

There Is No Doubt. Jesus is Alive!

Matthew 27:57-28:15

Attempts to P_____ the Resurrection (27:57-66)

- Jesus was buried in a r_____ man's tomb secured by a very large stone.
 1. This stone was on a slanting t_____
 2. This stone was 1-3 t_____
 3. This stone required the strength of s_____ people to roll it up the track.
- The tomb was guarded by four Roman soldiers who had the authority to k_____ anyone tampering with the grave.
- The stone was s_____ with a governmental seal
 1. It was positioned in such a way that by moving the stone, the seal would b_____
 2. The penalty for breaking a governmental seal was d_____
- These above measures (stone, guards, seal)
 1. Were put in place to prevent any possibility of anyone s_____ the resurrection.
 2. Provided the e_____ for the resurrection as a historical event – the stone was moved and the tomb became empty.

Attempts to C_____ up the Resurrection (28:11-15)

- The guards reported what they saw to the chief priests
 1. The text implies that the chief priests and elders b_____ their report (see Jesus prophecy of this in Jn 8:28).
 2. The religious leaders concocted a lie that the disciples stole the body while the guards were s_____.
 3. The religious leaders b_____ the guards to agree with this story and assured them that they would convince Pilate to not punish them.
- Why would the religious leaders promote a lie when they knew the resurrection really occurred? – they were more concerned about keeping their p_____ position over the Jewish people (see Jn 11:47,48).
- All attempts to explain the resurrection story away fail
 1. The stolen body theory – the disciples staged the resurrection

- a. The disciples would not concoct a story having w_____ as the first witnesses, since in their day the testimony of women held no weight.
 - b. The disciples would have to gain something, but they only received o_____ (all the apostles, except John, willingly died preaching the resurrection).
2. The hallucination theory – the followers of Jesus wanted to believe so bad that He would rise from the dead, that they imagined it.
- a. All accounts indicate that all initially d_____ any reports of the resurrection.
 - b. All accounts indicate that many r_____ to believe that Jesus rose from the dead.
3. The conspiracy theory
- a. It would require all the people n_____ as witnesses of the resurrection to be involved (all 11 apostles; the five women; James the brother of Jesus; and Cleopas).
 - b. It would require some kind of g_____ - they lived a life of high morality and sacrifice, facing persecution and death.
 - c. It would require the conspirators to carefully agree on the resurrection story – the four gospel accounts show that the writers did not c_____ with one another.

Attempts to D_____ the Resurrection Story (28:1-10)

- The four gospel accounts seem to c_____ one another and so many conclude that this discredits the resurrection story.
 1. Common sense tells us that whenever a major event is viewed and reported by different people, there will be different p_____ and focuses.
 2. The four gospels have different perspectives and focuses and can be harmonized.
- A possible harmonization is to see Mary Magdalene as visiting the tomb three times, and Peter visiting it twice (see insert)

Conclusion – There is no doubt. Jesus is alive!

A possible harmony of the resurrection stories

Mary Magdalene's First Visit to the Tomb

- Mary Magdalene and the other Mary come to the tomb as it was nearing sunrise on Sunday morning (Matt 28:1).
- They begin their journey while it is still dark (Jn 20:1).
- They bring with them Salome (Mk 16:1), Joana, and many more women (Lk 24:10).
- They had bought spices to anoint Jesus's body (Mk 16:1; Lk 24:1).
- While traveling, they discuss whom they could get to roll the stone away (Mk 16:3).
- Before arriving, a severe earthquake occurs. An angel of the Lord comes and rolls the stone away and sits on it, scaring the guards to death (Matt 28:2-4).
- The guards leave and report to the religious leaders (Matt 28:11-15).
- The women arrive shortly after sunrise (Mk 16:2).
- They see that the stone had already been rolled away (Mk 16:4; Lk 24:2; Jn 20:1)
- They enter the tomb and see that the body is missing. Suddenly, they see what appears to be a young man in a white robe (Mk 16:5). The young man really is the angel that rolled the stone away (Matt 28:5)
- He calms the women's fears and tells them that Jesus has risen from the dead just as He said He would. He instructs them to go and tell His disciples this, especially Peter. The angel also tells them that Jesus is going to Galilee where they will all see Him (Matt 28:5-7; Mk 16:6,7)
- The women run out of the tomb trembling and they say nothing to anyone on their way back (Mk 16:8).
- **[They were not convinced that Jesus had risen from the dead].**

