

Answer Key: Why Was Jesus' Tomb Empty?

Have you ever wanted to be a detective? Write down on the lines or draw in the box some things a detective needs in solving a case:

Magnifying glass, notebook, recording device, etc.

When solving a case a detective must **ask good questions** and then **seek evidence to answer** those questions. He or she might think about different ideas to answer those questions. To find out the truth of which ideas are right and wrong, he or she will often interview people that were eyewitness. An **eyewitness** is someone who was there and saw the event take place. Then the detective will make a conclusion about what truly happened based on the evidence that is gathered.

Detective Tools

The Gospels in the Bible (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) are accounts of real events that happened to real people surrounding the life, death, and **resurrection** (coming back to life) of Jesus, God the Son. When we have questions about what happened during the life of Jesus we can read these books to find out what happened. The **Gospels** were directly written by the eyewitness (like Matthew or John) or the information was gathered from interviewing eyewitnesses or investigating the events (like Mark or Luke).

Easter is a time that Christians celebrate when Jesus died on the cross to pay the punishment for our sin and then came back to life again. But some people today do not think that it was possible for Jesus to come back to life so they try to come up with another reason why Jesus' tomb might be empty or why people were saying that Jesus is alive. Even people back when the events happened found it hard to believe that Jesus was alive. It's not every day that someone dead comes back to life! Could it be true?

In this 7 day devotional you will read for yourself how God addressed these doubts during the events, in the lives of the eyewitness, to give them (and us) confidence that Jesus is truly alive!

Each day you will be a detective to investigate the eyewitness testimony to answer one of these questions:

- Why was Jesus' tomb empty?
- Why were people saying that Jesus was raised from the dead?

Grab your pencil and put on your thinking cap for this important investigation!

Day 1 – Why was Jesus’ tomb empty? Idea #1 – Fainted

Idea #1 says, “Jesus’ tomb was empty because Jesus fainted on the cross but then woke up after being in the tomb and walked out, but he did not really die and come back to life.”

READ the following verses and then ANSWER the questions to find out if this idea is TRUE or FALSE.

John 19:33-34 and Mark 15:44-45

Who made sure that Jesus was dead? The soldier at the cross, the centurion, and Pilate.

John 19:38-42

Who knew that Jesus was dead when handling his body? Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus

Facts:

- The Romans were expert killers.
- Roman soldiers would face death if they allowed a person to be taken off the cross alive.
- The order of blood and water that came out of side Jesus’ side when he was speared was a sign that Jesus had died.
- Those that handled Jesus’ body would have known that he was dead from the way he looked and felt (e.g. the stiffening of the body that takes place after death, cold and clammy, not breathing). They would not have buried a wounded or fainted man.



Conclusion for Idea #1: Based on these events, is it TRUE or FALSE that Jesus’ tomb was empty because he fainted on the cross and woke up later? (Circle the correct answer)

TRUE

FALSE

Explain your answer: There is no way that the Roman soldiers accidentally or purposefully allowed Jesus off the cross alive. Also the people that handled Jesus’ body when they were preparing his body for burial would have known if he was dead or had merely fainted.

Day 2 - Why was Jesus' tomb empty? Idea #2 – Stolen Body and Lying

Idea #2 says, "Jesus' tomb was empty because the disciples (Jesus' followers) stole Jesus' body and then lied about the resurrection."

READ the following verses and then ANSWER the questions to find out if this idea is TRUE or FALSE.

Matthew 27:62-66 - Were Jesus' enemies afraid that Jesus' disciples would steal his body and then lie about his resurrection? (Circle the correct answer) YES NO

What did they do to prevent this? They sealed the tomb and set a guard there.

Matthew 28:11-15 - When Jesus' body was discovered missing what did Jesus' enemies (the chief priest and elders) tell the soldiers to say? (Circle the correct answer)

The Truth—"Jesus is alive"

A lie—"The disciples stole his body."

What did the chief priests give the soldiers to promote this lie? Money (a bribe).

John 20:19 – What was the disciples attitude after Jesus' death?

(Circle the correct answer)

Courage

Fear

Rejoicing

Acts 5:17-20, 40-42 – Now, what were the disciples willing to suffer for their testimony that Jesus was alive? Being arrested, going to jail, beatings, and threats.

NOW what was the disciples attitude? (Circle the correct answers) Courage Fear Rejoicing

What changed them from fear to courage? (HINT: Acts 5:29-31) The fact that Jesus was raised from the dead!

