

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for November 6, 1988

Resurrection of Jesus
Part 3
Matthew 28:11-15
Dale Whitehead

Introduction: The greatest attempt to cover up the truth in history

1 Corinthians 15:12-19 tells us how futile our faith would be if Christ had not been resurrected. Matthew shows us the attempt by the chief priests to hide the fact that Jesus did rise from the dead.

The Setting: After Christ's resurrection the guard at the tomb (the Jewish temple police) had encountered the angel and became terrified. We assume they fled the tomb. "Some" of the guard reported their experience to the chief priests in Jerusalem. While we would expect honest leaders to launch an investigation, the chief priests were evil men and responded by gathering the Sanhedrin together (**Matthew 28:12**).

The Plot: The chief priests did not want this story to be spread; they wanted to suppress it. If they were interested in the truth they would have questioned and investigated but instead they bribe the guards with a large sum of money and instruct them with what to say, that the disciples had stolen the body while they were asleep.

The Contradiction: If the guards were in fact asleep it would be impossible for them to know if the disciples or anyone else stole the body or if it was in fact a resurrection.

A Better Story: It would be more logical to say the disciples came and overpowered the guards and stole the body. However, there was no evidence a fight or any injuries sustained by the disciples.

Result of the Plot: The soldiers took the money and spread the story widely. Even 35 years afterward, when Matthew wrote his Gospel, the story persisted. Justin Martyr over 100 years later notes that the story is still being told.

Decision: To believe the disciples or the Roman guard

- There were over 500 eyewitnesses to the resurrection (**1 Corinthians 15:1-10**).
- You simply cannot explain the behavior of the disciples later unless Jesus had indeed risen from the dead.

The resurrection is the greatest apologetic.

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