

PROVING THE BIBLE

Lesson Ten

Jesus' Resurrection

Last time we looked at a few of the miracles recorded in the Bible with a focus on the two most important miracles – Creation and Jesus' resurrection. We began to inquire how Jesus' body disappeared. The first step was to look at whether the disciples of Christ took his body.

Here is a review of why it couldn't have been the disciples who stole the body of Jesus:

- A large stone was put in place and sealed – making it hard to steal a body without a lot of effort and noise.
- There were four to sixteen trained Roman guards with weapons watching over it.
- The Jews had made it secure.
- Anyone who broke the seal on the rock would have been worthy of death.
- Everyone knew the action was going to take place on day three making it easy to know the exact date someone would try to steal his dead body.
- The guards reported the body was gone and was told to say they were asleep. Yet, this contradicts being an eyewitness while sleeping. It contradicts that if they knew who it was, why did they not stop and arrest the people who were carrying a very heavy dead body that had 75 pounds of spices stuck to it.
- Also, it would be hard to sleep when there was an earthquake reported that day.
- The fact the Jews had authority to take people to the Romans to be killed shows they could have just gone to the disciples and arrested them if they truly thought they had the body... but the disciples did not have the body.
- If the resurrection didn't happen, would the church have said it did when they knew it didn't? And we saw earlier that the church not only kept the accounts but made copies. If they knew that the disciples had stolen the body why would people continue to die for their faith and risk persecution during the 1st and 2nd centuries?

After reviewing that it wasn't the disciples who took Jesus' body, the next group we are going to look at is the Jews.

2) Was it the Jews?

Would the Jews have done it? Why? – they wanted the body to stay in, not be gone! And if they had stolen the body – they could have just brought it out on day four to prove Jesus was still dead. If they could produce a body, the story would be over. If anyone wanted the teaching of the apostles disproven, they could have just showed the body.

Besides all that the stone was what, according to Mark 16:4?

Mark 16:4

But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away.

The stone was very large and heavy.

Questions

Did the Jews want Jesus' body gone? Why not?

Would the Jews have done it?

Therefore, we see on the basis of the documentary evidence, that the disciples of Jesus could not have done it and the Jews certainly would not have done it...



3) Did someone steal his body, was it Romans or Gentiles?

John 19:38-42 – Explains how Jesus' body was taken down by two Jewish men.

Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. ³⁹ He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. ⁴⁰ Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. ⁴¹ At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. ⁴² Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

There are two things we need to know from this: Jesus was put in a new tomb where no one else had been laid, and all that he had on him was 75 pounds of spices. The two spices, myrrh and aloe, are incredibly sticky and myrrh is a gum resin that acts like a glue. Remembering these facts, let's read on.

Was it a grave robber? If so, how did he get past the soldiers, the big stone, and all without waking anyone up? What was the robber going to take – what was of value? The 75 pounds of used spices, nothing more. There was no one else in the tomb that had any possessions like gold, Jesus only was wrapped in linen and sticky spices. People knew Jesus was poor and the Bible verses had said the tomb was empty, other than Jesus. Therefore, no rich dead people to steal from.

Regardless of the fictitious story of someone taking the body, do you know what happened to Roman soldiers who lost their charges (meaning the people they were in charge of protecting or keeping?) They lost their lives. The story of Peter when he was miraculously

released from prison said that when Herod called for Peter from the jail and Peter was gone, Herod killed all the soldiers.

And when Paul and Silas were imprisoned in Acts 16:16-40 and the prison shook with an earthquake and the prison captain of the guard saw that the prison doors had been shaken open, he tried to take his spear to kill himself. Why? Because he knew that the loss of a charge was the loss of a soldier's life. Soldiers would die if they lost the person or thing they were responsible for.

Yet, the soldiers claimed they slept through the entire time the body was supposedly stolen. They didn't wake up and yet could tell who took the body? They didn't die, nor were they punished. And when Peter in Acts 2 tells the people in Jerusalem, where over 3,000 men alone were gathered, and he says they killed Jesus and he rose again, they could have walked away from Peter, walked to the tomb and checked, or showed the body of Jesus and that would have stopped the whole sermon.

