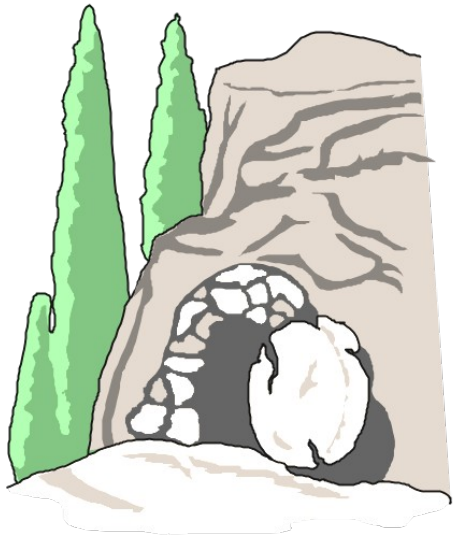
"The Irrefutable Fact of the Resurrection"



Matthew 27:57 - 28:15
4/28/2019

INTRODUCTION:

Christ's resurrection is an irrefutable fact of history!
(a fact which has practical ramifications for you!)

Evidences for Christ's resurrection:

I. **The <u>FACT</u> of His <u>BURIAL</u>** 27:57-61

II. **The <u>GUARDING</u> of His <u>TOMB</u>** 27:62-66

III. **The <u>TESTIMONY</u> of an <u>ANGEL</u>** 28:1-8

IV. **The <u>PHYSICAL APPEARANCE</u> of <u>CHRIST</u>** 28:9-10

V. **The <u>BRIBE</u> of the <u>JEWS</u>** 28:11-15

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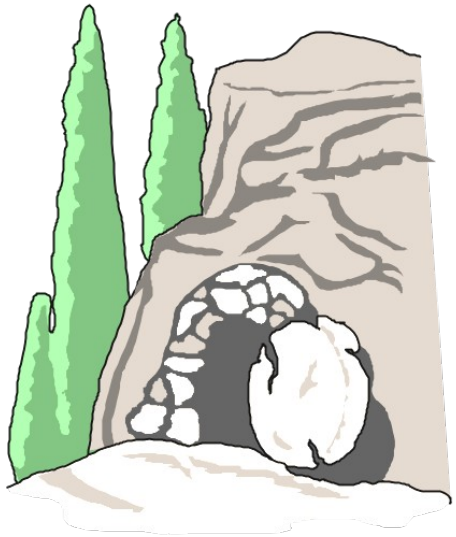

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INTRODUCTION:

SEE: MacArthur, p. 317-319 on the theories which deny Christ's resurrection.

Christianity is irrefutable; it can't be explained away, because of one simply fact of history: the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

***Christ's resurrection is an irrefutable fact of history!**
(a fact which has practical ramifications for you!)

Evidences for Christ's resurrection:

I. The FACT of His BURIAL 27:57-61

V. 57
"Even" **-** the end of the day, which was from 3:00 until 6:00. 6:00 began the new day.

Christ had died at 3:00, and it was unlawful for a corpse to stay on the cross past 6:00 when the Sabbath began (Jn. 19:31).

Joseph of Arimathaea was an *"honorable counsellor, who waited for the kingdom of God"* (Mk. 15:43). He is called *"a good man, and a just"* (Lk. 23:50).

Although he was a member of the Sanhedrin (a *"counselor"* - Lk. 23:50), he did not consent to what the Sanhedrin did to Jesus (Lk. 23:51) (He stood alone for what was right).

Both Joseph and Nicodemus were secret followers of Christ. They did not openly testify of Christ because of fear (SEE: *John 19:38-40).

"Jesus' disciple" - Joseph had been a secret believer, who for a while hid his faith in Christ.
Now, however, he was bold (Mk. 15:43) and unashamed of his Lord. He no longer would remain a closet Christian. His bold stand no doubt began when he would not comply with the decision of the Sanhedrin to condemn Christ.

"A rich man" - Although it is very rare for a rich person to be saved (Mt. 19:24), it is not impossible for God (19:26).

V. 58

"He went to Pilate" - This Roman governor, who "washed his hands" of the crucifixion of Jesus was very surprised to hear from Joseph that Jesus was dead already (Mk. 15:44).

Knowing Christ's powers and reputation, Pilate never expected Christ to expire so soon. Christ, however, *"gave up His spirit"* (Mt. 27:50).

V. 59

By handling the body, Joseph and Nicodemus defiled themselves and would not be able to continue the Passover feast. But what difference did it make? They had found the Passover Lamb of God! (Wiersbe, p. 104).

