

Masterwork of the Messiah

Expositional Study Of Matthew's Gospel

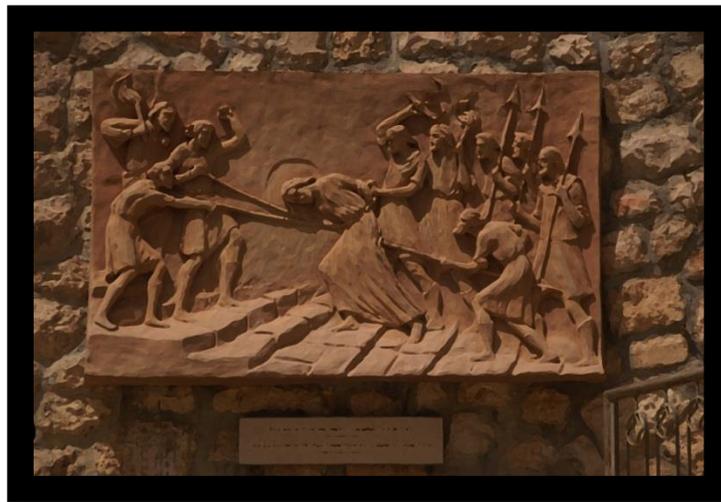
Is His Life, Your Life?

Matthew 27:57-28:15

Written By

©Pastor Marty Baker

April 5, 2015



I don't know where I got this particular amaryllis plant in this beautiful white, ceramic pot, but it has been on my back porch all winter. Last year, colorful blooms exploded all over its elongated, supple stems, and then everything faded, dried up, and died. So, I did what anyone of us would do: I mothballed it on an out-of-the-way counter where it has sat for months dried up and dead.

About a month ago, I thought to myself, "You know, I should probably add a little water to this bulb just to see what happens." Within a week, I'd say, small, powerful green stems started breaking through the dead, brittle outer husk. Now, as you can see, I'm waiting to see those gorgeous, massive, eye-catching flowers once more. And to think all it took to revive the dead bulb was a little water.

Such is the story of the man. As the Apostle Paul states so well in his first letter to the Corinthians:

²¹ For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead (1 Corinthians 15).

Because of Adam's sin and willful disobedience in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3), spiritual and physical death became man's judgment from a holy God. Outwardly and inwardly, then, we are analogically similar to this amaryllis bulb insofar as death describes us.

What makes the spiritually dead bulb from its lifeless condition? Good question. The only thing which can awaken the spiritual dead is the water of life. Where does one get this unusual, powerful water? Another good question. Jesus is, as He taught, the source of this water because He, that very first Easter, defeated sin and death. Now everything He told the spiritually parched and dead woman from Samaria is the epitome of spiritual truth:

¹³ Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; ¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life" (John 4).

Life. Eternal life. That is what the resurrected Christ gives when His water is poured on the dry, cracked ground of a dead spiritual bulb. How does one get Him to pour away? The Samaritan woman's reply gives you the much needed insight:

¹⁵ The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw" (John 4).

That day, that very moment she articulated this faith statement next to a dusty old well, Christ's life gave her spiritual life for time and eternity, and instantly she also became a beautiful flower of life in His garden.

What about you? Is her story your story? More importantly ...

Is His Life, Your Life? (Matthew 27:57-28:15)

Matthew, a Jew, who also experienced the life-giving water of the resurrected Jesus, wrote to tell in this historical narrative how this Messiah became the source of spiritual life for all who are born in spiritual death. From the beginning of the book to the end, we learn how Jesus fulfilled the role of the coming Savior and Messiah to a tee.

- Tribe of Judah? Check (Genesis 49:10' Luke 3:23, 33)
- Family line of Jesse? Check (Isaiah 11:1; Luke 3:23, 32)
- King line of David? Check (Psalm 2; Matthew 1)
- Born of a virgin? Check (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23-25)
- Born in Bethlehem? Check (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1)
- Capable of performing physical healings and miracles at will? Check (Isaiah 35:5, 6; 42; 7; Matthew 11:5; 15:30).
- The humble Passover Lamb who died for the sins of man? Check (Isaiah 53; 1 Corinthians 5:7).

This last prophetic fulfillment is carefully documented in Matthew chapters 26:1 through 27:56. Here we learn that He, the Holy One, had to first be betrayed by His people and then experience Roman crucifixion so He could bear the sin of all sinners of all time (1 Peter 2:24, “... and He himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness ...”). As we study His crucifixion, we can't help but see how various individuals responded to His redemptive, life-giving work. They represent the spiritual spectrum from *conflicted ones* like Simon of Cyrene, whom the Roman's conscripted to carry Christ's cross for the last leg of the death march (Matthew 27:32), to *cruel ones*, like the religious leaders of the day, who mocked Him as He, the sinless One, bore and died for their sin (Matthew 27:38-44). Put differently, they ranged from those who received His life-giving water to those who rejected it outright. Ostensibly, the question must be posed: Which group do you belong to?

