

RESURRECTION APOLOGETICS

Answers from <http://www.peterkreeft.com/topics-more/resurrection-evidence.htm>

A. POSSUM THEORIES

(JESUS DIDN'T REALLY DIE, IT JUST LOOKED LIKE IT)

1. **SWOON THEORY:** Jesus “swooned” (fainted) on the cross, was buried, and then got up and either lived for a little bit (and then died) or disappeared to another country so he wouldn’t be killed.
2. **DRUGGED-BODY THEORY:** Some kind of a plant-derived drug was given to Jesus that made him look like he was dead when he really wasn’t.

REBUTTALS:

1. Jesus could not have survived crucifixion. Roman procedures were very careful to eliminate that possibility. Roman law even laid the death penalty on any soldier who let a capital prisoner escape in any way, including bungling a crucifixion.
2. The fact that the Roman soldier did not break Jesus' legs, as he did to the other two crucified criminals (Jn 19:31-33), means that the soldier was sure Jesus was dead.
3. John, an eyewitness, certified that he saw blood and water come from Jesus' pierced heart (Jn 19:34-35). This shows that Jesus' lungs had collapsed and he had died of asphyxiation. Any medical expert can vouch for this.
4. A half-dead, staggering sick man in need of a doctor is not worshiped fearlessly as divine lord and conqueror of death.
5. How were the Roman guards at the tomb overpowered by a swooning corpse? Or by unarmed disciples?
6. How could a swooning half-dead man have moved the great stone at the door of the tomb? Who moved the stone if not an angel? No one has ever answered that question. Neither the Jews nor the Romans would move it, for it was in both their interests to keep the tomb sealed, the Jews had the stone put there in the first place, and the Roman guards would be killed if they let the body "escape."
7. If Jesus awoke from a swoon, where did he go? There is absolutely no data, not even any false, fantastic, imagined data, about Jesus' life after his crucifixion, in any sources, friend or foe, at any time, early or late. A man like that, with a past like that, would have left traces.
8. Most simply, the swoon theory necessarily turns into the conspiracy theory or the

hallucination theory, for the disciples testified that Jesus did not swoon but really died and really rose.

B. CONSPIRACY THEORIES

(SECRET TRUTH NEVER BEFORE REVEALED!)

3. STOLEN BODY THEORY: The disciples secretly stole Jesus' body and then invented the story of the resurrection.

4. MISSING BODY THEORY: Someone else (not the disciples) took Jesus' body, which made the disciples think Jesus rose from the dead, who then told everyone.

5. UNKNOWN TOMB THEORY: The disciples didn't know which tomb Jesus was placed in, so it appeared as if Jesus rose from the dead, and then they told everyone.

6. TWIN THEORY: Jesus had a twin that either died in place of the real Jesus or went around town after Jesus' death saying that *he* was actually the real Jesus. The disciples believed him and then told everyone that Jesus had risen from the dead.

REBUTTALS:

1. The "cruncher" in this argument is the historical fact that no one, weak or strong, saint or sinner, Christian or heretic, ever confessed, freely or under pressure, bribe or even torture, that the whole story of the resurrection was a fake, a lie, a deliberate deception. Even when people broke under torture, denied Christ and worshiped Caesar, they never let *that* cat out of the bag, never revealed that the resurrection was their conspiracy. For that cat was never *in* that bag. No Christians believed the resurrection was a conspiracy.
2. The disciples' character argues strongly against such a conspiracy on the part of all of them, with no dissenters. Their sincerity is proved by their words *and* deeds. They preached a resurrected Christ and they lived a resurrected Christ. They willingly died for their "conspiracy." Nothing proves sincerity like martyrdom.
3. There could be no possible motive for such a lie. Lies are always told for some selfish advantage. What advantage did the "conspirators" derive from their "lie" ? They were hated, scorned, persecuted, excommunicated, imprisoned, tortured, exiled, crucified, boiled alive, roasted, beheaded, disemboweled and fed to lions—hardly a catalog of perks!
4. If the resurrection was a lie, the Jews would have produced the corpse and nipped this feared superstition in the bud. All they had to do was go to the tomb and get it. The Roman soldiers and their leaders were on their side, not the Christians'
5. If there had been a conspiracy, it would certainly have been unearthed by the disciples'

adversaries, who had both the interest and the power to expose any fraud.

