



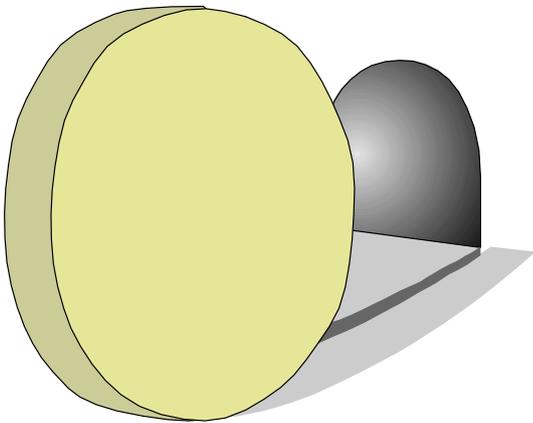
DID CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

Study 5

The Empty Tomb

John 20:27-28 (NLT)

Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don't be faithless any longer. Believe!" "My Lord and my God!" Thomas exclaimed.



The Easter story, and in particular the part about the empty tomb, has good reason for being famous. It caused a sensation at the time and, despite enormous publicity surrounding the event, Christ's body never was found. If he had been hardly known, and died privately, it is possible with some difficulty that his grave was switched to someone else's back yard. The story might have had a simple explanation like that except for the following considerations:

- Entire cities don't forget where they bury public figures.
- Public executions don't get meddled with by the public.
- People in their right mind don't break the Roman seal.
- Jews don't give money to Gentiles. (except to keep their mouths shut)
- Two ton stones don't roll quietly.
- Roman guards don't fall asleep.
- Untrue stories don't get believed by 3000 to 5000 people at a time.

NO ONE
FOUND THE
BODY OF
CHRIST.

The truth is, there is not one record, of any claim, by any person, to have seen the dead remains of Christ, despite enormous publicity surrounding the event, violation of the official Roman seal, and the vital vested interests of the Jewish authorities! There are only four possible explanations as to what might have happened.

Do you believe this?



Matthew 27:57-28:20 (See page 21-22)

Or one of these?

Body removed by authorities.

(So that disciples could not deceive public)

Body stolen by disciples.

(So that they could create the resurrection myth)

Jesus only swooned.

(Buried alive by mistake then regained consciousness)



Why then didn't the authorities produce his body? If they had it, they could have quashed the rumours forever.

1. If asleep, how did guards know it was the disciples?
 2. If asleep, how didn't they hear a 2-ton stone move?
 3. Not one record of disciples admitting stealing a body.
1. Confirmed dead by 4 executioners?
 2. Split out of grave clothes?
 3. Rolled the stone?
 4. Got through the guards?

The last three explanations are flawed. On the other hand, the trouble with believing that Jesus Christ rose to life again is that it has serious implications for us. Write 1 Corinthians 15:20 and compare it with John 5:28-29 (Page 23)

*“But _____
and proof that those who sleep in death will also be raised.”*

Do you want to receive eternal life and enter through Christ into a new relationship with God?

Fill in the missing line from John 6:40 (Page 29)

“This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son

and I will raise them up on the last day.”

If you believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead you are only a few steps from receiving His gift of eternal life. Please look at pages 28-31 and do the next and final study in 'Rainbow - Discovering the Christian Faith' When you make your decision, the Spirit of Christ will come into your life; you'll enter into a living relationship with Him, and receive the legitimate right to be a son or daughter of God.

THERE ARE
FOUR
EXPLANATIONS
TO THE EMPTY
TOMB. ONLY
ONE IS RIGHT.

WOULD YOU
LIKE TO RECEIVE
GOD'S GIFT OF
ETERNAL LIFE?

INTERESTING MARBLE SLAB DISCOVERED.

A marble slab, dating back to Claudius Caesar, was discovered in 1878 with a curious inscription. It was written in Greek and was a warning to grave robbers. The inscription translated as follows:

“Ordinance of Caesar:

It is my pleasure that graves and tombs remain perpetually undisturbed for those who have made them for the cult of their ancestors or children or members of their house.

If, however, anyone charges that another has either demolished them, or has in any other way extracted the buried, or has maliciously transferred them to other places in order to wrong them, or has displaced the sealing or other stones, against such a one I order that a trial be instituted, as in respect of the gods, so in regard to the cult of mortal's. For it shall be much more obligatory to honour the buried.

Let it be absolutely forbidden for anyone to disturb them. In case of violation I desire that the offender be sentenced to capital punishment on charge of Violation of Sepulchre.”

Previous Roman law concerning grave violation was a heavy fine. So why would the Roman government drastically increase the penalty to capital punishment? Had something happened around here that upset the government so much? Well here's a clue: Claudius reigned shortly after the time of Pontius Pilate, and the place where the slab was found was where officials might have expected the friends of a certain public figure to have resided. The town?
NAZARETH!