

## Searching for the Tomb of Christ

I hope that you will forgive me for deviating from our series of lessons on The Revelation. Sometimes there are events which are important enough that such deviations are necessary. One such event is the “documentary” that Discovery Channel did which claimed to have found the “family tomb” of Jesus. I want to take just a few minutes today to discuss this.

There are several problems that I see with the arguments that were made in this program. First of all, the author never showed that this was, indeed, a family tomb. This was asserted without any sort of proof. Now it may very well be a family tomb, but without further evidence this cannot be asserted as fact. If this is not a family tomb then the statistics that were quoted are totally absurd.

Next, it appears that this documentary was performed in the same way that much junk science is performed today. Rather than investigate the evidence to test the hypothesis a conclusion was drawn in the beginning and evidence presented in such a way as to be compelling to those who cannot see through the smoke and mirrors.

In the documentary a portion of Matthew 28:11-15 is mentioned as supporting evidence. Let’s look at this Scripture and then I’ll discuss how this does not fit with the argument of the documentary. This Scripture says:

- (11) Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.
- (12) And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,
- (13) Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him *away* while we slept.
- (14) And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.
- (15) So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

Let’s look at this Scripture closely and notice what the context is. To do this we need to look back at Matthew 27:62-66, which says:

- (62) Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,
- (63) Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.
- (64) Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.
- (65) Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make *it* as sure as ye can.
- (66) So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

So we see then that there was a purpose for the soldiers being put at the entrance to the tomb. The Jews did not want the disciples of Christ to claim that Jesus had risen from the dead.

This brings a very important question to mind which was not at all addressed by the documentary. The central theme of Christianity is that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. If Christ is not risen then our faith is in vain (1 Corinthians 15:14).

Let's suppose, then, that the accusation of the Jews was correct and the disciples did steal the body of Christ. What would have been the purpose? Wouldn't the purpose have been that a dead body would discredit the claims that Jesus is alive? Would it be logical then to have buried him in a family tomb? Wouldn't it have been more likely to have hid the body somewhere that the Jews would never find? If the body were put in a family tomb wouldn't this have been found out? Wouldn't this have easily been used to discredit the entire Christian movement?

You see, this entire premise just doesn't make sense. The claims of the disciples that Jesus is alive could only be substantiated if there were no body to be found.

This documentary went even further into heresy. The Jesus that was buried in the tomb had a son. In the documentary they indicated that in John 19:25-27 Jesus may have been speaking to Mary Magdalene and his son may have been the disciple that Jesus loved. One needs only to read the Scripture to see that this is not what it says at all. This Scripture says:

- (25) Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.
- (26) When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!
- (27) Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own *home*.

First of all the Scripture clearly says that Jesus was talking to his mother. Even though Mary Magdalene was there she was not the one he spoke to. Furthermore we're told who the disciple that Jesus loved is. John 21:20-24 says:

- (20) Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?
- (21) Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what *shall* this man *do*?
- (22) Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee? follow thou me.
- (23) Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee?
- (24) This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.

You see, the writer of the Gospel According to St. John is the disciple that Jesus loved. There is little dispute that St. John is the author of this book. So, then, it is John that took Mary into his own home and treated her as if she were his own mother.

Within the documentary there is also a great leap of faith in claiming that an ossuary labeled Mariamne is the body of Mary Magdalene. At the end of this documentary this is stated as if it is a foregone conclusion. This assertion is based on an argument that Mary Magdalene is referred to as Mariamne in a text of questionable origin and authenticity at best. Even if Mary Magdalene was referred to as Mariamne it does not prove that this is, indeed, her body.

This documentary is an attempt to discredit the resurrection of Jesus, just as the Jews tried to discredit the resurrection in the beginning. The truth is, though, that the body of Jesus will never be found. He is not there for he is risen. How do I know? Because he lives within my heart, and in the heart of every believer throughout the world.

Could there be a tomb with the family of Jesus, including his mother and his brothers? Certainly, but the body of Jesus will not be there. Furthermore, the body of Mary Magdalene would not be there. After all, as was pointed out in the documentary, if Jesus had been married to Mary Magdalene and had a son (and I assert that this is pure blasphemy) then this would have been a well-kept secret, and Mary and her son would not have been placed in the same tomb as the brethren of Christ.

The evidence, then, is overwhelming that this is NOT the tomb of Jesus of Nazareth. This should, then, be a wakeup call to Christians to the fact that Satan is still out there trying to discredit Jesus. It should let us know that the time is soon approaching when Satan will appear to replicate the virgin birth, the death, burial, and resurrection. Do not believe it. Jesus is the ONLY way to Heaven. If you've never received him as your personal Savior then I invite you now to call upon the Father, believing that Jesus died and was resurrected so that you might have eternal life with him.

Yours in Christ,

Bro. John Rich