Grace Baptist (Pinetree Town & Country Club) 20 April 1996 Dr. Rick Griffith

Crossroads International Church Singapore 16 April 2017 Single Message

NIV; PPT uploaded at the Topical Preaching link at BibleStudyDownloads.org 25 Minutes

Title

**Who Moved the Stone?**

***Topical Message***

Matt 24 Reading

**Topic:** Resurrection

**Subject:** Proofs for the resurrection of Christ

**Complement:** lead us to believe this is a historical fact.

**Purpose:** The listeners will believe intellectually that the resurrection took place.

**Note**: This message was originally preceded by Dr. Wee’s proofs that Christ indeed did die and followed by Dr. Poulson’s evangelistic closing (implications of the event).

**Meditation:** 1 Corinthians 15:58

**Reading:** Matthew 24

**Song:** Christ the Lord is Risen Today

# Introduction

### Attention: In February 2007 members of the media gathered at a news conference in New York to photograph two ossuaries (chests with human skeletal remains) said to have been found in a 2000-year-old tomb in Talpiot Jerusalem in 1980 that may have held the bones of Jesus and Mary Magdalene. Filmmaker James Cameron unveiled the artifacts in New York to promote a documentary film that claims scientists may have found the lost tomb of Jesus Christ and that—to support Dan Brown’s claim in *The Da Vinci Code—*Jesus and Mary Magdalene may have had a son named Judah. Time and again BBC and other news agencies report that archaeologists in Jerusalem have discovered the bones of Jesus of Nazareth. Is this true?

Da Vinci Code

Ossuary

What’s the Diff Black

1: Dead

(2 slides)

### Interest: This is no idle question, for since the first days of Christianity believers have claimed a resurrection for Jesus Christ. In fact, the resurrection of Jesus Christ and Christianity stand or fall together.

Difference it makes

#### Why? Christians claim to have a living relationship with the person of Christ. No one can have a relationship with a dead man.

World Religions

#### No other religion makes a claim of an empty tomb for its founder. If the claim of a resurrection is false then over one billion people have believed a lie (which is certainly possible, but would be sad indeed!).

What’s the Diff 1 Cor

#### Without a resurrection, Christianity would be the most vicious lie of history—for even today 245 people per day all give their lives for Christ.

833 martyrs daily

#### A dead Jesus invalidates all that he taught. He claimed to be “the resurrection and the life.”

Resurrect & Life

#### In other words, the resurrection is an issue of utmost importance!

### Background: So, let’s evaluate what we know are the facts.

Facts

#### You are all thinking people, skilled in looking at facts in science, law, and business. I trust that you can look at evidence and weigh it for what it is like many have in the generations preceding you. I was trained this way in business school myself, being forced to make decisions based on balance sheets, cost analyses, and the like.

Thinking people

#### The facts show at least six precautions taken to assure that Christ would not rise again:

##### Fact 1: Christ was dead. If anyone knew how to kill, it was the Romans. One remnant of a crucified man shows the ankle wholly pierced with a massive nail.

##### Fact 2: He was buried in a solid rock tomb according to the common practice of the time—a cave carved out of a wall of rock with no entry except a meter and a half door.

2: Tomb

(2 slides)

##### Fact 3: The body was wrapped with a 45 kg (100-pound) encasement of grave clothes. These linen strips and gummy spices hardened into a cocoon case much like a mummy. The friends of Jesus would have had a hard time carrying such a heavy load.

3: Wrapped

(2 slides)

##### Fact 4: Engineers have calculated that a stone of nearly 2 tons would have been required to cover the 1.5-meter opening. The Bible says that after two days of burial this was rolled uphill away from the entire tomb area!

4: Stone

(2 slides)

##### Fact 5: A Roman guard was placed at the tomb to protect the body from being stolen. Some imagine a few men in miniskirts “guarding the tomb.” Hardly! A Roman guard was a 4 to 16-man force capable of withstanding an advancing army of enemy troops. These guys were tough dudes!

5: Guard

(4 slides)

##### Fact 6: The seal. After the guard inspected the body and rolled the stone into place, they stretched a cord across it, fastening it with sealing clay at either end. On the clay in the middle was stamped the seal of the governor. Breaking his signet would incur the wrath of Roman law.

6: Seal

(2 slides)

### But something happened two days later that changed the course of history.

#### Today’s date testifies to it, for the date at the top—2017, “in the year of our Lord”—bears witness to the events of that day.

2017

#### In fact, you even have each Sunday off work due to belief in the resurrection, which eventually made Sunday a rest day!

