

## “What Have They Done With His Body?”

John 20:1-18

### DO WE BELIEVE BECAUSE OF EVIDENCE OR BECAUSE OF FAITH?

**1. The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ for our sins is the cornerstone of the Christian faith.**

- And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. 1 Corinthians 15:17
- If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. 1 Corinthians 15:19

**2. By necessity, believing in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is a matter of faith.**

- Faith is necessary for salvation. Ephesians 2:8-9
- Faith is necessary because we are separated from these events by time, culture, and language.

**3. At the same time, there is an abundance of historical evidence to support the resurrection of Jesus Christ.**

### ‘THEY HAVE TAKEN HIM AWAY’ – THE MYTH OF THE STOLEN BODY

**1. Who would want to ‘steal’ Jesus’ dead body out of the tomb—and what would be their motive?**

- The Roman government or soldiers? They had nothing to gain initially by stealing Jesus’ body.
- The Jewish leaders? They could have produced his corpse to disprove his resurrection.
- People who wanted to desecrate His body? They would have publicly displayed it.

**2. The tomb was guarded by soldiers. Matthew 27:62-66**

- The Roman punishment for failing on guard duty was death. Ref. Acts 12:18-19

**3. The graveclothes were still in the tomb and left folded. John 20:5-7**

- Burial practices in that culture at that time included wrapping the body with linens. John 19:39 (75 pounds!)
- Why would people stealing Jesus’ body unwrap it, then fold the linens before they left?

**4. Would the disciples have taken Jesus’ body to begin a ‘legend’ that He did, in fact, rise from the dead?**

- 10 of the 11 remaining disciples ended up being killed for their faith (only John was not martyred).
- Many people have died for religious fanaticism—but how many have died for what they knew was false?

**5. When did the myth of the stolen body begin?**

- Matthew (28:11-15) says the Jewish religious leaders made up the myth immediately following the resurrection.

*<sup>11</sup> While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. <sup>12</sup> And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers <sup>13</sup> and said, “Tell people, ‘His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.’ <sup>14</sup> And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.” <sup>15</sup> So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day.*

- And—in a different way—it was in the mind of Mary Magdalene. John 20: 2,13,15

### ENCOUNTERING THE RESURRECTED JESUS—MARY MAGDALE’S STORY

**1. Mary Magdalen’s experiences with Jesus.**

- She was one of the women who accompanied Jesus and his disciples in their ministry. Luke 8:3
- Jesus had freed her from seven demons. Luke 8:2
- She personally witnessed the crucifixion. Matthew 27:55-56; Mark 15:40; John 19:25
- She accompanied Jesus’ body to the tomb—and watched the stone rolled over the entrance. Matthew 27:61

**2. The morning of the resurrection.**

- Mary Magdalene and a small group of women went to anoint Jesus’ body. Luke 23:55-24:3
- Mary Magdalene was the first witness to see the resurrected Jesus. John 20:14

→ Why are you weeping?

- Mary Magdalene saw Jesus—but at first didn’t see that it was him.

**For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.**

**For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.**

**1 Corinthians 15:21-22**