C. MIND TRICK THEORIES

(DISCIPLES TRICKED INTO BELIEF)

7. HALLUCINATION/VISION THEORY: The disciples had visions or dreamed that Jesus rose from the dead.

8. HYPNOSIS THEORY: Jesus was a hypnotist who caused miracles by magic and hypnosis. Before he died, Jesus hypnotized his disciples to believe that he would rise from the dead.

REBUTTALS:

1. There were too many witnesses. Christ appeared to Mary Magdalene, to the disciples minus Thomas, to the disciples including Thomas, to the two disciples at Emmaus, to the fisherman on the shore, to James (his "brother" or cousin), and even to five hundred people at once (1 Cor 15:3-8). And Paul says in this passage (v. 6) that most of the five hundred are still alive, inviting any reader to check the truth of the story by questioning the eyewitnesses—he could never have done this and gotten away with it, given the power, resources and numbers of his enemies, if it were not true.
2. The five hundred people saw Christ together, at the same time and place. Five hundred separate Elvis sightings may be dismissed, but if five hundred simple fishermen in Maine saw, touched and talked with him at once, in the same town, that would be a different matter.
3. Hallucinations usually last a few seconds or minutes; rarely hours. This one hung around for forty days (Acts 1:3).
4. Hallucinations usually happen only once, except to the insane. This one returned many times, to ordinary people (Jn 20:19-21:14; Acts 1:3).
5. Hallucinations do not eat. The resurrected Christ did, on at least two occasions (Lk 24:42-43; Jn 21:1-14).
6. The disciples touched him (Mt 28:9; Lk 24:39; Jn 20:27).
7. The apostles could not have believed in the "hallucination" if Jesus' corpse had still been in the tomb. This is a very simple and telling point; for if it was a hallucination, where was the corpse? They would have checked for it; if it was there, they could not have believed.
8. If the apostles had hallucinated and then spread their hallucinogenic story, the Jews would have stopped it by producing the body.

D. MYTH THEORIES

(JESUS ROSE, BUT NOT LITERALLY...)

9. SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION THEORY: Jesus' *body* didn't rise from the dead, but his *spirit* did (kind of like a ghost) and that is what visited the disciples.

10. "IN OUR HEARTS" RESURRECTION THEORY: Jesus was so loved by his disciples that his memory "rose" in their hearts after he died. The disciples then shared this super strong memory with others who then received ooshy gooshy feelings of Jesus as well.

REBUTTALS:

1. There was not enough time for this myth to develop. The original demythologizers pinned their case onto a late second-century date for the writing of the Gospels; several generations have to pass before the added mythological elements can be mistakenly believed to be facts. Eyewitnesses would be around before that to discredit the new, mythic versions. We know of other cases where myths and legends of miracles developed around a religious founder—for example, Buddha, Lao-tzu and Muhammad. In each case, many generations passed before the myth surfaced.
2. The myth theory has two layers. The first layer is the historical Jesus, who was not divine, did not claim divinity, performed no miracles, and did not rise from the dead. The second, later, mythologized layer is the Gospels as we have them, with a Jesus who claimed to be divine, performed miracles and rose from the dead. The problem with this theory is simply that there is not the slightest bit of any real evidence whatever for the existence of any such first layer. The two-layer cake theory has the first layer made entirely of air—and hot air at that.
3. A little detail, seldom noticed, is significant in distinguishing the Gospels from myth: the first witnesses of the resurrection were women. In first-century Judaism, women had low social status and no legal right to serve as witnesses. If the empty tomb were an invented legend, its inventors surely would not have had it discovered by women, whose testimony was considered worthless.