

Remnant Life Church
April 1, 2018
Arriving at the Empty Tomb
Mark 16:1-7

What is that separates Jesus from the other historical religious leaders?

- Numbers
 - 551 BC – 479 BC – the dates that Confucius was born and died
 - 570 – 632 – the dates Muhammad was born and died
 - 1805 – 1844 – the dates Joseph Smith was born and died
 - 1911 – 1986 – the dates L. Ron Hubbard was born and died
- But Jesus had an added number
 - 3 BC – 30 and 3 days – the dates of His birth, His death, and His resurrection

Down through the centuries theories have been invented and proclaimed in an effort to disprove the fact of the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ

1. The disciples took His body
 - a. First, they would have had to get past the guards placed there by the Romans (**Matt. 28:11-12**)
 - b. Second, the disciples were all in hiding in fear (**John 20:19**)
 - c. Third, they had made no plans and were only interested in not being associated with Jesus (the reason they ran and denied Him)
2. Jesus and His disciples planned the event as a hoax – He didn't really die on the cross
 - a. The Romans were experts at torture and death; NO ONE survived the cross
 - b. The testimony of the soldiers who came to break Jesus' legs reported that He was dead (**John 19:32-33**)
 - c. Another soldier drove a spear into his side into the heart to confirm He was dead (**John 19:34**)
 - d. Would the appearance of a physically broken man with a shredded back and legs, a spear wound in His side, holes in His hands and feet, and a blood-soaked face and head have inspired and evoked worship?
3. The disciples made up the story of His resurrection
 - a. The soldiers on guard were paid to keep silent about what they had seen and spread the lie that the disciples took the body (**Matt. 28:12-15**)
 - b. If this had been true all the authorities would have to do was produce the body if the story was untrue
 - c. These 12 men spent the rest of their lives traveling around the known world preaching the resurrected Christ
 - i. All but one (John) was martyred
 - ii. Would they have done that, given their lives, for a lie?!

- In our world today, especially the culture of our country, Christianity is being made out to be the religion of the desperate, foolish, uneducated, and naïve
 - But we are not a people to be pitied
 - We do not need to be fearful or worried
 - We have a hope
 - It is a hope based on historical fact
 - Jesus lived, He was crucified, He died, He rose from the dead, He is alive today, He is seated at the right hand of God the Father, and He will come again to judge the living and the dead
 - That is not the dreams of the desperate, it is the certainty of the truth

READ – Mark 16:1-7

- It has been noted by many that even the first account of Jesus’ resurrection offers hope to the hopeless
 - In the first-century of Jesus’ time the woman was regarded as a second classed citizen who could not own property, could not testify in court, and could be persecuted if she was found alone in public.
 - But who were the first to receive the news of Jesus resurrection? 3 women
 - His mother Mary – “mother of James”
 - 2 men named James in the disciples – this one the half-brother of Jesus
 - Mary Magdalene – one of His most devoted and loyal followers
 - Salome – the wife of Zebedee; the mother of James and John
- God’s plan was to use these women of faith to first proclaim the good news that Jesus was alive

Seven truths of how these women arrived at the tomb that morning

1. They arrived with a purpose
 - a. They were not just out walking in the early morning – that would have actually been dangerous for them
 - b. There was unfinished business that needed taken care of
 - i. These three women witnessed the execution
 - ii. They knew, at least in their own minds, that He was dead
 - iii. His body had been taken down, wrapped, and placed in the tomb without the Jewish custom being performed of anointing the body
 - iv. Even worse, the Sabbath had made them wait even a day more
 - v. Their love for Him drove them to come and demonstrate that love even in death
2. They arrived early
 - a. I would expect no one had slept well the night before
 - b. Crucifixions were the things of nightmares
 - c. But they could not wait
 - i. They were not permitted to travel at night

- ii. At the very first light they were on their way to Jesus
 - iii. In spite of the obstacles they knew they would encounter
 - 1. There were Roman guards posted there
 - 2. How many others would have come?
 - 3. And what about the stone?
 - iv. But their love overrode their fear and the seemingly impossible

- 3. They arrived expecting
 - a. Again, they had witnessed all that had happened to Jesus
 - b. They also knew that they had to deal with the stone
 - i. The entrance was large enough for a man to bend over and walk through (John 20:5-6)
 - ii. Estimations are 5 to 6 feet in diameter and about a foot thick
 - iii. Weighing between 2 and 3000 lbs
 - c. But they still came with their spices in spite of apparent impossibility (Mark 16:1)

- 4. They arrived in amazement
 - a. They were discussing their impending dilemma (Mark 16:3)
 - b. Looking for the tomb they would have seen from a distance that the stone had been moved
 - c. Imagine the cries, the questions, the emotions, and the uncertainty
 - i. What is going on here? Where is He? Who did this?
 - d. What they did not realize, however, was that the stone had not been moved in order to let Jesus out, it had been moved to allow them to go in (Mark 16:5)

- 5. They arrived at a revelation
 - a. If Jesus was not there, then where was He?
 - b. But God did not leave them standing in confusion
 - i. He sent a heavenly messenger (16:5)
 - ii. He brought them a powerful revelation and with it, hope, joy, elation, and a life-changing statement
 - iii. *“Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.’”* (Mark 16:6-7)
 - 1. Why was Peter singled out?
 - a. Because Peter’s restoration was beginning
 - b. Jesus wanted Him to know that He was alive again so Peter could begin to heal from what he had done because there was great work for him to do (John 21:15-19)
 - 2. The angel takes the women’s attention to the 2 most important things they needed to know
 - a. (v 6) He is not here
 - b. (v 6) – “see the place where they laid Him”
 - c. In other words – do you see a body – NO!
 - d. (v 7) just as He told you!

6. They arrived at a new hope
 - a. How many people have been resurrected from the dead?
 - b. Immediately think Lazarus – some Jairus’ daughter
 - c. But the answer is One
 - i. *1 Cor 15:20-22 - But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.*
 - ii. Lazarus was not resurrected from the dead he was raised from the dead
 - iii. His body would die again, it was given extended time to live but it would die
 - d. Jesus is the first and only to be resurrected, the first fruits, risen with an imperishable body
 - i. This is why the account by John Jesus tells Mary not to hold onto Him – He was in His perfect body and that glory would have harmed her natural body (*John 20:17*)
 - ii. Jesus Christ is the first fruits to receive a heavenly body, raised in power, raised in glory
 - e. People are “brought back from the dead” every day in ERs and hospitals around the world
 - f. That is not resurrection, that is resuscitation
 - i. When we go to meet Him at His return we will not have been resuscitated we will be resurrected with a new heavenly body
 - ii. Then watch how long I will hold on to Him!

7. They arrived with a new reason to worship
 - a. The fear, the anxiety, the confusion, the dread, the tears were wiped away in a moment
 - b. John, the first disciple to arrive at the empty tomb, understood that as wrote in *Rev. 21:4 - ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.*”

- That experience at the tomb changed those 3 women, their lives were never again the same

- 2000 years ago, a historical event changed all of theology
 - It started with those 3 women
 - It was shared with and began to spread through 12 men
 - And it started a movement that changed all of humanity and all of history

- The 3 women arrived at the tomb that Sunday morning with purpose, they arrived early, they were expectant, they were amazed, they embraced a revelation, they left with a new hope, and they were given a new reason to worship
- Each of those aspects are still important to us today as Christians and, just like all of those who saw Jesus again, it ought to change everything about us as well!