

## Aim of lesson

To prove that Jesus really did rise from the dead by examining Bible evidence against some of the alternative suggestions to resurrection that have been made.

## Bible background

Matthew 27, 28; Mark 15, 16; Luke 23, 24; John 19-21; Acts 2-5

## Preparation required

You might like to read "Who Moved The Stone" by Frank Morrison.

Read the relevant Bible passages and decide how you are going to use the Students' Notes. The whole group could discuss each point and write down conclusions or, if the group is large, they could split up, discuss 2 or 3 points each and then report back to the entire group.

## Suggested outline of lesson

The sub-topics of the lesson are the points in the Students' Notes. It is suggested that each point should be answered a) with Bible evidence, b) with any other relevant or logical evidence.

### Jesus did not really die and later recovered?

John 19:33. Soldiers didn't need to break legs. Already dead.

Mark 15:44-45. Pilate confirmed death with centurion. A Centurion would not be biased - trustworthy evidence.

### The disciples had hallucinations?

An interesting consideration is the number of different ways and situations in which Jesus appeared:-

- Indoors / outdoors
- Singly / small numbers / large group
- Women / men
- Those with expectant faith / sceptical disciples
- Surprise appearances / planned meeting
- Rushed (don't touch me) / leisurely, talking in depth, sharing meal
- Not touching him / "feel my hands and feet."
- Doing normal things, eating / miraculous appearances.
- In Judaea / in Galilee
- At evening / at breakfast time
- In a crowded city / on a mountain top
- Stationary / when on a journey.

Hallucinations don't come with such variety!

### The disciples stole the body?

Matthew 28:11-15 records how this lie started.

The disciples were too unhappy, disbelieving and scared to trick the Jewish leaders at this stage. Later, when convinced Jesus was risen, they risked their lives and some even died for preaching the resurrection. They wouldn't have died for a stolen body that remained dead.

### Joseph of Arimathæa moved the body to a more suitable tomb?

Points to ponder

- It was reasonable that he should want to.
- He was perfectly respectable and could have done it openly in daylight.
- Being a Jew, he wouldn't have moved the body until after the close of the Sabbath.
- The early morning party of women did not meet him.
- If he DID remove it, it must have been during the night. It would be difficult moving a body by torchlight.
- Why remove the grave clothes and carry a naked body?

- How did he get past the guard?
- When Jerusalem was in uproar 7 weeks later, he could have produced the body and the tomb he'd moved it to.

## **The Jews or Romans took the body?**

Matthew 27:63-66. The Jews specially asked for a guard so that nobody could move the body and claim resurrection. Once the disciples declared Jesus alive, they could have produced the body to prove he wasn't. But they never did!

29 Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead [that is, if Christ is dead], if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?

30 And why stand we in jeopardy every hour [i.e. why am I prepared to give my life for the sake of someone who is not risen from the dead]?

## **The disciples visited the wrong tomb?**

Mark 16:6. The angels confirmed this was the place he HAD lain. The Jewish leaders would have soon shown them the right grave.

## **The disciples**

Compare the two sets of verses to show the overwhelming change in the disciples from the time after the resurrection and ascension. They changed from dejection to triumph, from sorrow to intense joy. They became a driving force. They preached and brought fantastic results. They turned the world upside down.

## **Relevance to our lives**

We shall see in next week's lesson that the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is the pivot of our faith. It is important that the young people are convinced that it really happened, especially as theologians and sceptics constantly doubt it.

## **Prayer**

Dear Lord God, we thank you for the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and for the faith of those who over many years have spread the truth of the gospel. Help us to be changed as they were, so that we may be certain of a resurrection like his. Amen

## **Other suggestions for activities**

1. Produce a play, or a video of an interview, in which the various people involved are interviewed.
2. As the resurrection of Jesus is the most startling miracle in the Bible, the young people may like to discuss the fact that if we are convinced that this took place, we should have no problem believing any of the other miracles.