

## Resources:

- McDowell, Josh, and Sean McDowell. **More Than a Carpenter**. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2009.
- Strobel, Lee. **The Case for Christ**. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998.
- McDowell, Josh. **Evidence for Christianity**. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc, 2006.

## Chapter 8: What Good is a Dead Messiah?

### The Crucifixion of Jesus Christ

#### Q. What did Jews at the time of Jesus' life think about the Messiah?

- That the Messiah would be a victorious, reigning **political** leader.
- That the Messiah would free the nation of Israel from **Roman** oppression.
- That the Messiah would establish **his own** reign of peace and justice.

#### Q. Why couldn't the disciples understand the Cross?

- They held **the same** beliefs about the Messiah as the rest of the Jewish nation.
- They didn't think Jesus could **die**
- His **suffering** was completely foreign to their concept of a Messiah.
- His **death** shattered their hopes of what the Messiah would do.

#### Q. How did the disciples misunderstand Jesus' purpose?

- They ignored, or couldn't even understand, His **predictions** of His own death.
- They **abandoned** him when He was taken captive before the crucifixion.
- They returned home **discouraged** after the crucifixion.
- Their vision had been too **small**

#### Q. What did Jesus' death really accomplish?

- The Jews were looking for a Messiah to save their **nation** from **political** oppression.
- Instead, Jesus came to save the **world** from the eternal consequences of **sin**

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*Discussion: Their national patriotism had led the disciples to look for a political Messiah for their nation and with His death their vision died. Speculate on what the disciples must have been thinking as Jesus revealed Himself alive over the next 40 days after His resurrection.*

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# Chapter 10: Can You Keep a Good Man Down?

## The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

### Q. Is Christianity valid?

- Does Christianity have a solid historical basis?
- Is sufficient evidence available to warrant belief in the Resurrection?

### Q. Was Jesus really dead?

#### *After Jesus was condemned to death*

- He was stripped of his clothing and scourged
- The result would have been tremendous pain and shock due to massive blood loss

#### *At the crucifixion site*

- He was nailed to the crossbeam of the cross at the wrists
- The crossbeam was hoisted and attached to the vertical beam
- He was also nailed to the vertical beam of the cross at the feet

#### *The result of the crucifixion would have been*

- His arms would be stretched
- His shoulders would be **dislocated**
- Rapid, irregular **heartbeat** due to shock
- Heart failure causing **fluid** around the heart and lungs
- Slow, agonizing death by **suffocation**
- **Cardiac arrest**

#### *Other Evidence of His Death*

- A Roman soldier thrusts a **spear** in Jesus' side
- Jesus' legs weren't **broken**
- Archaeological evidence that **nails** were used in crucifixion
- Roman soldiers were **convinced** of it

### Q. Is it possible Jesus wasn't really dead? (Swoon Theory)

- *This theory claims Jesus didn't really die, but instead only fainted from exhaustion and blood loss and was later resuscitated, fooling the disciples into believing He was resurrected*
- It would be **medically** impossible for Jesus to have survived the cross
- His **physical** state wouldn't be one to inspire the disciples to claim he was Messiah

**Q. Is it possible Jesus wasn't buried at all?**

- *This theory claims that, according to the customs of those days, criminals crucified were left hanging to be eaten by birds, or were thrown into a common grave*
- The **earliest** Christians believed Jesus was buried
- All four **gospels** share the same burial story, including Joseph of Arimathea
- It is highly improbable that Joseph of Arimathea was a **fictional person**
- There are no other **competing** stories of Jesus' burial

**Q. Is it possible the women went to the wrong tomb?**

- *This theory claims the women mistakenly went to the wrong tomb, and so the men did as well when they went to check the story*
- The Jewish authorities, and the Roman guard, would not have been **mistaken**
- The Jewish authorities would have quickly brought the body to prove **death**

**Q. Is it possible Jesus' body was stolen?**

- *This theory claims the disciples broke into the tomb and stole Jesus' body while the Roman guards slept*
- The **disciples** were in no mood to attempt such an act
- Stealing Jesus' dead body wouldn't **inspire** the disciples to claim he was Messiah

**Q. Is it possible Jesus' body was moved?**

- *This theory claims the Roman or Jewish authorities moved Jesus' body from the tomb*
- There are no **historical** accounts of this happening
- Authorities would have brought the body to **disprove** the disciples' preaching of Resurrection

**Q. Is it possible Jesus' body was relocated?**

- *This theory claims the body of Jesus was temporarily stored in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea on Friday night before being relocated to a criminal's tomb.*
- While **re-burial** was common in ancient Palestine, it wasn't done this way
- Instead, bodies would be buried for 1 year and then the **bones** moved
- There is no historical support for this theory in biblical or **non-biblical** sources

**Q. Is it possible people hallucinated seeing Jesus?**

- *This theory claims that the appearances of Jesus after the resurrection were either illusions or hallucinations.*
- This doesn't agree with **psychological** principles about hallucinations
- This doesn't agree with the **mental** state of the apostles
- This doesn't explain the **empty tomb**

**Q. Is it possible the Resurrection and appearances were just made up?**

- *This theory claims the story of Jesus' resurrection was made up because of the "discrepancies" in the Gospel accounts*
- The differences in the Gospel accounts are only in **secondary** details
- From the perspective of a historian, differences in minor details are **expected**
- The earliest claims of the empty tomb are too **early** to be legend
- The earliest claims of Jesus' **appearances** are contained in 1 Corinthians 15 and Acts and are too early to be embellished by legend

**Q. Is it possible the idea of the Resurrection was taken from mythology?**

- *This theory claims that the Resurrection was one of many central ideas of Christianity that were copied from Greek & Roman mythology*
- In reality, the mythological stories have much less in **common** with Jesus
- Unlike myths, there is **historical** evidence for Jesus' life, death, and resurrection

**Q. So then, was Jesus really raised from the dead?**

- The Roman seal was **broken** and the **stone** moved away
- The Roman guards were **gone**
- The Gospels account for discovery of the tomb by **women**
- The women and men both found the tomb **empty**
- The site of Jesus' **tomb** was known to both Christians and Jews
- Jesus appeared to more than **500 people** over the next 40 days
- The disciples' lives (and the lives of others) were **drastically** changed
- Early Jewish attacks on Christianity **accept** the empty tomb
- The disciples were willing to die for something they'd **seen firsthand**
- Christian Jews made changes to key **social** structures of their time (*sacrifice stop, salvation by faith, Sunday Sabbath, worship the Trinity, different idea of Messiah*)
- **Communion** and **baptism** emerged as sacraments
- The rapid growth and continued existence of the **church**

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*Discussion: Even if the alternative theories have holes, aren't they still more plausible than the idea that Jesus was God incarnate who was raised from the dead?*

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