

Is the Resurrection of Jesus Christ a Historical Fact?

예수 그리스도의 부활은 역사적 사실인가 ?

Part I

Matthew 28:1-10

★ Let's suppose that recently a group of people, who have never heard about Christianity, have found in Israel a papyrus scroll written in ancient Greek.



- ★ Archeologists investigated it using carbon dating and paleographic (letter form) dating and they concluded that the scroll was from the middle of 1st century.
 - ★ This scroll talks about a young man from Nazareth – his teaching and his behaviors for approximately three years.
-

- ★ This manuscript ends with an astonishing account that the young man was executed by the Roman Governor but he rose from the dead in couple of days.
 - ★ Let's read a part of this account translated in English and Korean.
-

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it.

안식일이 다 지나고 안식 후 첫날이 되려는 새벽에 막달라 마리아와 다른 마리아가 무덤을 보려고 갔더니, 큰 지진이 나며 주의 천사가 하늘로부터 내려와 돌을 굴러 내고 그 위에 앉았는데,

His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

그 형상이 번개 같고 그 옷은 눈 같이 희거늘 지키던 자들이 그를 무서워하여 떨며 죽은 사람과 같이 되었다.

The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.

천사가 여자들에게 말하여 이르되 너희는 무서워하지 말라 십자가에 못 박히신 예수를 너희가 찾는 줄을 내가 아노라. 그가 여기 계시지 않고 그가 말씀 하시던 대로 살아나셨느니라 와서 그가 누우셨던 곳을 보라.

Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you." So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

또 빨리 가서 그의 제자들에게 이르되 그가 죽은 자 가운데서 살아나셨고 너희보다 먼저 갈릴리로 가시나니 거기서 너희가 뵈오리라 하라 보라 내가 너희에게 일렀느니라 하거늘, 그 여자들이 무서움과 큰 기쁨으로 빨리 무덤을 떠나 제자들에게 알리려고 달음질할새,

Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

예수께서 그들을 만나 이르시되 평안하냐 하시거늘
여자들이 나아가 그 발을 붙잡고 경배하니, 이에 예수
께서 이르시되 무서워하지 말라 가서 내 형제들에게
갈릴리로 가라 하라 거기서 나를 보리라 하시니라.

(Matthew 28:1-10)

★ When these people, who do not know Christianity, hear this story of the resurrection, what would be their reaction? How many of them believe that Jesus of Nazareth has been raised from the dead?

- ★ The resurrection of Jesus is central in Christianity. Christians believe that the man Jesus was declared with power to be God by His resurrection from the dead (Romans 1:4).
 - ★ Nonetheless from a common sense point of view, it is impossible the dead to be revived.
 - ★ Modern technology allows medical professionals to revive some heart attack victims within a few moments of death. A few have survived after thirty minutes but days later – impossible.
-

Five Hypotheses

- ★ For the last 2,000 years of human history, Christians have believed in the resurrection of Jesus, whereas non-Christians have not.
 - ★ Some of the latter can be called questioners of God (not a negative statement, but simply a way of describing those who do not believe in the resurrection of Jesus) have spent 2,000 years trying to tell the world where the body of Jesus went.
-

- ★ They are generally highly-trained good people – brilliant scientists, in-depth anthropologist, vigilant historians, who logically deduce that Jesus could not have risen from the dead, but his body is missing. Therefore there must be another explanation.
- ★ And the following five theories are well researched, scientifically studied and peer reviewed options. These are the best-of-the-best over 2,000 years, brilliant questioners could come up with. Let's see these five hypotheses. [1]

[1] Aaron Walp, *Resurrection – Fact or Fiction?* Written Musings at Smashwords, 2013, Kindle edition.

1. Swoon:

Jesus passed out on the cross and did not die. While in the tomb, he awoke, rolled the sealed boulder guarded by the soldiers away, and walked to his friends house, roughly seven miles away.

2. Hallucination:

The apostles and hundreds of eye witnesses simultaneously hallucinated that Jesus was alive and heard him teach over a forty period.

3. Wrong Tomb

Within three days of burying Jesus, the apostles and disciples of Jesus walked to the graveyard but instead of stopping at Jesus' grave, they peered into someone else's tomb. That is, within a few hours of their friend's execution, they forgot where he was buried, and began to teach his resurrection.

