

Week of April 8, 2012
Jesus Rose from the Dead

Passage Outline:

1. **Proof of a Guarded Tomb** (Matt. 27:62-66)
2. **Proof of an Empty Tomb** (Matt. 28:5-8)
3. **Proof of Eyewitness Account** (Luke 24:13-16,32-33,35)

What This Study About:

We will study the facts of Easter: that Jesus was truly dead, really rose from the grave, and is alive today.

How Can This Study Impact Your Life:

When we understand that Jesus died for your sins and rose to live again we can have a brand new life.

1. Proof of a Guarded Tomb - Matthew 27:62-66

Matthew 27:62-66

⁶²The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. ⁶³"Sir," they said, "we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.' ⁶⁴So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first." ⁶⁵"Take a guard," Pilate answered. "Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how." ⁶⁶So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.

- A. The next day referred to Saturday. The Jews acted quickly to protect Jesus' body from theft.
- B. The chief priests included those who had condemned Jesus to death, and the Pharisees, who opposed Jesus through much of His public ministry, went to Pilate and request a guard for the tomb. Why would they need a guard for a dead man's tomb? The answer to that question lay in the words of Jesus.

Please read, if you have not already done so, the article "*The Priest*" contained in your preparation packet you picked up last Sunday.

- C. Jesus had told His disciples He would die and rise again.
 - i. Three times Jesus had predicted His death (See Matthew 16:21; 17:22-23 and 20:19).
 - ii. Jesus also taught that He would rise from the dead three days later (See Matthew 12:40; 26:61; John 2:19-21).
 - iii. Hearing of these predictions, the chief priests and Pharisees were nervous that something might happen.
 - iv. Perhaps, they feared that the disciples might come and steal the body of Jesus in order to claim that Jesus rose from the dead.
- D. Because the Jewish leaders believed something might occur within the first three days, they took steps to secure the tomb and prevent anticipated deception.
- E. But notice: By placing a guard at the tomb and making the tomb secure, they actually strengthened the evidence of the resurrection.

- i. Either the disciples stole the body or Jesus rose as He predicted.
 - ii. Since the Jewish leaders and Pilate did everything in their power to prevent the former, the latter stands as the most plausible explanation for what happened to the body of Jesus, that He rose from the dead!
- F. What about the guards? They had an important responsibility. Losing the body would have been punishable by death.
- G. Did the guards sleep on duty? The guards would not have grown lax in their duty when suspicions were already so high.
- H. By securing the tomb, the guards applied some kind of substance such as soft clay or wax with the Roman imperial stamp that would make breaking it punishable by the government. No pranksters would risk their lives to pull such a prank with the presence of Roman soldiers and a seal of the government.
- I. Modern opponents of Christianity have suggested that Jesus merely “swooned” or passed out on the cross and then awoke in the cool of the tomb. Again, this goes against the evidence.
- i. According to John 19:31-34, the professional soldier in charge saw that He was dead; and to make doubly sure, he stabbed Jesus with a spear, and blood and water came from His side.
 - ii. This is post-mortem (after death) evidence that Jesus had really died.
- J. The chief priests and Pharisees called what happened a deception:
- i. This refers to the idea that the disciples stole the body and then said Jesus rose from the dead.
 - ii. But, if the disciples stole the body, then why would all of them except John have died horrible deaths for a hoax that they made up?
- K. The best explanation for the missing body is that Jesus actually rose from the dead and the authorities had to scramble to provide an explanation that did not line up with the facts.

Know the Facts – Which is Most Convincing for You?

- 1. After the soldier pushed a spear into Jesus’ side, blood and water came out – this is post-mortem evidence of actual death.**
- 2. The tomb was guarded and seal, punishable by death if the soldiers failed.**
- 3. All the disciples, except John, died for the cause of Christ. Do you think they would have died for a lie that is if they made it all up and stole the body?**

2. Proof of an Empty Tomb - Matthew 28:5-8

Matthew 28:5-8

⁵ The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. ⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you." ⁸ So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

- A. A second evidence of the resurrection of Jesus is that of an empty tomb. Joseph offered his tomb for the body of Jesus. It was a “new” tomb (See Matthew 27:60), an important detail in the evidence, meaning

His was the only body there when the ladies left the tomb on Friday evening.