Joseph took a clean strip of cloth and wound it around Jesus body. Imagine the great emotion and grief in Joseph's heart as he (alone) prepares Christ's body for burial (all the disciples had forsaken Him and fled for fear of their own lives).

V. 61

Matthew mentions the two Mary's both to show their loyalty to Christ, and to provide the two or three witnesses to attest to the fact that Christ was literally buried.

The women of Galilee followed Joseph (Lk. 23:55) as he took the body down from the cross (Lk. 23:53). He then placed it in a sepulchre in which no corpse ever had entered (Lk. 23:53).

V. 57-61

Christ's burial was evidence of His death (He didn't "swoon," lose consciousness and then recover). He really did die.

And His burial sets the stage for the validity of His coming alive from the dead.

II. The GUARDING of His TOMB 27:62-66

V. 62

"The next day" **-** Saturday

V. 63

"That deceiver" **-** They terribly maligned the perfect Son of God, who alone was the Truth! (Jn. 14:6).

He was not a deceiver! They were deceivers and were victims of the greatest deceiver, Satan (Jn. 8:44).

"After three days I will rise again" **-** These wicked religious pagans remembered something even Jesus' own disciples had forgotten (Lk. 24:6-8; Mk. 16:14).

V. 64

"The last error **[deception]** ***shall be worse than the first"*** **-** They are saying: The deception of the disciples stealing His body and saying He is risen will be worse than His deception of saying that He would arise on the third day.

V. 65

"A watch" = a guard

"Make it as sure as ye can" - Secure the tomb as best as you are able

V. 66

"Sealing the stone" - This was likely done by connecting the stone to the tomb with a cord and sealing clay so that any tampering could easily be detected (Ryrie note).

The sealing of the tomb made it impossible for anyone, friend or foe, to steal the body. Without realizing it, the Jewish leaders and the Roman government joined forces to help prove the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Wiersbe, p. 104).

"A watch" - this watch involved more than one guard (v. 4 - *"keepers"* - plural).

*The fact that Christ's tomb was sealed and guarded by His enemies supports the validity of His resurrection!

III. The TESTIMONY of an ANGEL 28:1-8

V. 1

"In the end of the Sabbath" - As the Passover Sabbath (14th Nissan) and the Saturday Sabbath (15th Nissan) came to an end.

"The first day of the week" = lit. *"the first [one] of the Sabbaths"*

Some use this reference to the "first of the Sabbaths" to attempt to prove that Sunday became the new Sabbath. This is not what the text is saying. The Jews, who did not count the days of the week like we do ("Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, etc.), rather counted the days in their relationship to the Saturday Sabbath.

"The first of the Sabbaths" - refers to the Sabbaths for the new week.

The Old Testament Law required the Jews to celebrate 7 days of rest after Passover in connection with the Feasts of Unleavened Bread and Firstfruits (Lev. 23:7-8; Ex. 12:16).

This text is not a cryptic way for God to reveal a Sunday Sabbath, but is a disclosure of the Jewish week of rest and celebration.

"To see the sepulchre" - They came hoping to get someone to remove the stone (Mk. 16:3) so that they could anoint the body of Jesus with some *"sweet spices"*

(Mk. 16:1).

V. 2

"Earthquake" **-** Reminiscent of 27:51

The angel did not roll away the stone so Jesus could get out. He was already out (and could walk through walls - cp. Jn. 20:26).

The angel rolled away the stone so that people could see for themselves that the tomb was empty, that Jesus was not there!

V. 3

The dazzling, brilliant glow of this angel must have been a terrifying sight to behold.

V. 4

The guards shuddered in fear and became powerless like dead men, unable to move a single limb. Such a phenomena occurs when a mortal comes face to face with a powerful supernatural being (cp. Dan. 10:8, 10).

V. 5

After the guards fled the scene, this angel along with another angel (Lk. 24:4), greet the two Mary's as they come to the tomb and find the stone rolled away.

V. 6

"He is risen" **-** This short statement is the basis of the Christian faith.

"He is risen, as He said" **-** i.e. as He had promised you.

The Lord is always faithful to His promises. Trust Him!

IV. The PHYSICAL APPEARANCE of CHRIST 28:9-10

V. 9

"All hail" **-** Grace to you

"Held Him by the feet" **-** Christ had a literal body which could be clung to (Jn. 20:17).

"Worshipped Him" **-** the immediate response of anyone who enters the presence of the resurrected Christ.

