*Empty Tomb**

Matthew 27:57-66 (57) When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple:
(58) He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.
(59) And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,
(60) And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.
(61) And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.
(62) Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,
(63) Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.
(64) Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.
(65) Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can.
(66) So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.
The chief priests along with others in power, after having put so much effort into eliminating Jesus through deceit and false witnesses, found themselves being tackled by the truth again! The tomb was empty and the guards did not know where Jesus had gone. They only knew He was not there, for they had witnessed the Angel rolling the stone away and the tomb was empty. Turn to and read;
Matthew 28:1-7 (1) In the end of the sabbath, as it began to

dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.
(2) And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.
(3) His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:
(4) And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.
(5) And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.
(6) He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.
(7) And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.
Yet in spite of first hand knowledge, the guards accepted a bribe and they also became false witnesses at the request of the chief priests. The entire case against Jesus was built upon deceit and false witnesses both before and after His death.
Matthew 28:11-15 (11) Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.
(12) And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,
(13) Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.
(14) And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.
(15) So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.
There are "many infallible proofs" of the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, but the testimony of the empty tomb is the most conclusive of all. Jesus had been buried, with the

tomb sealed and guarded by a watch of Roman soldiers. Yet on the third day of His burial, on the morning of the first day of the week, the body was no longer there, and the empty tomb still stands today as an unanswerable proof that the Lord Jesus rose from the dead. There are other proofs, of course. The recorded appearances of the resurrected Christ to His disciples, the amazing change of demeanor of the disciples from that of fearful hideaways to fearless evangelists, the worldwide spread of the Christian faith founded on the death, burial and resurrection. Christ was even seen by more than five hundred people at the same time, undoubtedly the high priests must have known. Please turn to;

1Corinthians 15:1-4 (1) Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;
(2) By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.
(3) For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that **Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;**
(4) **And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures**:

Another compelling witness is that of Thomas. Apparently, like most of the disciples, Thomas had missed or refused to accept Christ's own warnings about His death. And in those somber days after Calvary, they certainly did not expect to see Him alive again. And then there were disciples on the road to Emmaus, for example, they had hoped Jesus of Nazareth would be the One to restore the nation of Israel (Luke 24:21). Even after these two encountered the resurrected Christ and reported their experiences to the other disciples they could hardly believe this wonderful turn of events. Their doubt soon evaporated into joy, not merely because their beloved Lord had risen from the dead. Others had seen and heard the resurrected Christ, but Thomas had missed out on this

momentous event (John 20:24). Thomas responded by demanding no less, but such a demand was an expression of weakness. Yes, the renewed faith of the other disciples was based on direct, physical evidence, but why could Thomas not trust the testimony of his closest friends? Christ's response was to appear again for Thomas' sake. Thomas had the opportunity to touch the wounds and made the supreme confession: My Lord and my God (John 20:28). *The story does not end there. Christ went on to teach this vital lesson:* Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed; (John 20:29). *If Christianity was to succeed, people would have to put their faith in a well-reasoned belief that Christ was raised from the dead. The testimony of the witnesses as recorded in Scripture would have to be a critical part of that belief. Immediately following the incident with Thomas, John wrote:* These things have been written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; (John 20:31). *Jesus dealt with Thomas' doubt, for all time. Doubt is a human weakness, but it is a serious matter when it affects one's faith. That Thomas and the other disciples could doubt* ***serves as a warning to us****. From our vantage point, they had every reason to be faithful, and yet they struggled with unbelief. Christians must be able to recognize doubt within themselves so that they can make the same good confession as the apostle Thomas. Doubt, left unresolved, can cause serious problems for a Christian—especially a young Christian. God holds each of us responsible—individually—for addressing the cause of our doubt, and for seeking a remedy based upon the word of God so that doubt does not prevent us from doing what faith requires. This is especially true for young people today, who are exposed to atheism, political correctness, evolution, situation ethics, and numerous other false concepts at an almost non-stop pace. Our children and grandchildren need to be exposed to, and understand, the vast amount of irrefutable*

