

# **Eternal Life Through Believing in Jesus**

## **48) Eyewitnesses**

- ✓ **Our faith stands or falls on the resurrection**
- ✓ **To witness the resurrection was an essential qualification for an apostle (Acts 1:22)**
- ✓ **If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, then Christianity is the most elaborate hoax, and our faith would be in vain (1 Cor.15:14)**
- ✓ **If He did rise from the dead, then we know for certain that all His claims regarding His deity and the way of salvation are authentic**
- ✓ **The evidence for the resurrection is based on many eyewitness accounts**

***'Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him." Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again to their own homes'***

**(John 20:1-10)**

- ✓ **The women came to complete the work begun by Joseph and Nicodemus**
- ✓ **The tomb was secured by a very heavy stone which was like a cartwheel, and dropped into a groove. It was also sealed**
- ✓ **When they arrived, the stone had been rolled away and the body was missing. So Mary ran and told Peter and John**
- ✓ **What happened to the body? Some ridiculous explanations: 1) The disciples stole it while the soldiers slept; 2) The Jews stole it; 3) The women went to the wrong tomb**

- ✓ **Peter and John ran together to the tomb. Both saw the grave clothes, but with no body**
- ✓ **The grave clothes were still in their folds, lying in their original shape, as they had been tightly rolled up around the dead body of Jesus**
- ✓ **Why would any robber remove the body from the grave clothes? If foes had removed the body, they would have left the grave clothes in a torn mess**
- ✓ **If friends had removed the body they would have taken the clothes with it**
- ✓ **John could draw only one conclusion — Christ had risen**

✓ **It seemed that the body passed through the grave clothes or evaporated out of them. Thus, there is a deeper significance in the angel's word to the women, '*Come see the place where the Lord lay*' (Matt.28:6)**

✓ **John was the first to believe the resurrection. The other disciples did not believe on the basis of an absent body or the graveclothes, but only when they saw the living Christ**

✓ **They did not know the Scriptures regarding the resurrection at this stage, e.g. '*For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption*' (Psa.16:10)**

✓ **Even Jesus' predictions were only understood after He had risen (Jn.2:18-22)**

***'But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God'" Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her'***

**(John 20:11-18)**

- ✓ **Peter and John left the scene but Mary remained, weeping. Then she saw two figures in white inside the tomb (Hebrews 13:2)**
- ✓ ***'And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony'* (Ex.25:22). Christ is now the true meeting-place between God and us**
- ✓ **They asked *'Why are you weeping?'* She replied that, in addition to the death of Jesus, she thinks His body has now been removed to another place**
- ✓ **As she turned back she saw another figure outside the tomb, but didn't recognize that it was Jesus. She thought He was the gardener**



✓ **He asked her why she was weeping and what she was seeking**

✓ **The death, only, of Jesus leads to weeping. It is the resurrection that leads to joy**

✓ **As soon as He uttered her name she knew it was Jesus. 'You have said, "I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight"' (Ex.33:12)**  
**'...the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out' (John 10:3).**  
**'But now, thus says the Lord, who created you, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine"' (Isa.43:1)**

- ✓ **She replied 'Rabboni!' and tried to hold Him. Jesus told her not to try to detain Him, thinking He was going to ascend to the Father**
- ✓ **He was not saying don't touch me because I first have to ascend to My Father. He did allow the disciples to touch Him, E.g. Lk 24:39; Matt.28:9. Thomas. The Greek tense here means 'Stop doing something' rather than 'Do not do something'**
- ✓ **He was saying 'Don't think that by holding onto Me so tightly you can retain Me and have Me with you forever. That will only happen when I have ascended to the Father'**
- ✓ **He told her to give His 'brethren' a message**

**\*John was the first to believe the resurrection without seeing Jesus. Mary was first to see the resurrected Christ**

**\*The gospel is confirmed by the testimony of many eyewitnesses. *'For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time'* (1 Cor.15:3-8)**

# Who Moved The Stone?



**FRANK MORISON**

## A. Simon Greenleaf—professor of law at Harvard in the 1800s

His three-volume work *A Treatise on the Law of Evidence* has been considered by the Supreme Court to be the greatest single authority on legal evidence.

He said, “If the evidence for the resurrection was set before any unbiased courtroom in the world it would be judged to be an historical fact—Jesus Christ rose from the dead!”