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The Resurrection of Jesus... just a sham?

The greatest hoax ever? Or, the certain evidence of a Creator God?
by James McBride

The resurrection of Jesus is perhaps the most attested fact of history. It has significance for all mankind—for *you*, whether Christian or Muslim or Hindu or Buddhist or even in Judaism. *All* mankind.

Since man was created and 'fell' the knowledge of a coming Deliverer—the '*Desire of all nations*'—was common knowledge. That knowledge—however distorted—passed down the generations, into all nations, all religions. Inevitably false teachers hi-jacked God's plan introducing many of its elements into sometimes successful humanly-devised religions. Since creation there have been numerous such deceptions—in Babylon, in Egypt, in ancient Iran, for example.

In Mithraism, 'born' in ancient Persia, the 'god' supposedly died and was resurrected. The hand of the great Deceiver, however, is seen in other aspects of that false faith. In stark contrast to the true church being built (to this day) by Jesus Christ, adherents of Mithraism observed his birth—on December 25. They worshipped on Sunday, believed in an 'immortal soul', believed in false ideas of heaven and hell and eternal torment for the wicked. Just like the modern face of 'Christianity'.

But no-one, ever, has returned from death in the same manner as did Jesus the Messiah. Certainly no founder of any other faith has done so. Not in all human history. Devotees visit the tombs of Abraham and Mohammed. Buddha disappeared into nirvana. Yet Jesus predicted, in detail, his death. He predicted his resurrection and the precise timing of it. He carefully laid the plans for his future activities. He burst the chains of death and came among his

contemporaries in a tangible body that defies explanation, able—and visibly to witnesses—to pass through solid matter. He was transported instantly from place to place. He passed through locked doors. This was no myth. Many contemporary witnesses bore testimony to this unparalleled event. And it's not over, *for he still lives*. The fact of his resurrection was well-known throughout the then known world.

What It Means

The death and resurrection of Jesus sets divine approval on the faith he promoted. In face of philosophers, sceptics, even bishops, unless Jesus of Nazareth arose from the grave Christianity is a fraud. Unless he arose from the grave every professing Christian is still unforgiven, still in their sins, still without salvation. Unless he arose you may as well go away and devise your own rules for behaviour, follow any faith..

If Jesus conquered death it undeniably proves the existence of an Almighty God. It means that every other faith system is, however successful, fraudulent. It puts every individual who commits to Christianity under awesome obligation. It answers the ultimate question—*is there life beyond the grave?* If the Gospel reports of his resurrection are true can we then question the substance of the rest of the Bible? Or the existence of God?

Jesus time and again predicted his own death. But always he made clear that in a specified time he would rise from the dead. Talk about going out on a limb. It happened—precisely as he predicted. Since he was right you can be sure his other predictions are certain. Like, '*I will come again*'. Like, '*when the*

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Son of man returns in all his glory he will gather the nations before him for judgment. And believe him, he will not return as the 'meek and mild' Jesus of popular imagination but as the all-conquering King of kings set on exposing and destroying *'those who destroy the earth'*.

Irrefutable Evidence

Consider the following, each of which can be supported by much evidence:

- Jesus predicted his own death—*'killed'*—many times
- He time and again predicted his resurrection
- He fulfilled a precise timetable, resurrected as the *'first of the firstfruits'*
- He predicted when he would rise again from the dead: in *'three days and three nights'*. This, he said, was the only sign he would give the unbelieving Jewish authorities
- He fulfilled all the many prophecies concerning his death
- He was seen on numerous occasions, after he rose, by numerous contemporaries—on one occasion by around five hundred
- The Jewish authorities couldn't produce his body and resorted to bribery and influence
- The empty tomb on the outskirts of Jerusalem, easily accessible to all comers, bore witness to his resurrection. No evidence was produced showing it fake or fantasy. No-one made the tomb a shrine. It was empty.
[request the article **The Empty Tomb**]
- Following his crucifixion the disciples were unbelieving, fearful and timid. They were transformed following the resurrection appearances of Jesus
- The teachings of the apostles following the first Christian Pentecost centred on the undisputed fact of the resurrection of Jesus. No-one in Jerusalem contradicted them.
- Only in the fantasy realm of fiction did Jesus Christ recover, live for a time in the flesh and then die like everyone else

Act Now

The passing of centuries has blurred the impact of the resurrection of Jesus. The undeniable fact is that he died, horribly mutilated, and then three days and three nights later passed through the undisturbed grave-clothes and a sealed and solid rock 'door'. He walked and talked with his disciples. And then, before many witnesses, ascended to the right hand of God. Historically, some have been restored to life. But all of us, like them, die sooner or later.

Believe he was resurrected and your life has to change. It is evidence that death isn't the end, that there is life beyond the grave. That God exists. And, as Jesus said and as confirmed by his apostles [see **Apostles**, p.8], that a time of judgment is coming.

Jesus was the first to be resurrected—*'the first of the firstfruits'* - in a spirit-body. At his coming again all those who truly believe and are baptized will join him, in the same form, to reign with him for a thousand years in a renewed world. Wrote James: *'We are a kind of firstfruits'*. There is, now, time for you to commit to him and to have stake in his Kingdom, to reign with him.

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