Looking, now, at the events post-crucifixion, we encounter additional sets of people who represent, once again, how dead spiritual bulbs (to stick with our opening metaphor) responded to the person and work of Jesus, the Messiah. I have a hunch you just might see yourself in one of them. Some represent those limited few who, by faith, asked for that life-giving water from the resurrected Lord, while others represent the vast majority who rejected, thereby choosing spiritual death over spiritual life.

First up, are two men I'd call ...

The Concealed Christians (Matthew 27:57-61)

Matthew introduces us to one of them with these words:

⁵⁷ When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸ This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. ⁵⁹ And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, ⁶⁰ 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. ⁶¹ And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the grave.

We learn of the second man, Nicodemus, from John's parallel account (John 19:38-39). Both of these men were members of the Sanhedrin (Luke 23:51; John 19:39), or the Jewish Supreme Court, the same group of religious men who had convicted Jesus on trumped up charges at several highly illegal night courts. From what we read in these two historical contexts, they were quiet, secret supporters of Jesus. Pragmatically, this means they either did not attend the trials, or they did appear and were either dismissed if they spoke in favor of Jesus or they stood stone-cold silent as the misguided mob twisted and perverted justice to rid the world of the One who claimed to be not only the Messiah, but God in the flesh (John 8:58).

Either way, Joseph, a wealthy man everyone in town probably knew, or Nicodemus, another powerful member of the High Court, at some unknown point in their lives, evaluated the hard, empirical evidence for Jesus being, in fact, the Messiah, which led to His life-giving water being poured lavishly on their lives. Nicodemus came to Jesus years earlier under the cover of darkness to talk with Him privately about how His miracles pointed clearly to His messianic, divine nature (John 3:2), and Jesus naturally challenged him to look to Him in faith so he could pass from death to life (John 3:16-18). Sometime after this encounter, ol' Nicodemus

believed not just the evidence but the Lord of the evidence. Could he, then, have shared his new life with Joseph? We won't know until we get to heaven, but it is exciting to think about.

Regardless of when Joseph and Nicodemus received the water of life, Jesus, their collective coming forward to receive the body of their crucified Lord represented not only courage but total identification with Jesus. Being wealthy has its privileges, which probably accounts for how Joseph gained an audience with Pilate, the Governor. His mere presence at the Antonia Fortress on that Passover sometime after 3 p.m. immediately and definitively identified Him, a Jew and a Judge of the High Court, as a Christ-follower. By coming out of the spiritual shadows he risked everything: his physical life, his prestige as a Supreme Court judge at the pinnacle of his career, his comradery with other judges, his future ability to go to the Temple for worship, his lucrative and prestigious career, and public fame, notoriety, and power. John Wayne would have loved these men. Why? Because they represented his definition of courage, "Courage is being scared to death and saddling up anyway."¹

Joseph, a lover of the Lord and the Law (the Mosaic Law dictated that a person executed on a tree had to be buried on the same day, Deuteronomy 21:22-23), couldn't permit the Lord to be placed in a common grave when he had a brand new tomb near Golgotha located in an olive grove. In so doing, his actions immediately fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy concerning the Messiah being with a rich man in His death and burial (Isaiah 53:9). So, desiring to bear the cross of Christ out of love for Him, Joseph did the unthinkable: He asked for and received the body of Jesus in order to prepare it for burial, and somewhere along the line his judicial friend, Nicodemus, courageously joined him.

In classic Jewish fashion, they wrapped the body with linen cloth from the shoulders to the toes, much like you'd wrap a mummy, being careful to add spices between the folds in order to minimize the odor of decay and death, spices weighing around seventy-five pounds (John 19:39). The fact that women Christ-followers were there, women who had watched the entire crucifixion of their Lord, suggests they helped with the burial preparation. After all, who can imagine watching devoted female disciples of Jesus watching two, probably aged men, doing all the labor? When they finished their work, they placed Jesus in the tomb, and rolled a massive stone to seal it shut. They had truly honored Him by bravely stepping forward to bury Him. No longer did spiritual shadows satisfy them. Now, their faith could be seen by all, supporters and enemies alike of the Christ. Now, all knew His life had become their life ... for all eternity.

