

# **The Roman Soldiers:** *We Were There!*



Find out what really happened at the tomb of Jesus, from the *only* eyewitnesses present.

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## **The Roman Soldiers: “We Were There!”**

According to the *Gospel of Matthew*, a group of Roman Soldiers, via a Jewish request, had been assigned by the Roman governor to guard the tomb of the recently deceased Jesus. One night, while on guard duty, the zombie Jesus popped out, the soldiers got scared, deserted their post, ran back into the city, and reported to the Jewish priests & rabbis. Matthew then claims that these priests & rabbis made up an excuse for the soldiers to use, bribing the soldiers to claim that while they were asleep, with their eyes closed, they saw the Christians come in and steal the body. Or so Matthew claims. (Matthew 28:4, 11-15)

Matthew’s claims just seem to lack the ring of truth. Let’s educate ourselves a bit about the REAL Roman guard. From famed Christian author Josh McDowell’s book *Evidence That Demands A Verdict*<sup>1</sup> we learn the following from McDowell’s many and varied sources...

The guard numbered from ten to thirty men.....they were not the kind of men to jeopardize their Roman necks by sleeping on their post...they were Roman soldiers, not mere Jewish temple guards...The soldiers had very strict discipline...the punishment for deserting one’s post was death...the fear of punishments produced faultless attention to duty, especially in the night watches...refusing to protect an officer was punishable by death...one soldier who had fallen asleep on duty was executed by being hurled from the cliff of the Capitolium... (pp 218 – 224)

Based upon these facts, let’s go back now and analyze Matthew’s obvious fiction. Let’s tear apart, examine, read between the lines, THINK, and redo Matthew’s “account.” There would have been “ten to thirty men,” so we’ll split it down the middle and go with twenty. Since the penalty for falling asleep while on guard duty was DEATH, the last thing these twenty guards would have admitted to anybody is that they had fallen ASLEEP. Rather than being protected by such an excuse, such an excuse would have killed them, and not with a painless death. Therefore, ***Roman soldiers would have NEVER used falling asleep on duty as an excuse***, and thus we’ve uncovered Matthew’s first mistake.

These were professionally trained, full-time ROMAN soldiers, not some rag-tag rent-a-cop Jewish temple police. If they were going to go anywhere when the doo doo hit the fan at the tomb, they, as ROMAN soldiers, would have gone on their ROMAN training, by going to their ROMAN commanders, to seek ROMAN help to achieve a ROMAN solution to the problem. ***Roman soldiers would not have gone running to Jewish rabbis for help***, as Matthew claims! This is Matthew’s second mistake.

In fact, they would not have gone “running” AT ALL, to a Jewish rabbi or a Roman commander, as according to McDowell, “the punishment for deserting one’s post was DEATH”. These were soldiers, Roman soldiers, and if they had “run away” to ANYONE, they would have been put to death. Thus, Matthew’s third mistake.

It is interesting that, out of all the claimed resurrection accounts contained in the New Testament, the ONLY time spectators are said to have run away in fear is right here. I think this fiction of

Matthew's was a cowardly attempt to put down Roman soldiers. I think maybe Matthew felt inadequate and weak when compared to Roman soldiers (???sword envy???), and thus took this chance for a cheap, inaccurate put-down. But contrast these men of Rome, conquerors of the world, with the cowardly wimps of Jesus who couldn't even conquer their own fears. All of them ran away like frightened women in a horror movie, deserting Jesus to his fate in the Garden of Gethsemane. Matthew had hung around for so long with this trash, that I guess Matthew thought all men to be as cowardly and dishonest as himself and his Christian cohorts. This slander of the soldiers' bravery makes Matthew's fourth mistake.

And the excuse that the soldiers were given by the Jews to use, in addition getting them executed by their commanders, also makes no sense in and of itself. "You are to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.'" (Mt 28:13) Come, let us reason together, let us THINK !!!!!!!...