Jesus appeared to:

--Mary Magdalene (Mk. 16:9)

--The two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Mk. 16:12; Lk. 24:13-35) and ate with them in their home (Lk. 24:30)

--Peter (Lk. 23:34)

--The eleven disciples (Mk. 16:14). They also handled Him, saw His hands and feet, and saw Him eat in their presence (Lk. 24:36-43).

* At His first appearance, Thomas was missing (Jn. 20:19-25), then again He appeared with Thomas present (Jn. 20:26-31)

* Then to seven of the disciples up in Galilee (Jn. 21:1ff)

--Then to over 500 brethren at once (SEE: I Cor. 15:1-8)

--Then to Stephen (Acts 7:55-56)

--Then to Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:5)

V. The <u>BRIBE</u> of the <u>JEWS</u> 28:11-15

V. 11

"Some of the watch" **-** Some of the guards w ho had experienced the encounter with the angel (v. 4).

V. 12

Rather than accepting the testimony of the guards, and not having the character to examine the validity of Christ's resurrection, they in hardened unbelief muzzled the mouths of the soldiers with money.

In order to cover up the resurrection, they bribed the guards with that which most godless heath would gladly take to keep their mouths shut.

Could you ever be bought off if a ***"large sum of money"*** was offered to you? What would it take to silence your witness?

They had given money to Judas to betray Christ, and now they give money to cover up His resurrection.

V. 13

"While we slept" **-** If they were sleeping, how did they know what happened?!

What a haphazard, ill-planned alibi! How would sleeping people know who it was that stole the body!?

Guards were not allowed to fall asleep on the job anyway. They could lose their lives for such irresponsibility.

Since the Pharisees and chief priests had hired the guards, their fate would be determined by this Jews rather than by Pilate.

Their story was <u>self-contradictory</u>.

Oh, the hardness of man's heart! These people were stubbornly unwilling to at least say: "Maybe there is something to this Jesus of Nazareth." There had been so many attestations to His Messiahship. This was the ultimate!

Maybe deep down inside they know what the soldiers say is true. They don't deny or question their story; they just seek to cover it up.

V. 15

"They did as they were taught" **-** Rather than doing what was right, they violated the truth, violated their own conscience, violated what they saw, heard, and experienced. All for the sake of filthy lucre.

Their lie became the common belief among the Jews.

"Until this day" **-** It is sad how false doctrine has a way of continuing from

generation to generation. The lies go on and one, to those who have their heads in the sand.

"Mark Twain once wrote that a lie can go around the world while truth is still lacing up her boots. There is something in human nature that makes it easy for people to believe lies" (Wiersbe, p. 106).

CONCLUSION:

Other proofs of Christ's resurrection:

1. The grave clothes were left behind (Jn. 20:5-7)
   (If Christ's body had been stolen, there is no way they would have wasted the time to unwrap Him)

2. The cowardly disciples were transformed and were even willing to all die as martyrs for their faith

3. Even Saul of Tarsus, an enemy of Christ, was compelled to believe in Him when he saw the resurrected Savior

4. Jesus is transforming people today, as He has for nearly 2,000 years
   Hymn: "You ask me how I know He lives, He lives within my heart"

Because Jesus arose from the dead. . .

1. He is proven to be the <u>Son of God</u>
   (Rom. 1:4 - *"And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead"*)

2. His <u>promises</u> are <u>trustworthy</u>
   (Jn. 10:18 - *"No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have i received*

of my Father.") (cp. Mt. 12:40, 16:21, 17:9, 23)

3. He has <u>power over life</u> and <u>death</u>
(Rev. 1:18 - *"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."*)

4. He can now <u>give eternal life</u> to all who believe
(Jn. 10:28 - *"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."*) (cp. Rom. 10:9-10)

5. He can <u>intercede</u> as our High Priest
(Heb. 7:25 - *"Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them")*

6. He can <u>empower</u> us to live victoriously
(Rom. 6:4 - *"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life")*

7. Our <u>labor</u> for Him is <u>not in vain</u>
(I Cor. 15:14 - *"And if Christ is not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain"*) (I Cor. 15:58 - *"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord")*

8. We are assured that <u>we, too, shall rise</u> from the dead
(Jn. 11:25 - *"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live"*) (Jn. 14:19 - *"Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also"*)

9. He is <u>coming</u> back <u>again</u>
(I Th. 4:13-18)

10. He will one day <u>judge the world</u>
(Acts 17:31 - *"Because He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he ordained;; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead"*)

HYMN: "<u>Christ Arose</u>"