

1.

Body

1.

The Physical Battle 27:57-66

1.

First, it is a physical battle. A battle for the physical bones of Jesus.

1.

Joseph of Arimathea

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“Disciple of Jesus”

-

“asked for the body”

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In order to keep Jewish law. A dead body could not legally remain on the cross for more than 24 hours, and it could not be taken down and buried on the following day because it was the Sabbath, so it had to be buried today. Joseph of Arimathea saw this need and so made a way for the law to be kept.

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Joseph's purpose is not primarily to gain **possession** of the body of Christ, though this is the result of his action.

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“Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb. ”

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Notice that the **location of this tomb was known** to Joseph, to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, AND to the chief priests, the Pharisees, Pilate, and the guard of soldiers. When the soldiers and the Jews later told the false explanation of the empty tomb, they no doubt made the location of this tomb known to the general public. This lends more support to the traditionally held location of Jesus' tomb than to any new discovery of a tomb at a different location.

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The guard

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“after the day of Preparation”

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Manner: Impiety - Business on the Sabbath.

The chief priests and Pharisees considered it a work of necessity to petition Pilate on the Sabbath. I’m surprised they were willing to do this.

This gives a slight shade of impiety to their intent from the outset.

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“imposter...fraud”

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Mindset: Defame Christ and His disciples. These are based on the same root word in the Greek. Notice that here you can see the Jews preparing for the intellectual battle already. Their “Plan A” is the physical battle, but if that fails, they have an explanation ready: His disciples stole Him away and will tell the people a lie that “He has risen from the dead.”

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“tomb to be made secure”

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Means: Keep Christ's bones in the tomb.

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Your response.

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I have little doubt that if you were present for these events, you would want to take part in this physical battle. You who are believers would want to help Christ receive a God-honoring burial like Joseph did, and would want to visit Christ's grave like the Marys did. And the

unbelievers of today would want to lock Jesus' bones in the tomb so we could not pull the greatest hoax in human history on the world. And in fact today, unbelievers hope they can find Christ's bones in order to prove that Christ's resurrection was a hoax after all.

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The Intellectual Battle 28:11-15

1.

Second, the battle for the bones of Jesus is an intellectual battle. It is not that believers and unbelievers can gain possession of Jesus' bones by means of a successful argument, but rather they battle intellectually over where in fact the bones of Christ are *located*

. Where are they? In Jerusalem? India? Japan? Or in heaven, seated at the right hand of God the Father?

2.

The Jews began this intellectual battle even before Christ rose from the dead. This is not unlike the current practice of airing anti-Christian documentaries immediately prior to the celebration of Easter. But the intellectual battle began in

earnest immediately after the resurrection.

3.

The report of the guard 11-15

1.

“all that had taken place”

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The truth. It appears the guard gave an accurate and complete account of the fact that Christ rose from the dead.

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“taken counsel...we will satisfy him”

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The conspiracy. This is quite literally a conspiracy.

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“a sufficient sum of money”

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The bribe. The Jews give the guard a selfish motive to disseminate a false report.

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“**stole Him away**”

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The lie. Those who claimed

Christ was an “**imposter**”
promoting “**fraud**”

” are now engaging in fraud themselves. The guard had told them the truth, but the Jews deliberately suppress the truth in their unrighteousness. This protects the Jews’ intellectual, ecclesiastical, and political position, but it involves serious intellectual problems.

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The lie the Jews concocted is the same story told by the documentary. It is still circulated to this day. The tomb of which the documentary speaks is very likely not the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. So, for Jesus' bones to arrive in the documentary's tomb, they had to be removed from Joseph's tomb and transported to the tomb in Talpiot. The documentary and the scholarly buzz surrounding it

focuses carefully on this very passage, noting that immediately after the resurrection, some people believed Christ's body had been stolen by His disciples.

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But would the disciples really have been able to sneak past the guards while the guards were asleep? The Jews

had paid the guards to stay awake! And now they pay the guards to falsely admit that they had fallen asleep, the very thing they had been paid not to do. The story doesn't ring true.

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And further, if someone had stolen the body, it would have been either the Romans, the Jews, or the disciples. If it

was either the Romans or the Jews who moved the body, they could have produced the body to disprove the disciples' claim that Jesus rose from the dead. Why didn't they do so? If it was the disciples who moved the body, why were they willing to die for their claim that Jesus rose from the dead, when they knew He did not? Again, the Jews' story doesn't ring true.