The resurrection is confirmed by eyewitness testimony as we discussed earlier. And these eyewitnesses died for their faith and were beheaded, crucified, killed with a spear, and more because of their statement that they saw Jesus alive and that he rose from the grave. There were serious consequences for such statements. And yet, they clung to their story. People die for their religion all the time, but would they do it knowing they were wrong and that Jesus never did rise? Would all 500 do that? Would over 500 people go to their deaths knowing it was fake? They all saw Jesus rise and clung to their factual story even to death.

We began by looking at the evidence from the tomb itself that the body was gone and that it could not be the Jews, grave robbers, the Roman guards, or the disciples...

So now, the next thing to discuss is, then did Jesus even really die?

Did Jesus Really Die?

To look at that, we need to consider the grave clothes and burial custom of the Jews.

The Clothes

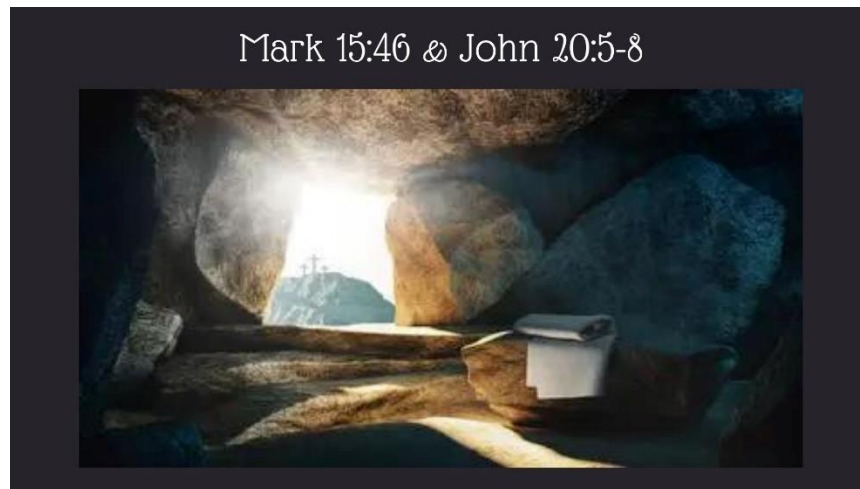
Mark 15:46

So Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb.

John 20:5-8

He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth

was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed.



Question:

What do we notice about the clothes?

The clothes were left lying. Linen still in place where Jesus was laid. It was left there lying in the same place. This doesn't fit with the idea of someone trying to leave in a hurry to avoid guards.

Burial Custom of the Jews

John 11:43-44

When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

John 19:40

Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs.

John 11:43-44 and 19:40



Question:

Was Lazarus able to unwrap himself?

See how Jews bound people after death: Lazarus in the book of John is so bound that Lazarus needs help to be unwrapped. We saw from the Bible account that Jesus also was wrapped in the same way. So Jesus is completely wrapped from head to toe, including being bound hand and foot. And the spices used included myrrh which is a very sticky gum resin. If Jesus wasn't raised from the dead, then who came in, rolled the stone away, didn't wake anyone up, unwrapped and then rewrapped the clothes perfectly behind with 75 pounds of sticky spices being all over the place? And then carry the naked body out past the guards...??? Or, Jesus himself trying to get out of the clothes himself?



Try getting out of
this one?



The Swoon Theory

This theory states that Jesus never died but became unconscious, and then once in the tomb, woke up and left the tomb.

It disregards the fact that all four of the Gospel accounts testify to the fact of Jesus' death on the cross. (Matthew 27:50, Mark 15:37, Luke 23:46, John 19:30, 33).

It also doesn't take into account many proofs to the contrary:

Mark 15:44-45

Pilate was surprised to hear that he was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked him if Jesus had already died. ⁴⁵ When he learned from the centurion that it was so, he gave the body to Joseph.

Pilate was surprised that Jesus was already dead and was not satisfied until he learned from the centurion that Jesus was truly dead.

