

## The Resurrection Narrative: Facts and Claims

(A) Pilate was surprised to hear that he was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked him if Jesus had already died. (B) Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where he was laid. (C) Jesus' body was stolen to validate his followers' beliefs. (D) It was Preparation Day (that is, the day before the Sabbath). So as evening approached, (E) Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. (F) Jesus was resurrected as a spirit, not in bodily form. (G) But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. (H) So Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. (I) <sup>2</sup> Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb (J) <sup>6</sup> "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. (K) The empty tomb is a symbol of life conquering death, not a historical reality. (L) Jesus did not actually die, but fainted, and was buried alive. He recovered in the tomb and came out alive—thus creating the illusion of resurrection. (M) The disciples of Jesus were confused and returned to the wrong tomb, which was empty. (N) <sup>3</sup> and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" (O) <sup>7</sup> But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'" (P) Mass hallucination, caused by deep grief, caused many to witness the resurrected Jesus. (Q) The gospel writers (and other New Testament writers who comment on the resurrection) are not eye witness testimony, but are based upon oral tradition and composed at least twenty-five years after the resurrection event. (R) When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. (S) As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. (T) When he learned from the centurion that it was so, he gave the body to Joseph. (U) The gospel writers embellished details not in the original oral account and added detail to the story over time. (V) The gospel writers included legendary elements to the basic story of Jesus' death in keeping with the literary conventions and superstitious world view of the time. (W) The gospel writers (and other New Testament writers who comment on the resurrection) and/or later church scribes edited the resurrection story with additions and deletions to harmonize accounts and establish the resurrection as historical fact. (X) The gospel writers (and other New Testament writers who comment on the resurrection) provide contradictory evidence and omit such key elements of the story so as to question the reliability of the historical accounts. (Y) Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid. (Z) The editorial comments of the gospel and letter writers apply circular reasoning and beg the question (assuming what has not been proven) to support the resurrection and accompanying religious doctrine recorded in the New Testament.