What about you? Has His life become your life? If it has, I pray you are not content with the shadows, with concealment, and with obscurity (for whatever reasons you might have). No, to know the power of His life-giving water is to, by definition, flower and bloom in your faith so all can behold the beauty of a transformed life. Are you a quiet, virtually silent saint this holy season? If so, realize the magnitude of His sacrifice challenges you to tell your world how His water quenched your spiritual thirst and brought immediate and wonderful spiritual life to your once dead spiritual body. And step forward boldly and lovingly, regardless of the repercussions and the personal or professional costs. Since two members of the Jewish High Court made a definitive faith statement, anyone else can too, whether you are a General in the U.S. Armed Services or a mother with two little children at home. When you know the power of His redemptive water, you can't help but eventually bloom where you are.

A second group of people who had the opportunity to offer a response to Jesus are presented in bold relief in Matthew 27:61-66. I classify them as ...

¹ *The New Encyclopedia Of Christian Quotations*: 232.

The Crafty Ones (Matthew 27:61-66)

These are the people who are so opposed to Christ (and Christianity) they will, despite all the hard evidence supporting His messiahship and position as THE Savior, will bend, twist, distort, misrepresent the Christ-story and even law itself either minimize its societal impact, or to remove it from the cultural scene altogether. These are the people who, for love of their religion, be what it may, or love of other intellectually interesting worldviews, willfully embrace any story to find purpose and meaning in this life, no matter how obscure, untenable, legalistic, or illogical they might be ... so long as it is not the Christ-story. Along these lines, Matthew submits to us the members of the Jewish Supreme Court, viz., the Sanhedrin.

⁶² Now on the next day, the day after the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered together with Pilate, ⁶³ and said, “Sir, we remember that when He was still alive that deceiver said, ‘After three days I am to rise again.’ ⁶⁴ “Therefore, give orders for the grave to be made secure until the third day, otherwise His disciples may come and steal Him away and say to the people, ‘He has risen from the dead,’ and the last deception will be worse than the first.”

Their presence before Pilate is utterly jaw-dropping. Why? They came to Pilate on “the next day, the day after the preparation.” To Westerners, this doesn’t mean much. To middle-easterners of this day-and-time, it meant much. The Day of Preparation denoted the time period on this Passover Friday between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. Pragmatically, it denoted the time period Jews prepared themselves for the holy Sabbath which commenced at sundown, or around 6 p.m. Once the sun set, Sabbath, or a new day began, so they had to make sure their homes were ready for the holy day. Since these Jewish religious and judicial leaders of the Mosaic Law approached Pilate after this day, it means they stood before him on Sabbath and broke the Mosaic Law in so doing. Their hatred of Jesus burned so intensely they broke their own law and came before the Gentile at a time they should have been home worshipping God. Their godless goal? To make sure additional procedures were put in place to keep His dead body from being snatched by His disciples so a false resurrection story could embolden a new, though supposedly false, faith.

Don’t you find this all most intriguing? They held to their religion and its mindless traditions and rituals so tightly they wouldn’t for a second believe Jesus might have been the Messiah. Even though He raised the dead during His ministry on several occasions (Luke 7:11; John 11:38-57), I’m sure they explained that all away. Even though He performed countless and substantial organic miracles in their presence, like the healing of man blind from birth (John 9), they rejected the divine events outright, opting, as in this instance, to ridicule the healed man for being a vile sinner (unlike them, the holy ones) instead of embracing the reality and message of the healing.

Ever met anyone like this? Our world is full of them. They are the ones who will become verbally violent when you dare suggest their holy book is wrong for denying the deity and resurrection of Jesus. They are the ones who will hold onto their carefully crafted worldviews at all costs, so long as they do not have to entertain the inferior notion of believing in Jesus as God, Savior, and the Messiah. Rhodes Fairbridge represents those crafty ones in *The Columbia History*

of the World when he writes, “We (the intellectually enlightened ones) reject the miraculous.”² David Jobling, a seminary professor from years ago, is also of this group when he writes,

“We [that is, modern people] see the universe as a continuity of space, time, and matter, held together, as it were, from within ... God is not ‘outside’ time and space, nor does he stand apart from matter, communicating with the ‘spiritual’ part of man ... We must find some way of facing the fact that Jesus Christ is the product of the same evolutionary process as the rest of us.”³

Jesus was and is not God? He’s just a product of evolution? Huh? See what I mean? Sometimes religious people are the greatest obstacles to finding true spiritual life and meaning.

