

Any questions?

NASB 1 Corinthians 15:42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable *body*, it is raised an imperishable *body*; ⁴³ it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;

Jerusalem Bible:

⁴⁴ When it is sown it embodies the soul (ψυχικόν), when it is raised it embodies the spirit (πνευματικόν). If the soul has its own embodiment, so does the spirit have its own embodiment.

These slides are available at
www.fbcweb.org/sermons.html
by Undershepherd Don Hargrove

Theological/Doctrinal Foundations : Eschatology (22)

The Future Hope: R life in the new heavens and earth

1. As far as the pagan world (ancient and modern) is concerned, the road to the underworld ran only one way. Death was all powerful; one could neither escape it nor break its power. Everyone knew there was no answer to death. No pagan believed in bodily resurrection.
2. The Christian view of the afterlife, resurrection, and the marriage of heaven and earth are without parallel in the ancient world—except for Judaism.
3. The idea that the ultimate hope is some blissful disembodied ethereal state is utterly pagan.

Preparation for Bible Class – Spiritual Life Foundations

#1 Salvation: Grace orientation

1 Timothy 1:12 I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service; ¹³ even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor [terrorist]. And yet I was shown mercy, because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; ¹⁴ and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are *found* in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost *of all*.

Preparation for Bible Class – Spiritual Life Foundations

#2 Battling our OSHGEN

Romans 7:18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good *is* not.

Preparation for Bible Class – Spiritual Life Foundations

#3 Spiritual maturity – life above your dreams

Ephesians 3:16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power (PSDs 1-4:GR, FHS, FR, GO) through His Spirit in the inner man ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith (PSD 5, DO); *and* that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ (PSDs 6-7, PLG, CSL) which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fulness of God (PSDs 8-10, +H, PersD, OWC). ²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,

Resurrection Special #21:

Matthew 27:46-28:20 - Failure of Naturalistic Theories

1. Matthew 27:45-28:20.

- Death of Christ, 27:45-56
- The burial, 27:57-66
- The women at the empty tomb, 28:1-8.
- Resurrection appearances, 28:9-20.

2. Overview of the development of the 4 gospels. The inscripturation of the fourfold gospels began shortly after the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost. All of the gospels are written during Acts (30-66). Controlling factors in the mediation of divine revelation through history: HS, eye-witness testimony, & the apostles.
- ✓ Matthew was written between 30-42 for the Jewish phase and focus (cf. Acts 1-12).
 - ✓ Luke was written between 40-62 for the Gentile phase (Acts 13-28) under the leadership of Paul.
 - ✓ Mark was written between 40-66 with a Roman emphasis under authority of Peter and Paul.
 - ✓ John was written between 40-66 on deity of Jesus Christ.

Overview of the development of the 4 gospels (cont).

- ✓ Matthew was composed to meet the urgent needs of the primitive church of Jerusalem. Christ is King.
- ✓ Luke was written during the ministry of Paul to emphasize Greek issues. Christ is man.
- ✓ Mark was written under Peter and Paul as a bridge between Matthew and Luke. Christ is servant.
- ✓ John made it clear that the primary objective of Jesus throughout his ministry was in response to the spiritual authorities in Jerusalem. Christ is God.

3. Those four certain historical facts. The historical data that enjoys support from over 3,400 worldwide scholars over many decades (atheists, agnostics, cynics, revisionists, moderates, conservatives, liberals):

- #1 – Jesus' burial by Joseph of Arimathea.
- #2 – The Empty Tomb discovered by women.
- #3 - Christ's postmortem appearances.
- #4 - Origin of the disciples' belief in Jesus' resurrection (origin of Christianity).

4. Historiography. The establishment of historical proof.

#1 - What are the facts to be explained?

#2 - What is the best explanation of those facts?

5. Today the relevant historical facts are largely agreed upon by critics—almost universally.

6. The only plausible and the best explanation is that Jesus bodily rose from death.

Fact #1 - Jesus burial

- ✓ Jesus' burial is multiply attested in several *independent* and early eyewitness testimonies Gospels, Acts, 1 Cor. 15.
- ✓ Joseph of Arimathea was part of the Sanhedrin who condemned Jesus.
- ✓ The historical credibility of the burial story supports the empty tomb.

Fact #2 – Jesus Empty Tomb

- ✓ Multiple independent attestation. We also have the eyewitness testimony of Peter and John.
- ✓ Grammatical and syntactical unit in all accounts.
- ✓ Women as witnesses. Their names also fit the time.
- ✓ No other burial tradition exists.
- ✓ It would have been impossible to proclaim the resurrection of Jesus apart from an empty tomb.
- ✓ The earliest Jewish polemic testifies to an empty tomb, cf. Matt. 28:11-15.
- ✓ These are just a few of the reasons that the majority of skeptical scholars agree that Jesus' tomb was empty.

Fact #3 – Christ’s post-mortem Appearances

On different occasions different individuals experienced appearances of Jesus as bodily alive from the dead. This is virtually universally acknowledged by critical scholars because:

1. The very early testimony of Paul shows that the disciples saw appearances of Jesus, 1 Cor 15; Gal. 1. This includes the substantial number of 500.

