

Tomb of Cyrus, the Great, d. 530 BC



Pasargadae

Visited by Alexander the Great.

Came to pay tribute.

Tomb was recently ransacked.

Alexander was furious.

Cyrus knew nothing / did nothing.

Death does that...

He is not here... (Lk.24:6)

Luke 24

1: first day . . . *they* came. *Who?* (23:55-56)

2: found stone rolled away

3-4: went in: did not find body; two men...
shining garments?

5: terrified. “Why are you looking...?”

6-8: He is not here...risen. Remembered...

- Mk.9:9-11, “what is rising...?”
- Mk.9:30-32, did not understand; afraid...

[8:32-33, Elijah]

Luke 24

9-10: rushed to tell the eleven and others

11-12: unbelieving apostles. Peter / John...

13-32: two men in for big surprise

The sequence:

Sorrow, 23:55-56

Scare, 24:4-5

Spices, 24:1

Scriptures, 24:5-8

Shock, 24:2-3

Spread, 24:9-10...

Facts

- Jesus lived at time / place Bible says
- Associated with characters it describes
- Crucified
- Died
- Buried
- Empty tomb on third day

Knew difference between myth and fact

2 Pt.1¹⁶ For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

- False messiahs fell into obscurity...
 - Theudas: promised to divide waters of Jordan (AD 44)
 - Egyptian gathered crowd of 30,000; walls of Jerusalem would fall at his word (AD 52-54)
- Christians flourished: Jesus arose

I. Eyewitness testimony to resurrection of Christ

- Acts 1³ to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.
- “Infallible proof” – sign, convincing proof –
 1. Sufficient number of witnesses, 1 Co.15:5f.
 2. Seen over 40 day period, Ac.1:3
 3. Seen at different places / occasions
 4. Sufficient to make identification certain
 5. Held to testimony for decades, 1 Co.15

Witnesses (1)

1. Mary Magdalene, Jn.20:1, 11
2. Mary, mother of James..., Mk.16:1
3. Women from Galilee, Lk.23:55, 24:1ff
4. Peter, Lk.24:34
5. James, 1 Co.15:7
6. Cleopas and another, Lk.24:13-32
7. Ten apostles without Thomas, Jn.20:24

Witnesses (2)

8. Eleven apostles (Thomas), Jn.20:26-29
9. Seven disciples, Galilee, Jn.21
10. Disciples at mountain, Mt.28:16-20
11. Five hundred+ at once, 1 Co.15:6
12. Mount of Olives, Ac.1:4-12
13. Paul, 1 Co.15:8

Analyzing the facts –

1. His resurrection was totally unexpected
2. He appeared to individuals and groups.
3. He appeared in different places (garden; upper room; by sea...)
4. Variety of acts, words (e.g.: Jn.21:5 ... ate)
5. Tested by physical senses (Jn.20:24-29; 1 Jn.1:1-3)
6. They did not believe their own senses; Lk.24:37,39 – spirit ('ghost').

Apostles: primary witnesses

- Every sermon: resurrection of Christ
- Acts – ‘raised’ (10x); ‘resurrection’ (10x)
- If He is not raised, how to explain the church? 1 Co.1, 15
- Why willing to die for their faith?

I. Eyewitness testimony
to resurrection of Christ

II. **The tomb**

The tomb was . . .

- New, Lk.23:53
 - Could not have been previous body
- Cut in solid rock, Mt.27:60
 - No other entrance to enable someone to sneak body out the back
- Sealed, great stone; guarded, Mt.27:62-66
 - Could a crucified man remove it?
- Carefully inspected, Lk.24:12
 - Not a quick glance moved by assumption
 - Body was there; now gone

- The body was gone...
 - Women watched the burial; returned to empty tomb, Jn.20
 - Guards / Sanhedrin, Mt.28:4...11 –
 - Why make up story if body is in tomb?
 - His dead body would kill the church
 - Radical critics today admit tomb was empty

We are interested in most tombs
because of what they contain;
this one because it is empty

I. Eyewitness testimony
to resurrection of Christ

II. The tomb

**III. How to account for
the empty tomb?**

1. “Disciples stole the body?”

- Mt.28:11-15
 - Admit the guarded tomb is EMPTY
 - Men who sought false witnesses against Jesus now bribe guards to lie
 - Money played large role in His condemnation (Judas); now after His resurrection
 - Disciples are in no mood to face Roman soldiers . . . until He is raised

2. “Jesus did not die, but swooned”?

- He suffered 5 wounds; on cross from 9-3 (Mk.15:25, 42).
- More evidence that Jesus died than most important people ever lived.
- Even if resuscitated, could He remove the stone? ...overcome guards?
- Disciples did not react to His appearance with pity, offer aid...

Jesus bodily arose from the dead

- Psalm 2 . . . Psalm 16 . . . Isaiah 53 . . .
- Paul fought against His resurrection, yet changed. Why?
- Only predisposed bias could prevent belief in the resurrected Christ (cf. Lk.16:31)
- Lk.24⁵ why seek living among dead? ⁶He is not here, but is risen...

The only time the absence of Christ
is a source of inexpressible joy