



Links Players

From Atheism to Christ! - Explaining An Empty Tomb

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. (Luke 24:1-6, ESV)

What is the greatest shot you have ever seen? For some, the one iron struck by Nicklaus on the 17th at Pebble Beach in the 1972 U. S. Open is the best! For others, the chip on the 16th green by Tiger in the 2005 Masters exceeds all the greatest golf shots ever executed. As Vern exclaimed, "In your life, have you ever seen anything like that?"

Early in this debate, it becomes apparent that some subjectivity is involved in the discussion—the greatest shot for one comes in second for another!

Contrary to all the rhetoric over the years that "all things are relative," Christians argue that some things, like "the greatest shot ever," are relative to the person.

While Christians concede that point, they also reason that other things are objective and universal, applying to all who have ever lived regardless of the years in which they exist. As C.S. Lewis once quipped, "We don't discover the truth by looking at a clock."

This is to say there is a "God's eye" perspective on everything from ethics to facts of history and the content of truth. God has pre-interpreted reality and communicated that to his creatures in Scripture.

Lee Strobel examines the most important question in the history of mankind—Did Jesus Christ die and rise in an immortal body to provide forgiveness of sins and life everlasting to those who repent and believe? Or, asked another way, "Why was that tomb empty?" Lee is right! Everything hangs on this!

Everyone agrees that the "tomb was empty." This raises the all-important question—"Why was it empty?" The historical reality of an "empty tomb" does not explain why it was empty.

In the first century, some authorities argued that the disciples "stole the body." Of course, that explanation is highly implausible. The probability of the disciples stealing the body to live lives of unspeakable suffering and martyrdom is unreasonable.

Furthermore, Jewish and Roman authorities in the first century were entirely vested in "keeping Jesus dead." In other words, they had nothing to gain from an "empty tomb."

Suffice it to say here that the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most cogent explanation of the "empty tomb." Furthermore, once we discover this reality, we begin to understand the remainder of the "riddle of life" rightly.

Sadly, many refuse to consider the evidence because they begin with the presuppositions (i.e., assumptions) that a supernatural world does not exist, miracles cannot happen, and "dead men don't rise to live forever."

When anyone begins with that naturalistic worldview and remains consistent with their position, they will never, tragically, see the truth. There is, after all, such a thing as "willful blindness."

In response, Christians boldly say, "He is risen, and we are forgiven."

Prayer: Father, give us the boldness to proclaim the reality of the resurrection!

READING - Matthew 27: 57-66 and Matthew 28: 1-15

OPENING QUESTIONS:

What is the greatest shot you have ever seen?

1. Did the women conclude that Jesus was risen by merely observing the "empty tomb?" If not, then what events persuaded them that he was alive?

2. What alternative explanation for an empty tomb was given by the Roman guards and Jewish authorities? Why?

3. Using any texts from Scripture, discuss among yourselves the significance of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.
