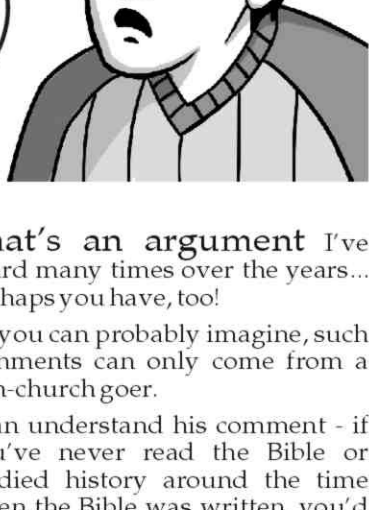


DID JESUS RISE FROM THE DEAD?

That question makes no sense - people don't just wake up from the dead and start walking about again. I know the Bible claims Jesus did this, but as a thinking person I would like to see a whole lot of evidence before swallowing such a tall tale!



That's an argument I've heard many times over the years... perhaps you have, too!

As you can probably imagine, such comments can only come from a non-churchgoer.

I can understand his comment - if you've never read the Bible or studied history around the time when the Bible was written, you'd certainly have difficulty in understanding or believing this fundamental truth.

However, the Bible clearly states Jesus rose from the dead. I can quote **nineteen** Bible verses that confirm his resurrection as factual.

The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; He has risen, just as He said. Come and see the place where He lay." (Matthew 28:5-6)

That's fair comment, my friend, and of course I didn't write this tract for those who have all the answers

But the truth that I proclaim here is indisputable. Check the following from Matthew chapter 27:

Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, *After three days I will rise again.* Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, *He is risen from the dead:* so the last error shall be worse than the first.

Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can.

Matthew 27:66 further states: "So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard."

The sealing was done in the presence of the Roman guards, who were left in charge to protect this stamp of Roman authority and power.

Yet in the process they overreached themselves and provided additional witness to the fact of the empty tomb, and the resurrection of Jesus.

Soldiers cold-blooded enough to gamble over a dying victim's cloak are not the kind of men to be hoodwinked by timid Galileans.

Despite the bravado of the Jewish leaders who, a day earlier, had Jesus put to death and stood to mock Him during his bitter agony on the cross, they still feared Him! What they now feared was Jesus rising again.

"There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it." Matthew 28:2

The famous painting of this iconic scene by Mikhail Nesterov

In AD 56 Paul wrote that over 500 people had seen the risen Jesus and that most of them were still alive (1 Corinthians 15:6).

It passes the bounds of credibility that the early Christians could have manufactured such a tale and then preached it among those who might easily have refuted it simply by producing the body of Jesus. (John Warwick Montgomery)

Note that when the disciples of Jesus proclaimed the resurrection, they did so as eye witnesses, and they did so while people were still alive who had contact with the events they spoke of.

When Paul spoke to the Athenians about Christ, they had no answer for his claims: "And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked." (Acts 17:32)

Why did Paul encounter such un-belief in Greece, and not in Jerusalem? Because in Jerusalem the fact of the empty tomb was indisputable.

Paul's hearers had not checked out the story for themselves, and rather than go to any trouble to investigate, they were happy to mock in ignorance.

Intellectual trouble best describes their stand.

C'mon! There has to be an explanation for the empty tomb!

If the Jews had issued an official order to have the body moved, why, when the apostles were preaching the resurrection in Jerusalem, didn't they explain: "Wait! We moved the body - Christ didn't rise from the Grave."

But you could ask, if the Pharisees denied the resurrection, why didn't they explain exactly where the body was laid?

If all that failed, why didn't they recover the corpse, put it on a cart, and wheel it through the centre of Jerusalem? Such an action would have destroyed Christianity, not in the cradle, but in the womb

It is evident that, if His body could have been found, the Jews would have produced it, as the easiest and most complete refutation possible of the whole story.

When the story of the resurrection of Christ came forth, as it immediately did; when it was publicly asserted by His disciples, and made the ground and basis of their preaching in His name, and collecting followers to His religion; the Jews could not produce the body. (Paley, VEC, 196-98)

THERE ARE ONLY TWO POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS FOR THE EMPTY TOMB

Through human agency:

Removed by Enemies - No Motive
Removed by Friends - No Power

Through divine agency:

Most logical explanation

The Bible states the resurrection, yet the proof is silence from the unbeliever.

Yes, I see it now! The resurrection is a solid truth!

It would have been to the advantage of the authorities that the body should remain where it was; and the view that the body is untenable.

The Power that removed the body of the Saviour from the tomb must therefore have been divine.

At that time, there were unfounded theories that the disciples had stolen the body.

Each of the disciples, except John, died a martyr's death. They were persecuted because they tenaciously clung to their beliefs and statements.

But Paul Little writes: "Men will die for what they **believe** to be true, though it may actually be false: They do not, however, die for what they **know** is a lie." If the disciples had stolen Jesus' body, they would have known their resurrection proclamation was false. However, they constantly referred to the resurrection as the basis for their teaching, preaching, living, and - significantly - dying. The theory that the disciples stole the body is absurd. (Lewis & Short, LD, 62-64.)

Think about this one!

The church was founded on the resurrection, and disproving it would have totally destroyed the credibility of the New Testament. However, instead of any such disproof, throughout the first century, Christians were threatened, beaten, flogged and killed because of their faith. It would have been much simpler to silence them by producing Jesus' body, but this was never done.

As John R W Stott has so succinctly said, the silence of Christ's enemies "is as eloquent a proof of the resurrection as the apostles' witness".

So the proof of the resurrection came from the enemies of Jesus!

Wow! Would you believe this incredible logic? Proof from the opposition itself!

For Caiaphas the very idea of Jesus arising from the dead was an anathema. He, together with Pilate, would have instructed the Roman soldiers and Jewish police to find the body. The intention would be to drag it through the streets in order to show that Jesus was an impostor.

Result: The Good News and the New Testament.

For comparison, here is the complete record, as compiled by G B Hardy:

Confucius' tomb: Occupied

Mohammed's tomb: Occupied

Buddha's tomb: Occupied

Jesus' tomb: **EMPTY.**

The verdict is in!

The evidence clearly speaks for itself:

CHRIST IS RISEN INDEED

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