



We are a gospel-centered church in Orange County committed to spread the Good News of God's love to everyone. We invite you to join our family-oriented, culturally diverse congregation.

Whether you are investigating the claims of Jesus or are a mature believer, we want you to connect with others and grow in your relationship with God and other Christians.

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## Is The Resurrection True or False? (Part 1)

April 14, 2019

Text: 1 Corinthians 15:1-8; Mark 15; Matthew 27; Theme: Proving, biblically and historically, Christ's resurrection; Background Understanding is that the scriptures point out the keys of the New Covenant: Sin is punishable by death. Spiritual death is defined as separation from God. Salvation reunites man to God. Christians believe the key to salvation is found in Christ's death and resurrection. Why is it a big deal? Without the resurrection our faith is useless!

### The "Bare Bones" of the Gospel

What is the Gospel Paul mention in 1 Corinthians 15:1-8? Christ died for our sins. (v3) He was buried and then rose on the third day. (v4) Both of these things were according to the Scriptures." The word "Scriptures mean the Jewish Bible, the Old Testament. Paul offers proof of those who have seen Christ rose. (v5-8) The list: Peter; then the 12; then more than 500 at the same time; then James; then the Apostle; and finally Paul.

Two areas New Testament authors appeal to in Jesus' life to show he was/is the Messiah.

A. **Prophecy from the Old Testament** – Nearly 300 prophecies in the Old Testament about the Messiah; Jesus fulfilled them all. Odds of one man fulfilling just eight of the prophecies are 1 in 10 to the 17th power.

B. **The Resurrection** – Many try to disprove the resurrection, claiming Jesus wasn't dead, or that the disciples stole the body or some other made up junk. But when you know the facts surrounding the crucifixion and resurrection, you can come to no other conclusion but that Jesus was really dead, and He did rise from the grave. Consider two areas: Before Easter Sunday and after Easter Sunday.

### Before Easter Sunday

#### Jesus was dead.

Consider: The beating, stripping and journey (Mark 15)

**The crucifixion** itself proves he was dead.

Pilate said so; the centurion believed it (Mark 15); He was pierced, blood and water flowed out (John 19:34 –this shows medically His heart had ruptured, and, even if, he wasn't dead yet, a spear to the heart and lung would finish the job.

#### **The Burial**

We know more about the burial of Jesus than we do anyone else in all of ancient history; He was taken off the cross; cleaned up/bandaged; covered in about 100 pounds of spices then put in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. This may sound like no big deal, but many try to say His body was simply thrown in a pit and that He was never buried, so this info is very important.

### **The Stone**

A large, heavy disc rolled into a slight depression in front of the tomb. It was for protection and required several men to move it. Matthew, Mark and Peter all describe Jesus' stone as being "Great" bigger than perhaps normal.

### **The Seal (Matthew 27:62-64)**

The seal was an additional precaution. Why? The tomb was sealed with a cord stretched across the stone and attached to the tomb wall and sealed with a government signet ring.

Breaking of the seal was punishable by death according to the Roman law.

### **The Guard (Matthew 27:66)**

A "guard" is a group of 4-16 soldiers; Military discipline was very strict! (Example: a recorded incident of a guard falling asleep at his post tells us the punishment was being thrown off a cliff!) Many claim the guards fell asleep (all four of them?) and the disciples stole the body. Would you fall asleep knowing the punishment?

### **The Disciples went their own ways.**

Matthew and Mark both say that when Jesus was arrested, the disciples "deserted" Him and they "fled". They believed Jesus was dead and returned to Fishing. Does it really make sense that the disciples stole the body? Would they really sneak past four sleeping guards, break the seal, take the body, and sneak past the four guards again when they couldn't even defend Him when He was alive?

## **Is The Resurrection True or False? (Part 2)**

Text: The Gospels; Theme: Proving, biblically and historically, Christ's resurrection  
Before Easter Sunday (Was Christ Dead?) --John 19:34

Jesus was dead -beat, stripped, crucified, pierced. The burial -knowing more details, wrapped up, spices.  
The stone -in a groove, "great," took at least 3-4 to move. The seal -cord across stone, sealed by government ring, breaking without permission was punishable. The guard - actually a group of four men, highly trained, much disciplined (e.g., death for falling asleep). The disciples -went their own way after Friday.

### **Easter Sunday and Beyond**

#### **The empty Tomb.**

The disciples and others saw it. The authorities against Jesus believed it (Matthew 28:11-15). Only place in the Bible the empty tomb is mentioned and facts given: Gospels (Rest of the New Testament focuses on resurrection, not the tomb itself). Why not in Acts? Main debate in Acts was over why it was empty, not if it was empty. If His body was still there, people would have known it was a lie, and the story would not have lasted so long.

