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SYS222 Christology

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February 8, 2018

Research Paper

The Theories of the Resurrection

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Thesis: There are many theories on the views of the resurrection but one theory Christianity holds more believable for the Christian faith.

I.	Introduction	1
II.	Theories of the Resurrection.....	1
	A. Swoon Theory	2
	B. Conspiracy Theory	2
	C. Hallucination Theory	3
	D. Christian Theory	4
III.	Conclusion	6
IV.	Work Cited	7

Introduction

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." John 11:25. As we view the life of Jesus Christ, many have their thoughts on what they choose to believe about His life. There are thoughts on His birth, His life on earth as He walked with the disciples, His death on the cross, and His resurrection. I chose to focus on the resurrection because to me that is a significant time in the life of Jesus Christ. Many look at the resurrection in many ways and have drawn their own conclusion on the belief of Jesus Christ resurrection. The Christian faith believes what the Bible speaks on concerning the resurrection. There are many theories on the views of the resurrection but one theory Christianity holds more believable for the Christian faith.

Theories of the Resurrection

We will look at the four of the theories explaining the view of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Three of the four views I have identified do not seem plausible or believable.

Swoon Theory

The Swoon theory proposes a number of ideas surrounding the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This theory explains that Jesus Christ did not die on the cross, but merely fell unconscious, or swooned. This theory claims that Jesus was revived in His tomb. Based on following evidence disproves this theory for example the Roman procedures for those dying on the cross would be the breaking of the legs. However, Jesus legs were not broken by the Roman soldiers which means they believed Jesus was already dead. As we read, John 19:32-33 states, "Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs."

Another disbelief to say this theory is the Romans soldiers were there to guard the tomb so that no one could steal the body of Jesus, how could a body experiencing swoon be able to overpower the Roman guard because this just not possible.

Another idea was stating the Roman soldiers fell asleep while being on their post and the disciples stole the body of Jesus. We know this idea is unbelievable because the Roman soldiers knew they would lose their life for allowing this to happen while on their post.

Conspiracy Theory

The Conspiracy theory explains that the disciples plotted a plan to lie about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. There are seven arguments to say this theory does not make sense. Blaise Pascal has the following explanation to indicate that view is unbelievable:

The apostles were either deceived or deceivers. Either supposition is difficult, for it is not possible to imagine that a man has risen from the dead. While Jesus was with them, he could sustain them; but afterwards, if he did not appear to them, who did make them act? The hypothesis that the Apostles were

knaves is quite absurd. Follow it out to the end, and imagine these twelve men meeting after Jesus' death and conspiring to say that he has risen from the dead. This means attacking all the powers that be. The human heart is singularly susceptible to fickleness, to change, to promises, to bribery. One of them had only to deny his story under these inducements, or still more because of possible imprisonment, tortures and death, and they would all have been lost.¹

The whole theory that the resurrection was a conspiracy means that if a Christian believes this notion why would they consider becoming a Christian. The disciples believed in the resurrection and the powerful impact on their lives. What would the disciples gain by spreading the resurrection if were not true.

Hallucination Theory

The Hallucination theory is an idea to explain the resurrection of Jesus Christ were not real appearances of Him but for those who said they saw Jesus Christ were hallucinating. The arguments for this idea clearly show this idea had no permits. The definition of hallucination is defined as a “sensory experience of something that does not exist outside the mind.”² There were several witnesses to see Jesus after the resurrection. Jesus was seen by some of His disciples, Mary Magdalene and He appeared to five thousand at one time as written in the scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3-8). These witnesses were considered to be favorable and honest and of good character.

A hallucination is believed to last only a few minute if not less. Jesus was seen forty days after His resurrection and taught the people about the kingdom of God, as stated in Acts 1:3. A hallucinations are believed to occur only once but after Jesus’s resurrection He appeared

¹ Pascal, Pensees 322, 310

² The Random House College Dictionary, pg. 596

to many people as the scripture states in John 20:19-21, “19. *Then the same day at evening, being the first [day] of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace [be] unto you. 20. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them [his] hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. 21. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace [be] unto you: as [my] Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*” Not only did Jesus appear before His disciples, He showed them His hands and side from where He was pierced. Those that did see Him including His disciples were in disbelief thinking He must be a ghost but because He had eaten before them this proved He could not be a ghost. (Luke 24:36-43).

C.S. Lewis explains the thought of hallucination

“Any theory of hallucination breaks down on the fact (and if it is invention [rather than fact], it is the oddest invention that ever entered the mind of man) that on three separate occasions this hallucination was not immediately recognized as Jesus (Lk 24:13-31; Jn 20:15; 21:4). Even granting that God sent a holy hallucination to teach truths already widely believed without it, and far more easily taught by other methods, and certain to be completely obscured by this, might we not at least hope that he would get the face of the hallucination *right*? Is he who made all faces such a bungler that he cannot even work up a recognizable likeness of the Man who was himself? (*Miracles*, chapter 16)”³

The thought of Jesus resurrection as a hallucination does not make logical sense to anyone. We have many scriptures to support His resurrection. “*To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things*

³ C.S. Lewis, *Miracles*, chapter 16

pertaining to the kingdom of God:" (Acts 1:3). Jesus showed Himself to many which discredits the hallucination theory.

Christian Theory

The resurrection of Christ was a key step in the process of salvation for the unbeliever. Christ came to us a baby birthed by the virgin Mary, He walked on the earth and dwelt among man. He suffered, bled and died on the cross for our sins. He was buried but then He got up with all power in His Hands. For those who believe in Him and the power shall be made alive again. *"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, [even] to them that believe on his name."* John 1:12. We were lost in our sins and we had no life but because of the resurrection through Jesus Christ we are made alive. Jesus rescued us from a miserable life of sin. The price that Jesus paid for us makes us free.

The Christian belief is centered and focused around the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our belief in the work on the cross and the price paid for the remission of sins is the foundation of every Christian believer. In 1 Corinthians 15:17 says, "And if Christ be not raised, your faith [is] vain; ye are yet in your sins." Here Paul explains if Christ was not raised from the dead then faith is in vain. Many who followed after Jesus and who proclaimed the good news message also placed emphasis on the resurrection and without it our walk would simply be a lie. Many were ready to defend the message because they walked with Jesus and believed the message of salvation that Jesus spoke while on earth.

Conclusion

We can conclude from the Swoon, Conspiracy and Hallucination theories that the idea on the resurrection did not have sufficient evidence to prove against the resurrection of Jesus Christ. As a Christian believer, our faith is based on Jesus Christ dying on the cross and resurrecting from the dead. Jesus came to be a ransom for us all. Matthew 20:28 says, “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Work Cited

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