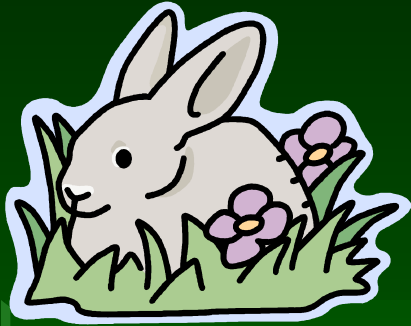




# Happy Resurrection Day

April 2011



# Easter Origins

- *The Oxford English Dictionary says: Easter has a pre-Christian origin.*
- Easter comes from Eostre.
- Eostre was the Spring goddess of fertility.
- Her fertility symbols were the egg & the hare, or bunny.

# Goddess of Fertility

- The rabbit was the symbol of Eostre because the rabbit was the best example of fertility.
- In the time it takes for a woman to have 1 baby, a hare could have 70 offspring.

# Learn Not The Way of the Heathen

- From "Easter and Its Customs", by Christina Hole:
- "Spring heathen rites like those of *Tammuz* were carried forward into Easter customs.

# Tammuz

- The International Standard Bible Dictionary says that Tammuz was the Babylonian god of fertility (symbolized by rabbits and eggs)
- Tammuz is found in Ezekiel 8:13-14 where the Bible speaks of abominations

# Tammuz / Eostre an Abomination

- “Thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen...” Jeremiah 10:2
- “You shall not follow a multitude to do evil.” Exodus 23:2

# Is The Grave The End?



# Prophecies Before Christ

- “Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise.”  
Isaiah 26:19
- “Oh Lord, thou hast brought my soul up from the grave...” Psalm 30:3
- “Them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and contempt.” Daniel 12:2



# Christ Foretold His Resurrection

- “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up...He spake of the temple of his body.” John 2:19, 21
- “I lay down my life that I might take it again...I have power to take it again.” John 10:17-18
- “I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me shall never die.” John 11:25

# He Told His Followers

- Jesus taught his disciples...that he must be killed...and he shall rise the third day. Mark 9:31
- "But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee."

Matthew 26:32,27:63

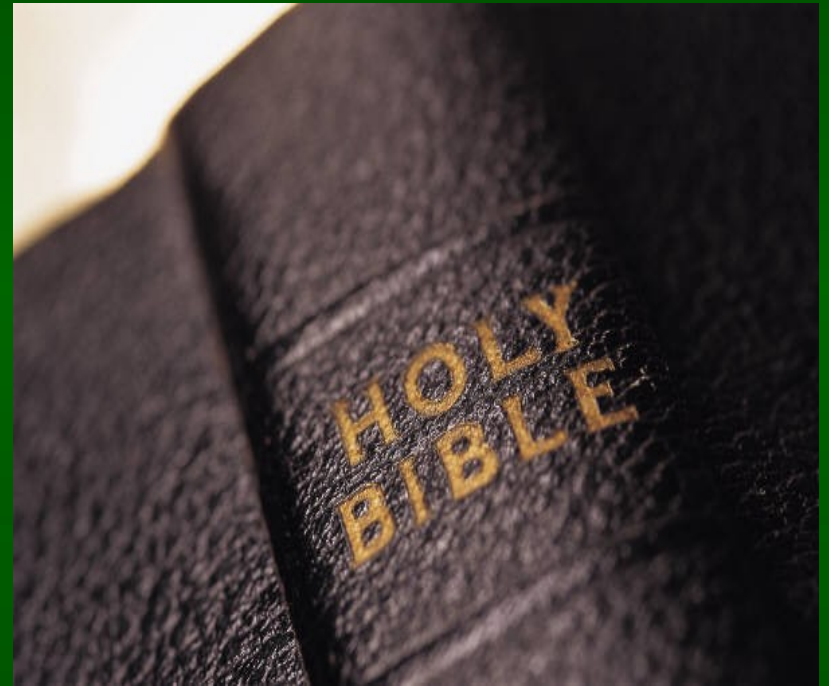
- *None of the disciples were waiting in Galilee for the risen Savior - why?*

# Advance Precautions

- The Chief priests and Pharisees came unto Pilate. Matthew 27:62
- "That deceiver said, while he was yet alive I will rise again after 3 days."  
Matthew 27:63
- "Command therefore that the sepulcher be made *as secure as you can.*" Matthew 27:64-65

# The Biblical Account

“ He is not here.  
For he risen  
as he said.”  
Matthew 28:6



# The Biblical Account (2)

- They departed with fear and great joy.