Fact #3 – Christ’s post-mortem Appearances

2. The Gospel accounts of the resurrection appearances are fundamentally reliable historically.
 - Controlling presence of living eyewitnesses of the apostles.
 - Authoritative control of the apostles would have helped to keep embellishments in check.

Fact #3 – Christ’s post-mortem Appearances

3. Particular resurrection appearances have historical credibility.
 - Appearance to women.
 - Appearance to Peter. This is in pre-Pauline tradition and granted by nearly all critics.
 - Appearance to the Twelve. This would prevent it from becoming a late invention. We have multiple attestation here as well.

Fact #3 – Christ’s post-mortem Appearances

- The appearance to the 500 believers. Paul had firsthand contact with these people and appeals to them as eyewitnesses.
- The appearance to James. Given his antipathy to Jesus during his lifetime, and his leadership of the church thereafter, his turnabout was most likely due to a resurrection appearance.

Fact #3 – Christ’s post-mortem Appearances

- The appearance to Paul. We have in Paul’s letters firsthand information concerning the appearance of Jesus to him, an event that transformed the life of this Pharisee.
- Multiple independent attestation of the private and group appearances.

Fact #3 – Christ’s post-mortem Appearances

4. The resurrection appearances were physical, bodily objective appearances of Jesus Christ. They were not visions. We see this in Luke and in Paul’s development of the doctrine of resurrection. The physicalism of the resurrection appearances dominate the accounts. Visions would not have caused the disciples to believe in resurrection; they would have only believed in His assumption or ascension.

Fact #4: Origin of the Disciples' Belief in Jesus' Resurrection

1. All agree that belief in the resurrected Christ lay at the heart of the earliest Christian faith.
2. The original disciples suddenly came to believe that Jesus was risen from the dead despite every predisposition to the contrary. They had no concept of a dying and rising Messiah, cf. the resurrection in the OT.
3. Without the resurrection they would not have declared Him as the Messiah. What else could explain the turnaround?

Fact #4: Origin of the Disciples' Belief in Jesus' Resurrection

4. Their leader was dead and they had no expectation of a physically dying and rising Messiah.
5. According to OT law, Jesus died as a heretic.
6. Sunday became new holy day.
7. Content of gospel was Jesus Christ.

8. Nevertheless, the disciples came to believe so strongly that God had raised Him from the dead, they were willing to die. What caused them to believe such an un-Jewish and outlandish thing? Why such a powerful transformation?
9. We have a total of 16 independent sources on the disciples' willingness to suffer for their belief in the Risen Lord.
10. All of this historical data begs for an explanation.

Two Steps in Historiography

1. What is the historical data?
2. Taking the data to best explanation. The best explanation is that God raised Jesus bodily from the dead. It is the only hypothesis that passes all historical tests or canons. All other theories fall short and continue to be abandoned by scholars. None of the naturalistic theories are plausible. The only reason that one can give for the rejection of the resurrection of Jesus (we are not even attempting to prove that God raised Him) is *a priori* rejection of the existence of God—i.e., naturalism!

Natural hypothesis #1: Fraud theory #1: the disciples were guilty of fraud.

1. The central idea is that the disciples lied about the appearances and stole the body from the tomb.
2. Problems:
 - They really believed they had seen Jesus Christ.
 - Their lives were transformed.
 - They were willing to endure imprisonment, sufferings, and even martyrdom—based on 1st hand knowledge.
 - What about Paul and James?

Natural hypothesis #2: Fraud theory #2: someone other than the disciples stole the body

1. Since the disciples really believed, maybe someone else stole the body and duped them.
2. Critical flaws in this theory:
 - Empty tomb alone would not convince Paul or James.
 - Empty tomb alone did not cause belief in resurrection (cf. Women, Peter, Thomas).

Natural Hypothesis #3: “Witnesses went to the Wrong Tomb”

1. The idea is that they went to the wrong tomb and since He was not there, they concluded He was resurrected.
2. Critical flaws in this theory:
 - Does not account for appearances of risen Lord.
 - Empty tomb alone would not convince disciples.
 - This would have been suspected by Paul and James.
 - No source to suggest that location was unknown.
 - Historicity of Joseph of Arimathea.

Natural Hypothesis #4: Apparent Death (Swoon Death)

1. Virtually all critical historians accept that Jesus was crucified and died (even our “friend” Bart Ehrman).
2. Critical flaws in this theory:
 - JAMA scientific investigation.
 - Spear wound resulted in blood and water. Roman author Quintilian (35-95) gives testimony.
 - Consider German scholar D.F. Strauss’ scenario.
 - Paul?
 - James?

Natural Hypothesis #5: Hallucinations.

Problems:

1. Hallucinations are private events in the mind. There is no such thing as a group hallucination.
2. Empty tomb?
3. Conversion of the Church Persecutor Paul?
4. Conversion of Skeptic James?
5. Too many personal variances of witnesses: men, women, hardheaded Peter and softhearted Mary, indoors, outdoors et al.

