
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is: ***Is there proof of the resurrection of Christ?***

Let's begin by reading Acts 2:24-28 and as I read, remember that this is speaking about Jesus:

Acts 2:24-28

²⁴ ... God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. ²⁵ For David says concerning Him:

'I foresaw the LORD always before my face,

For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.

²⁶ Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad;

Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope.

²⁷ For You will not leave my soul in Hades,

Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

²⁸ You have made known to me the ways of life;

You will make me full of joy in Your presence.'

RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

This section of scripture is speaking of the resurrection of Christ. Peter is preaching to an audience of Jews who had, just fifty days earlier, crucified Jesus. Now, on the Day of Pentecost, Peter is preaching that Jesus resurrected and is alive again. This is the ultimate proof of the deity of Jesus Christ. This proves beyond any doubt that He was more than just a prophet. He was more than just a human. He was God in the flesh and because He was God in the flesh, Peter said correctly that *"it was not possible that He should be held"* by death.

If Jesus did not really resurrect from the dead, this would have been the perfect time and the perfect place for someone to prove that He did not resurrect. Peter is preaching in Jerusalem – the city where Jesus was crucified. The grave where Jesus was buried was within walking distance – a short walking distance – from where Peter was standing and preaching. If Jesus did not really resurrect, the Jewish authorities could have objected, lead people from the audience to the grave, opened up the grave and shown everyone the dead body of Christ and proven that Peter's entire message was a hoax.

THE JEWISH EXPLANATION

The Jewish authorities, who were guilty of crucifying Jesus, knew the truth. They knew very well that Jesus had resurrected. Roman soldiers had been placed on guard around the tomb – not just one or two – but several. They had made the tomb as “*secure as they could.*” Listen:

Matthew 27:62-66

⁶² On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, ⁶³ saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.' ⁶⁴ Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first."

⁶⁵ Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how." ⁶⁶ So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.

In other words, it was impossible to have made the tomb any more secure than it was. The guards who were stationed around the tomb were skilled and trained soldiers with orders to kill anyone attempting to rob the grave.

On the first day of the week, an angel descended from heaven and rolled back the stone covering the mouth of the tomb. The guards were so frightened that they fell down as dead men. Jesus resurrected on this first day of the week. But listen to what happened then:

Matthew 28:11-15

¹¹ Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. ¹² When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, ¹³ saying, "Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.' ¹⁴ And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure." ¹⁵ So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

The Jewish explanation of the empty grave is that the disciples of Jesus stole the body of Jesus while the guards were all asleep. Some today, perhaps, believe this explanation. But think about this for a moment and you will see how foolish this really is. There are at least seven reasons why this explanation cannot be believed by rational thinking people:

- a) It might be possible that one guard would fall asleep on duty. This sort of thing sometimes happens. But when it does happen, that guard is punished severely for sleeping on duty. You will notice that none of the guards are punished for sleeping.
- b) It might be possible that one guard would fall asleep on duty, but it is incredible to think that all the guards were all sleeping and that they were all sleeping at the same time.
- c) These disciples were so afraid of the authorities when Jesus was alive that they denied they even knew Him (Mt 26:29-75). The ones who didn't deny Him fled away and left Him to face the authorities alone (Mt 26:56). Would these timid disciples, who were afraid to stand by Jesus while He was alive, would they now be willing to risk their lives to steal away His body now that He's dead? This is unbelievable.
- d) The grave clothes which had wrapped the body of Jesus were neatly folded and laid in the grave (Jn 20:1-10). If the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus while all the guards were asleep, would they have removed all the grave clothes off the body, fold them up nice and neat, and then drag the body out and steal it away? Further more, does anyone really think all this could be done without waking up the sleeping guards?
- e) How could the guards testify that the disciples of Jesus stole His body away? They said they were asleep, so how do they know who stole the body? Also, these Roman soldiers knew nothing of who the disciples were. How do they know it was the Lord's disciples? After all, remember, they said they were asleep.
- f) None of the apostles, nor any of the disciples were ever punished or imprisoned for stealing the body. If they really did steal the body, why didn't the authorities investigate and punish the ones who stole the body?
- g) When Peter preached on Pentecost that Jesus had resurrected, no one was able to stand up and resist his speech.

When you look at all the facts involved, it becomes painfully obvious that Jesus really did resurrect. He was more than just a man. He was more than just a prophet. All other religious leaders have died or will die. When they do die, they stay dead -- including the so-called "prophet" Muhammad, Joseph Smith, Mary Baker Eddy, Jim Jones, the Ayatollah Khomeini, Joseph Stalin, Vladimir Lenin, Adolph Hitler and any other leader - whether religious or political, they have all died and remained dead. They were mere mortals. But Jesus proved Himself to be God Himself by the resurrection from the dead.

King David wrote about all of this. He wrote 1000 years before Jesus ever came to earth that after the Lord died, He would resurrect. This is divine proof of the authenticity of Christianity. No other religion has a Leader and Savior like the Lord Jesus. Because Jesus is God, He has the right to rule over the lives of men. He has a right to set the terms for salvation and the conditions of proper worship. This means that any and every religion or religious movement other than the church of the Lord Jesus Christ is a false religious movement and the members of those movements will be lost on Judgment Day. No one will be saved other than those who submit to the Lord's rule and become members of His church.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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