There is no way that these soldiers, who were professional killers, would have been mistaken that he was dead. Still, if he was so beaten that people thought he was dead, how could he have the strength to remove His own burial clothes, the stone, and come out secretly? This theory is false. The evidence from historical sources proves Jesus was indeed dead and did not come out of the tomb on his own.



Centurians Assurance
Blood and Water
John and others saw Christ dead

Jesus died at Calvary

Jesus did die, the Jews, disciples and Romans all agreed. Everyone saw and attested that He died. Hindus and Muslims say Jesus did not die and lived out the rest of his life in India or an Arab country – total nonsense.

Let's read Mark 15 (some we just read earlier) and see how one of the professional soldiers, a centurion, responded:

Mark 15:39-45

And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"
Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joseph, and Salome. In Galilee these women had followed him and cared for his needs. Many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem were also there. It was Preparation Day (that is, the day before the Sabbath). So as evening approached, Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Pilate was surprised to hear that he was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked him if Jesus had already died. When he learned from the centurion that it was so, he gave the body to Joseph.

Notice the centurion stated Jesus was dead and even went so far as to say he was the Son of God. This centurion had seen many people crucified. A horrible job, but his one job was to make sure that those who were crucified did not come down alive. He knew what a dead body looked like.

Not only did the centurion say he was dead. John also was an eyewitness.

John 19:30-35

When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.
Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe.

Questions:

What did John confirm in verses 30 and 35?

Why did they not break his legs like the others?

What did the soldier do instead of breaking his legs to ensure he was dead?

What came out of Jesus?

This only happens when someone has been dead long enough that when their lungs are pierced in an upright position, the lungs have filled up with water, and therefore burst out water and blood.

Again, the soldier was a trained killer and knew what dead meant. If he made a mistake, it was his life for the person he was in charge of.

Mark 15:15

Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

Question:

What did they do to Jesus before He was crucified?

Mark 15:21

A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross.

We see here that someone had to carry his cross, we know this because of another passage that says the reason why was because Jesus fell and couldn't carry it himself. So keep this in mind, Jesus was whipped and beaten so bad, that he falls trying to carry the wood piece of the cross.

Mark 15:25

It was nine in the morning when they crucified him.

So now Jesus is beaten and couldn't carry his own cross. We read earlier that he had been up all night facing false accusations and now has been crucified.

Then we saw that a trained soldier confirmed he was truly dead, to prove it he stabbed Jesus with a spear and instead of flinching, nothing but blood and water come out.

Does this sound like a guy who is just passed out? Also think of what we read earlier. He was completely wrapped for three days in linen, so much so, that people in that case can't unwrap themselves. Oh, and the two men that wrapped him in the linen for hours and then carried his body away didn't notice him moving or breathing.

Then even if he did wake up after all of this and did manage to unwrap himself after three days with no water, no food, beaten with open wounds, had a spear stuck into his side so he bled water and blood, Jesus would still have to move a large stone. How is he now, in this condition, going to roll away the stone from the other side? Then as he leaves, he wraps up the linen nicely and walks out past the guards unnoticed.

He's not.

So we see that Jesus' body was gone. It wasn't taken by the disciples, the Jews, grave robbers, or soldiers.

The Jews would have made it VERY SECURE. They had guards, a seal, and anyone who messed with it would have committed a serious crime against Rome. Extremely serious.

How did the tomb become empty? The Romans and the Jews didn't want it to happen, especially on the third day! All they had to do was show the body to stop all of Christianity.

Our faith in God, Christ, and the Bible is not a blind faith, but a faith based on evidence, on fact, assurance and truth. As John 8:32 says, "*we can KNOW the truth, and the truth will set us free.*" Let's live our lives confident of the fact that God is the Father and Creator of heaven and earth, that Jesus came to earth to save us of our sins, died, was buried and was resurrected on the third day so we can have assurance of eternal life, and that the Bible is God's word. The Bible is trustworthy to tell us how we are to live, to answer the questions of why am I here? What is my purpose? And, where will I go when I die?

You can know the truth, but there is a difference between a belief that and a belief in.