- ◆ **IF** they had been asleep, they would never have admitted it, for to admit it would be certain death.
- ◆ **IF** they were executed (from admitting they were sleeping), then their bribe would have been moot to them.
- ◆ **IF** they were asleep, then they had their eyes closed. And IF they had their eyes closed, then they could not see. And IF they could not see, then they could not see the body being carried out. And IF they could not see the body being carried out, then they also could not see WHO was doing the carrying.
- ◆ **IF** they really DID see people stealing the body out of the tomb, then they had their eyes open. And IF their eyes were really open, they must have only been pretending to be asleep. And IF they were pretending to be asleep while watching all this going on, and did not stop it, then they were totally negligent in their guard duty, and would have been executed by their commanders.

And thus we see Matthew's fifth mistake, sixth mistake, seventh mistake... hell, I give up- just count them for yourself from here on out.

I hope you get the point by now. The excuse these Roman soldiers were given to use is totally implausible. Unbelievable. **An excuse that is unbelievable is unusable.** They may just as well have claimed flying cows carried off the body! They would have had no use for such a useless excuse. The only solution that makes sense is that the whole bribery charge was a poor attempt by Matthew to try and smear the eyewitness account by the 20 Roman Soldiers.

A German theologian in the early 1800's also noticed Matthew's "account" lacks the ring of truth. David Friedrich Strauss spent years writing a detailed analysis of Jesus entitled, *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*.<sup>2</sup> His reward for being honest with the data? The Christians got him fired from his job, blacklisted him from all future jobs, and persecuted him till the day he died. Remember- Christianity cares not for discovering the truth, only for "circling the wagons" to defend the same old worn-out doctrines. In other words, don't confuse them with the truth- they already have their minds made up. That's why R&D departments don't exist in schools of theology- there's nothing new allowed to be discovered, only old dogmas to defend.

Listen to what Strauss had to say about the problems in Matthew's story of the Roman Soldiers:

***Regarding Matthew's claim that the Jewish council knew about Jesus' threat to resurrect***

...it is not to be conceived how the Sanhedrists could obtain the information that Jesus was to return to life three days after his death; since ***there is no trace of such an idea having existed even among his disciples***... (the disciples) had not, either before or after the death of Jesus, the slightest anticipation of his resurrection, (therefore) they could not have excited such an anticipation in others. (pp 705,706)

***Regarding the strange behavior of the guards***

But within the narrative also, every feature is full of ***difficulties***, for, according to the expression of Paulus, ***no one of the persons who appear in it, acts in accordance with his character***...It is more astonishing that the guards should have been so easily induced to tell a falsehood which the severity of Roman discipline made so ***dangerous***, as that they had failed in their duty by sleeping on their post. (pp 706, 707)

***Regarding the Jewish council's reaction at the news of Jesus' supposed resurrection***

***How*** could the council, many of whose members were ***Sadducees***,\* receive this as ***credible*** ?...***real*** Sanhedrists, on hearing such an assertion from the soldiers, would have replied with exasperation: 'You lie! You have slept and allowed him to be stolen; but you will have to pay dearly for this, when it comes to be investigated by the procurator.' (p. 707)

\*(NOTE: Sadducees did not believe resurrections were even ***possible***-- see Matthew 22:23)

It is obvious to a thinking individual that much of Matthew's "inspired account" is not even plausible. Too many characters acting ***out of*** character. In short, bad fiction. So let's try to at least resurrect ***something*** from Matthew that ***is*** plausible, from the bits of data we have and from reading between the lines...

## ROMAN SOLDIERS --VS-- CHRISTIAN LIARS: WHO DO YOU TRUST?

**On** *the one hand*, we've got ROMAN SOLDIERS. Twenty Roman soldiers, with no vested interest to protect, no point of view to defend, "they had not the slightest interest in the task to which they were assigned" (McDowell, p. 218-224), with no reason to lie, and no prior known instances of lying. They were the ONLY non-biased, NON-CHRISTIAN witnesses to see how the body actually left the tomb. We have 20 eyewitnesses viewing the tomb, at the very minute in question, claiming a perfectly believable and reasonable explanation for the missing body. They claimed the Christians somehow snuck in and stole the body. Thus, the only REAL eyewitnesses to the supposed resurrection claim the whole thing WAS A HOAX!!! The Christians don't even claim being AT the tomb when the body left it- they claim they were miles away in Jerusalem! (As we are learning, though, they were close enough to steal the body!) Twenty soldiers, EYEWITNESSES, who testify the Christian claim of a resurrection is a lie. We've got brave soldiers guarding their post, who neither fell asleep nor ran away, as either action would have cost them their lives. These brave soldiers saw the Christians sneak in and steal the body away (possibly through deceit and guile, a tactic not unknown to men. See the Jewish historian Josephus' book, *The War of The Jews*.)