4. Theft

Either the apostles, disciples or Joseph of Arimethea (owner of the tomb), Some of these suspects did it to keep Christianity going.

5. Passover Plot:

While the apostles and Jesus were eating dinner at the Last Supper, they devised a devious plan to slip a sleeping agent in the bitter wine the guards would give him while hanging on the cross. This medicine would put his body in a comatose like state so the guards would believe he was dead. Once he was buried and away from the crowds, the apostles would remove him from the tomb and Christianity would have their centerpiece of worship, a risen Savior.

- ★ From the incredible and respectable diligence of the skeptics of God in devising these five ideas, ironically we can decisively and unequivocally know the following five corroborating resurrection evidences.
 - ★ At minimum, these wise and careful researchers studies and concluded:
-

1. A man named Jesus lived in Jerusalem.
 2. A man named Jesus was beaten by Roman soldiers and crucified on a cross.
 3. A man named Jesus was buried in a rock tomb.
 4. The body of a man named Jesus is no longer in the tomb in which he was buried and the disappearance happened within days of his burial.
-

5. A man named Jesus led a life so profound that he altered the known world, and questioners have spent two thousand years trying to disprove that which His followers wholeheartedly believed: many died for this belief, and many more believe today. That is, they believed a man named Jesus lived, died, was buried, on the third day arose from the grave, lived with them for another forty days, and then ascended to Heaven as they watched.
-

Jesus surely died on the Cross

“There was absolutely no doubt that Jesus was dead”

Alexander Metherell, M.D., Ph.D.

- ★ The Roman Governor Pilate had Jesus flogged and handed Him over to be crucified (Matthew 27:26).
- ★ A third-century Roman historian by the name of Eusebius described a flogging by saying, “The sufferers veins were laid bare , and the very muscle, sinews, and bowels of the victim were open to exposure.” [2]

[2] Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ*, Zondervan, 1998, Kindle Edition.

★ According to Dr. Alexander Metherell [3] Jesus lost a large amount of bleed due to the flogging showing hypovolemic shock, which means the person is suffering the effects of losing a large amount of blood and can lead up to death.

[3] Alexander Metherell, M.D. Ph. D. worked as a consultant to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute of the National Institutes of Health of Bethesda, Maryland.

- ★ Finally Jesus was crucified (Matthew 28:35).
 - ★ It is known that once a person is hanging in the vertical position, crucifixion is essentially an agonizingly slow death by asphyxiation. (Dr. A. Metherell)
 - ★ All the four Gospels tell Jesus died on the cross.
 - ★ John 19:34 says when one of the Roman soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.
-

★ “John probably had no idea why he saw both blood and a clear fluid come out certainly that's not what an untrained person like him would have anticipated. Yet Johns description is consistent with what modern medicine would expect to have happened. At first this would seem to give credibility to John being an eyewitness” (Dr. A. Metherell)

The Empty Tomb



- ★ All the four Gospel record that on the third day when the women disciples went to the tomb of Jesus, they found it was empty (Matthew 28:6).
 - ★ On the other hand, in the Acts of the Apostles, which described the history of the early church, there is not a single reference to the empty tomb.
-

★ Regarding this fact, Dr. Norman Anderson [4] said, “The empty tomb stands, a veritable rock, as an essential element in the evidence for the resurrection.”

[4] Dr. Norman Anderson: an expert in Arabic and Islamic law, Dean of School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

★ He continued, “It is a matter of history that the apostles from the very beginning made many converts in Jerusalem, hostile as it was, by proclaiming the glad news that Christ had risen from the grave – and they did it within a short walk from the sepulcher. Any one of their hearers could have visited the tomb and come back again between lunch and whatever may have been the equivalent of afternoon tea.”

★ In sum, the absence of explicit mention of the empty tomb in the speeches in Acts is best explained by noting that the fact of the empty tomb was not in dispute and thus it was not at issue. So the apostles preached the Good News of His death and resurrection with conviction. [5]

[5] Josh McDowell & Dave Sterrett, *Did the Resurrection Happen ... Really?* Moody Publishers, Chicago, 2011, Kindle Edition.