At other times, it is the educated ones who are, well, really uneducated. David Hume is a classic example in this case:

If we take in our hand any volume: of divinity or school of metaphysics, for instance; let us ask, Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No. Commit it then to the flames; For it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion.⁴

Ravi Zacharias deconstructs and dismantles this supposedly airtight intellectual argument against even the concept of religion and spirituality with this cogent, logical analysis:

David Hume’s grand statement is neither scientific nor mathematical. If, in order to be meaningful, a statement must be either mathematically sustained or scientifically verifiable, then David Hume’s statement itself is meaningless. It is a philosophical solvent that dissolves itself. The emperor has no clothes, while boasting the finest threads.⁵

Such fine reasoning, however, usually does not sway the minds of those enmeshed and deeply committed either to a belief system which attempts to worship God without the Christ of God or which does not believe in God at all. The religious leaders responsible for Christ’s crucifixion were of the former sort. They hated Him because He challenged their beliefs, He out-thought and out-taught them regarding true spirituality, He dared to condemn their beliefs as erroneous, He performed miracles they attributed to the power of the Devil (Matthew 12:22-37), and He dared to claim divine status (John 8:58). Therefore, they politically moved to make sure that despite His teachings about a resurrection (Matthew 16:21; 17:9, 22-23; 20:18-19; 26:32), no disciple would, or could, penetrate their plan to guard His dead body.

Pilate, wishing to just get them off his political plate once and for all, caved to their bizarre request:

² John A Carraty and Peter Gay, eds., *The Columbia History of the World* (New York: Harper 7 Row, 1972): 14.

³ David Jobling, How Does Our Twentieth Century Concept of the Universe Affect Our Understanding of the Bible? *Enquiry*, September-November 1972: 14.

⁴ David Hume, *On Human Nature and the Understanding*, Anthony Flew, ed. (New York: Collier Books, 1962): 163.

⁵ Ravi Zacharias, *Jesus Among Other Gods* (Nashville: Word Publishing, 2000): 63.

Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go, make it as secure as you know how."⁶⁶ And they went and made the grave secure, and along with the guard they set a seal on the stone.

Interesting. Pilate assigns another Roman guard detail to help his Jewish opponents. The mere statement, "You have a guard," which is an imperative in Greek, suggests, as A.T. Robertson, the Greek grammarian argues, the presence of a Roman detachment, not Temple police,⁶ who did not enjoy power outside of the Temple itself. Pragmatically, since this probably included a Centurion, as with the crucifixion detail, the detachment could easily have been composed of from ten to twenty heavily armed, battle-hardened, loyal-to-the-core Roman soldiers. You can better believe they will not let any rag-tag group of Jewish religious zealots get by them, and they know the consequences of falling asleep on duty: execution. These men must have laughed at the nature of this easy assignment for that Friday evening leading to Sabbath.

The job for them couldn't have been easier. Guard a dead Jew their crucifixion detail had killed, and make sure nobody messed with the rope they stretched over the tombstone and sealed with the wax insignias of the powerful Roman Empire.

Amazing. You can lock my Jesus in a tomb, but you can't keep Him there. You can place a guard over my Jesus, but you can't possibly guard the One who can pass through matter. You can try your best at keeping others from pulling my Jesus out of a sealed tomb, but you cannot keep Him from coming out by supernatural means. Remember, it was He who said to Peter, "That thou are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). He fulfilled that word the moment He broke the bonds of death.

Such is the blindness of the crafty ones. They actually thought, despite all evidence to the contrary, they could put an end to the followership of the so-called Messiah, Jesus, with one group of highly motivated, well-armed, and devoted group of Roman soldiers. They thought wrong, and their thinking naturally leads us to the third group who responded to the person and work of Jesus. I call them ...

The Committed Ones (Matthew 28:1-10)

They are the ones who followed Christ in life and in death. They are the ones who heard His teaching and watched His miracles and would, by no means, abandon Him as His body was placed in a tomb. They were convinced He was the Messiah in life, and in death that belief was not something they would throw to the proverbial wind even if they did not fully understand the tragic, dreadful, unthinkable events of the last twenty-four hours. Matthew introduces us to these people with these words:

¹ Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave.

⁶ Josh MacDowell, *Evidence That Demands A Verdict* (Arrowhead Springs, CA: Campus Crusade for Christ International, 1972): 219.

Jesus died on Friday afternoon at 3 p.m.,⁷ or day one (in Jewish time reckoning any part of a day was seen as a day), Sabbath started at sundown and ended on sundown the next day (day two), and Jesus rose on the first day of the week, or Sunday morning at dawn (day three). Two Marys came to anoint Christ's body with additional spices. Surely, their action dripped of love and devotion of the Master. Mary from Magdala, the one Christ has cast seven demons from (Luke 8:2),⁸ and Mary, the mother of the disciple named, James (Mark 15:40; 19:25) and wife of Clopas were the devoted Christ-followers. According to Mark, Salome also joined them (Mark 16:1). Their day wouldn't go as planned. The fact Matthew named these women further underscores the veracity of the account. Anyone who disputed their claim could have easily traveled to their homes and asked them to describe what they saw as viable witnesses.

Only Matthew recounts what occurred as these women approached the tomb at sunrise (Mark 16:2). Why did he supply this supernatural historical detail? Since his authorial goal focused in reaching his Jewish people for Jesus, and they sought a sign to aid their belief (Matthew 12:28), we can surmise he recorded this detail to hopefully establish yet another viable reason for trusting this Nazarene as the Messiah:

² And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. ³ And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. ⁴ The guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men.

