

The Profound Cosmic Event

Dr. Latha Christie



JESUS' RESURRECTION -THE QUESTION OF THE DESTINY OF EVERY HUMAN BEING HANGS ON THIS TENET; AS INTRINSIC TO THIS HISTORIC RESURRECTION IS THE HOPE THAT THERE IS A LIFE BEYOND.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a profound cosmic event and the fulcrum of the Christian faith. Paul writes that without the resurrection of Christ, the Christian faith is pointless (1 Corinthians 15:14). That is why naturalists scorn the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. When the British magazine *The Spectator* asked Richard Dawkins whether he believed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, he said: 'People believe in the Resurrection, not because of good evidence (there isn't any) but because, if the Resurrection is not true, Christianity becomes null and void, and their life, they think,

meaningless.' Elsewhere, he wrote about the resurrection of Jesus, that it's so petty; it's so trivial, it's so local, it's so earthbound, and it's so unworthy of the Universe and that it is as well-documented as Jack and the Beanstalk. This year, when Easter Sunday fell on April Fools' Day after 62 years, there were many jokes on social media. A few who don't want to believe in the historic resurrection of Jesus Christ wrote that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the greatest prank in history.

However, the ultimate question of the destiny of every human being hangs

on this tenet, as intrinsic to this historic resurrection is the hope that there is a life beyond. For the disciples of Christ, the resurrection was an earth-shaking experience and had a profound effect, as they went everywhere boldly preaching the gospel and declaring the divinity of Jesus Christ. However, time and time again, many theories have been proposed to discount the Christian claim of Resurrection, like: the Swoon theory (Jesus fainted on the cross due to shock and loss of blood and later in the tomb somehow He got revived, managed to unwrap His dressings and roll the huge

stone and climb out of the sealed tomb); the Hallucination theory (the many people who saw the resurrected Jesus were just hallucinating); the Conspiracy theory (Christ's disciples stole the body of Jesus and fabricated the story) and so on. Though these theories attempted to portray the resurrection of Jesus Christ as a fraud, the evidence strongly points towards the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Many books, including the book by the investigative journalist, an atheist, Lee Strobel, who went out to disprove the new-found faith of his wife and finally ended up as a Christian, provide valid evidence for the historical resurrection of Jesus Christ. Strobel¹ says that the gospel reports the resurrection in sober language, with specificity, and within a historical context that can be checked out. Also, another journalist, Frank Morison, set out on a journey to disprove the resurrection of Jesus Christ, but midway, due to overwhelming evidence pointing to the resurrection, he became a Christian and wrote the book - *Who Moved the Stone?*

John 20 gives a detailed report of Jesus' resurrection. When Mary Magdalene came early in the morning and found the stone rolled away from Jesus' tomb, she ran to Peter and another disciple (probably John) and said that somebody had taken away the Lord Jesus from the tomb. Peter and John ran together to the tomb and found something very profound – perhaps the turning-point in the lives of those two disciples. They saw (Greek word *theoreo*² gaze upon, contemplate, consider) that the napkin (Greek word *soudarion*³ –head-covering for the dead) that had been on Jesus' head was not lying with the linen cloths but was rolled up (Greek word *entulisso*⁴ –to roll up; not flattened) in a separate place. They saw that the head covering of Jesus was not folded, but rolled up – presumably in the shape of a sphere – but with no head in it any longer. Even the other burial linen clothes were lying undisturbed with no body inside it. All this suggests that, after the resurrection, Jesus' body simply went through the clothes. The stone was probably moved

by angels to let the disciples in and not to let Jesus out.

RESURRECTION, NOT RE-ANIMATION

Many confuse the resurrection of Jesus with the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Raising of Lazarus was resuscitation - the reanimation of a dead body back to life, but the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a cosmic event that transcends space and time. It is a complete victory over death and life. In John 20:15, when Jesus said to Mary Magdalene, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" she could not recognize Him and she perceived Him to be the gardener. Later that same day, Luke (Luke 24:13-35) gives an account of two disciples who met Jesus on the road to Emmaus, and verse 16 says that their eyes were kept from recognizing him. Again in John 21, we can read when Jesus showed Himself to His disciples at the sea of Tiberius, verse 4 says that the disciples did not know that it was Jesus while He stood on the shore. Why was the

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post-resurrection appearance of Jesus challenging to recognize for His inner circle? We can infer that His body was not a mere physical body; it was a glorious body. He was not a mere spirit, because Jesus showed His resurrected

body to the Jews. On both occasions, the account mentions that the doors were shut, yet Jesus came and stood in their midst. This does not mean that His body had dematerialized, because Luke 24:39 clearly shows that Jesus' body was essentially material. Jesus says, "Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." Jesus could eat physical food and also He had the crucifixion marks on His body (Luke 24:40-43; John 20:27). The text says that He came into the room when the doors were shut.