evidence upon which biblical faith is based. They need to know that biblical faith is not a "leap into the dark," but is gleaned through testimony based upon reliable evidence. They need to know that Christianity is not a "pie-in-the-sky-by-and-by" type of belief, but rather a commitment deeply rooted in Biblical fact and verified historical evidences. There was a time when faith and sight went together. That is to say, at one time in history, men walked by faith because of sight as witnessed in John chapter 20. However, eventually followers of Jesus possessed a faith in Him that was not based upon sight, but instead upon such things as credible testimony, deduction, and revelation. Today, Christians can have a genuine faith without ever having seen Jesus, please turn to;

1Peter 1:7-9 (7) That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:
(8) **Whom having not seen**, ye love; in whom, **though now ye see him not**, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:
(9) Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

All of us believe in people, places, and events that we never have seen personally, yet that does not diminish their factuality. Nor does the absence of "sight" weaken the faith routinely produced via credible testimony from people of the past who did witness such things. Truly, one may "walk by faith, not by sight," and still possess knowledge-based faith. One can be sure of the fact, ***"the empty tomb",*** *where Christ had lain because of Biblical and historical evidence beginning with the truthfulness of Mary Magdalene, turn with me to;*

Luke 24:10-11 (10) It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles.

(11) And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.

Even tho the empty tomb is conclusive proof that Jesus had risen, some doubt that Jesus ever existed. You may find this surprising, but there are many people in the world today who actually think that Jesus is nothing more than a fantasy figure that various secret societies created 2,000 years ago. Alleging His name belongs in the same fictional writings that contain such characters as Hercules, Thor or Zeus. Gerald Massey, in his book, Gnostic and Historic Christianity*, has written that "whether considered as the God made human, or as man made divine, this character [Jesus] never existed as a person" (1985, p. 22). Skeptics like Massey and others believe Christians have been deceived into thinking there really was a man named Jesus, even though the New Testament proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that Jesus actually lived, it is by no means the only historical evidence available. Around the year A.D. 94, a Jewish historian by the name of Josephus mentioned Jesus' name twice in his book,* Antiquities of the Jews. *In section 18 of that work, Josephus wrote:* "And there arose about this time Jesus, a wise man, if indeed we should call him a man; for he was a doer of marvelous deeds, a teacher of men who receive the truth with pleasure." *Then, in section 20, Josephus documented how a man named Ananus brought before the Sanhedrin* "a man named James, the brother of Jesus who was called the Christ." *About 20 years later, Tacitus, a Roman historian, wrote a book surveying the history of Rome. In it he described how Nero (the Roman emperor) "punished with every refinement the notoriously depraved Christians (as they were popularly called)." He went on to write that "their originator, Christ, had been executed in Tiberius' reign by the governor of Judea, Pontius Pilate" (Annals 15:44). Even though Tacitus, Josephus, and other historians from the first and second centuries A.D. were not followers of Christ, they did have something to say about*

Him—and they even verified that Jesus was a real person who was so famous that He even attracted the attention of the Roman emperor himself! Another obvious reason to believe that Jesus was a real person is because our entire dating method is based upon His existence. The letters "B.C." stand for "before Christ," and the letters "A.D." (standing for Anno Domini) mean "in the year of the Lord." So when a history teacher speaks of Alexander the Great ruling much of the world in 330 B.C., he or she is admitting that Alexander lived about 330 years before Jesus was born. But even this dating system is changing in an attempt to discredit Christ and His word. Modern dating is B.C.E., which means before the common era and C.E. means common era. Anti-Christ is at work!! When Peter stood up to preach on the Day of Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ, the basis of his sermon rested on the fact that Jesus died, was buried, and rose again on the third day. In order to silence Peter, and stop a mass conversion, the Jewish leaders needed simply to produce the body of Christ. Why were the Jewish leaders reluctant to take the short walk to the garden and produce the body? Simply because they could not! The tomb was empty! The Priests knew it and tried to explain it away, the apostles knew it and preached it boldly in the city of Jerusalem, and thousands of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and visitors knew it and converted to Christianity, turn with me to;