Permit me to attempt to reconstruct what historically occurred here by lining up the descriptions from the other gospel parallel accounts:

- Another earthquake occurred. The last one happened the exact moment Jesus died, and now this one transpired the moment He rose from the grave. I wonder, was it a category twelve on the Richter scale? Translated, was this just a mild 3.5 tremblor, or an 8.0, rock-splitting, fissure-forming event? I think I'll go with the latter, and it probably knocked the soldiers off their feet, causing them to drop their spears and shields.

⁷ And Jesus did die despite what some in other religions state. The ancient Scriptural documents written in close proximity to the event (some thirty-five to sixty years), clearly support this tenet, as do the writings of Tacitus, the Roman historian: "Christus, the founder of the name [Christian], had undergone the death penalty in the reign of Tiberius, by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilatus, and the pernicious superstition was checked for a moment, only to break out once more, not merely in Judaea, the home of the disease, but in the capital [Rome] itself, where all things horrible or shameful in the world collect and find a vogue" Tacitus, *Annals*, Books 8-14, trans. John Jackson, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 5:283-85. Additionally, there are thirty-four ancient biblical passages substantiating that Christ died and wasn't simply asleep or replaced by a substitute: Four formulas: 1 Corinthians 15:3; Romans 1:3-4; 10:9; Philippians 2:8. Seventeen passages where Paul said "resurrection" or "raised from dead": Acts 17:18, 31-32; 26:23; Romans 4:24; 6:4-5, 9; 7:4; 8:11; 1 Corinthians 15:12-20; Galatians 1:1; Philippians 3:10; Colossians 2:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; cf. Ephesians 1:20; Acts 13:30, 34. Thirteen passages where Paul said "Christ died": Romans 5:6, 8, 10; 8:34; 14:9, 15; 1 Corinthians 8:11; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; Galatians 2:21; Colossians 2:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:14; 5:10. Roman crucifixion details did not fail to kill their prisoners, and there is no way anyone could have traded placed with Christ while Rome held Him.

⁸ Why did Christ appear to Mary of Magdala first? Probably to demonstrate he who had cast the seven demons out of her had completely defeated all demonic forces by means of His death and resurrection.

- An angel (possibly Gabriel who has played a key role in the story regarding Jesus; viz., Luke 1:19, 26) entered our dimensionality by descending from above the, most likely, bored guards.
- The angel did not lazily roll the stone away. He picked it up and hurled it as the Greek word, *airo* suggests in John 20:1.⁹ Manipulating this massive stone

⁹ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament And Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979): 24. **αἶρω** fut. ἀρώ; 1 aor. ἤρα (ἤρα v.l.; TestAbr; GrBar); pf. ἤρκα Col 2:14. Pass.: 1 fut. ἀρθήσομαι; 1 aor. ἤρθην; pf. ἤρμαι J 20:1; Hs 9, 5, 4 (Hom.+; he, like some later wr., has ἀείρω).

① to raise to a higher place or position, *lift up, take up, pick up*

① lit., of stones (Dio Chrys. 12 [13], 2) J 8:59 (cp. Jos., Vi. 303); Rv 18:21; Hs 9, 4, 7. Fish Mt 17:27; coffin 1 Cl 25:3; hand (X., An. 7, 3, 6) Rv 10:5 (Dt 32:40). Hands, in prayer 1 Cl 29:1 (Ael. Aristid. 24, 50 K.=44 p. 840 D.; 54 p. 691; PUPs 8 p. 30 no. 14 [pre-Christian] Θεογένης αἶρει τὰς χεῖρας τῷ Ἡλίῳ; Sb 1323 [II A.D.] θεῶ ὑψίστω καὶ πάντων ἐπόπητῃ καὶ Ἡλίῳ καὶ Νεμέσεσι αἶρει Ἀρσεινὴ ἄωρος τὰς χεῖρας). But αἶ. τὴν χεῖρα ἀπό τινος *withdraw one's hand fr. someone=renounce or withdraw fr. someone* B 19:5; D 4:9. Of snakes *pick up* Mk 16:18. κλίνην Mt 9:6. κλινίδιον Lk 5:24. κράβαττον Mk 2:9, 11f; J 5:8–12. Of a boat that is pulled on board Ac 27:17. Of a spirit that carries a person away Hv 2, 1, 1 (cp. TestAbr B 10 p. 115, 11 [Stone p. 78] of angels). Take up a corpse to carry it away AcPt Ox 849 verso, 8 (cp. TestAbr A 20 p.103, 20 [Stone p. 54]). αἶ. σύσσημον *raise a standard* ISm 1:2 (Is 5:26); αἶ. τινὰ τῶν ἀγκόνων *take someone by one's arms* Hv 1, 4, 3. For Ac 27:13 s. 6 below.—Pass. 2 Cl 7:4. ἄρθητι (of mountains) *arise* Mt 21:21; Mk 11:23. ἤρθη νεκρός Ac 20:9.

