

Easter 2024: The Resurrection God's Stamp of approval

John 20:8

- As we celebrate Easter all over the world the resurrection story is being told in Churches throughout the world, it's a wonderful testimony of God's faithfulness. From the very beginning there have been attempts to silence those who would tell the resurrection story but despite the incredible opposition, God has seen fit for people around the world to hear how His Son conquered both death and the grave on that first Easter Morning.
- I want to look back to before that first Easter morning, when those who were afraid of Jesus and His teachings came to the ruling power in Jerusalem Pontious Pilate and asked if he would increase security to make sure that none of Jesus disciples come and steal his body away claiming that he had risen from the dead, for in doing so the last deception would be greater than the first deception (speaking of everyone who believed in Him) they said.
- **Math 27:63-66** so Pilate headed their council, by making sure the stone was secure, sealing it with Caesars seal, so that if anyone broke it they would now be under a death sentence, and increased security placing an all night guard detail for good measure. **V63** made sure we understand that those who requested this, did so with complete clarity as to what they were trying to prevent, they didn't believe and therefore didn't want others to believe that it was even remotely possible that Jesus could rise from the dead.
- It's the same way today, people have developed all kinds of theories to discredit the resurrection, from saying His body was stolen, to he really wasn't dead on the cross, therefore He resuscitated Himself and walked out of the tomb, even naming it the swoon theory. As we'll see when you study scripture, and all of the information presented by it, what is disproved are all these theories saying He didn't rise from the dead.
- Lets look at the theory could his disciples have stolen Jesus body, scripture says that the Pilate, the Pharisees, and the guards all made sure that the tomb was secure, placing the Stone at its entrance, history tells us that typically a stone like this would have weighed at least **2** tons, and without modern technology it would have taken several men to move the stone from the entrance just to get in to take the body out of it.
- Now here's the interesting part if that is the case how could several people grunting, pushing and pulling, go unseen by guards who have an all night rotation detail? Remember who's life depended upon them not allowing Jesus body to be taken, in fact in Roman Law a soldier who allowed his prisoner to escape not only died but also his family would be executed as well, so we know these men would never willingly allow this to happen.

- **Math 28:2-6**- says they didn't willingly allow this, an Angel came and rolled the stone away, and he spoke to the ladies who came to the tomb early Sunday Morning letting them know that Jesus is no longer there but has risen, and he shows them where Jesus once laid.
- **V4** says the guards were there witnessing this miraculous event, and they just stood there like dead men because of fear. In **Math 28:7-8** the ladies are told to go and tell the other disciples that Jesus is alive and no longer in the grave and as they go look who meets them "**The Lord**" and He has the same message for them that the Angels gave > "**go and tell My brethren**" I love how the Lord calls us His brothers even though we are His servants.
- **Math 28:11-15** interestingly the guards also go and tell but their message is to people who didn't want to hear it (the religious rulers), and after hearing what had happened, instead of falling down in worship, they invent a lie and pay the guards to spread it throughout the city. They also tell them they will make sure that they won't get into any trouble with their superiors for Jesus walking out of the tomb, Wow! That was the hold that they had on the guards who were still afraid of losing their lives and having their families executed.
- That takes away the theory of Jesus being stolen, what about Him resuscitating Himself? **Jn 20:1-5** once word came from Mary Magdalene we read that John and Peter ran to the tomb to see, and I love how John refers to himself as "**the disciple whom Jesus loved**", he also tells us that he outran Peter to the tomb. When John got there he doesn't run immediately into the tomb but stoops down and takes a peep, he didn't know what he would find, Mary and the ladies encountered Angels so John is a little cautious at first, who can blame him.
- **Jn 20:6-8** although John beat Peter to the tomb it was Peter who first went inside of it, and notice what they saw, only Jesus grave clothes, some of which is neatly folded in place. Now if Jesus had resuscitated Himself would He have left the tomb fully naked? That would have drawn a lot of unwanted attention for someone Who was trying to sneak away from guards don't you think. What I like is John says it wasn't the empty tomb initially that caused him to believe but seeing the empty grave clothes as well, then he says that's when he believed **V8**.
- As I read this I thought all of us are different and it takes certain things that others might not need in order for us to whole heartedly give ourselves over to something or someone. For John it was the empty tomb with the empty grave clothes, as **Jn 20:9** says they hadn't yet understood that scripture prophesied that Jesus would rise from the dead, we know because we have read the gospels and then the Prophets, but the disciples had not yet come to that spiritual understanding, but now it is beginning to unfold itself to them.
- Later Jesus showed Himself to the rest of the disciples and they all believed, but Thomas wasn't there and instead of taking the others word for it he said unless he can see the nail prints in His hands and feet he will not believe > **Jn 20:25**. What does Jesus do he shows him His hands and feet and tells him to touch Him and that's when doubting Thomas becomes believing Thomas and falls down and says "**My Lord and My God**" > **Jn 20:26-28**.

- That is what it took for Thomas to believe, for others it will take something else, whatever it is The Lord meet us where we are, and for us living today, although we haven't personally seen The stone moved, the grave empty, the soldiers gone, we believe and Jesus calls us blessed for it > **Jn 20:29**. Whatever circumstance or situation it took that brought you to the realization that Jesus is alive and rose from the dead so that you may live Praise God for it!