Conclusion for Idea #2: Based on these events, is it TRUE or FALSE that Jesus' tomb was empty because the disciples stole his body and then lied about him coming back to life? (Circle the correct answer)

TRUE

FALSE

Explain your answer: After Jesus' death the disciples were very afraid. They did not have the courage to go and steal Jesus' body. His enemies also made sure that this would not happen by setting a guard at the tomb. Jesus' enemies are the ones who started the story about Jesus' disciples stealing his body by bribing the soldiers to promote this story. But since the disciples were willing to experience bad things (persecution) for saying that Jesus rose from the dead, Jesus must have been truly alive. The truth is the only thing that would change the disciples from fear of persecution to courage and rejoicing in persecution.



Day 3 – Why were people saying Jesus was alive? Idea #3 – Seeing Things

Idea #3 says, “People were saying that Jesus was alive again because the disciples saw Jesus alive in their mind or in a dream/vision, but he was really still dead.”

READ the following verses and then **ANSWER** the questions to find out if this idea is **TRUE** or **FALSE**.



John 20:24-28 - Who doubted the other disciples and probably thought that they were imagining the risen Jesus? **Thomas**

What did Thomas demand? **To see the nail marks in Jesus’ hands, place his fingers into the marks of the nails, and to place his hand into Jesus’ side.**

What caused Thomas to know that he was really seeing Jesus alive again? **When Jesus told Thomas to touch him and see his wounds.**

Luke 24:36-43 - What did the disciples think they saw when Jesus first appeared to them? **A ghost.**

What actions did Jesus tell his disciples to do to show that he was not a vision/dream?

LOOK

TOUCH

WAKE UP

PRAY

What did Jesus ask for in Luke 24:41? **Something to eat.**

Conclusion for Idea #3: Based on these events, is it TRUE or FALSE that the disciples saw Jesus in a dream or a vision, but he was really still dead? (Circle the correct answer) TRUE **FALSE**

Explain your answer: **Since the disciples saw, touched, and ate with the risen Jesus there is no way that he could have only been a vision/dream.**

Day 4 - Why were people saying Jesus was alive? - Idea #4 Fooled

Idea #4 says, "People were saying that Jesus was alive again because the disciples were fooled by someone pretending to be the risen Jesus."

READ the following verses and then **ANSWER** the questions to find out if this idea is **TRUE** or **FALSE**.

John 20:10-18

Who did Mary think that Jesus was at first? A gardener.

Who did Mary finally realize it was? Jesus.

Luke 24:13-35

Did these two disciples know that it was Jesus walking with them at first? YES NO

What did Jesus do that caused these disciples to recognize that it was truly him? Breaking the bread, and the way he opened the Scripture to them.

Conclusion for Idea #4: Based on these events, is it TRUE or FALSE that Jesus' friends were fooled by someone pretending to be the risen Jesus, but he was really still dead?

(Circle the correct answer) TRUE FALSE



Explain your answer: The eyewitnesses realized that it was truly Jesus with them by the way he spoke to them or by the way he acted.

Day 5 – Why are people saying Jesus is alive? - Idea #5 - Added Later

Idea #5 says, “People believe that Jesus rose again because the resurrection was something added much later to Jesus’ story which turned Jesus’ life into a legend with amazing tales, but the eyewitnesses did not believe in the resurrection.”

READ the following verses and then ANSWER the questions to find out if this idea is TRUE or FALSE.



Matthew 28:1, 5-10

Who was the first to TELL that Jesus was alive? An angel.

Who were the first to HEAR that Jesus was alive? Mary Magdalene and the other Mary.

Who were the women to TELL about the risen Jesus? His disciples.

Acts 2:14, 22-32

NOTE: A prophecy is given by God to tell what will happen in the future and is often given thousands of years before it happens.

What Old Testament author is quoted as prophecy that Jesus was going to rise again? David.

How did Peter know that Jesus was alive? (Hint: Acts 2:32) He was an eyewitness to the risen Jesus.

When did people FIRST say that Jesus was alive? (Circle the correct answer)

Right after it happened.

Hundreds of years later.

Conclusion for Idea #5: Based on these events, is it TRUE or FALSE that Jesus’ resurrection was something added much later to his story, but the eyewitnesses did not believe that part?