Acts 2:32-38 (32) **This Jesus hath God raised up**, whereof we all are witnesses.
(33) Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.
(34) For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,
(35) Until I make thy foes thy footstool.
(36) Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that

God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.
(37) Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?
(38) Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.
Jesus has exhibited far more evidence validating His deity than any reasonable person could demand. His life was prophesied in minute detail hundreds of years before He was born, He accomplished miracles that supported the prophesies, He foretold His own death and resurrection, He showed Himself alive to many witnesses after His resurrection, and ascended to Heaven in the sight of many witnesses as He culminated His earthly ministry. Another evidence is that of Jacob, listen to this; The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be; (Genesis 49:10). *Interestingly, the scepter remained in place even while the Jews were in captivity under both the Babylonians, the Medes and the Persians. It even remained in place for a time under Roman captivity—until the Emperor instituted procurators. When that occurred, even first-century Jews recognized the departure of the scepter because the Romans, about A.D. 11, took away the Jews' right to administer capital punishment. One Jewish teacher, Rabbi Rachmon, put the situation in these terms:* "When the members of the Sanhedrin found themselves deprived of their right over life and death, a general dismay took possession of them; they covered their heads with ashes, and their bodies with sackcloth, exclaiming: Woe unto us, for the scepter has departed from Judah, and the Messiah has not come." *When the members of the Sanhedrin found that they could not put Jesus to death themselves, but instead had to request, Pontius Pilate, the Roman procurator to do so on*

their behalf (Luke 23:24), they should have known that the Messiah was in their midst, for that was Jacob's exact prophecy!
Yet the Jews ignored the voice of God and demanded the death sentence for His only begotten Son. Woe to those today who ignore the many evidences God has provided concerning the deity of His precious Son, Jesus Christ! Woe to those today who ignore the many evidences of the empty tomb. When the tombs of our family, friends and loved ones become empty including our own, then what? Please turn to;
Revelation 20:11-15 (11) And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.
(12) And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.
(13) And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.
(14) And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.
(15) And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.
The Lord's tomb 'empty' means one thing, A Christians seat 'empty' at the Lord's day assembly means something else. That missing occupant was not there to praise God in song, was not there to join with the assembly in prayer, was not there to joyfully give of ones means, and was not there to join in the memorial of the Lord's death. Why was that person not there? Could it have been the lust of the flesh?, or the lust of the eyes?, or the pride of life? Reasons that will not stand up in the spiritual court of law. If ones reason is only an excuse it will not hold up. I have bought a farm and I need to check it

out. I have bought a tractor and I need to try it out. I have gotten married and we cannot come. These are things people do in life, but are not to be used as an excuse to miss the assembling of themselves together. One can check it out, try it out or plan a honeymoon for another time, but do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together. I am persuaded that neither tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword can prevent the faithful from assembling ourselves together. All reasons for excuse pale in comparison. The time may come that the faithful cannot assemble openly, but they will still assemble somewhere, somehow, looking for that great day when the Lord shall come for His own; So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation (Heb 9:28). *It is not who you are, or where you have been, it is where you are going that counts and it is an eternal decision based upon faith that cometh by hearing the word of God. Faith in Christ is the effect of belief and baptism is the effect of faith. Do you believe? Do you have faith? Have you repented? If so, please come and confess that Jesus is the Son of God and then be baptized into Him for remission of your sins. The spirit and the bride say come. If one is in need of prayer for other reasons, the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. The Spirit and the bride say, come.*

This message approved by
Jack Warford
a minister for Christ

‘Empty Tomb’ Revised; 02122020
Study Aids; Impact of the Empty Tomb: by Henry M. Morris, Ph.D.
Instutite of Creation Research
Out With Doubt: by Bert Thompson, Ph.D.
Apologetics Press :: Reason & Revelation
What Happens to Faith When We Doubt?: by Trevor Major
Apologetics Press :: Reason & Revelation
Apologetics Press :: Bible Bullets
A Messiah WHO “Sneaks” Into History? by Kyle Butt

This message presented to; BaronOk-Jan2011/RinggoldTx-July2016/ PineMtAr.-July2016/PleasentViewOk-July2016/ WestvilleOk-Aug2016/

Can We Prove Jesus Was a Real Person? by Eric Lyons, M.Min.