A belief **that**, is a belief that something is true.

A belief **in**, is a belief in something to the point you will change your life because of it.

May you decide to have a belief **in** Jesus knowing he is the Son of God.

In this series we have looked at six major foundations of evidence that the Bible is God's word and that Jesus is truly the Son of God.

Questions:

How has this series of lessons helped you understand the Bible?

Do you have any other questions in relation to the Bible being accurate, true and trustworthy?



How do we know the Bible is the Word of God as many other religions claim this too?
We can be confident the Bible is the Word of God because of the evidence.



1. Scientific Foreknowledge

- Quarantine: Leviticus 13:45-46
- Hand Washing and Sanitation: Numbers 19:11-12
- Soap/Purification: Numbers 19:1-7
- Food Consumption: Leviticus 11:3, 7-8, 9, 29-31, 32
- Paths in the Sea: Psalm 8:8
- Water Cycle: Ecclesiastes 1:7; Job 36:27-28

2. Predictive & Messianic Prophecy

- Fall of Tyre: Ezekiel 26:1-14, 19-21
- Fall of Babylon and Cyrus: Isaiah 13:1, 17, 19, 44:28, 45:1-4
- Genesis 3:15 and Luke 1:30-31, 35 – Jesus born of the seed of a woman
- Micah 5:2 and Matthew 2:1-5 – Where Jesus was born
- Isaiah 53:8-9 and Luke 23:32-33, 50-53 – Messiah died with thieves and buried with rich
- Matthew 26:14-16, 27:3-7 & Zechariah 11:13 – Price of Betrayal
- Matthew 27:35-36, 46 & Psalm 22:1,7-8, 16-18 – Jesus pierced and clothes divided and cast lots for

3. Outside Sources for Historicity of Jesus

- Thallus – c. 52 AD (Mark 15:33): Jesus' death at noon
- Cornelius Tacitus – born 52-54 AD: Nero burning of Rome
- Pliny the Younger – c. 112 AD: Letter on torture
- Suetonius – c. 120 AD: Christians expelled from Rome (Acts 18:1-2)
- Talmud: Jewish book: Writes of Jesus
- Josephus – c. 70AD Historian who wrote of Jesus

4. Archeological Evidence

- Hezekiah's Tunnel: 2 Kings 20:20
- Sennacherib's siege: 2 Kings 18:13, 19:32-37, 2 Chron. 32:1
- King David, King Hezekiah, Pontius Pilate, the Hittites
- Walls of Jericho: Joshua 6:20

5. Eyewitness Testimony

- 2 Peter 1:16 – Peter: we were eyewitnesses
- 1 John 1:1-3 – John: we have heard, seen, touched
- Luke 1:1-3 – Luke: eyewitnesses, carefully investigated
- Acts 1:1-3 – many convincing proofs
- Acts 2:22-23 – as you yourselves know
- Acts 26:24-28 –not done in a corner
- 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 – Paul: Peter the Twelve, 500 brothers, James

6. Miracles

- Known by others: Acts 2:22; John 11:40-48, 53, 12:9-11
- Importance of Resurrection: 1 Cor. 15:13-19; Romans 1:3-4
- Did Disciples Steal Body: Matthew 27:62-66; 28:11-15; Mark 16:4;
- Did Jews Steal Body: Matthew 27:62-66
- Did Grave Robbers Steal Body: John 19:38-42
- Did Jesus Really Die?
Look at the grave clothes: Mark 15:46; John 20:5-8; John 11:43-44; 19:40
Centurions Assurance/Pilates Confirmation: Mark 15:39-45
Witnesses, Confirmation of Death by spear: John 19:30-35
Jesus' injuries: Mark 15:15, 21, 25

Proving the Bible - Jesus' Resurrection

What Do You Think?



1. How do we know the Disciples did not take the body of Jesus?
2. How do we know the Guards or Romans did not take the body of Jesus?
3. How do we know the Jews did not take the body of Jesus?
4. How do we know that Jesus truly died?
5. How do we know that Jesus truly rose again?

Draw a Scene of the Tomb