**On** *the other hand*, we have CHRISTIANS. We have biased Christian men, with a dogma to defend, possibly in their 80's at the time they wrote the gospels, writing strictly from memory about an event 50 plus years ago in their past. Biased men with BIG vested interests and years of their lives invested in the institution of Christianity. Were these honest & honorable men? Their leader, Peter, thinking it to be in his best interests, trying to look good to Jesus, was the one who had promised (it turned out to be a LIE) he would NEVER desert nor deny Jesus, that he would rather DIE first, and ALL the rest of the Apostles concurred, (Mt 26:33-35). Mere hours later after this brave boast, according to the text, "they all left him, and fled" (Mk 14:50), and Jesus was being led away alone to his bloody death, deserted by his cowardly friends. While this is happening we find the liar Peter lying up a storm, once again, when he thought it to be in his best interests. Peter, the practiced boot-lick, was now trying to kiss up to the winners of the recent struggle, just as he had hours before kissed up to Jesus, before Jesus became a loser. Peter now lies THREE TIMES IN A ROW, and even lies UNDER OATH!!! (Mt 26:72) THIS is the quality of witnesses the Christians put forward to "prove" the resurrection- a man who LIES UNDER OATH. Several weeks later Peter the liar claims to be a personal witness to the resurrection (Acts 2:32), but who but an idiot would trust such an untrustworthy scoundrel? And Peter, being the leader, "as cream rises to the top," was the best of the lot, the others being worse- if that's possible. And according to the Christian's own Bible, years later, well into the Christian movement, Peter and his cohorts were STILL being liars, "not straightforward about the truth of the gospel" (Gal. 2:14).

Some may seek to trivialize these lies that Peter engaged in. But these lies were NOT trivial- these lies cost Jesus his life! If Peter and his cohorts had stood their ground and defended Jesus, (as Roman soldiers would have done) as they had all so bravely promised to do just hours earlier, and had not all run away like the scared cowards they showed themselves to be, history would have been different. But don't give Peter all the blame, there's enough to go around. Theologian David F. Strauss (Strauss, p. 686), quotes the ancient Christian writer Justin as writing in his Apologies I. 50, that on that fateful night not just Peter, but ALL of the disciples lied. They lied by denying they knew Jesus --AND-- they had lied when they denied a few hours prior they would ever do such a thing. Lies upon lies- that's the foundation this religion of lies and liars is based upon.

Remembering the words of Jesus- that someone who can't be trusted in a small thing can't be trusted in a BIG thing either (Lk 16:10), how can *anyone* possibly trust *anything* these liars wrote about the (if true) BIGGEST EVENT IN HUMAN HISTORY? ALL of the Apostles, upon whose testimony the entire resurrection claim is founded, (the resurrection being the VERY

FOUNDATION THE HEART OF THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL RESTS UPON), all of these Apostles are documented liars. With a shaky foundation of SAND like that, as Jesus said, "Great will be the fall of that house" (Mt 7:27). With a ancient tree whose very root is rotten to the core, modern corrupt Christians like the Rev. Jim Jones, Rev. Jimmy Swaggart, Rev. David Koresh and other bad fruit makes sense. As Jesus himself said in Matthew 7: 18-20,

*...nor can a ROTTEN tree produce good fruit...you will know them by their fruits.*

We see in our own age the rotten fruit that Christianity has spawned. Almost daily, some new sex or money scandal concerning "the saints" breaks into the news. The rotten fruit of Christianity has always been obvious. And now, so also is the rotten root. Christianity was started by cowardly liars. They had lied about not denying Jesus, lied about not deserting Jesus, lied about Roman Soldiers deserting their post, and then they lied about seeing a zombie Jesus prowling about. Lies. Nothing but lies. But what else should you expect from Christians, knowing their history?

