



The Resurrection Of Christ: A Historical Inquiry

Gerd Ludemann

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In this thorough exegesis of the primary texts dealing with the resurrection of Jesus, New Testament expert Gerd Lüdemann (University of Göttingen) presents compelling evidence that shows the resurrection was not a historical event and further argues that this development leaves little, if any, basis for Christian faith as presently defined.

Beginning with Paul's testimony in 1 Cor. 15: 3-8, in which the apostle declares that Jesus "has been raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures," Lüdemann systematically evaluates every reference to Jesus' resurrection in the New Testament, as well as apocryphal literature. He examines the purpose of the text writers, the ways in which they reworked tradition, and the historical value of each account. Through this approach, he offers a reconstruction of the probable course of events as well as the circumstances surrounding Jesus' death on the cross, the burial of his body, his reported resurrection on the third day, and subsequent appearances to various disciples.

Since the historical evidence leads to the firm conclusion that Jesus' body was not raised from the dead, Lüdemann argues that the origin of the Easter faith must be sought in the visionary experiences of Christianity's two leading apostles. From a modern perspective this leads to the inescapable conclusion that both primary witnesses to Jesus' resurrection, Peter and Paul, were victims of self-deception.

In conclusion, he asks whether in light of the nonhistoricity of Jesus' resurrection, thinking people today can legitimately and in good conscience still call themselves Christians.

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