#### **The Seal**

The stone was sealed in the presence of the Roman guard. Breaking the seal was a crime against the government.

#### **The Guard**

Probably didn't care about Jesus; they probably cared more about the seal and their duty to protect it. Were they killed or imprisoned for blowing their assignment? (Read Matthew 28:11-15.) No! Instead they were given money to lie

#### **The Grave Clothes**

They were lying just like the body was still wrapped inside them, except there was no body. If you were stealing Jesus, would you take the time (with four guards outside) to take off the gauze/spices, then put them back neatly?

#### **The Appearances of Jesus**

There are over 15 recorded appearances; Over 500 saw the risen Jesus; All these events were reported in the lifetime of the disciples. If these appearances were made up, wouldn't people be able to refute those who supposedly saw Jesus? Wouldn't you if you knew something wasn't true?

### **Jesus' Enemies couldn't refute it.**

See how they acted in Matthew 28:11-15! They were sometimes silent. Read Acts 2. (This is the sermon on the Day of Pentecost. No one in the huge crowd even tried to refute the resurrection. Why? Anyone could go see that the tomb was empty!)

### **The transformed/changed lives of the disciples.**

The disciples were scared when He was alive. Why would they suddenly become bold and all give their life for Him (and the many others, like Stephen, who believed) if it weren't true? Peter is an example. Compare John 18 to Acts 4. Some traditions of their deaths: Peter, Andrew and Simon were crucifixion; Matthew was beheaded; Bartholomew was beaten crucified, and skinned alive.

### **Inadequate theories attempting to disprove the resurrection**

#### **The Swoon Theory**

This theory says that Christ never died on the cross; He just passed out (swooned). After several hours in the tomb, Christ was revived by the cool air, arose and left the tomb. **Problems with swooning:** Pilate, the soldiers and the Disciples all believed He was dead. John also tells us that Jesus had a spear through the heart/lungs. Even if He was passed out and awoke after the beating, journey, crucifixion, and over 36 hours without food and water, could He really get up, take off the grave clothes, move a "great" stone, overpower a multitude of Roman guards, then walk seven miles to Emmaus on the same day? (Read Luke 24:13.) I don't think so!

#### **The Theft Theory**

This theory says the Disciples stole the body. **Problems with theft:** Disciples had no motive, they thought He was dead. They didn't understand His resurrection predictions. (See John 20:9 and Mark 9:23.) The guards' story in Matthew 28 wasn't questioned. In fact, they were paid to lie instead of being killed for messing up. If the soldiers were sleeping, how could they know the Disciples stole the body? And what about all the noise of moving the stone – The Disciples were cowards on Friday, now they get brave? Would all the Disciples die for a lie? If it was a lie, wouldn't at least one of them have confessed to save his life? If you stole the body, would you take time to put the grave clothes back with trained killers outside?

#### **Another Theft Theory**

This theory says Jesus' enemies stole the body. **Problems with the second theft theory:** Why did they do it? They killed Christ to shut Him and His followers down. A missing body would only make things worse for them! If they did steal the body, why not produce it when the Apostles preached the resurrection in Acts? Why not say "Oh wait! Here's the body; He didn't rise after all!"

#### **The Hallucination Theory**

This theory says everyone who saw Christ saw a hallucination; they saw what they wanted to see. **Problems with the hallucination** involve contradictions of certain laws and principles that are proven to be present when a hallucination occurs. Only particular kinds of people have hallucinations. (These conditions could not have been present in over 500 at the same time or in everyone who saw Christ within a 40 day period.) Hallucinations are very individualistic and subjective. (They differ from all.) Hallucinations almost always happen in a place that brings back memories, and they follow a pattern. Christ's appearances happened in a variety of settings and times of day. Hallucinations are generally believed by those experiencing them. Christ's followers had to be convinced that what they were seeing was not a hallucination (e.g., Thomas and Mary).

#### **The Women (and everyone else) went to the wrong tomb.**

This theory simply says they went to a different tomb. **Problems with the wrong tomb:** Matthew 27:61, Mark 15:47, and Luke 23: 55 all carefully note Mary saw Jesus being put in the tomb. They knew where the tomb was. The women left and Peter and John came to the same wrong tomb with grave clothes inside? Don't think so. If they had gone to the wrong tomb, the authorities could have gone to the right tomb and proved them wrong (after all, the guards were there). If all these people still went to the wrong tomb, surely Joseph of Arimathea would have known which tomb was his and would have gone to find out if Jesus' body was there or not.