experiences. Even if a group is hallucinating at the same time, they do not see/hear the same things. No evidence of "group hallucinations" are recorded anywhere.

- 1 Cor. 15:6 - After appearing to the disciples who TOUCHED Him, Jesus appeared to >500 people at one time, most of whom were still alive during the writings of Paul to verify what they saw.

5) People invented Christianity based on pagan myths:

- Most cited parallels aren't true; most have no historical evidence.

- Other parallels are so broad they'd be true in any religion. (*Person of Interest* by J. Warner Wallace).

- Some parallels written *after* Christianity came onto the scene.

- Regardless of if these claims were even true, it would not change the evidence available for the resurrection of *Jesus*.

6) Jesus's teachings were embellished:

- Creed's of Christian beliefs were already circulating within 3-5 years after Christ's death. (1 Cor. 15:3-7). Paul had received this creed, so Christian beliefs were circulation far too early for a "legend" to be created.

- The New Testament documents are written closer to the events they describe than any other historical document in the world and have *never* been disproved.

### **Why the Resurrection?**

1) Criteria used by historians to weigh a hypothesis:

- Explanatory Scope - Number of facts accounted for by a hypothesis; the more facts a theory accounts for, the stronger it is.

- Explanatory Power - How well a hypothesis explains the given facts; i.e. the quality of a hypothesis.

- Plausibility - Anything is *possible*, but not everything is *reasonable*.

- Less Ad Hoc - When a hypothesis relies on few presuppositions; i.e. the resurrection hypothesis requires only one assumption beyond the evidence: the existence of God.

2) Q: If your child said, "It doesn't make sense that Jesus rose from the dead?", how would you respond based on what you have learned?

## **Miracles**

- 1) Most non-believers reject any supernatural theory because it goes against their naturalistic worldview, which is why it's important to understand why miracles are even possible.
- 2) "If God exists, miracles are possible; if God doesn't exist, miracles are not possible." - N. Crain
- 3) Science and the laws of nature don't rule out the possibility of God, but rather are evidence for Him; He created them, after all, and can intervene however He chooses.
- 4) We should always take care, however, in assessing things claimed to be miracles and compare them with Scripture and evidence available for them.
- 5) Understanding the evidence for God and the reliability for Scripture is vital in understanding why miracles are even possible.