Sunday

Cross

### So, what happened with the body of Jesus?

#### Some have claimed that what happened was not a resurrection, but the so-called eyewitnesses went to the wrong tomb. Sounds plausible, especially for people mourning over the death of a loved one. I’m not sure how that will make angels appear at that wrong tomb, though!

Angels & Mary

Wrong Tomb

#### But the Jewish authorities didn’t have misty eyes! When it was proclaimed that Jesus arose, all these unbelieving authorities had to do was to bring people to the right tomb and display the body of Jesus!

Pharisee

### No, somebody moved stone. You’re thinking, educated people. Let’s think through this together: *Who* moved the massive stone over Christ’s tomb (subject)?

Who Moved?

# I. Robbers didn’t move the stone.

MP

[Random thieves certainly did not fake a resurrection.]

Why am I so convinced that grave robbers didn't take the body?

One author notes, "Aside from there being zero explicit historical evidence to support such a notion, there is strong evidence from history to show that this would not have possibly happened, and that comes from an artifact known as the Nazareth Inscription. It likely dates to either the reign of Julius Caesar, or perhaps Augustus — at about 30 BC – [14] AD. This is what it says:"

Caesar
(3 slides)

## The well-known edict of Caesar proclaimed the death penalty for those who disturbed graves.

Possible?

## Besides, there was no incentive or wealth buried with Jesus—plus they would have to risk their lives against the Roman contingent. And John says that the headpiece on Jesus was folded by itself. Why would robbers leave any of the grave clothes?

Romans?

Neat clothes?

# II. Disciples didn’t move the stone.

MP

[The followers of Jesus certainly did not fake a resurrection.]

## Why not? They were least expecting a resurrection! Nearly every disciple fled when Jesus was crucified and then locked themselves up like scared chickens in a hen house.

Despond

## But within a few days they changed from fearful men to fearless men boldly proclaiming the resurrection—and ten of the eleven disciples died a martyr’s death for their faith. Would you give your life for a lie? That’s not courage but insanity!

## Jesus’ followers were mostly fishermen by trade. Can we really believe that such men could fight through a Roman guard and move a 2-ton stone? You’ve heard of the Jewish 6-day war? This would have been the Jewish 6-second war!

Hands

## Even still, the rumor that the leaders spread was that the Roman soldiers saw the disciples steal the body while they were asleep. Tell me, friends, have you ever seen *anybody steal anything* when you were asleep?

Guards floored

## Do you know the penalty for Roman soldiers who fell asleep on duty? Especially at night? Automatic execution by having his clothes set on fire! These soldiers would be banging each other on the head to keep awake! Not one of these guards would have been asleep—let alone the whole bunch of them!

Pilate

(So, Jesus’ disciples didn’t move the stone. What about the unbelieving authorities? No, the…)

# III. Jews didn’t move the stone.

Jews

[The religious authorities in Jerusalem certainly didn’t want to fake a resurrection.]

Close-Up

## They were the ones to try to prevent the stone from being moved!

Jews Standing

## The Jewish leaders were the ones who requested the Roman guard.

## If the Jews took the body not anticipating that others would see this as a resurrection, all they had to do was to publicly show the body! They felt that a fake resurrection would lead to even more followers of Jesus. No one out of envy aids his opponent!

Grave Clothes

(So, neither the disciples nor Jewish authorities moved that stone. What about the Romans? No…)

# IV. Romans didn’t move the stone.

MP

[Guards funded by the occupying power had no interest in suicide by not doing their job.]

## The Roman soldiers were the ones commanded by Pilate to guard the tomb!

## Do you know the penalty for a Roman soldier who let the seal get broken? Execution again! You can be sure they guarded it for fear of death itself.

## As hard as they tried to protect it, though, the Bible says that an earthquake occurred, the seal was broken and then the guards became the scared chickens. In fact, they were the first witnesses to the resurrection! They told the religious leaders about it and even made some money off by taking a bribe. The Jewish authorities also protected their lives.

## The 2016 movie “Risen” accurately depicts the plight of the Romans who needed to find the body to prevent the resurrection story from being spread.

Risen
(4 slides)

(No grave robber, disciple, Jewish leader, or Roman soldier would have stolen the body. And if an unbeliever ever found a body, the enemies of Christianity would have paraded it through Jerusalem to kill this new faith in the womb. And who would have become a believer in Jesus by seeing a dead body—or even die for a hoax? No, it stands to reason that…)

# V. Jesus Christ moved the stone!

MP

[Our Lord is the only reasonable option for the empty tomb—so he rose from the dead!]

