

	Swoon	Conspiracy	Hallucinations	Substitution	Resurrection
Death	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Burial	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Empty tomb	✓ - v. unlikely	✓	✗	✗	✓
Disciples' sincere belief in having seen risen Jesus	✓ - v. unlikely to convince them of conquering death	✗	✓	✓, unlikely	✓
Paul's conversion	✗	✗	✓, but ad hoc	✗?	✓
Intrinsic problems:	If not on the cross, he would have died in the tomb	1. No good motive to steal a body 2. Or spread lies under threat	1. Group hallucinations impossible 2. especially multiple ones (probabilities multiply)	Even twins can't impersonate each other to friends	1. God would need to exist 2. and want to become a human, 3. and to suffer and die

## Could the passion and resurrection accounts be a legend?

First, the prior probability that a concept of such resurrection would develop naturally is low: Judaism is a perfectly internally-consistent worldview: Life, death, judgment at the end times. There was no motive to develop an exceptional singular resurrection event. This has, in fact, never happened in Judaism since Jesus and not really in the ancient near east altogether (Contrary to popular rumours, Osiris did not rise back to life. He rose back *in the underworld*, which means he was still very much dead).

Second, there was not enough time for a legend to develop:

1. An atheist scholar prof. Gerd Lüdemann, says about the Creed quoted in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 “the elements in the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion of Jesus [...] not later than three years [...] the formation of the appearance traditions mentioned in 1 Cor.15.3-8 falls into the time between 30 and 33 CE.” [The Resurrection of Jesus, trans. by Bowden (Fortress, 1994), 171-72.]
2. Another atheist scholar prof. James Dunn says “This tradition, we can be entirely confident, was formulated as tradition within months of Jesus’ death.” [Jesus Remembered (Eerdmans, 2003) 854-55].
3. The earliest of Paul’s letters date back either to 52 AD (1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians) or possibly 48 AD (Galatians). So around two decades of the crucifixion.

Third, it was too close to the crucifixion: The Christian movement started in Jerusalem (Acts 2), the very city in which Jesus was publicly crucified. No legend of resurrection would gain traction in such proximity (in time and space) to Jesus’ death.

Finally, the accounts bear no hallmarks of a legend:

1. Legends would not have made women to be first witnesses of the resurrection
2. Later writings (“Gospel of Peter” (2<sup>nd</sup> century AD) and “Gospel of Mary” (3<sup>rd</sup> century AD)) did exactly that: they diminished the importance of women at the tomb virtually replacing them with men.
3. Other embarrassing facts mentioned by the accounts that would not develop as a legend:
  - a. Jesus was not buried by his “faithful disciples”, but instead by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, members of the very court that condemned Jesus to death.
  - b. Peter’s denial of Jesus
  - c. All male disciples running away after Jesus’ arrest. Only one was present at the crucifixion, but at least four women.

## Further scholarly reading:

Michael Licona’s doctoral thesis “The Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus: Historiographical Considerations in the Light of Recent Debates” (2008)

Gary Habermas is going to release his (multi-volume) “Magnum Opus” in the upcoming years (estimated 5500 pages)