

JESUS' RESURRECTION – THE “PLINTH”
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Selected Bibliography— Michael R. Licona, *The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2010); Gary R. Habermas and Michael R. Licona, *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2004); N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, Christian Origins and the Question of God, vol. 3 (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003).

Introduction—My Story

- *“Why are you a Christian?”*
- *The “pillar” under my faith*
- *The crumbling of Jesus’ authority and my faith*
- *A wise word*
 - *“Been there, done that”*
 - *“What had I missed?”*
 - *The need for validation*
 - *The potential of the resurrection*
 - *Finding my “plinth”*
- *But why should anyone believe that it happened?*

1. The Nature of the Evidence

- *A lesson from an intersection*
 - *Possible explanations*
 - *An inner urge*
 - *A mistaken perception*
 - *An Accurate perception*
 - *Confirmation from interviews*
- *This is the kind of evidence that we have for Jesus’ resurrection*
 - *No direct access to the event*
 - *Our access is through the testimony and actions of those who declared Jesus’ resurrection*

2. A Simple Argument

- *An argument drawing on Michael Licona and N. T. Wright (see bibliography)*
- *Three bedrock historical facts that must be accounted for*

2.1. Jesus' Death by Crucifixion

- *Jesus died by crucifixion under the reign of Pontius Pilate*
 - *Broad scholarly acceptance*
 - *Rules out the "swoon theory"*

2.2. The Resurrection Faith of the Disciples

- *Shortly after his death, Jesus' disciples had experiences that convinced them that he was risen from the dead and had appeared to them.*
 - *The disciples believed this to their martyr deaths*
 - *Multiple witnesses to this fact – Paul, Luke, and Apostolic Fathers*
 - *Wide scholarly acceptance of the historicity of this faith*
- *The historical question – What caused this faith?*
 - *They explained it as arising from an encounter with Jesus*

2.3. The Resurrection Faith of Paul

- *Paul converted after what he claimed was an encounter with the risen Jesus.*
 - *Affirmed by Paul himself and several other sources*
 - *Paul believed this to his martyr death*
 - *Wide scholarly acceptance of the historicity of this faith*
- *The historical question – What caused Paul's faith?*
 - *Paul explained it as arising after an encounter with Jesus*

2.4. The Distinctiveness of the Apostles' Martyrdoms

- *Why different from other martyrdoms?*
- *The reason for their martyrdoms*
 - *Non-Apostolic martyrs – dying for a teaching or belief*
 - *Jihad martyrs*
 - *Myanmar victims*
 - *Christians under ISIS*
- *The implication of their martyrdoms*
 - *... that they were convinced by someone's teaching – not that the teaching was true*
 - *If the disciples had died for Jesus' teaching, their deaths would be the same*
 - *But the disciples died for an encounter with a living person, not for a teaching*
- *The historical question – what caused this faith?*

3. Explanations No Longer Held

- *Jesus' disciples stole the body*
 - *Why doesn't this one work?*
- *The story developed later as mythology or legend*
 - *Why doesn't this one work?*
- *Hallucinations are to blame*
 - *Why doesn't this one work?*

4. Only Two Remaining Options

4.1. Non-Physical "Apparitions" of Jesus' Spirit

- *They all actually saw something – Jesus' visible spirit ...*
- *... but they mistakenly thought it was Jesus' physical body*
- *Strengths*
 - *Accounts for the Apostles' faith*
 - *Accounts for Saul's inexplicably sudden conversion*
 - *Accounts for their martyr deaths*
 - *Accounts for changes in Jewish practice and belief*
- *Weaknesses*
 - *Struggles to account for the apostles' testimony of physicality*
 - *Does not account for the empty tomb*
 - *The Jewish notion of "God raised Jesus from the dead" or "resurrection" ...*
 - *... always meant that a person's corpse was brought back to life*
- *Significance of a spiritual "resurrection"?*
 - *The appearance of Jesus' spirit is one of several similar experiences*
 - *This appearance does not set Jesus apart as the one who has all authority*

4.2. The Physical Resurrection of Jesus

- *The disciples encountered Jesus physically alive after his death*
- *Weakness*
 - *The uniqueness of Jesus' resurrection – the problem of uniqueness*
 - *Nothing is "historical" without a similar event in the present*
 - *Jesus' resurrection is unique – it fails this historical test*
 - *The necessary uniqueness of Jesus' resurrection*
 - *If it's not unique, then it's no big deal ...*
 - *... then neither is Jesus*

- *Strengths*
 - *Accounts for the remarkable transformation in the Apostles*
 - *Accounts for Saul's inexplicably sudden conversion*
 - *Accounts for their martyr deaths*
 - *Accounts for the empty tomb*
 - *Fits with Jewish meaning of "God raised Jesus" and "resurrection"*
 - *Accounts for changes in Jewish practice and belief*

5. Confirmations of This Faith

- *Behavior more significant than merely driving through an intersection*
- *Changes in Jewish beliefs and traditions*
 - *Circumcision (1 Cor 7:19; Gal 5:6)*
 - *Food Laws (Mk 7:18-19; Acts 15:19-20; Rom 14:20)*
 - *Sacrifices (Heb 10:14, 18)*
 - *The Being of God (1 Cor 8:4-6; John 1:1; Titus 2:13)*
 - *The Use of the OT (Heb 1:8a, 10-12; Ps 102:25-27)*
 - *The Sabbath (Col 2:16)*
- *Now try to imagine these changes just because a famous Galilean was crucified*
 - *The problem – once a messianic candidate died, his messianic identity was dropped*
 - *Jesus is the one exception*
- *Something massive occurred after Jesus' crucifixion for these changes to occur*

6. Implications for Us

- *Back at the intersection*
 - *Inner urge – Hallucinations*
 - *Mistaken Perception – Apparitions of Jesus' spirit*
 - *Accurate Perception – Physical Resurrection*
- *If Jesus rose from the dead, it changed the world*
- *I have confidence in what was accomplished on Good Friday (Matt 26:27-28)*
- *I have confidence in what was accomplished on Easter morning (John 5:24-25)*
- *I can trust my spiritual experiences with Jesus*
- *Let us stand here ...*
... until we see Jesus face to face!

To his glory!