

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

What other explanations do people give to explain away the Resurrection of Our Lord?

Some people claim that it really was Jesus on the cross, but He didn't really die.

The gospels record how Jesus was tortured and then killed by professional executioners. Not only were the executioners professionals, but their careers and even their lives depended on them doing a thorough job. Furthermore, this execution took place in public in front of a howling crowd who was there to make sure the job was done properly.

Nevertheless, people say that He couldn't have risen from the dead so it must be that He wasn't dead to start with. They say Jesus didn't really die on the cross because someone gave Him drugged wine and He just passed out. Or maybe He passed out from the intense pain. Either way, He woke up again a few days later and everyone thought He had risen from the dead.

So let's get this straight: The man was tortured to within an inch of his life, then after dragging the heavy cross through the city streets, Jesus was nailed to it by professional executioners who, instead of breaking His legs to hasten His death, stabbed him with a spear instead. Nevertheless, someone slipped past the professional execution squad to give Jesus drugged wine. Would that have been one of His followers? But we know they fled in terror when He was arrested. Was it one of the professional executioners who would have had to risk his own life to give the criminal an overdose of painkiller?

Let us imagine for a moment that such a theory is true. Now we must believe that Jesus woke up in a freezing-cold tomb on a chilly morning in April, having suffered scourging, crucifixion, massive blood loss, shock, and a spear wound to the heart. First He unwraps the shroud and burial wrappings and takes care to fold them neatly at the foot of His bed. Then (from the inside) he rolls back a stone on the outside of the tomb that weighs a couple of tons. He then stumbles out, totally naked, and limps up to the disciples on His bloody feet, shows them His hands, and gasps out a greeting between the stabs of agonizing pain from the spear wound. Most people would have concluded that the man had somehow survived crucifixion and given him first aid and put him to bed.

Are we to believe that the disciples saw this terribly wounded survivor and said, "How wonderful! Something that has never happened before has happened. The Lord of Life has risen from the dead! Let's write it all down and start a new religion."

I don't think so.

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

Your Pastor,
Fr. Longenecker