

Attempts To Bury the Resurrection

A young girl lived near a spooky-looking cemetery and when going to the store, she had to follow a path that went through the cemetery. Yet the girl never seemed to be afraid, even when it was dark outside. When someone asked her if she was scared walking through the cemetery, she replied, “Oh, no, I am not scared, for my home is just beyond.”

Because Jesus Christ rose from the dead, Christians believe they have a home just beyond the cemetery and therefore have no need to fear it. Since he conquered death and lives again, they will also conquer death and live again.

Sadly, skeptics have offered several theories to “bury” the resurrection. One theory says that Jesus was not dead when they took him off the cross, he simply fainted. Then in the cool of the

tomb he revived and departed. Such reasoning is illogical for many reasons. (1) What are the chances that Joseph, Nicodemus, and the soldiers would all have been mistaken about his death? (2) How could a man who had been scourged and crucified have the energy to move a rock that usually took two or three men to move? It is inconceivable to think that a man who had his hands and feet pierced, not to mention his side punctured with a spear, could have the capability of doing such a thing. (3) What about the guards? How could this wounded man move the rock and escape without being noticed?

Another theory says that the disciples stole the body during the night. Like the previous theory, such reasoning is illogical. (1) What physical benefits would the disciples receive from stealing the body of Jesus and preaching that he was resurrected? That kind of preaching cost many of the disciples their freedom, their possessions, and even their lives. (2) What spiritual benefits would the disciples receive? If they were lying about the resurrection, they would be eternally punished by God. (3) What are the chances that the fearful disciples would suddenly have the courage to sneak by the guards and steal the body of their tortured leader? If they feared the Roman authorities while Jesus was living, wouldn't that fear increase after his horrific death? (4) It is foolish to think that the disciples could remove the massive rock and carry the body away without the guards noticing. (5) Can you imagine thieves taking the time to unwrap the grave clothes in the tomb? Surely they would have waited until they got to a secure place to do that. (6) If the disciples stole the body while the guards slept (Matt. 28:13), how could the guards have known that the disciples were responsible?

There are other theories as well. For instance, some say that the disciples did not really see Jesus resurrected but were hallucinating. That is not reasonable, however, since over 500 people saw him at once (1 Cor. 15:6). Can you imagine how much weight 500 witnesses would carry in a court of law? This is not to mention the other appearances recorded in Scripture.

These theories are weak attempts to deny the undeniable. The gospel accounts of what happened on that memorable morning are true. Jesus was raised! His spirit broke forth from the hadean realm and reunited with his body. His heart began to beat, his eyes began to blink, and his lungs began to fill with air. He sat up and walked out of the tomb never to die again.

If you are not a partaker of the blessed hope that Christians have through the resurrection, we urge you to believe and obey the gospel (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-5). Jesus lives!



Aaron Erhardt Village church of Christ