① fig. αἶ. τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἄνω *look upward* (in prayer, as Ps 122:1; Is 51:6 al.) J 11:41. For 10:24 s. 5 below. αἶ. φωνήν *raise one's voice, cry out loudly* (1 Km 11:4; 30:4; 2 Km 3:32 al.) Lk 17:13. πρὸς τινα Ac 4:24.

② to lift up and move from one place to another

② *take/carry (along)* lit. w. obj. acc. σταυρόν Mt 16:24; 27:32; Mk 8:34; 15:21; Lk 9:23. ζυγόν (La 3:27) Mt 11:29. τινὰ ἐπὶ χειρῶν 4:6; Lk 4:11 (both Ps 90:12). Pass. Mk 2:3. αἶ. τι εἰς ὁδὸν *take someth. along for the journey* 6:8; Lk 9:3, cp. 22:36. Of a gambler's winnings Mk 15:24.—Fig. δόξαν ἐφ' ἑαυτὸν αἶ. *claim honor for oneself* B 19:3.

② *carry away, remove* lit. ταῦτα ἐντεῦθεν J 2:16 (ins [218 B.C.]: ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΑ 7, '34, p. 179, 15 ταῦτα αἰρέσθω; Just., D. 56, 3 σκευῶν ἀρθέντων). Crucified body of Jesus 19:38; cp. vs. 31; 20:2, 13, 15; of John the Baptist Mt 14:12; Mk 6:29. A stone from a grave-opening J 11:39, 41; pass. 20:1. οἱ αἶροντες οὐκ ἀνέφερον *those who took something* (a mouthful) *brought nothing* (to their mouth) GJs 18:2 (not pap). τὸ περισσεῦον *the remainder* Mt 14:20; 15:37; cp. Lk 9:17. περισσεύματα Mk 8:8. κλάσματα *fragments* 6:43; baskets 8:19f. ζώνην *take off* Ac 21:11; *take: τὸ σὸν what belongs to you* Mt 20:14; τὰ ἀρκούντα *what was sufficient for him* Hs 5, 2, 9. αἶ. τι ἐκ τῆς οἰκίας *get someth. fr. the house* Mk 13:15; cp. vs.16 and Mt 24:17; cp. 24:18; Lk 17:31; *take (a body) from a tomb* J 20:2, 13, 15; *take τινὰ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου* 17:15.

③ to take away, remove, or seize control without suggestion of lifting up, *take away, remove*. By force, even by killing: abs. ἄρον, ἄρον *away, away* (with him)! J 19:15 (cp. POxy 119, 10 [Dssm., LO 168; LAE 188 n. 22]; Philo, In Flacc. 144; ἄρον twice also La 2:19 v.l., in different sense). W. obj. αἶρε τοῦτον Lk 23:18; cp. Ac 21:36; 22:22. ἄραι τὸν μάγον AcPl Ha 4, 35f; αἶρε τοὺς ἀθέους (s. ἄθεος 2a) MPol 3:2; 9:2 (twice); *sweep away* Mt 24:39; ὡς μελλούσης τῆς πόλεως αἶρεσθαι *as though the city were about to be destroyed* AcPl Ha 5, 17; cp. κόσμος ἔρεται (=αἶρεται) ἐμ πυρί 2, 26f. W. the connot. of force or injustice or both (Epict. 1, 18, 13; PTeht 278, 27; 35; 38 [I A.D.]; SSol 5:7): τὸ ἱμάτιον Lk 6:29; cp. vs. 30; D 1:4. τὴν πανοπλίαν *all his weapons* Lk 11:22; τάλαντον Mt 25:28; cp. Lk 19:24. Fig. τὴν κλεῖδα τῆς γνώσεως 11:52. Pass.: Mt 13:12; Mk 4:25; Lk 8:18; 19:26. *Conquer, take over* (Diod S 11, 65, 3 πόλιν) τόπον, ἔθνος J 11:48. For Lk 19:21f s. 4 below. αἶ. τὴν ψυχὴν ἀπό τινος J 10:18 (cp. EFascher, Deutsche Theol. '41, 37–66).—Pass. ἀπό τῆς γῆς Ac 8:33b (Is 53:8; Just., D. 110, 6). ἀφ' ὑμῶν ἢ βασιλεία Mt 21:43.—Of Satan τὸν λόγον τὸν ἐσπαρμένον εἰς αὐτοῦς Mk 4:15; cp. Lk 8:12. τὴν χαρὰν ὑμῶν οὐδεὶς αἶρει ἀφ' ὑμῶν *no one will deprive you of your joy* J 16:22. ἐξ ὑμῶν πᾶσαν ὑπόκρισιν *rid ourselves of all pretension* B 21:4; ἀπό τῆς καρδίας τὰς διψυχίας αἶ. *put away* p 29 *doubt fr. their heart* Hv 2, 2, 4. αἶ. ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ *put away fr. oneself* Hm 9:1; 10, 1, 1; 10, 2, 5; 12, 1, 1. αἶ. ἐκ (τοῦ) μέσου *remove, expel* (fr. among) (Epict. 3, 3, 15; Plut., Mor. 519d; BGU 388 II, 23 ἄρον ταῦτα ἐκ τοῦ μέσου; PHib 73, 14; Is 57:2) 1 Cor 5:2 (v.l. ἐξαρθῆ); a bond, note, certificate of indebtedness αἶ. ἐκ τοῦ μέσου *destroy* Col 2:14. Of branches *cut off* J 15:2. Prob. not intrans., since other exx. are lacking, but w. 'something' supplied αἶρει τὸ πλήρωμα ἀπό τοῦ ἱματίου *the patch takes someth. away fr. the garment* Mt 9:16; cp. Mk 2:21. *Remove, take away, blot out* (Eur., El. 942 κακά; Hippocr., Epid. 5, 49, p.