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Yet unbelievers continually develop new ways of explaining away the resurrection. And those explanations always fail to fully prove that Christ did not rise from the dead.

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“this story has been spread”

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The effect: deception

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The spiritual battle 28:1-10

1.

Lastly, there is a spiritual battle for the bones of Jesus. And this battle makes all the difference. In this battle, the onslaught of unbelief is completely vanquished. Because of the overwhelming spiritual power of Jesus Christ, unbelievers will never

win the physical or intellectual battle for the bones of Jesus. The issue is not merely that Jesus' physical bones can't be found, it is not merely that their earthly location can't be finally ascertained through intellectual inquiry, but the issue is that Jesus Christ is the true and living God, and no mere mortal can defeat Him. Consider the glorious and awesome power of the

living God! A minuscule portion of His mighty power is on display in the angel He sent to the tomb.

1.

The angel 1-4

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“a great earthquake”

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“angel of the Lord”

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Angels are
incomparably more
powerful and holy than
men! And yet before
God Himself the angels

cover their faces and cry
“Holy, Holy, Holy!”
Their holiness is absolutely
nothing compared to
the infinite holiness of God!

—

“rolled back the stone”

—

“His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow.”

—

“for fear of him the guards trembled and

became like dead men. ”

-

If you are not
trembling in your heart
because of the
incredibly terrible
power of this angel, you
don't yet understand

that all the Roman guards in the world cannot cage the bones of Jesus! If you are more impressed by the arguments of a television documentary than by the earth-shaking power of this angelic spirit of utter astounding

brightness and power,
you do not yet know
the power of the
Almighty God!

-

And this angel
came from that God!

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The message 5-7

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“Do not be
afraid...He is not here,
for He has risen.”

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Amazingly, the
angel tells the women
not to fear. The
reason is that the

angel knows they are seeking Jesus. The angel is not here to destroy those who seek Jesus, but to announce the message that Jesus is risen from the dead.

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Neither believers
or unbelievers will win
the physical battle for
the bones of
Jesus. No, instead,
Jesus Himself won
that battle. He
raised His bones from
the dead, and He

takes His flesh and bones where He wants them to be.

Unbelievers want to secure Christs' grave in order to possess His physical bones, but Christ alone holds the keys of Death and Hades! He has taken

captivity captive, and
now gives the gift of
resurrection to
men. He is the
Resurrection and the
Life. Do you believe
this?

-

Your response 8-10

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If you do, then in
your heart the spiritual
battle for the bones of

Jesus has already been won. Christ has won it by raising your heart to life, and on the final day He will raise your body as well to life in glory. His bones are not bound by sin and death and hell, and neither are yours. The

spiritual battle for the
bones of Jesus is
over.

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And so is the
intellectual battle. The
women's message
now is no longer

that Jesus is buried in
the tomb, but rather
that He is risen
from the dead. It is
this message—that
Jesus is risen from
the dead—that now is
the truth of convicting,
convincing,
converting power that
they carry to the

apostles, and to the world. It is the message of the gospel, and this alone, that will triumph over the intellectual arguments of unbelief. The gospel must be presented in all the fullness of its evidential support

and sound intellectual rigor, all of its logical consistency, but it is the gospel's call to repent and believe on Jesus Christ that will resurrect the dry bones of the lost, deceived, and dying world.

Matt. 27:57-28:15 - The Battle for the Bones of Jesus

Written by Tim Black

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And so the physical battle is over as well. James Cameron and Simcha Jacobovici will never find the dead bones of Jesus.

Because He is alive, and exalted to the right hand of God, and

He will come again to judge the world.

Unbelievers will claim to have found his tomb time and again, and time and again you should always challenge them and say, “Show me the bones!” They cannot. And they will

not.

1.

Conclusion

1.

Where are the bones
of Jesus? Why can't
you show them to me?
Why can't you prove

beyond a shadow of a doubt where His grave lies? Why can't you prove He didn't rise from the dead? “O Grave, where is your victory? O Death, where is your sting?” Because of Christ's resurrection, they are gone.

2.

“Thanks be to God,
who gives us the
victory through our
Lord Jesus Christ!”

1

Corinthians 15:57

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