## And why not? Several times before his death he predicted that he would die and rise again.

Large Stone

## But you say, “Maybe he did it, but he didn’t actually die.” Suppose Jesus wasn’t really dead.

### No, he was up all night in six trials that included being beaten beyond recognition…

### Was so weak he couldn’t even carry his own cross…

### Was crucified with seven-inch nails driven through his hands and feet…

### Received a spear thrust into his heart…

### Was put into a 100-pound cocoon of grave cloths…

### Laid in a dark, cold, wet tomb with a nearly 2-ton doorway…

## But, instead of all of these things killing him, it healed him?

### He split out of the clothes…

MI

### He pushed the stone uphill away from the tomb…

### He conquered the entire group of guards…

### He appeared to his disciples and never even got any pity from them?

## Sorry, I don’t have enough faith to believe that! That’s even more miraculous than a resurrection!

# Conclusion

### Since no person would have or could have moved the stone, a supernatural resurrection must have occurred (Main Idea)! We have exhausted all reasonable options. Jesus rose!

### I appeal to you as intelligent friends. Christianity is based on the most incredible event of history—the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Garden Tomb

### In the 1920s, the skeptic Frank Morison set out on a quest to disprove the resurrection. His research ended in proving what he tried to destroy, so instead he wrote the classic book, *Who Moved the Stone?*

He is Not Here!

Morison Book

### Why is this important? It relates to the message we preach called the gospel, or Good News. This news includes the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

Gospel Circle

Garden Tomb

### It is based in history as you can visit the tomb today to see it for yourself.

### It’s not an issue as much as it is a Person—the Person of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

Jesus

### Jesus came alive and never died since. That means that he is as alive today as you or me. It also means that as God himself he can change your life as a living Saviour.

Resurrect Life!

### As he reached out his hand to give his followers bread, so he is reaching out to give you himself as the True Bread from heaven right now. Will you accept him?

Jesus & Bread

**Possible Illustrations**

Dateline Jerusalem (RESURRECTION)

Wellington’s defeat of Napoleon (RESURRECTION)

# Preliminary Questions

**Verses Questions**

# Context: What did the author record just prior to this passage?

# Purpose: Why is this passage in the Bible?

# Background: What historical context helps us understand this passage?

# Questions

# Tentative Subject/Complement Statements

Text

# Possible Illustrations

### Text

# Possible Applications

### Text

**Who Moved the Stone?**

**Purpose or Desired Listener Response (Step 4)**

The listeners will

**Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)

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#### The facts show at least six precautions taken to assure that Christ would not rise again:

### But something happened two days later that changed the course of history.

#### Today’s date testifies to it, for the date at the top—2017, “in the year of our Lord”—bears witness to the events of that day.

#### In fact, you even have tomorrow off work due to belief in the resurrection, which eventually made Sunday a rest day!

### So, what happened?

#### Some have claimed that what happened was not a resurrection, but the so-called eyewitnesses went to the wrong tomb. Sounds plausible, especially for people mourning over the death of a loved one.

#### But the Jewish authorities didn’t have misty eyes! When it was proclaimed that Jesus arose, all these unbelieving authorities had to do was to bring people to the right tomb and display the body of Jesus!

### No, somebody moved stone. You’re thinking, educated people. Let’s think through this together: *Who* moved the massive stone over Christ’s tomb (subject)?

(*Who* moved the massive stone over Christ’s tomb? Well, the…)

# I. Robbers didn’t move the stone.

# II. Disciples didn’t move the stone.

# III. Jews didn’t move the stone.

# IV. Romans didn’t move the stone.

# V. Jesus Christ moved the stone!

# Conclusion

### Since no human would have or could have moved the stone, a supernatural resurrection must have occurred (Main Idea).

### Main Points

### What difference does Christ’s resurrection mean to you?



**Rick Griffith**

16 April 2017

Resurrection Sunday (Easter)

**Who Moved the Stone?**

***Topical Message***

# Introduction

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### This is no idle question, for since the first days of Christianity believers have claimed a resurrection for Jesus Christ. In fact, the resurrection of Jesus Christ and Christianity stand or fall together.

### Six facts:

#### Fact 1:

#### Fact 2:

#### Fact 3:

#### Fact 4:

#### Fact 5:

#### Fact 6:

### So, what happened?

### *Who* moved the massive stone over Christ’s tomb?

# I. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ didn’t move the stone.

# II. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ didn’t move the stone.

# III. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ didn’t move the stone.

# IV. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ didn’t move the stone.

# V. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ moved the stone!

# Conclusion

### Since no human would have or could have moved the stone, a supernatural resurrection must have occurred (Main Idea).

### What difference does Christ’s resurrection mean to you?

**Thought Questions**

1. Who do YOU think moved the stone at the tomb of Jesus? Why?

Text

Text

Text

Text

1. How should YOUR life be different once you believe that Jesus rose from the dead?

Text

Text

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