in this fashion, in and of itself, stands as strong testimony for a supernatural event of all events (Matthew 27:60). Some would suggest this is a legendary or mythical tale; however, this could not be the case because it could have been easily refuted by a number of flesh and blood witnesses at the day and time. Further, the fact that women are the witnesses adds even more believability to the narrative because their testimony did not carry as much weight in the Jewish culture as that of a man. Why include them, then, if this did not occur as detailed?

- When the women arrived, they found the soldiers laying around, probably passed out from sheer fear of seeing an angelic being far superior to them. Believe me, seeing a dazzling being robed in lightening-like garb would cause even the strongest among us to tremble and keel over in fear.

Upon their arrival, the angel did four unique things:

⁵ The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. ⁶ “He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying. ⁷ “Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you.”

One, he comforted the women who found his presence simply nerve-racking; two, he informed them that Jesus was bodily resurrected as prophesied; and three, he challenged them to look inside the empty tomb. Why do this? Better yet, what did they see when they looked in? The same thing Peter and John did later (John 20:6-8): an empty cocoon which had previously held the body of Christ. The only way Jesus got out of those tightly wrapped, heavy grave clothes was to pass right through them! The fourth thing the angel did was to command the women to go and tell what they had witnessed to the disciples. No wonder the women *rushed* (ran) back to the disciples to tell them the Lord had risen! They saw the proof of the resurrection. They analyzed the evidence and this changed everything.

Matthew is the only gospel writer to include what happened next:

⁸ And they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy and ran to report it to His disciples. ⁹ And behold, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they came up and

236 pain; cp. Job 6:2; IG II, 467, 81 ζημία; Epict. 1, 7, 5 τὰ ψευδῆ; SIG 578, 42 τ. νόμον; Pr 1:12; EpArist 215; Just., D. II, 7, 3) τὴν ἀμαρτίαν τ. κόσμου J 1:29, 36 v.l.; 1 J 3:5 (Is 53:12 Aq., s. PKatz, VetusT 8, '58, 272; cp. 1 Km 15:25; 25:28). Pass. Ac 8:33a (Is 53:8); Eph 4:31. Fig. *take*, in order to make someth. out of the obj. 1 Cor 6:15.

④ to make a withdrawal in a commercial sense, *withdraw, take*, ext. of 2 αἶρεις ὁ οὐκ ἔθηκας Lk 19:21f (banking t.t.: JBernays, Ges. Abh. I 1885, 272f; JSmith, JTS 29, 1928, 158).

⑤ to keep in a state of uncertainty about an outcome, *keep someone in suspense*, fig. ext. of 1 αἶ. τὴν ψυχὴν τινος J 10:24 (Nicetas, De Manuele Comm. 3, 5 [MPG CXXXIX 460a]: ἕως τίνος αἶρεις, Σαρακηνέ, τὰς ψυχὰς ἡμῶν; The expr. αἶ. τὴν ψυχὴν w. different mng. Ps 24:1; 85:4; 142:8; Jos., Ant. 3, 48).

