

Heart of the Matter

## *The Empty Tomb*

**Brad Harrub**

*Having looked in the tearful eyes of parents whose children have abandoned the Faith, I have learned there are a million miles between our children “going through the motions” in reference to the spiritual lives versus our children possessing hearts that dictate their actions. In this column, I plan to share with you what I hope to instill in the hearts of my children and those whom I love.*

Every year thousands of Muslims make a pilgrimage to Mecca to the tomb of Muhammad. Likewise, followers of Confucianism visit the grave of Confucius in Qufu, Shandong Province of China. Similarly, the Temple of the Tooth or “Dalada Maligawa” is believed to house some of the cremated ashes of Buddha. Having been buried centuries ago, the physical bodies of these religious founders are slowly turning to dust as millions journey to pay honor and respect.

Christianity is unique in that we serve a risen Savior. There are no remains to which to pilgrimage. Our Savior Jesus Christ fully conquered death. For those skeptics who vehemently cling to naturalistic causes for everything, the bodily resurrection of Jesus seems ludicrous. They laugh at the very notion. Yet, what does the evidence prove?

**Here’s what I intend on teaching my children about the resurrection.**

**Everything** hinges on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, “And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen your faith is futile; you are still in your sins” (1 Corinthians 15:14-17). Simply put, if Jesus could not make it out of the tomb, we don’t have any hope.

When you consider the resurrection, ask yourself first and foremost: **Who moved the stone?** Make no doubt about it, the individuals living at that time took ample measure to make sure the tomb was secure. The chief priests and Pharisees spoke to Pilate and said, “Sir we remember while He was still alive, how that deceiver said ‘After three days I will rise.’ Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away” (Matthew 27:63-64). We learn from Matthew’s account that the stone in front of the tomb was sealed and a guard was assigned to watch the tomb (27:65-66).

And yet, even with all of this preparation, the tomb was found empty. Logic tells us that if the Jews took the body, they would have paraded it all around town denouncing the notion that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. If they really knew where the body was, it would have surfaced not long after the crucifixion. Likewise, if the disciples took the body then they would have known for certain that the resurrection was a hoax. Not only did they preach about the bodily resurrection of Jesus, but many went to their deaths in proclaiming it. Who would go to his own death perpetuating a lie? A stranger off the street would not have taken it for fear of the guard and breaking the seal—besides what use would the body have been to a stranger? None of these options is logical—and yet the tomb remains empty.

I have come to regard the resurrection as probably the best “Christian evidence” material in existence. Scholars who don’t believe in the Bible will concede that a man named Jesus walked the earth and was crucified. We have ancient historical writings that serve as evidence for these events. But how can one explain away the empty tomb? Again, who rolled away the stone? How was it that Saul—who would later become the apostle Paul—was so utterly convinced of the resurrection? Additionally, why would thousands of religious people change their day of worship from the Sabbath (Saturday—Exodus 20:8, Exodus 31:15-19) to the first day of the week (Sunday—Acts 6:7; 21:20). Finally, why would thousands of Jews be pricked in their hearts on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) if it were merely a hoax?

Jesus conquered death. This exciting fact gives meaning to every aspect of our modern-day worship. We now have a mediator through which we can pray. It gives meaning to the Lord’s Supper that we observe on the first day of the week. The truth that Jesus came out of the grave gives Christians the hope that we too will one day spend eternity with Him! Study the resurrection, for it will certainly strengthen your faith.

Love,

Dad