

GAMMA - Questions

1 Cor 15a

A. The importance of the resurrection

- 1. What is the gist of the all important gospel? v1-4
Compare this with Romans 1:3-4 and see what are the important pillars of the gospel?**
- 2. What are the evidences of the resurrection? v 4-11 What is the minimal facts argument for the resurrection ? Why is this a powerful argument for the resurrection when we discuss with our friends who have not believed**
- 3. Detail the implications if there is no resurrection from the dead? v12-19
Please share, what part did the resurrection of Christ play in your decision to become a Christian? Or did it ?**
- 4. What would you do if there was no resurrection from the dead? Discuss your attitudes towards death before you came to faith and how have they changed? Is there some fear when you contemplate death ? How do you deal with this fear? why discuss this vital issue**
- 5. What is the importance of Christ's resurrection from the dead for us? v20-35. How can we make this fact a part of our lives and how can we make this the central feature of how we live?**

Apologetics

Secular explanations for the empty tomb

1. Conspiracy theory

The disciples stole the body and faked his resurrection.

Problems

Character of disciples..they were ordinary people not frauds

They had no motive for the conspiracy as the result of the claim would cause them each to be martyred

Only one of them had to betray the conspiracy for it to unravel and none of them did. Charles Colson shared from his Watergate conspiracy cover up how vulnerable it was. In Watergate, despite their power and loyalty to a corrupt president it took only weeks for the natural human instinct for self preservation to so overwhelm the conspirators that one by one they deserted their leader. Nothing less than the true resurrection would have had these men die for the truth

They lacked the means as they were ordinary fishermen and tax collectors not movers and shakers.

How could they have overcome the Roman guards detail who would have been severely punished to allow the body to be taken.

Look at the disciples at Jesus death , they all ran away, Peter betrayed Jesus if Jesus had died and Peter knew it where was the source of his courage?

Some grave robbers stole Jesus body

Improbable because Jesus died a pauper in a borrowed grave nothing of value to steal

If they had indeed stolen his body the thieves would have quickly discredited the disciples claims on resurrection later on

How could the grave robbers over come the Roman guard who were well armed

Why would they have bribed the guards for a body of a pauper where they is no way they could have cashed in on the body?

2. Apparent Death Theory (Swoon Theory)

19th century origin in Heinrich Paulus and Friedrich Schleiermacher and Islamic scholars. He fainted and revived in the tomb

Physically implausible because Jesus was flogged mercilessly prior to crucifixion and this uses the cat of nine tails with bits of bone at the end of the whip that tear into this flesh of his back and cause massive damage and even organ damage to the lungs. This is the verberatio in Latin. The time to death from Roman crucifixion ranges from 3-4 hrs to days and is inversely related to the severity of the scourging. Victims die of asphyxia.

He was so weak he could not carry his own cross and had to have someone carry it for him

There was a spear thrust into his side drew fluid and blood indicative of pericardial effusion

If indeed he had just fainted he would have required the resuscitative efforts of a modern ICU to recover. He would have looked so pathetically that it would be quite unlikely that his disciples would have hailed him as the conqueror of death as they would have been busy trying to nurse him back to health
The Roman guards were professionals at execution and would not have made the mistake, they had broken the legs of the other two to hasten their death and did not need to break Jesus legs as they had determined he had died and for good measure thrust the spear into his side to be sure.

3. Wrong tomb

The women went to the wrong tomb or Jesus was buried in a shallow grave as with common criminals and his body was eaten by dogs hence an empty grave

All the gospels and Acts record Jesus was properly buried in a tomb

Tomb belonged to Joseph of Arimathea a prominent member of the Sanhedrin the highest Jewish body of leaders and hence its location would not be easily mistaken.

The disciples themselves besides the women have verified the empty tomb