⑥ to raise a ship's anchor for departure, *weigh anchor, depart*, ext. of 1, abs. (cp. Thu. et al.; Philo, Mos. 1, 85; Jos., Ant. 7, 97; 9, 229; 13, 86 ἄρας ἀπὸ τῆς Κρήτης κατέπλευσεν εἰς Κυλίκιαν) Ac 27:13.—Rydbeck 155f; B. 669f. DELG s.v. 1 ἀείρω. M-M. TW.⁹

took hold of His feet and worshiped Him.¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and take word to My brethren to leave for Galilee, and there they will see Me.”

Somewhere between the tomb the location of the disciples, Jesus appeared to them in bodily, not spiritual form. He was not some ethereal, or hallucinatory form, but a highly tangible body they could touch as they humbly, and logically, worshipped at His nail-scarred feet. And like the angel, Jesus, in classic, loving fashion, counseled these fine women not to fear but to tell His brethren, the disciples, they could meet Him where He started His ministry: in Galilee.

Don't you know they cried with joy as they ran as fast as they could to tell the men they had just seen the risen Lord! Such is the nature of the committed. They worship Jesus, no matter what, and they waste no time in telling others “He is risen!” Are you a member of this godly group? If so, then you have a historical story of all stories to tell the world. Jesus defeated sin, death, and the Devil and now quite alive and ready to turn repentant sinners into saints. So, I give you permission. Run, don't walk, to share the good news.

As you go forth realize that not everyone is going to excitedly embrace the historical theological reality of Christ's resurrection ... no matter how many viable, tenable, and logical proofs you put before them. We learn this sad truth in the closing part of this narrative where we bump into men we've seen before ...

The Crafty Ones (Matthew 28:11-15)

These religiously minded men, these men in love with the form of religion buy adept at denying the evidences for the work and revelation of God, would not, for a moment, drop their vain religion and embrace no matter what evidences were presented to them. Read and and you will see what I mean:

¹¹ Now while they were on their way, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all that had happened. ¹² And when they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, ¹³ and said, “You are to say, ‘His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.’ ¹⁴ “And if this should come to the governor's ears, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble.” ¹⁵ And they took the money and did as they had been instructed; and this story was widely spread among the Jews, and is to this day.

These religious leaders merely hatched a conspiracy theory regarding the missing body of Jesus. Had His body not actually been missing, all they would have needed to do was produce it; however, they could not do this because it really was gone. They were left scrambling to devise a plausible story so they could keep their positions of power, places of prestige, and lucrative jobs. But it was a weak story at best. Let's think about it logically.

- You mean to tell me, all the guards fell asleep?
- You mean to tell me, no one was a light sleeper? I'm one of those. Eleven disciples (skilled mostly as fishermen, not commandos) invading my sleeping area would have most certainly aroused me had I been a guard.

- You mean to tell me, not one disciple snapped a dry stick with his sandal or accidentally kicked one rock into another one, or slipped on some loose shale?
- You mean to tell me, not one man heard that massive stone rolling away?
- You mean to tell me, a group of cowardly disciples all of a sudden became brave enough to dare to take on between ten to twenty heavily armed Roman soldiers.
- You mean to tell me, you the soldiers knew the disciples of Jesus stole His body? How could they *possibly* know this information if they slumbered?

Friend, when you start devising arguments to deconstruct the resurrection, your position will be the one facing deconstruction. Further, when you retreat into various objections to the resurrection, your objections will not be historical and logical but simply philosophical ... and most likely illogical. After interacting with the powerful arguments for the resurrection of Jesus from Gary Habermas, Charles Hartshorne, whom the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* labels as “one of the most important philosophers of religion and meta-physicians of the twentieth century,”¹⁰ states, “I can neither explain away the evidences to which Habermas appeals, nor can I simply agree with Flew’s or Hume’s positions ... My metaphysical bias is against resurrections.”¹¹ Translated: Don’t bother my finely tuned mind with the facts. My presupposition is miracles like resurrections just don’t happen in our world. One thing is sure about crafty people like Hartshorne, who, I’m sure is a really great man possessing a fine mind: *Christ’ life is not his life.*

If all of this describes you, I can tell you that one thing is sure. The same resurrected Lord who revealed Himself to those women and beleaguered disciples waits to reveal Himself to you so that you can say with confidence, for the first time in your life: *His life has given me life, life eternal.*¹² Today, you might be like that dead bulb in the pot. And like that bulb you are desperately in need of one thing: life giving water which can only come from the good hand of the risen Savior, Jesus.

Anyone thirsty right now and ready for a drink of all drinks?

¹⁰ *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Fall 2004 ed., s.v. “Charles Hartshorne,” (by Dan Dombrowski) <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2004/entries/hartshorne/>.¹⁰

¹¹ Terry L. Miethe, ed., *Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987): 142.

¹² Along these lines, I would direct you to read chapter six of J.P. Moreland’s fine work titled *Scaling the Secular City* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987): 159-184. Excellent discussion concerning the resurrection’s reality.