

The Resurrection: An idle tale?

Luke 23:50-24:12

The resurrection is foundational to the Christian faith. But it also runs counter to all we know about life and death. So, we will consider, 1. How can you know the resurrection happened? And 2. Why does it matter that it happened?

How can you know it happened?

There are 7 reasons from this passage:

1. Jesus was dead: Joseph of Arimathea and the women knew he was dead. Luke tells us they are trustworthy witnesses.

2. Jesus was buried: His body was placed in a tomb and a stone rolled across. No one else had been buried in the tomb – so this was not a case of mistaken identity. The women saw the tomb – so they didn't go to the wrong tomb.

3. No one was expecting a resurrection: Joseph (and Nicodemus) wrap Jesus in strips of cloth with 34kg of spices. They weren't expecting Him to rise from the dead. The women come back to anoint his body – not to witness a resurrection. They weren't expecting anything because everyone knows the dead don't rise!

4. The body was missing: On Sunday morning the tomb was empty. Who had taken the body?

- The Religious Leaders? – Why would they? And when the disciples started preaching the resurrection, why didn't they bring the body out?

- The Romans? – what motive did they have. Pilate wanted to avoid a riot, not start one.

- Grave robbers? They would have had to fight past a Roman guard, move the stone, all in order to steal the body of a penniless travelling rabbi, whose clothes had been gambled away. And would they have left the grave clothes neatly folded?

- The disciples? Why would they do that when they weren't expecting a resurrection? And why then preach and die for something you know to be a lie you made up?

The one explanation that fits is that of the angels: v6, "He is not here, but has risen."

5. There is no attempt to describe it.

None of the gospels make any attempt to describe the resurrection – and that is a sign of their truthfulness. No one saw it – so they don't make anything up.

6. The women are the first witnesses.

Women were considered unreliable witnesses. If the early church invented these stories, why use women as the first witnesses?

7. The disciples are the very first skeptics.

The men think the women are delirious. Their skepticism is some of the strongest evidence for the resurrection. Firstly, why make it up? Secondly, something must have happened to persuade them, because within a few days they are preaching and dying for the truth of the resurrection.

Why does it matter that it happened?

The resurrection tells us Jesus is Lord. And that has profound implications for everyone of our lives.