You may find this surprising, but there are many people in the world today who actually think that Jesus is nothing more than a fantasy figure that various secret societies created 2,000 years ago. Allegedly, His name belongs in the same fictional writings that contain such fairy-tale characters as Peter Pan, Hercules, and Snow White and the seven dwarfs. Gerald Massey, in his book, Gnostic and Historic Christianity, has "informed" us that "[w]hether considered as the God made human, or as man made divine, this character [Jesus—EL] never existed as a person" (1985, p. 22). Skeptics like Massey, Acharya (1999), and others believe that Christians have been deceived into thinking that there really was a man named Jesus, when, in fact, He never lived.

How do those of us who believe in the historicity of Jesus Christ respond to such allegations? Can we really know that there was a sinless, miracle-working, death-defying man named Jesus who lived upon the Earth approximately 2,000 years ago, or have we accepted His existence blindly?

Even though the New Testament proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that Jesus actually lived, it is by no means the only historical evidence available. Around the year A.D. 94, a Jewish historian by the name of Josephus mentioned Jesus' name twice in his book, Antiquities of the Jews. In section 18 of that work, Josephus wrote: "And there arose about this time Jesus, a wise man, if indeed we should call him a man; for he was a doer of marvelous deeds, a teacher of men who receive the truth with pleasure" (emp. added). Then, in section 20, Josephus documented how a man named Ananus brought before the Sanhedrin "a man named James, the brother of Jesus who was called the Christ, and certain others" (emp. added).

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Even though this is only a sampling of the evidence relating to the man known as Jesus, it is enough to prove that He was a real person, and not just some imaginary character. We do not accept His existence blindly—it is a historical fact!

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Lawsuit over Jesus by Eric Lyons, M.Min.

As the creation-evolution debate rages in courtrooms throughout America, and while lawsuits are being filed continually in objection to various visible vestiges of America's Christian heritage, one court case in Viterbo, Italy is drawing worldwide attention. Atheist Luigi Cascioli is suing Catholic priest Enrico Righi for teaching that Jesus lived on Earth 2,000 years ago. Cascioli contends that Righi and the Catholic church have deceived many people by teaching that Jesus was a real historical person who actually lived in Palestine during the first century. After Judge Mautone initially refused to hear the case, his decision was overruled in December 2005 by the Court of

Appeal, “which agreed that Signor Cascioli had a reasonable case for his accusation that Father Righi was ‘abusing popular credulity’” by teaching the historicity of Jesus (Owen, 2006). Righi has now been ordered to appear in court “to prove that Jesus Christ existed” (Owen).

A mountain of evidence exists for the reality of Christ (none more important than the historical, inspired New Testament documents), and yet skeptics continue to allege that he is merely a figment of our imagination, and/or has been confused with one of several “known” historical persons from the first century. If skeptics and atheists are now going to take “Jesus” to court (which should not concern Christians in view of the evidence supporting His historicity), perhaps those same individuals will be consistent and put their beloved theory of evolution on trial. After all, evolutionary science professors worldwide teach students the “fact” that the Universe is the product of a Big Bang, yet no one has ever proven such to be the case. (In reality, a growing number of scientists are beginning to reject this explanation for the origin of the Universe—see Harrub, 2005). What’s more, students are repeatedly taught that life came from non-living chemicals billions of years ago, even though no one has ever witnessed spontaneous generation take place, and the law of biogenesis flatly contradicts this theory. The fact that Cascioli’s case has reached this far is a sad commentary on today’s society. The fact that the unproven theory of evolution continues to get a free pass among “enlightened” skeptics who (allegedly) want only “the facts,” is also telling.

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