★ The high priests and the Pharisees eagerly wanted to keep the body of Jesus in the tomb seeing His skull and decomposition of His flesh in order to stop “Jesus movement”. This is why they asked Pilate send a guard to make secure the tomb of Jesus (Matthew 27:63-64).

★ On the third day, some of the guard reported to them that what had happened in the tomb – about the angel and the resurrection. They accepted the fact that the tomb was empty, but the chief priests bribed the guard to say “His disciples came and stole His body away while we were asleep.” (Matthew 28:12-13)

If Jesus Had Survived the Cross

★ Although there is no possibility for Jesus to survive the cross, let's suppose that He made it. That is to say, if He had not died but passed out and regained His conscience in the tomb, how would He have looked like? His back was severely injured on His back, His head was hurt by the crown of thorns, His hands and feet were pierced by large nails, and His side was attacked by the Roman spear. He would have been a bloody terrible man almost dead.

- ★ A person in that kind of pathetic condition would never have inspired his disciples to go out and proclaim that he's the Lord of life who had triumphed over the grave.
 - ★ Seeing this Jesus who is dying, who can bravely claim saying, "Our Master has risen! He is the Savior of the world! He is God"? Who can follow this Jesus as His witness at the risk of his/her life? It is impossible.
-

- ★ When Jesus was arrested by the Jewish authority, His disciples fled. They disappointed with Him. They hid themselves in a place with the doors locked for fear of the Jews.
 - ★ Nonetheless, only several weeks later, on the day of Pentecost, in front of a large number of Jews Peter and the other disciples bravely preached as follows,
-

God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact... Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ! (Acts 2:32, 36)

이 예수를 하나님께서 살리신지라 우리가 다 이 일에 증인이로다... 그런즉 이스라엘 온 집은 확실히 알지니 너희가 십자가에 못 박은 이 예수를 하나님께서 주와 그리스도가 되게 하셨느니라 하니라!

- ★ Surely something extraordinary has happened. They did not meet dying and bloody Jesus who barely regained His conscience. They did not steal the decaying body of Jesus.
 - ★ They met the risen Jesus who has His glorious body, as they testified repeatedly in the book of Acts. If not, you cannot explain the fundamental changes happened in their lives.
-

★ Since the resurrection of Jesus is a historical fact,

1. He is God.
2. He is able to save us from our sins.
3. We Christians shall die someday, but each of us will have heavenly body like Him in the resurrection.
4. We will meet a large number of Christians in heaven including our family members and friends and have fellowship with them.
5. We are to live our lives to the full at home, at school, and at work as Christians, not compromising with injustice but following the truth, knowing that we will have the final victory in our lives thanks to the risen Jesus.

★ It was in a church that I met my wife Hyeran for the first when I was a college freshman. She was an intelligent student majoring in psychology and always acted with confidence. I was too timid to come to talk with her.

★ Once she shared her testimony in the church: She was born into a nice family and her father was a dentist. When she quietly talked about the sudden death of her father at her age of 12, I was shocked.

- ★ On the outside, she was a pretty student at a good university, but she confessed she had not been able to handle her problem of fertility. However studying the Bible, she encountered the Risen Jesus and found the meaning of her life.
 - ★ Actually she looked happy and was very active in the church. Although she was busy of her study, she first served the Lord sharing Jesus with others. Her life challenged me who did not yet know Jesus personally.
-

- ★ A few months later I finally accepted the Risen Jesus as my Lord. Fundamental changes occurred in my life. Several years later the Lord led me and Hyeran so that we got married.
 - ★ For more than 20 years, we have followed the Lord doing the ministries that He has entrusted to us. We have had large and small difficulties, but we sometimes talked to each other saying, “We were not that kind of people who followed Jesus. We did not deserve it. We are deeply thankful to the Lord.”
-

★ As a matter of fact, I was a very selfish and realistic man, but the Lord has led me to be a witness to Him. I was a man full of worry and fear, but the Lord has led me to be a preacher of the Good News.

★ If I had not met the Risen Jesus, this kind of fundamental changes would not have made in my life. I am deeply grateful to the Lord who has called a man like me as His witness.

★ Roman 10:9 declares,

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

"네가 만일 네 입으로 예수를 주로 시인하며 또 하나님께서 그를 죽은 자 가운데서 살리신 것을 네 마음에 믿으면 구원을 받으리라."