



AREOPAGUS PROCLAMATION

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“lost track” of the body of Jesus. Finding the tomb empty was simply a matter of faulty navigation; they just went to the wrong tomb.

This position is easily refuted. The location

of Jesus’ body was understood by those most vested in the event. The fastest way to nip Christianity in the bud would have been to produce His dead body. Had the initial claim of an empty tomb been a mistake, the Sanhedrin could have easily done so. Furthermore, Jesus was laid in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea⁽¹⁾ — a well-known man and likely one of the Sanhedrin himself.⁽²⁾ Jesus’ body wasn’t misplaced — it was gone.

The second possibility is that the disciples made up their claims about the Resurrection.

This implies that they stole the body from the guarded tomb — a claim that the Sanhedrin made⁽³⁾ — intentionally fabricating the tale of the risen Lord, setting out to deceive the whole world.

Again, this is highly unlikely.

Right away, a small detail emerges that challenges the likelihood of overt deception. That detail? *Women first discovered the Resurrection* — and the disciples credited their testimony as a source for the Resurrection claim.⁽⁴⁾

This is a significant problem for the person who maintains that the disciples set out to deceive the world with a made-up story.

First century Jewish women did not enjoy the same status and credibility as modern, western women. Their testimony was subject to skepticism simply *because* they were women.

Consider the following quotes from that era:

■ *But let not the testimony of women be admitted on account of the levity and boldness of their sex, nor let servants be*

admitted to give testimony on account of the ignobility of their soul; since it is probable that they may not speak truth, either out of hope of gain, or fear of punishment. — Josephus, *Antiquities* 4.8.15⁽⁵⁾; (Emphasis mine).

■ *Any evidence which a woman (gives) is not valid (to offer)...This is equivalent to saying that one who is Rabbinically accounted a robber is qualified to give the same evidence as a woman.* — Talmud, Rosh Hashannah 1.8.⁽⁶⁾

Would a group of Jewish men, intending to deceive their Jewish community into believing a resurrection had taken place, fabricate the testimony of a group of women to advance their lie? This would not aid the credibility of their claim to the Resurrection. It would have been embarrassing to depend on the testimony of women.

Finally, we come to the third possibility—that the women’s report was true. Ironically, it is *exactly because* the disciples credited women as testimony for the resurrection of Jesus that their account is trustworthy. A deceptive account

would not have depended upon women’s testimony; that would have been counterproductive.

This gender-based evidence adds to an already compelling case for the resurrection of Jesus. Consequently, it is most rational to conclude that the disciples told the truth.

FOR FURTHER READING

The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus, by Gary Habermas and Michael Licona, Kregel Publications. 2004.

(1) Matt. 27:57ff

(2) Mark 15:43

(3) Matt 28:11ff

(4) Luke 24:1-11

(5) Quoted in *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus*, by Gary Habermas & Mike Licona, p.72

(6) Ibid



Gender-Based Evidence for the Resurrection

by Rick Carver

How does one go about the nasty business of deceiving someone?

What sorts of things should an architect of deception keep in mind if he or she is to successfully “sell” a false story to a large group of people?

Any attempt to hornswoggle a community must necessarily avoid details that would automatically call the credibility of the story teller into question. For example, consider these potential “Best Sellers:”

- *Ethical Investment Tips and Strategies*, by Bernard ‘Bernie’ Madoff
- *Living in Harmony*, by Adolph Hitler

Or perhaps . . . *Keeping Marriage Alive*, by Elizabeth Taylor

Did you take these titles seriously? If you recognized these names, it’s not likely. This tongue-in-cheek illustration reveals a clear principle — we are not inclined to take a treatise seriously when the credibility of the author is called into question.

Jesus’ disciples claimed that He was resurrected. Should we take their claim seriously?

There are essentially three positions one can hold regarding the disciples’ resurrection testimony.

First — that they were mistaken — that the women, disciples, Romans, and Sanhedrin [religious rulers] all