Matthew 28:7-8

- That is a rare combination of emotions – fear and great joy. How do you explain it?
- “...and Tell his disciples he is risen.”
  - *Why do you have to tell them that he did what he said he was going to do?*
  - *Because they doubted it could happen.*

# False Explanation

- Reported until this day. Matthew 28:11-15
- Matthew was written more than 30 years after the Resurrection took place. The lie about the stolen body was still being told 30 years after Christ resurrected.
- Nearly 2000 years later, 2011, some still repeat 'the paid for lie' that Christ's body was stolen by the disciples.

# The Body Wasn't Stolen

- How come none of Jesus' disciples were arrested for stealing the body? If the Roman guards testified of them doing so and for breaking the Roman seal on Jesus' tomb, the consequences would have been lethal!
- However, none of the disciples or followers were arrested or interrogated!

# Plan To Steal The Body?

- 100 lbs of Aloe and Myrrh
- That adds a lot of weight if you are planning on stealing the body later.
- If you had planned to steal the body, why spend so much to wrap it?
- When stealing the body, why stick around so long unwrapping the body.



# **Not Easy to Get A Body Out of The Grave Clothes**

- Moreover myrrh was a sticky spice that adheres to the body.
- Sticky grave clothes would have been removed with great difficulty.
- This is confirmed as well in the story of Lazarus' resurrection.

# Lazarus Had To Be Helped

- John 11:44 “The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, **“Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”**”
- Note that Lazarus’ grave clothes had to be removed from him! He couldn’t have done it by himself.

# The Roman Guard



- Roman guard - 4 men
- Slept in shifts, changed every 3 hours
- Armed with 6-foot pike, 3-foot thrusting sword, a dagger, and for protection a shield covered with leather and metal work.

# The Roman Guard (2)

- If a Roman guard fell asleep, all of the team was executed.
- History tells us that to set an example, if one of the guard was found sleeping, the entire guard team would be killed, placed in a pile and burned.

**THE ROMAN GUARD WAS NOT ASLEEP!**

# Problems With Theory

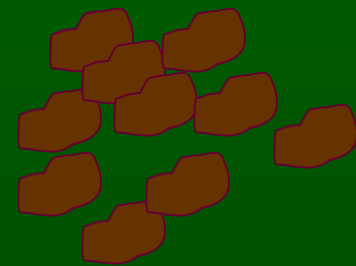
- If Roman soldiers were all asleep, how did they know that it was the disciples who stole the body?
- The stone weighed over 2,000 lbs. How does a crew of amateurs move that stone uphill without waking someone up?

# Problems With Theory (2)

- To make something “as sure as you can” do you assign incompetent or sleepy soldiers?
- Remember the penalty for sleeping was death!

# If A Plot to Steal Body

- In the Watergate scandal, all but one of the top 12 spilled the beans.
- If it were a plot, why did not even one of the 12 disciples spill the beans?



# Caesar's Order

- "It is my will that graves and tombs lie undisturbed for ever...Respect for those who are buried is most important; no one should disturb them in any way at all. If anyone does, I require that he be executed for tomb-robbery."

Source: "The National Decree Stone" National Library in Paris, sent to the museum from Nazareth in 1878.



# If A Plot to Steal Body (2)

- One of the Roman laws was death to anyone disturbing a grave. Would that many people needed to move a 2 ton stone, be willing to come help rob a tomb? For what gain?



# Jesus' Brother Knew

- Historians of that period such as Josephus and Eusebius record that James the brother of Our Lord was stoned for his beliefs.
- James is referred to as "the brother of Jesus", who for his belief in the resurrection, died a martyr."

# Seen For 40 Days

- Jesus was seen for 40 days after the resurrection from the tomb. Acts 1:3



# The Evidence

- Simon Greenleaf (1783-1853)
- Famous Law Professor,  
Harvard University
- Greenleaf wrote the 3 volume  
set of books called "A Treatise  
on the Law of Evidence"

# The Evidence (2)

- Considered the best book ever written regarding legal evidence.
- “Examination of the Testimony of the Four Evangelists by the Rules of Evidence...”
- Greenleaf said the evidence overwhelmingly proves the Resurrection to be true.

# Quoting Greenleaf

- “According to the laws of evidence used in courts of law, there is more evidence for the historical fact of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ than for any other event in ancient history.”

# Albert L. Roper

- A.L. Roper, Mayor of Norfolk, Virginia for 6 years
- He was a defense attorney for 42 years, taking on the big cases around the globe.
- Roper was an expert on criminal evidence.

# Albert L. Roper (2)

- Roper did an exhaustive study to determine if the Resurrection story was true.
- Here is what he said:
  - "I say unequivocally the evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is so overwhelming that it...leaves absolutely no room for doubt."



