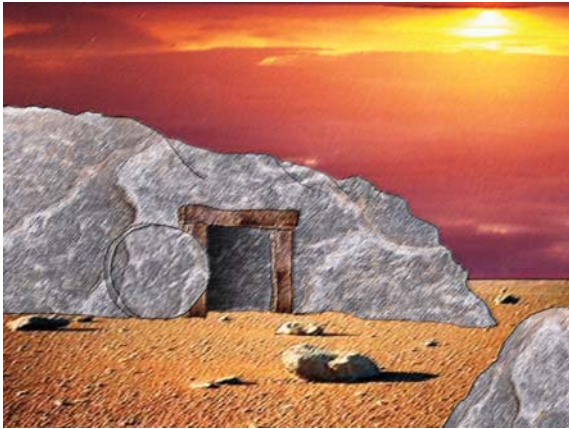


Jesus rose from the dead



The great Easter cover-up

It's no exaggeration to say that the whole Christian gospel stands or falls on the fact of the bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Even the apostle Paul says as much in the Bible—'And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith' (1 Corinthians 15:14).

It's not surprising, therefore, to find the fact of the resurrection continually under attack. In fact, the first cover-up is recorded in the Bible, in Matthew 28:11-15: the chief priests bribed the soldiers, whom they themselves sent to guard the tomb, to say that they had fallen asleep on duty and that Christ's disciples had then come and removed the dead body of Jesus. This story

failed to take into account the fact that the disciples were in no emotional state to steal the body, and that none of them believed the story of the resurrection when they first heard it.

Ever since, the cover-up has gone on, and various theories have been invented to deny the resurrection:

The swoon theory—that Jesus did not die on the cross. He merely fainted or swooned, and in the cool of the tomb he revived.

The wrong grave theory—that the open grave the women came to on Easter Sunday morning was the wrong grave. They did not see an angel, but a workman pointing them to the correct grave with the words, 'He is not here, he is over there.'

If you can believe either of these theories, you will believe that pigs can fly. It takes more faith to believe these theories than to believe the recorded facts in the New Testament.

Why do people seem so determined to cover up the fact of the resurrection?

Because a risen Jesus is a serious threat to unbelief. If he did rise from the dead, then everything else in the gospel has to be accepted and believed. A risen Jesus would prove that everything he said was true and everything he did was possible.

Unbelief in the face of these truths is therefore unreasonable, and positively dangerous, because to reject the only Saviour leaves a sinner with nothing but hell and judgement.

The Easter cover-up is the greatest possible example of determined 'head in the sand' unbelief. It refuses to face the facts and chooses rather to believe any fanciful theory that can soothe its conscience.

Jesus did rise from the dead

He did so, as he said he would.
He did so, as the Scriptures prophesied he would.
He did so, and later over 500 people saw him at the same time.
He did so, because he is God and it was not possible for death to hold him.

Everything in the Christian faith depends upon who Jesus is

Jesus is special. His birth was special and different from all other births. His mother Mary was a virgin, so Jesus' birth came about not as a result of human love or lust, but through a remarkable life-giving operation of the Holy Spirit. This may be difficult for us to understand, because in human experience it is totally impossible. But in the birth of our Saviour, God was doing something special, something way beyond human thought or imagination.

The miracles Jesus did and his own resurrection are not surprising after that.

The gospel speaks of a risen, living Saviour, and its claims are therefore reasonable

It claims to offer forgiveness for all sin. It claims to guarantee eternal life for all who believe in Jesus.

You can trust these claims because of the resurrection, which gives the whole gospel reality, life and power.



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