Not only are all of the Apostles documented multiple LIARS, they may not even qualify as "real CHRISTIANS", as they had denied Jesus!!!

But WHOEVER ((that would include Apostles as well)) shall DENY me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.

(Jesus Christ, Matthew 10:33)

Think of all the thousands of brave Christian men and women, even children, who innocently trusting in what these conniving Apostles had falsely written about Jesus, down through the centuries suffered horrible torture and disfigurement, yet refused to deny their Jesus. Think of all those brave Christians, who when tied to a stake and being burned alive- as their skin was melting off of their charring bodies, looked out at the buckets of cool water waiting to douse the flames, the buckets awaiting only the short utterance, "I deny Jesus". These martyrs, when told to deny Jesus, chose death; even though the very people who wrote the gospels their beliefs are founded upon, took the coward's way out and chose life! And what terrible tortures- fire, the rack, lions, did these Apostles endure, to have denied their Lord? NOTHING!!! Nothing but maybe the chill night air! They weren't tortured at all! These scumbags, at the very first sign of trouble, gladly denied anything to do with that man Jesus. They denied Jesus. They are a disgrace and an embarrassment to the Christian community. They are not even Christians, as Christ promised to deny ANYONE at the final judgment who had denied him. And yet these EX-CHRISTIANS, these

disgusting, lying cowards, are the very “witnesses” who authored much of the *New Testament* modern Christians ignorantly parade around with to “prove” the resurrection of Jesus!!!

As further evidence (as if we need any more) of the lack of credibility among the Apostles of Jesus, these “gentlemen” showed they didn’t even trust each other to tell the truth! Remember “Doubting Thomas” (Jn 20: 24,25)? WHAT did he DOUBT??? The word, and thus the integrity, of his fellow Apostles!!! They didn’t even trust each other, so why the hell should we trust them? Thomas certainly didn’t trust these people, though to him they were his best friends. Are we then to trust them, though to us they are total strangers? People base their actions upon reasons, “cause and effect.” SINCE Thomas refused to trust what his fellow Apostles had said (the ‘effect’), he must have known from past experience that these Apostles were habitual LIARS!!! (the ‘cause’). And thus we have the cause: habitual lying, resulting in the effect: lack of trust. If Thomas didn’t trust these Apostles to tell the truth, neither should we.

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The Christians claim a resurrection: an UNbelievable & UNreasonable explanation for what happened to the body of Jesus. Their only document, The New Testament, offers dubious evidence, was written by documented liars, and has not one Christian eyewitness at the tomb at the time in question who actually saw how the body left the tomb. And these Christian authors, with no evidence or sources or documentation to back up their libel, malign the reputations of hard-working soldiers who are no longer around to defend themselves, accusing them of lying and accepting bribes. Just how did these Christian authors know anyway, years later, what word-for-word details went on in private conversations between the soldiers and anyone??? Their accusation is obviously an unfounded cheap shot meant to ruin the reputations of the ONLY witnesses who actually saw what REALLY went on. It’s time the reputation of these Roman Soldiers be resurrected.

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Twenty eyewitnesses, twenty Roman Soldiers, whose testimony manages to slip past centuries of Christian censorship. Twenty eyewitnesses who, if they were alive today, could tell us:

***We saw the whole thing- we were there.  
Jesus didn’t rise from the dead, the  
entire Christian story is a fraud. The  
Christians created a diversion, lured us  
out of reach of the tomb, but not out of  
eyesight. We saw with our own eyes but too  
late to stop them, the Christians running  
off with the body. Resurrection? Hah! WE  
WERE THERE!***

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- 1) EVIDENCE THAT DEMANDS A VERDICT, Josh McDowell, Campus Crusade, San Bernardino, CA 1972
  - 2) THE LIFE OF JESUS CRITICALLY EXAMINED, David Friedrich Strauss, Sigler Press, Ramsey, NJ 1994