
WEEK 09: REVIEWING THE THEORIES

TOPIC TO BE COVERED:

- Conspiracy theory
- Apparent death theory
- Displaced body theory
- Hallucination theory

WHAT IS THE BEST EXPLANATION?

- We have seen that:
 - Christ was crucified on the cross on Friday and buried in the tomb that evening
 - Sunday morning the tomb that Christ was buried in was found empty
 - After the “crucifixion of Christ”, many claimed to have seen Christ
 - The Christian faith emerged in the community, even though Christ had been “crucified”
 - What is the best explanation to these **historical events that took place?**
- The proposed explanation should be:
 - related (to all the events)
 - realistic
 - plausible

CONSPIRACY THEORY

- **Summary of Theory:** Disciples stole the body of Jesus and lied about the Postmortem appearance. Not satisfied with the first deception, they ended up engineering the “fallacious” religion that would be known to the world as Christianity.
 - This **successfully** explains all the events:
 - If they stole the body **the tomb will be empty**
 - If they lied about His appearance, then we should NOT believe what they wrote about.
 - Before talking about plausibility, let us see if this theory is realistic
 - There are virtually no known historical documents or findings that confirms this theory
 - In a “fabricated” document such as the bible, why would they have women discover the tomb?
 - Especially when this is the central theme of the story
 - They would have been caught walking around with the body of Christ.
 - What benefit would the disciples get from this fictional story?
 - Why do we not have ANY STORY OF **THE ACTUAL RESSURECTION TAKING PLACE!**
 - The main problem with this theory is that it is improbable.
 - As we saw last week, the story that we find in the bible is sooo unique that they could not have fabricated a story like that of Christianity

- If they were going to come together to fabricate this story they would have been confined by the culture and religion of which they adhered to.
 - They would have believed Jesus would have gone to the place where people die.
 - We cannot address the historical events **in hindsight of the resurrection story.**

APPARENT DEATH HYPOTHESIS

- **Summary of Theory:** Christ survived the crucifixion! Later, He appeared to His disciples which lead them to believe in Christianity.
 - This theory also successfully explains all the historical events.
 - If Christ survived the crucifixion, He is able to escape from the tomb; thereby leading the women to find an unoccupied tomb.
 - This theory, however, fails since it is unrealistic.
 - There are virtually no known historical documents or findings that confirms this theory
 - If Christ had survived the crucifixion, He would have been **greatly** wounded.
 - If a “beaten-up” Christ crawls towards the disciples with His last breath, the disciples (at best) would have pity on Him.
 - Since Christ would appear to be weak, they would never follow Him and claim He is God
 - But the biggest problem with this theory is that it is HIGHLY improbable.

- As we have studied earlier, the romans were **experts at crucifixion.**
 - There is no way that He could have survived.
 - There is only one known record of a person who has survived the crucifixion.

"I saw many captives crucified and remembered three of them as my former acquaintance. I was very sorry at this in my mind, and went with tears in my eyes to Titus, and told him of them; so he immediately commanded them to be taken down, and to have the greatest care taken of them, in order to their recovery; yet two of them died under the physician's hands, while the third recovered." By **Josephus of Aremthea** (not to be confused by Joseph of Aremthea)

- Assuming Christ survived, how would a “beaten-up” Christ been able to roll away the huge rock that was placed in-front of the tomb.

DISPLACED BODY THEORY

- **Summary of Theory:** Joseph of Arimathea placed the body of Christ *temporarily* in the tomb. He later would end up moving the body to the criminals’ common graveyard. Since the disciples were not aware of the new location of the body of Christ, they found the tomb to be empty and declared to the world... “Christ Has Risen!”
 - Although this theory explains the events related with the empty tomb, it is silent regarding the Postmortem Appearances and the origin for the Christian faith (ie. a resurrected Christ)

- Not finding the body of Christ would NOT lead them to come up with the theology of Christianity
- The second problem with this theory, their claims were never corrected.

“A meeting with the elders was called, and they decided to give the soldiers a large bribe. ¹³ They told the soldiers, “You must say, ‘Jesus’ disciples came during the night while we were sleeping, and they stole his body.’ ¹⁴ If the governor hears about it, we’ll stand up for you so you won’t get in trouble.” ¹⁵ So the guards accepted the bribe and said what they were told to say. Their story spread widely among the Jews, and they still tell it today.” **Matthew 27:12-15**

- If the body had been misplaced:
 - Why would they say the disciples stole the body?
 - Why did they not simply show the community the body of Christ?
- This theory is also not plausible since the criminals’ graveyard was **50-600 yards away.**
 - Once a body has been buried in the Jewish culture, they were NOT allowed to move the body (unless it was towards a family tomb)

HALLUCINATION HYPOTHESIS

- **Summary of Theory:** The disciples were miserable after the death of Jesus so much that they began to enter a state of psychosis making them believe that they saw Christ.
 - This theory only attempts to address the Postmortem appearances but offers no explanation for both the empty tomb and the emergence of the Christian Faith.
 - The diversity of these Postmortem appearances make this theory unrealistic.

- How can over 500 people experience the SAME hallucination?
- Even if we allude to the deep sorrow felt by the disciples to suggest the cause for this “hallucination” there is no real basis one can make for **the appearance seen by Paul.**
- Once again the true problem with this analysis is that it is highly improbable.
 - Hallucination is defined as:

“ the experience of perceiving objects or events that **do not have an external source**, such as hearing one’s name called by a voice that no one else seems to hear.” **Encyclopedia Britannica**

- As we discussed before, the Jewish community had no prior knowledge of a resurrection like that of Jesus
 - If they were to experience a hallucination, they would have seen Christ in the bosom of Abraham since this is where they believed the “soul” of a dead man would go.

“So it was that the beggar died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.” **Luke 16:22-23**