

The Wednesday Word, May 8, 2019: So, the Disciples Stole Christ's Body?

In a desperate attempt to explain away the resurrection, the soldiers who guarded the tomb were bribed to say that, while they were sleeping, the disciples came and stole the body (Matthew 28:12-13).

Yeah right! That won't stand up in court! How did they know what had happened if they were sleeping?

However, if the disciples did, in fact, steal the body, why would they willingly die awful deaths to affirm their absolute belief that Jesus was resurrected?

Church tradition tells us how these so-called body stealers and their friends died. Warning! The following is not pretty.

1. Matthew. Suffered martyrdom in Ethiopia, killed by a sword wound.
2. Mark. Died in Alexandria, Egypt after being dragged by horses through the streets until he was dead.
3. Luke. Although not of the original 12, was hanged in Greece as a result of his powerful preaching to the lost.
4. John. He was the only one who lived to old age and was not martyred. Tradition has it that he survived being boiled in oil. He was imprisoned on the island of Patmos where he wrote the Book of Revelation ...was later freed and went to Turkey and served as a church leader.
5. Peter. He was crucified upside down on an x shaped cross. He told his tormentors that he felt unworthy to die in the same way that Jesus had died.
6. James. Again, not one of the original 12 but the Lord's half-brother and spokesman for the church in Jerusalem. He was thrown a hundred feet down from the southeast pinnacle of the Temple when he refused to deny his faith in Christ. When they discovered that he survived the fall, his enemies beat James to death with a club.
7. James. One of the Sons of Zebedee was a fisherman by trade when Jesus called him to the ministry. He was put to death by the sword at Jerusalem, Acts 12:2.
8. Bartholomew. Also known as Nathaniel. He was a missionary to Asia. He witnessed for our Lord in present day Turkey. Bartholomew was martyred for his preaching in Armenia where he was flayed to death by a whip.
9. Andrew. He Was crucified on an x-shaped cross in Patras, Greece. After being whipped severely by seven soldiers they tied his body to the cross with cords to prolong his agony. His followers reported that, when he was led toward the cross, Andrew saluted it in these words, "I have long desired and expected this happy hour." He continued to preach to his tormentors for two days until he died.
10. Thomas. He was speared to death in India during one of his missionary trips to bring the Gospel.
11. Jude. He was killed with arrows when he refused to deny his faith in the resurrected Christ.
12. Matthias. The apostle chosen to replace the traitor Judas Iscariot. He was stoned and then beheaded.

To my friends who distain the truth of the resurrection of Christ I would ask... Are you really

saying that these same disciples crept in and stole the body and then falsely claimed that Jesus had risen? Why then did they continue to perpetrate this so called fraud ... even in the grim face of violent deaths?

It is because they knew they served the living, resurrected Saviour. They knew their redeemer lived and so they willingly died for Him and the truth of His cause (1 Peter 4:12-13).

His resurrection proves that He has forever exhausted all the penalty due to the sins of the believer. He was raised again because He had secured our justification (Hebrews 1:3; Romans 3:24). How the Devil hates this message and assaults those who bring it.

May we pray for the persecuted churches in India, Pakistan, Myanmar, Nepal, China and Africa to mention but a few.

In these Last Days we are being called to stronger than ever involvement with the cause of Christ.

And that's the Gospel Truth!