- B. Some have suggested that the women went to the wrong tomb, but they were there on Friday. After the Sabbath, the women arrived to finish preparing Jesus' body for burial.
- C. The angel told the women the startling news, "He is not here!" Obviously this would have confused the women because they had seen the place where Joseph buried Jesus (27:61). Could it be that the women had traveled by mistake to a wrong tomb? Why would the guards have protected the wrong tomb?
- D. The angel proclaimed that Jesus "has been resurrected." This word is passive in voice, meaning that God raised Jesus from the dead; Jesus did not raise Himself. The angel reminded the women of Jesus' predictions to rise from the dead—He had risen, "just as He said."

Please read, if you have not already done so, the articles "*Resurrection in First-Century Jewish Thought*" and "*Women as Eyewitnesses*" contained in your preparation packet you picked up last Sunday.

- E. What the angel said next is extremely important. He invited the women to "come and see the place where He lay." The same people who had seen Jesus placed in the tomb had an invitation to look to that very same place to see that the body was no longer there.
- F. The angel told them to hurry and tell the disciples that God had raised Him from the dead.
- G. Seeing the empty tomb and daring to hope that Jesus was indeed alive, the women left quickly as the angel had encouraged them. They left the tomb with mixed emotions.
- H. The women took the news to the disciples, thus becoming the first to report the resurrection of Jesus.

How Would You Share the Proofs of Jesus' Resurrection?

Write a short paragraph to describe to a lost friend the proof of Jesus' resurrection as evidenced by the empty tomb. Try to include the frequent objections that were raised in our study. It is good that we prepare before that opportunity arises. Please be prepared to share the most important news the world has ever heard.

3. Proof of Eyewitness Account - Luke 24:13-16,32-33,35

Luke 24:13-16

¹³ Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. ¹⁵ As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; ¹⁶ but they were kept from recognizing him.... ³² They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" ³³ They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together... ³⁵ Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

- A. The best proof of the resurrection is eyewitness accounts.
- B. One such account happened to two disciples traveling to a village called Emmaus about seven miles from Jerusalem. Today, we are not sure where this village was.
- C. The passage says that the men were prevented from recognizing Jesus. Why?

- i. This is not to say that Jesus was so different that they could not recognize Him, but only that they were prevented from recognizing Him. Why?
 - ii. The time was not right for Jesus to reveal Himself to them. Besides, Jesus never over-whelms people to force belief. He would do so through the Scriptures and through His actions, thus allowing people to come to their own conclusions.
- D. Jesus asked the travelers about their conversation. They were stunned that this Jesus had not heard all the reports happening in Jerusalem. The travelers proceeded to share the events and now the latest report that some women had gone to the tomb and did not see a body but an angel, who said Jesus had risen.
- E. Jesus began to explain the Scriptures to the travelers of how the death of Jesus, as the Messiah, was predicted by Moses and the Prophets.
- F. Luke tells us that the disciples' hearts were ablaze with anticipation and excitement.
- G. But, they still did not recognize that the One walking with them was Jesus. Only after Jesus broke bread at table with these two, did they realize what was happening and who Jesus was.
- H. The disciples did not wait around but immediately returned to Jerusalem to share their story.

The Evidence Is In!

The guarded tomb, the empty tomb, and the eyewitness accounts all point to the same conclusion: Jesus rose from the dead. Like the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, we, too, have a message to share. We also have personal encounters with the risen Christ. Maybe our encounters are not as dramatic as the one told by the two disciples, but the difference Jesus Christ has made in our lives still need to be shared. No one can argue with you about your personal encounters with Jesus. They are yours personally! People's eternity hangs in the balance!

Biblical Truths in Focus

1. The resurrection of Jesus is a miraculous event predicted by Old Testament and by Jesus Himself.
2. The guarded tomb dispels the argument that the disciples stole the body of Jesus.
3. The empty tomb dispels the belief that Jesus remains dead.
4. The fact that the authorities had no body to present as Christianity spread proves they did not steal the body.
5. The testimonies of both the early church and Christians today emphasize the presence of the living Christ.