

# How an Empty Tomb Can Fill Our Lives

## Easter April 5, 2015

### Pastor Jon Haakana

Throughout the Lenten season in our midweek worship services we looked at the alternate theories proposed by unbelievers and skeptics regarding the resurrection of our Lord. We heard those theories proposed to us by men known to us as Alan the Atheist, Sr. & Jr. Today, you heard Alan Jr. with a hint of doubt in his voice as he is starting to believe that there is only 1 theory that makes any real sense.

Clarence Hall writes, "Easter says you can put truth in a grave, but it won't stay there." So, let's look at the Biblical account of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus, and see how it is the only proposal that makes any real sense, and we will see how an empty tomb can truly fill our lives.

Mt.28:5-6 -- "The angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said.'"

**WHAT THE RESURRECTION REALLY MEANS FOR US...4 things:** Jesus does what He says He'll do; Jesus is who He says He is; Jesus' power is greater than any obstacle; and, life after death is real because of Jesus and what He really did for us on that first Easter morning.

#### 1) **JESUS DOES WHAT HE SAYS HE'LL DO.**

Mt.28:6 - "He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said." Jn.2:22 - "So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this; and they believed...the word which Jesus had spoken." So, let's look at some more words of Scripture...

a) **Jesus Clearly Was Dead.** Jn.19:33 - "...when (the soldiers) saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs, but one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water."

The coroner of the day, the centurion who was assigned a detail of men to guarantee that the three men hanging on crosses that day did die as their sentences demanded, twice signed off on the fact that Jesus was, officially, dead. Pilate...Joseph of Arimathea...the soldiers went around to break the legs of those who were on the cross so that the victims would no longer be able to push themselves up and gasp for air, determined that Jesus was already dead. Just to be sure, one of the soldiers plunged a spear/sword up into Jesus' chest cavity, puncturing His heart...blood AND water.

So, nope. No "swoon theory" possible, as we discovered this Lenten season. Jesus really did die. Oh, by the way, to believe that Jesus didn't really die but emerged later, you would have

to believe some pretty bizarre stuff: nothing to eat or drink since Thursday night...wrapped in cloths with a 100 #s of spices...muscles were shredded from His beating ...bleeding for hours and a spear thrust in His side...but somehow managed to resuscitate, roll away a large stone, overpower the guards...walk 7 miles and appear as a risen victor. It actually takes more faith to believe THAT theory than it does to believe the claims of Scripture, that Jesus really did rise from the dead.

**b) He Was Placed in Joseph's Tomb.**

Mt.27:59-60 - "And Joseph took (Jesus') body...and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the entrance of the tomb and went away."

The "wrong tomb" theory is laughable...the ladies...the guards...Joseph of Arimathea. And, to believe this wacky "wrong tomb" theory, you would have to believe that the angel of the Lord also was in error and went to the wrong tomb...He DIDN'T say, "He is not here...he's over there! Instead, what he told them was, "He is not here, he is RISEN!"

**c) No One Stole the Body.** Mt.28:12-13 - "...the (chief priests) gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, and said, 'You are to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.' And if this should come to the governor's ears, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble.'"

To believe this, we must examine WHO would have stolen Jesus' body...The soldiers?...The disciples?...The religious leaders?

**d) But He Definitely Rose Again.** Mt.28:5-6 -- "The angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said.'" We began this Lenten season with words from the Apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 15: "If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is our faith."

The only plausible, logical conclusion is simple. If Jesus really did die, no one stole the body, and the resurrection account occurred at the right tomb, there is no other explanation other than HE DID IT! However, there are two other additional proofs of His resurrection that we need to remember...

**e) Hundreds Saw Him Alive.** 1Cor.15:5-6 - "...He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time."

In a courtroom, a case can be settled on the testimony of only ONE eye-witness. No testimony carries more weight than an eye-witness. In Jesus' case there were at least 500 eye-witnesses to the fact that He was alive after He had died.

f) **The Disciples Became Bold.** Ac.4:19-20 - "But Peter and John answered, 'we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.'"

One of the assurances of Easter is that Jesus is that since Jesus always does what He says He'll do, it's important for us to look at some of the things **Jesus promises US as believers this day...**

a) **Forgiveness and a Fresh Start.** 1Jn.1:9 - "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

b) **Peace amid Chaos.** Mt.11:28,30 - "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest...For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

c) **Purpose and Joy.** Jn.15:11 - "These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you..."

d) **Eternal Life with Him.** Rom.6:23 - "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

## 2) **JESUS IS WHO HE SAYS HE IS.**

Jn.11:25 - "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life;'" Jn.14:6 - "Jesus said to her, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.'"

He is more than merely a good man...more than a prophet or teacher...more than a miracle worker.

## 3) **JESUS' POWER IS GREATER THAN ANY OBSTACLE.**

1Cor.15:55-56 - "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? ...thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Ph.4:13 - "for I can do all things through Christ, Who is my strength."

If Jesus handled death, the greatest obstacle of all, I can trust that His power is greater than...Any financial problems I might incur. Any marital problems that develop. Any parental difficulties I might experience. Any relationship issues I might have to deal with. Any sin I've ever committed.

## 4) **LIFE AFTER DEATH IS REAL.**

Jn.11:25 - "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies.'"

Rom.6:5 - "If we have been united with Him like this in His death, we will certainly also be united with Him in His resurrection."

The apostle Paul's life goal, as recorded in Philippians 3:10..."I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection..."

### **BRINGING IT HOME...**

Questions to ask myself:

>Have I truly accepted Jesus' gift of forgiveness?

>Am I trusting and enjoying Jesus' promises?

>Does my life give evidence of resurrection power?

What does Easter really mean? Listen unbeliever and doubter and skeptic, there is no other explanation that holds water or carries the weight of the Scriptural record, than Jesus lived, died, and rose again and became the way of salvation for you and all people, believe it or not! Listen believer and seeker, because Jesus lives we too can have life and salvation. The life He offers brings fullness and joy in this life and the promise of eternal life with Him in heaven. Because the tomb is empty your sins are forgiven. Because the tomb is empty the promise of salvation is yours. Because the tomb is empty you are given strength to overcome all obstacles. Because the tomb is empty, your life can be full!

Jesus said in John 11: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" Jesus asks. Do you believe this?

He is risen! He is risen indeed! Amen.