Peter's First Visit to the Tomb

The women go to the upper room where the apostles are, and Mary Magdalene tells Peter and John that Jesus's body has been taken out of the tomb and they do not know where His body is. So Peter and John run to the tomb. Upon entering it they see the grave clothes without the body. They return to their own homes not yet understanding that Jesus had risen from the dead (Jn 20:2-10).

Mary Magdalene's Second Visit to the Tomb

- **[Meanwhile, Mary Magdalene and the other women return to the tomb.]**
- The women are still perplexed. Suddenly, two men in dazzling clothing stand beside them, scaring them so bad that they fall to the ground on their faces. [The men are really angels]. They remind the women of Jesus's words: that it was necessary for Him to be betrayed, to be crucified, and to rise again on the third day (Lk 24:4-7).
- All the women run away with great fear **[still not believing that Jesus had risen]** (Matt 28:8a).

Mary Magdalene's Third Visit to the Tomb

- **[Mary tells the women to wait as she returns to the tomb].**
- Mary weeps while standing by the tomb and looks in. She sees seated two angels dressed in white. They ask her why she is crying. She tells them that people have taken away her Lord and she does not know where they put Him. She turns around and sees Jesus but does not recognize Him. Jesus asks her why she was crying. Thinking that He was the gardener, she respectfully asks for the body of Jesus. Jesus

then speaks her name in such a way that she realizes that it is Him. She clings to Him but He tells her to go and tell all His followers that He will ascend to the Father (Jn 20:11-17).

- **[Mary returns to the women and tells them].**
- They remember Jesus's words that He would be crucified but would rise again (Lk 24:8). With great joy they all run to tell all the disciples (Matt 28:8).
- On the way, Jesus appears to them and they fall at His feet in worship. Jesus instructs them to boldly tell His followers to journey to a designated mountain in Galilee where they would all see Him (Matt 28:8-10,16).

Peter's Second Visit to the Tomb

- The women tell the apostles and others that Jesus is alive (Jn 20:18; Lk 24:9,10), but they deem their report as nonsense, except for Peter. Peter runs to the tomb to analyze the grave (Lk 24:11).
- Meanwhile, two disciples leave the upper room to go to their home in Emmaus (Lk 24:13).
- Jesus appears to Peter while at the tomb (Lk 24:12; 1 Cor 15:5).
- **[Peter returns to the upper room and tells those gathered there that Jesus appeared to him].**

The Rest of the Story

- Jesus appears to the Emmaus disciples as a traveler, spending the whole day with them discussing scripture and the events surrounding Jesus's death. Not until evening do they realize that they have been talking with Jesus who vanishes before them. That night, they return to Jerusalem and go to the upper room. They tell the apostles and the others their experience. They learn that Jesus appeared to Peter also. During this conversation, Jesus appears to those in the room (Lk 24:13-43).
- Eventually all believe who were there (Jn 20:19-23).
- One apostle was not there, Thomas. They tell him that they all have seen Jesus. He refuses to believe their words. Eight days later Jesus appears to them while Thomas was there and has Thomas examine Him. Thomas believes (Jn 20:24-29).
- By now, all 500 followers have been told that Jesus is alive and they go to the mountain in Galilee Jesus had designated for this meeting. He appears to all of them. The apostles worship Jesus, but some of the others have doubts. Jesus gives them the Great Commission (Matt 28:16-20).
- After 40 days of proofs, He gathers the followers on Mt Olivet in Bethany and ascends into heaven before their eyes (Lk 24:50-52; Acts 1:12).