Natural Hypothesis #6: Delusions

Problems:

1. Requires a certain state of mind.
2. Conversion of Church Persecutor Paul?
3. Conversion of the Skeptic James?
4. Empty Tomb.

Natural Hypothesis #7: Visions

Subjective vs Objective Visions (Stephen)

Problems:

1. Similar to hallucination theory.
2. Empty tomb?
3. Conversion of Church Persecutor Paul?
4. Conversion of the Skeptic James?

Quiz (10 questions)

Almost all of the disciples seemed unmoved by the empty tomb to believe in Jesus's Resurrection. Why is this important in refuting Fraud 2 theory?

A – The question is misleading. The empty tomb moved both the women and the disciples to believe in Jesus' resurrection.

B- It sets the stage for employing the principle of enemy attestation, since Paul and James both came to believe in Jesus' resurrection because of an empty tomb.

C- It was the appearances that led to belief in Jesus' resurrection, not an empty tomb.

D – A & C

Quiz

Who was the first to proclaim that the disciples had stolen Jesus' body?

A – Josephus

B- Jewish Leadership

C- Tacitus

D – Matthew

Quiz

What is the name of the theory that someone other than the disciples stole Jesus' body and as a result Jesus' disciples and others believed He had risen?

Quiz

What is the greatest challenge to the theory that the disciples went to the wrong tomb?

A- 20th century archaeologists discovered low levels of radiation in Jesus' actual tomb.

B- Even if they had, it wouldn't matter, because the appearances led to their belief that Jesus had risen, not the empty tomb.

C – Josephus confirms the Gospel accounts of the correct tomb.

D – B & C

Quiz

Lies on the part of the disciples would have been the first conclusion arrived at by first century skeptics. Nevertheless, two skeptics became believers because they too believed that the risen Jesus had appeared personally to them. Who were these two skeptics?

Quiz

How do we know that the disciples were not lying regarding Jesus' resurrection?

A- Because the Jewish leadership resorted to claiming that the disciples had stolen the body.

B- There were willing to suffer and die for their beliefs that Jesus had risen.

C – We know they were not hallucinating the appearances. Therefore, they could not have been lying.

D- Suetonius reports that Jesus' disciples truly believed that they had seen Jesus.

Quiz

If a skeptic claimed that the disciples stole the body and lied about the appearances, you might respond with which of the following?

A- This explanation does not account for the conversion of Paul who would have been one of the first to suspect lies on the part of the disciples.

B- This explanation does not account for the conversion of James who rejected Jesus prior to His death and would have suspected lies on the part of the disciples.

C – It is extremely unlikely that all of the disciples would have been willing to suffer and die for a known lie.

D- All of the above.

Quiz

Why is the willingness on the part of the disciples to suffer and die for their beliefs so profound, since people of other faiths willingly die for their beliefs too?

A- People of other faiths willingly suffer for what they believe is true, whereas the disciples willingly suffered for what they knew was either true or false.

B- The willingness on the part of the people to suffer and die for their cause is not profound, since people of conflicting beliefs cancel each other out.

C – We cannot say that the disciples *willingly* suffered and died for their beliefs, only that they suffered and some died because of them.

D- B&C

Quiz

True or False. Delusions cannot be experienced by groups of people.

A- True

B- False.

Quiz

If someone claimed that Jesus's disciples experienced hallucinations, which resulted in their belief in Jesus' resurrection, you could respond with which of the following:

A- Group hallucinations are possible.

B- Hallucinations do not account for the empty tomb.

C- Hallucinations fail to account for the conversions of the skeptics Paul and James, who were unlikely to have been in the frame of mind to experience an hallucination that would have changed their view of Christ.

D- Both B & C.

The “Hypothesis” of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ (from purely an historical perspective)

1. Great explanatory scope. The resurrection of Christ explains why the tomb was empty, why the disciples had post-mortem experiences of seeing Jesus, why the Christian faith came into being.
2. Great explanatory power. The resurrection of Christ explains why the body of Jesus was not in the tomb, and why people repeatedly saw Him alive. It explains their willingness to be tortured and murdered for this faith.

3. It is not ad hoc. It is not contrived; it only requires one hypothesis: God exists. Even that need not be an additional hypothesis if you already believe in God.

4. Plausibility. It is in accord with accepted beliefs. Christians readily accept that *naturally* dead men do not rise. Given His unparalleled life, wisdom, claims, and prophecy, the resurrection serves as divine confirmation. Christ was either God or a blasphemer.

5. Illumination Thus, it is in accord with accepted beliefs and provides illumination to *all* facts.
6. It far outstrips all rival theories in meeting the canons of 1-5 above. This is why alternate theories continue to be abandoned for the last 200 years. This is precisely why all other theories have not attracted wide scholarship and most “pop” theories have been almost universally rejected.

All alternate theories fail miserably to meet the canons of history as to the best explanation.

- 1) Explanatory scope.
- 2) Explanatory power.
- 3) Less ad hoc.
- 4) Plausibility.
- 5) Illumination.
- 6) Best explanation.