

**The Empty Tomb needs a necessary Explanation:
Some simple thoughts on the Empty Tomb**

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the be-all and end-all of the Christian faith. If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, all bishops, priests, and Christian ministers should go home and get honest jobs, and all the Christian faithful might as well go/stay home. As Paul himself put it: "If Jesus is not raised from the dead, our preaching is in vain and we are the most pitiable of men."

It's no good, of course, trying to explain the resurrection away or rationalize it as a myth, a symbol, or an inner subjective experience. None of that does justice to the sheer strangeness of the Biblical message.

-For example: The soldiers letting the body disappear?

-The similar but not exact Gospel accounts – Police, Military, Civilian Investigators will all tell you, if sets of witnesses have identical stories: then they have most likely been coached, and are probably not telling the truth.

— St. John Chrysostom – wrote in a 4th century Easter homily:

When [Mary] came and said these things, the apostles heard them and drew near to the tomb with great eagerness. They see the linen clothes lying there, which was a sign of the resurrection. **For if they had removed the body, they would not have stripped it first, nor, if any had stolen it, would they have taken the trouble to remove the napkin and roll it up and lay it in a place by itself apart from the linens. They would have taken the body as it was.**

Therefore, John tells us by anticipation that it was buried with much myrrh, which glues linen to the body. He tells us this so that when you hear that the napkin lay apart from the linens, you may not endure those who say that he was stolen. For a thief would not have been so foolish as to expend so much effort on a trifling detail.

So awed were they by the resurrection—and you can sense it in every book and letter of the New Testament—that they awaited the imminent arrival of the new state of affairs, the return of Jesus and the establishment of God's kingdom. The timid Apostles are transformed to men of great strength and courage – enough that most imitated Christ by the giving of their lives – what in the world happened that was so extraordinary?

It comes down finally to this: if Jesus was not raised from death, Christianity is a fraud and a joke. But if he did rise from death, then Christianity is the fullness of God's revelation, and Jesus must be the absolute center of our lives. There is no third option. **-The Christian church should have died with Jesus.**

The hope - He continually intercedes for us before the Father and by His wounds/strikes we are healed. (Isaiah)...

-NT Wright studied the various accounts of the resurrection.

-Many have come to a belief in Jesus' bodily resurrection studying the nuances.

-No plausible explanation for the behavior of the apostles (before and after).

-It cannot be folklore, a fable, or myth – because the time frame isn't long enough for these to develop.

*****Sometimes in Scripture studies – we need a Necessary Explanation where none can be found...IN Other words the behavior, actions, or story makes no sense unless we have a valid answer – IN the case of the Empty Tomb we have no valid explanation.**

In the 1st centuries of the Church people were willing to give their lives for this gift. The early church was not seen as cool in the culture of that day. Sound familiar? Yet many wanted to join this church – WHY?

-The soldiers, the Jewish Elders, The Roman Leaders were all aware of the myth of the resurrection, so they needed to guard the tomb with their lives to squash this new pesky religion – Yet the tomb was found empty.

**-So Rome & Jewish Elders said the Apostles snuck in and stole the body.
-So the Romans soldiers fell asleep and allowed the theft. Hmmm**

-& The Apostles weren't going to gain fame, riches, and notoriety like the 80's TV Evangelists so why perpetuate a myth/Lie – Why steal the body when there is literally nothing to gain by doing this?

-The Early Christians revered their dead as Sacred. And they held on to the original remains as Sacred – Eg., Cross, Peter & Paul – Why didn't they keep the remains of Jesus – Needs Necessary Explanation??

-History reports that the 1st Apostles were scared and timid at the cross – many running away – but later were willing to give their lives to participate in this ancient church - “What changed them?”

– Our Easter Readings speak of the EYEWITNESSES.

-These Christians knew they could be persecuted for the name of Jesus but they were ok with that – What changed them?

-The early Christians who saw the empty tomb, and then the thousands who saw the risen Christ. They proclaimed the Holy Name of Jesus – Acts of the Apostles said they added to the numbers of the early Catholic Church - Thousands were Baptized and Confirmed. Road to Emmaus Story...

-Eyewitnesses: they saw Jesus & then received what they saw.

-Today we receive this same Jesus in the Sacraments.

-Today we follow these courageous Christians and continue to be strengthened by these same sacraments of (Baptism, Eucharist, and today – Confirmation).