(Circle the correct answer)

TRUE

FALSE

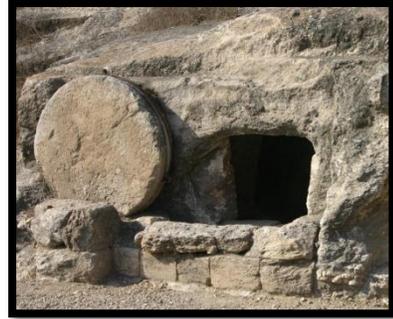
Explain your answer: Jesus’ resurrection was something that was told from the very first day he rose from the dead. It was told by the eyewitnesses. It was also something promised thousands of years before Jesus even came to earth. It was not something made up later.

NOTE: Not only did eyewitnesses say that Jesus was alive again right after it happened, but this was also something promised by God thousands of years before Jesus came so his resurrection was definitely something told EARLY rather than LATER.

Day 6 - Why were people saying Jesus was alive? Idea #6 Wrong Tomb

Idea #6 says, "People thought that Jesus was alive because the disciples went to the wrong tomb, which was empty, but Jesus' real tomb still had his body."

READ the following verses
and then ANSWER the questions
to find out if this idea is TRUE or FALSE.



<u>The Group that Knew where Jesus' Tomb Was</u>	<u>Scripture/Evidence</u>
THOSE THAT BURIED JESUS	"After [the crucifixion] Joseph of Arimathea ... and Nicodemus ... took the body of Jesus and they laid Jesus there [in the tomb, in the garden]." [John 19:38-42]
JESUS' DISCIPLES	"So Peter went out with the other disciple John , and they were going toward the tomb." [John 20:3]
JESUS' FRIENDS	"[When Joseph laid Jesus's body] in his own new tomb ... Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb." [Matthew 27:60-61]
JESUS' ENEMIES	"So they [the chief priests and the Pharisees] went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard ." [Matthew 27:66]

*Write the total number of people/groups that would have known where Jesus' tomb was: **9**.

(HINT: Count bolded and underlined names/groups)

Conclusion for Idea #6: Based on these events, is it TRUE or FALSE that everyone would go to a wrong tomb that was empty, thinking it was Jesus' tomb? (Circle the correct answer) TRUE **FALSE**

Explain your answer: **It is highly unlikely that ALL of Jesus' friends and enemies made the same mistake of forgetting where Jesus' tomb was or mistaking another tomb, which was empty, for Jesus' tomb. Plus, if the disciples would have gone to the wrong tomb, his enemies would have gladly gone to the right tomb, taken out Jesus body, and proved that he was still dead.**

Day 7 – Does Jesus resurrection matter for us today?

How did your investigation go, Detective? This week you have looked at six different ideas to answer two questions. Below are the two questions and the six ideas that you investigated. **Circle TRUE or FALSE for each idea to state your conclusion for each one.**

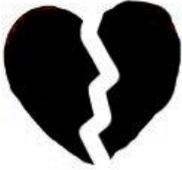


<u>QUESTION</u>	<u>IDEA</u>	<u>CONCLUSION</u> <i>(Circle TRUE or FALSE for each idea based on the evidence you discovered from the eyewitnesses.)</i>
Why was Jesus' tomb empty?	#1 - Because Jesus fainted on the cross, but walked out of the tomb after waking up.	TRUE <u>FALSE</u>
Why was Jesus' tomb empty?	#2 - Because the disciples stole his body and then lied about Jesus coming back to life.	TRUE <u>FALSE</u>
Why did people say that Jesus had risen from the dead?	#3 - Because the disciples saw Jesus in a vision/dream but he was really still dead.	TRUE <u>FALSE</u>
Why did people say that Jesus had risen from the dead?	#4 - Because the disciples were fooled by someone pretending to be Jesus.	TRUE <u>FALSE</u>
Why did people say that Jesus had risen from the dead?	#5 - Because the story about Jesus coming back to life was something added much later to Jesus' story, like a legend.	TRUE <u>FALSE</u>
Why did people say that Jesus had risen from the dead?	#6 - Because the disciples went to the wrong tomb, which was empty, but Jesus' body was still in his tomb.	TRUE <u>FALSE</u>
<p>*Were any of these ideas TRUE based on the events that you studied from the eyewitnesses?</p> <p>Write your answer on the line: <u>NO</u>*</p>		
<p>CONCLUSION: That must mean that Jesus actually died on the cross, was buried in a tomb, and arose from the dead where he was seen and touched by others.</p>		

JESUS IS ALIVE!

