



The Empty Tomb: Jesus Beyond The Grave

By Robert M. Price

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Did Jesus rise from the dead? Although 19th- and early 20th-century biblical scholarship dismissed the resurrection narratives as late, legendary accounts, Christian apologists in the late 20th century revived historical apologetics for the resurrection of Jesus with increasingly sophisticated arguments. A few critics have directly addressed some of the new arguments, but their response has been largely muted. *The Empty Tomb* scrutinizes the claims of leading Christian apologists and critiques their view of the resurrection as the best historical explanation.

The contributors include New Testament scholars, philosophers, historians, and leading nontheists. They focus on the key questions relevant to assessing the historicity of the resurrection: What did the authors of the New Testament mean when they said Jesus rose from the dead? What historical evidence is needed to establish the resurrection? If there is a God, why would He resurrect Jesus? Was there an empty tomb? What should we make of the appearance stories? Apart from historical evidence, is belief in the resurrection justified?

The Empty Tomb provides a sober, objective response to arguments offered in defense of Christianity's central claim.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This uneven and sometimes obscure collection of essays takes up the gauntlets thrown by contemporary Christian apologists like Craig Blomberg, Peter Kreeft and William Lane Craig and argues that a physical resurrection of Jesus Christ is so unlikely as to be impossible. (As Price puts it, there is "implicit absurdity" in the "notion that Jesus is still alive, after two thousand years, in the personal, individual-consciousness mode intended by evangelical apologists.") The essayists, all of whom are male, previously published these articles in academic journals (most notably the *Journal of Higher Criticism*), mostly within the past five years. The fact that these essays originated in academic niche periodicals and seem largely unchanged means that these are often inaccessible works that demand prior knowledge of specialized philosophical debates. Michael Martin's essay on the improbability of resurrection, for example, jumps right into proving his case by applying Bayes's Theorem without even bothering to explain what that theorem is, and Evan Fales's piece on "Reformed Epistemology and Biblical Hermeneutics" is clearly directed at the Ivory Tower, not the person in the pew. Price's own contributions (the introduction and two essays) are more accessible than his peers', but can also be polemical and mean-spirited, as when he calls Blomberg "a PR man for Bill Bright and his various agendas." However, several essays make excellent points about holes in Christian apologists' arguments; Richard Carrier's discussion of the "spiritual body of Christ," for instance, challenges Christians' tendency to imagine a monolithic worldview among first-century Jews.

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From the Publisher

Library Journal Reviews, April 15, 2005

Did the Resurrection actually take place? This is the central question that Price (editor, *Journal of Higher Criticism*) and Lowder (cofounder, Internet Infidels) pose in their essay collection. Written in response to recent works by Wolfhart Pannenberg, William Lane Craig, Murray J. Harris, and others who offered a defense of the Resurrection on historical and logical grounds, the essays probe the following: What is the most reasonable way to understand the appearance stories? Why would a God resurrect Jesus? Is the Resurrection theologically necessary? Is there enough historical evidence to make the Resurrection plausible or convincing? Did the "Empty Tomb" really take place? To such questions, the answer is in the negative or is rendered in a nontheistic manner. Interestingly, contributors include not only philosophers, historians, and major nontheists but also New Testament scholars who view the Resurrection as a later church development. Well argued and well written, the essays are certain to stimulate further insight and reflection for both theists and nontheists. As Price states in the introduction, the book contains "important issues of interest equally to traditional believers, skeptics, and critical theologians." Recommended for academic libraries.-John Jaeger, Dallas Baptist Univ., TX

About the Author

Robert M. Price, Ph.D. (Selma, NC), professor of scriptural studies at the Johnnie Colemon Theological Seminary, is the editor (with Jeffery Jay Lowder) of *The Empty Tomb: Jesus Beyond the Grave* and the *Journal of Higher Criticism*. He is also the author of *Top Secret: The Truth Behind Today's Pop Mysticisms*; *The Paperback Apocalypse: How the Christian Church Was Left Behind*; *The Reason-Driven Life: What Am I Here on Earth For?*; *The Incredible Shrinking Son of Man*; and *Deconstructing Jesus*; among other works.

Jeffery Jay Lowder is the cofounder and past president of Internet Infidels, Inc., an international coalition of

nontheists dedicated to promoting and defending a naturalistic worldview on the Internet.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Dick McAlister:

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Katrice Fredericksen:

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you never get previous to. The The Empty Tomb: Jesus Beyond The Grave giving you one more experience more than blown away the mind but also giving you useful details for your better life in this particular era. So now let us show you the relaxing pattern the following is your body and mind will be pleased when you are finished reading through it, like winning a game. Do you want to try this extraordinary spending spare time activity?

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