# Chief Justice of England

- Lord Chief Justice of England Lord Darling stated: "No intelligent jury in the world could fail to bring in a verdict that the Resurrection story is true."

# The Change in Paul

- Before Christ was crucified and buried, Paul persecuted and killed Christians.

# The Change in Paul (2)

- After the death, burial and resurrection, Paul became a Christian and gave his life establishing churches throughout the empire.
- For over 20 years he suffered for, and served the Christ he once hated.

# Change in Disciples

Matt 26:56 “Then all the disciples forsook him and fled.”

Mark 14:50 “Then they all forsook him and fled.”

# Disciples Were Cowardly

- John 20:19 "... when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews."
- How could cowards face Roman soldiers, break the Roman seal, roll the heavy stone, unwrap Jesus' from his grave clothes and steal Jesus' body?

# Specific Evidence

- When Christ was arrested all of his followers forsook him and fled.
- Three times Peter denied that he ever knew Christ.
- None of the disciples went to the place that Jesus said that he would be three days after the burial.
- "...when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, "some mocked" Acts 17:32-34

# More Evidence

- After the death, burial and resurrection, the disciples went throughout the known world, preaching the Gospel.



# More Evidence (2)

- 11 disciples were martyred and yet the gospel spread despite the severest of persecutions.
- What caused the change in the cowardly disciples from “I never knew you” to “I am willing to be tortured and killed for you”?
- They knew Christ had resurrected.



# Changing The Sabbath

- Jews feared breaking the Sabbath. Previously the Jews had been sent into Babylonian captivity for 490 years for breaking the Sabbath.
- The apostles were God-fearing Jews who observed the Fourth Commandment.

# Changing The Sabbath (2)

- Something monumental would have to happen to get them to change the day of worship from Saturday to Sunday.
- After Christ's death, thousands of converted Jews worshipped on Sunday, then tens of thousands, then hundreds of thousands of Jews and Gentiles changed the day of worship from Saturday to Sunday.

# Historical Evidence

- Josephus wrote at end of the 1st century AD, in *Antiquities*:
- "Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him many Jews, and also many of the Greeks.

# Historical Evidence (2)

- This man was the Christ. And when Pilate had condemned him to the cross... he appeared to them alive on the third day, the divine prophets having spoken these and thousands of other wonderful things about him..."
- *Josephus was a Jew, responsible for writing history for the Roman Emperor.*
- *Why would he write a lie? Huge risk!*

# Was It Added Later to Josephus?

- Some recent skeptics suggested that in recent times someone added the Resurrection account to Josephus's History.
- Nice try, but not true. The fourth-century writer Eusebius, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, quoted Josephus' statement about Christ.

# Miraculous Resurrection

- “And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulcher.
- But God raised him from the dead.”

Acts 13:29-30

# The Catacombs

- 25 miles of tunnels under Rome, where Christians hid, lived and worshipped to avoid persecution of Romans.
- If you heard someone coming toward you in the dark tunnel, you cried: "He is risen". If a Christian was coming at you, he cried back: "He is risen indeed."

# Easter and Resurrection

- Polycarp, a disciple of the Apostle John, preached that the 14th Abib was the Scriptural day of the year to celebrate the Resurrection.
- 14<sup>th</sup> of Abib was the Old Testament onset of the Passover, which our Savior kept the night that He was betrayed.



# Christ Our Passover

- Historians such as Will Durant tell us that exactly the same time of year as the Jewish Passover, when the lambs were being slain to pay for the sins of the Jews, Christ was crucified.

# I Corinthians 5: 7-8

- “ For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us....”

# Council of Nicea (325 A.D.)

- Constantine, at the Council of Nicaea ruled that Easter (a combination of the celebration of Eostre and the celebration of the Resurrection of Christ) is to be observed by all on the fourteenth day following the vernal equinox.

# What Does The Resurrection Matter To You ?

- That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

Rom. 10:9

*God does not say “might be saved” or “can be saved”; God says “thou shalt be saved.”*

# What If No Resurrection?

- And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain ... And if Christ be not raised, your faith [is] vain; ye are yet in your sins.

(1 Cor. 15:14, 17)

# The Grave Is Not The End

- "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."
- "Believeth thou this?" John 11:16

# The Resurrection

- Budha's remains are on public display at Patna, India
- Confucius bones are at Qufu, Shandong, China
- Mohamed's remains are in Medina, visited by millions
- Many visit the graves of Marx and Lenin.
- But Christ's body is not here,  
for **he is risen** as he said.

# Happy Resurrection Day

"He is risen"



And your reply is?



**He is risen indeed!**