Though the resurrection and the appearances of Jesus Christ are historical, a mind bent towards naturalism, refuses to accept the supernatural and questions - How is that possible? How can physical body come out of a closed tomb or enter into a closed room? In a review of Carl Sagan's book, *The Demon-Haunted World*, Richard Lewontin, a geneticist, wrote this - 'We take the side of science in spite of the patent absurdity of some of its constructs, in spite of its failure to fulfill many of its extravagant promises of health and life, in spite of the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated just-so stories, because we have a prior commitment, a commitment to materialism..... materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door'.

Like Lewontin, many naturalistic scientists are not able to ascribe the appearances of Jesus Christ to the supernatural. But they tend to hold to unsubstantiated 'fairy-tale physics' to explain the beginning of the universe and life. However, the scientific advances have only pointed out that there are huge gaps in our scientific understanding of the origin of the universe and life. Even the great mathematician Roger Penrose, who subscribes to atheism, said that the "multiverse" hypothesis that was posited as an alternate explanation for the incredible fine-tuning of our universe, that the M-theory can explain everything and has made God redundant as the first cause, is misleading. He called



M-theory as “hardly science” and “not even a theory”, but only a collection of hopes and ideas, very far from any testability. The theories like string theory and M-theory posited to explain the beginning condition of the universe, which are fundamentally unfalsifiable, have many spatial dimensions. This is because, when physicists delve deeper into the subatomic world, the phenomena beyond the realm of our observations, they encounter elegant mathematical order with many extra dimensions pointing towards something deeper. Though the existence of these extra dimensions seem like something cooked up by science fiction writers, many scientists⁵ believe that these extra dimensions beyond the visible spatial dimensions of length, width and depth, do in fact exist. However, these extra dimensions remain unobserved, hidden from our perception and might even be beyond our scientific reach. Scientists still haven't found that one make-or-break experiment that can furnish some tangible evidence in settling this extra-dimensional mystery once and for all.