"... God did not send his Son (Jesus) into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him (Jesus)." [John 3:17]

This is very important! If Jesus had not risen from the dead we would not be celebrating Easter, but we would also still be separated from God because of our sin.



Sin is anything that you think, say, or do that breaks God's law. For example, have you ever lied, disobeyed your parents, or been jealous of something someone else has? Those things are sin because they break God's law. God is the highest authority which means he sets the rules and we have broken them.

Read Romans 6:23 - What is the wages of sin? **Death.**

The word "WAGE" describes what we receive for doing something. If you get paid for doing a job or your chores, that is your wage. The wage that we get for sinning is death. **Death** means dying here on earth, being dead in our friendship with God while on earth (we cannot be his friend), and suffering eternal death in Hell. Sin is a big problem!

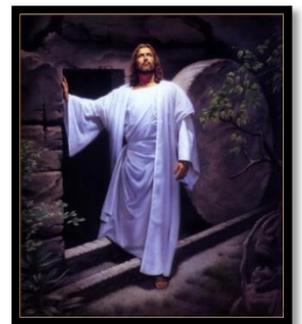
You might wonder why God can't just forget about your wage for sin. It is because God is just, which means that he cannot let us get away with doing what is wrong. Just like a good teacher at your school would discipline a student in your class who was doing wrong, so God is good and must punish sin.

This is why you are in big trouble. Your sin must be paid for and you cannot earn God's forgiveness by being good. So God did something wonderful so that you do not have to pay for your sin with your own death. He sent Jesus to die on the cross as a payment for your sin. The Bible says that without someone dying and giving their blood there is no forgiveness. This is why Jesus had to die a bloody death on a cross. Since he was perfect he was able to take your sin punishment, as he had no sin of his own to pay.

READ 1 Corinthians 15:17 – If Jesus had not been risen from the dead, what would

that mean for us? **Our faith as Christians would be meaningless and we would still separated from God because of our sin.**

When God raised Jesus from the dead three days later, this showed that God had accepted Jesus' payment for our sin and that Jesus is the victor over sin and death. This is why Easter is so important!



BUT it is not enough to just believe in your head THAT Jesus died on the cross and came alive again. You must personally believe IN Jesus. It's like receiving a birthday gift. You have to personally take it before it becomes yours. **Have you believed in Jesus as your Savior from sin?** A savior is someone who rescues you from a problem. You might think that you don't have any problems in your life, but if you have not

believed in Jesus as your Savior then you have a very big problem...you are under God's judgment for your sin.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son (Jesus), that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ... Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God." [John 3:16, 18]

If you have not believed in Jesus as your Savior, you can do that right now. Tell God:



- 1) That you are sorry for sinning by breaking his law.
- 2) That you believe that Jesus is the one who died for your sin and rose again.
- 3) That you are asking Jesus to save and forgive you.

If this is the first time you have told God this, please tell your parent or grandparent, Sunday school or AWANA teacher, or Pastor so that they can tell you more. This is what Easter is all about! For those that have believed in Jesus as their Savior, this is a day to be thankful and celebrate that Jesus is our risen Savior from sin and has given us eternal life! (**Eternal life** means getting to have a friendship with God while you are on earth, and not only being forever with God after you die, but just like Jesus was raised to life, you will also be raised to life to spend forever with God in Heaven.)

You can write your name and today's date on this line to remember that this Easter has a special meaning for you! _____

JESUS IS THE RISEN SAVIOR!

(Now go and tell others!)

More Resources:

- Print more copies of this devotional, Answer Key, YouTube clips, books, lessons, etc. on the topic of Jesus' resurrection: www.networkerstec.com/resurrection.html
- *Cold Case Christianity for Kids* by J. Warner and Susie Wallace and the Case Makers Academy
 - www.casemakersacademy.com
- *Alive* by J. Warner Wallace (www.coldcasechristianity.com)
 - Suggested Memory Verses: Matthew 28:6, 1 Corinthians 15:3-5, 2 Peter 1:16-17, 1 Corinthians 15:20-22, 1 Corinthians 15:51-27
 - More Scripture Memory Resources: www.networkerstec.com/scripture-memory.html
- Resources for sharing the Gospel with children: www.networkerstec.com/kids-gospel.html
 - Footing Before Foundation Course to answer questions like, "Is Jesus God, the Savior?" www.networkerstec.com/apologetics.html