

Legend, Liar, Lunatic or Lord

God? Jesus? I mean who really believes in all that? Many of us today have doubts as to the existence of God, or even his son; who supposedly rose from the dead. But where is the evidence? Proving that God exists is not necessary, however if the resurrection can be proven. If that can be proven; the rest is easy to prove. Jesus himself told us he would be raised again....

Claim of the Resurrection

Luke 18:31-34

Jesus claimed he would be killed, and then raise again. Why would he claim that? Either what he said was true or he was a liar, or a legend, or maybe even a lunatic. Let's look at the possibilities that have been presented:

1) Legend

Jesus could not just be a legend. He has been referred to by many 1st Century Roman and Jewish historians. Archaeology has shown that the four Gospels were written in the lifetime of his contemporaries.

Legends take many generations. But most of all, would a legend have such an impact on the world as Jesus had? Do legends inspire men and women to die for them? Do they lead people to urgent missionary activity, social concern, or changed lives?

2) Liar

Perhaps all the claims of Jesus were lies, and he knew about it. Is it possible that a man who was consumed with exposing religious hypocrisy would be the greatest hypocrite of all?

What would be the motives of his deceit?

- Personal curiosity about crucifixion?
- Money; when he died penniless?
- Hatred for humanity; then why die for the sins of the world?

Common sense tells us he did not lie.

3) Lunatic

Still assuming what he said was untrue; but knowing he wasn't a liar, leads us to believing that he was a lunatic.

No one could make such claims as he did, believing they were true, if he were not insane. But did Jesus' character exemplify the imbalanced personality of a madman? Was he instable, obsessed, have irrational fears, paranoia, anxiety, mood swings or introversion? No!

In fact, Jesus was so perfectly balanced, that if he was the standard for "sanity" we would all be in danger of being declared insane.

4) Lord

We have clearly seen that Jesus could not have just been a legend, a liar, or even a lunatic. But there is still one more option. What he said was true; every single claim. Which would mean He is Lord. But what is the logic in dying and raising again?

The Power of the Cross

I Corinthians 1:18-25

The cross is the very power of God. To the world it is foolishness; but to those who believe it is the very power of God.

The "foolish" people who simply accept Christ's offer are actually the wisest of all. But this wisdom of God is totally based on our belief that Jesus died, was buried, and raised again on the third day. The resurrection is the very cornerstone of the Christian faith.

I Corinthians 15:1-19

The resurrection is the greatest miracle of all. Now either the resurrection happened or it didn't; and either Jesus appeared after death or he didn't. To attack the resurrection is to attack the very message and heart of Christianity. If Christ was not raised:

- Preaching is useless
- Christians are liars
- Christian faith is useless
- Our sins are still unforgiven
- The dead have no hope of salvation
- We might as well seek pleasure, since life is so short.

Mark 15:16-47

The Christian faith is now open to investigation. Let's look at what happened. Now let's look at the logical possibilities.

Tomb Was Occupied

If that was true than we only have two possibilities:

1) They Went To The Wrong Tomb

Is it likely that the believers went to the wrong tomb? Or that none of the disciples remembered where it was? Joseph owned the tomb and personally buried him. Also the women saw where he laid him. Sooner or later the right tomb would have been found.

2) Hallucination

Is it possible all the people hallucinated that they saw Jesus. Hallucinations occur when someone is hoping or expecting to see the object about which he hallucinates. Ex. man in desert looking for water. This is not the case here; the disciples were not expecting him to be raised again or they would have been lined up at the tomb. So how were they?

John 20:1-9

Peter was surprised to hear his tomb was empty; but he did know where it was. Also Paul claimed there were still witnesses that were alive. A foolish claim to make if they could be independently questioned.

Most of all however, if everyone went to the wrong tomb, including the Roman Guards, why didn't the opponents of the faith simply produce the corpse of the dead body. We can see clearly that the tomb was not occupied!

Tomb Was Empty

Since we know that the tomb was not occupied it leaves only one alternative, the tomb was empty. This could leave many possibilities:

1) Jesus Didn't Really Die

This means Jesus deceived his disciples; and we already know Jesus was not a liar. It also assumes Jesus could have survived 36 hours in a dark, cold tomb, having been wrapped up in linen and 75 pounds of ointments; without food and water.

It also ignores the trauma Jesus had been through before being entombed: a sleepless night, clubbing, torture, flogging, etc., and finally crucifixion. This also assumes that the Roman soldiers (experts in execution) were confused about whether Jesus was alive or dead.

John 19:31-37

Jesus was most definitely dead; so we are certain his body was missing. But who moved his body?

2) Disciples Moved the Body

This means they both stole and lied; which violated the teachings of Jesus. It also means they died for a lie. Who would knowingly die for a lie? We need to remember how they suffered:

- Beheaded
- Crucifixion (Peter upside down)
- Stoned
- Killed by arrows
- Flogged, beaten, etc.

Also, how did they overcome the Roman guards? Were they asleep? Very doubtful, Roman guards were executed if anything was taken from their protection. Disciples did not take the body.

3) A Gardener Stole It

He overcame the Roman guard with a shovel and committed a serious crime. If he was an enemy, why didn't he just reveal where it was when the resurrection was preached. If he was a friend, he would have shown the body to the disciples in order to spare them the persecution they were suffering.

4) Thoughtless Thieves

Ignoring the problems of the Roman guards, why would they take the body? Grave robbers look for valuables. What value is a corpse? Besides would they take time to fold his head wrappings?

5) The Romans

Why would they take it? They were concerned at keeping peace; not launching the Christian faith.

6) Jealous Jews

They are the last ones on earth who would have taken the body; they tried to stop the preaching of the resurrection. And if they did have the body; they would have used it to stop the spread of the faith. We are running out of possibilities.

7) U.F.O.'s or Starving Worms

These are totally irrational; I think we need to abandon these wild attempts to explain away the resurrection.

8) The Sober Truth

The sober truth makes more sense than the many attempts to explain away the truth. The tomb had to be either occupied or empty: we saw it was certainly empty. Jesus had to be dead or alive when he was placed in the tomb: we saw he was certainly dead.

The body was either removed by others or resurrected by God himself: the others could not have taken the body, thus the resurrection is the only possible explanation.

It takes more faith not to believe in the resurrection than to accept it as true. It is the only explanation which makes sense of all the facts: Jesus' repeated predictions, the incredible transformation in the lives of the disciples, and the lives of true disciples today.

The Resurrection...

I Corinthians 15:20-22, 33-34

Jesus has raised from the dead and he is our Lord. Only our sin makes us ignorant; so that we don't believe the truth.

Some of you might say you do believe in the resurrection; then you would believe everything Jesus said. You must be His disciple! We need to make a decision to put Jesus first in our lives and obey all his commands.

Acts 17:30-31

Repent of your sins. God will not accept ignorance. Jesus will return, because he did raise from the dead. Jesus is Lord!