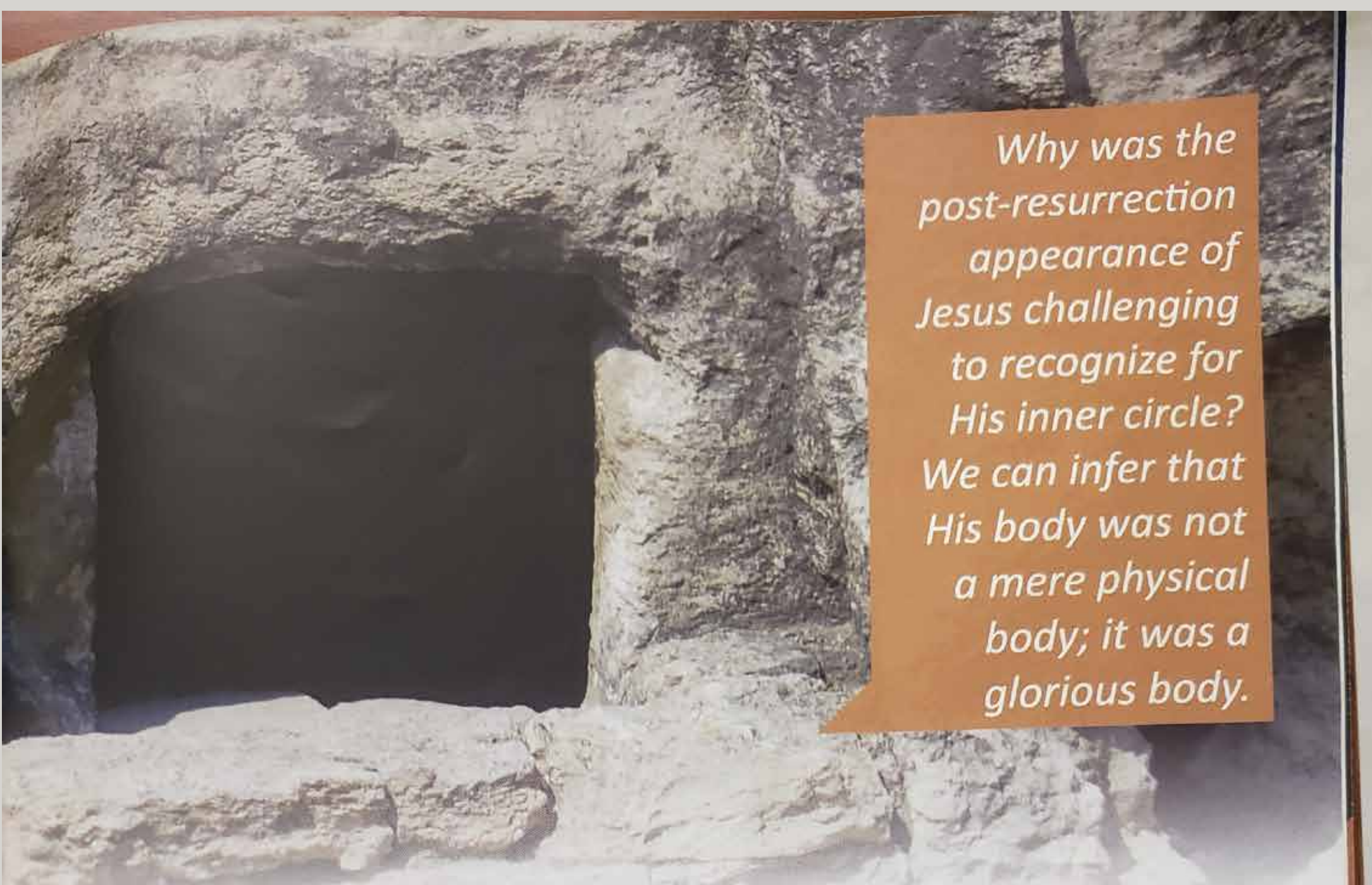
THE OTHER DIMENSION

This idea of extra dimensions became the topic of interest even a century ago. The novel *Flatland*, by Edwin Abbott Abbott⁶, describes the journeys of a square, a mathematician

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and a resident of the two-dimensional country, Flatland, to Spaceland (three dimensions), Lineland (one dimension) and Pointland (no dimensions). They

ultimately entertain thoughts of visiting a land of four dimensions. Based on this novel, if a three-dimensional being living in Spaceland can lift a two-dimensional being living in flatland up out of the plane and then set him down again in the plane after a day, his relatives would have given a missing person's report already. This action will appear miraculous in their eyes. In the same way, a three-dimensional being can enter flatland and rob the houses of two-dimensional beings, without breaking or opening doors, while remaining invisible when he returns to his Spaceland. Any advanced higher-dimensional being will be unidentifiable and hidden to our senses until the higher-dimensional being chooses to reveal himself in a way that the lower dimensional beings can perceive. If a higher dimensional being can remain invisible while intervening in lower dimensions, how much more can the eternal, glorious God, who is omnipotent (all-powerful), omniscient (all-knowing), omnibenevolent (all-good), and who is beyond all dimensions, intervene while choosing to



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remain invisible. The Resurrected Christ probably should have to shed his extra-dimensional components for making His disciples to perceive him. He was willing to reveal Himself to His select few who would take the message forward.

In one of William Blake's most famous works, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, he says, "If the doors of perception were cleansed everything

would appear to man as it is". Our preconceptions dramatically influence the way we perceive the world. We see the world not as it is, but only through the lenses of our perceptions. If only the perception of our eyes can be well adjusted to behold this ultimate reality, we will stand in awe and wonder with an astonished gaze at the transcendent glories of spiritual realities. The Bible is

filled with profound revelations and, if we cleanse our perception with its truth, we can grasp it in its clarity. The Word of God plumbs the depths, stretches the human intellect, informs the human mind, and guides the thoughts. Yet, it is also possible to stand before that revelation and say that it is utterly foolish and respond like Bertrand Russell, "You didn't give us enough evidence." ■



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Endnotes:

1. Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ*, Zondervan, 2016.
2. *The Analytical Greek Lexicon of the NT*, s.v
3. *The New Strong's Expanded Dictionary of Bible Words*, s.v.
4. Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the NT, s.v
5. Nima Arkani-Hamed, Savas Dimopoulos and Georgi Dvali, *The Universe's Unseen Dimensions*, Scientific American, Vol. 283, No. 2, August 2000, pp. 62-69.
6. Edwin A. Abbott, *Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions*, Dover Thrift Editions, 1884.