

Rome and the Resurrection

April 15th & 16th, 2017

Matthew 28:1-15

Roman guards, in fear, “*trembled and became like dead men*”!

- ❖ The Roman guards were soldiers that were not easily intimidated.
- ❖ The Roman guards reported what had happened to the chief priests – they could not tell their Roman authorities or they would be disciplined or even killed.
- ❖ The soldiers had to be paid off to lie about the resurrection of Christ.

Many are so blinded by their religious belief, or lack of it, that they cannot admit the truth of the resurrection. They would rather believe a lie than acknowledge and celebrate the truth that ...

“He is Risen!”

Rome was a pluralistic nation.

- ❖ Rome had absorbed the deities and gods of the lands that they conquered.
 - The Pantheon housed many gods.
 - Romans had personal shrines to various gods in their homes.
 - Rome saw religion as a source of Social Order.
 - Rome allowed Judaism as a means of keeping peace.

Jesus was just another Jew to the Romans.

- ❖ The Romans had no knowledge of the prophecies that Jesus fulfilled, or of the fact that God promised the Messiah, Emmanuel, God incarnate, to redeem a people for Himself, both Jews and Gentiles!

Jesus’ life had touched some of the Roman soldiers who observed the power of God in Him!

- ❖ The Centurion in Capernaum was a Roman military officer in charge of approximately 100 men.
 - He asked Jesus to heal his servant who was paralyzed and suffering.
 - Matthew 8:5-13
- ❖ The Centurion at the cross proclaimed, *“Truly this was the Son of God!”*
 - Matthew 27:54
- ❖ The Centurion, Cornelius, *“was a devout man who feared God.”*
 - He believed when Peter preached the Gospel to him *“...you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea...they put [Jesus] to death by hanging Him on a tree, but God raised Him on the third day...”*
 - Acts 10

Jesus had predicted His death and resurrection on several occasions!

Matthew 16:21 “From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.”

Matthew 17:9 “And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, ‘Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead.’”

Matthew 17:22-23 “As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, ‘The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day.’ ...”

Matthew 20:18-19 “See, we are going up to Jerusalem. And the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and He will be raised on the third day.”

Matthew 26:2 “You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.”

Matthew 26:31-32 “Then Jesus said to them, ‘You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, “I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.” But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.’”

- *Matthew 28:16-20 “Go therefore and make disciples...”*

The Resurrection is the crux of Christianity and distinguishes us from every other religious belief system in the world!

“Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,’”

John 11:25

Endnote:

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