



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

## The Leaders' Lie Proving the Resurrection

MAY 16-18, 2012

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### Matthew 28:11-15

*“Now while they were on their way, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all that had happened. 12) And when they had assembled with the elders and counseled together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, 13) and said, ‘You are to say, “His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.” 14) And if this should come to the governor’s ears, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble.’ 15) And they took the money and did as they had been instructed; and this story was widely spread among the Jews, and is to this day.” (NASB)*

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“THE RESURRECTION ‘IS NOT ONLY SO ESTABLISHED THAT THE GREATEST LAWYERS HAVE DECLARED IT TO BE THE BEST PROVED FACT OF ALL HISTORY, BUT IT IS SO SUPPORTED THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO CONCEIVE OF ANY METHOD OR LINE OF PROOF THAT IT LACKS THAT WOULD MAKE [IT] MORE CERTIAN.” IRWIN H. LINTON

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Why do some of the guards leave their post? Had the leaders, when requesting the guards, said that Jesus was a “deceiver?” Did these legislators convince themselves that the truth was a lie and their lie was the truth? Why would the Sanhedrin pay so much money to the soldiers to tell a lie that was so obviously not true? Is it possible that the chief priests heard the news of the Resurrection even before the disciples? What was the penalty for soldiers sleeping while on guard?

### FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- MAY 23-25: MATTHEW 28:16-20 *THE KING OF KINGS’ GREAT COMMISSION*
- MAY 30-JUNE 1: INTRODUCTION TO JONAH *NINEVEH THE MOST CRUEL CAPITOL*

It is amusing and ironic that the same soldiers who were requested to prevent a resurrection hoax now become a liability causing the leaders to promote the initial hoax they were trying to prevent (Mt. 27:64)! For such an august body to promote such a juvenile means of perjury shows the extreme desperation of their plight, and the severe limitations of their believable options. The chief priests obviously took the guards’ story seriously, or they would not have hastily required a special session and assembled the elders of the nation. Not only had the soldiers witnessed the earthquake, the coming of the shining angel in the darkness of the early morning, but the angel destroying the seal and moving the stone, and then sitting as a guard upon the stone! They probably left off the fact that their response had been to shake in fear like the earthquake and become like dead men (Mt. 28:4). Their tones as they stated the facts certainly had the leaders convinced of the validity of their report because the response of the murderous legislators was not to question their report as if they were lying, but instead to “*suppress the truth in unrighteousness*” (Rom. 1:18).

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“NO ONE IS SO BLIND AS ONE WHO WILL NOT SEE.”  
BURTON COFFMAN

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### I. THE SECURITY’S RESPONSE MT. 28:11

In this guard, most likely containing sixty legionnaires, were the most elite Roman soldiers, part of the executive protection unit for the Governor, Pilate. These soldiers had appropriately quaked in terror. They had not only witnessed the supernatural, but “They had failed in their duty, or so they thought. Soldiers who slept on guard, stole from within the camp, deserted a position out of fear, dropped or lost weapons in battle, faced a beating with sticks and stones called a fustuarium. It normally led to death, but even survivors were outcasts and exiles for

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### BIBLE STUDIES

WEDNESDAY @ 7:00AM –BIBLE STUDY – FREDERICKSBURG – BOB EVANS ON RT. 3, 11:30AM – WOODBRIDGE – RESUMING AGAIN ON MAY 23  
THURSDAY @ 7:30AM –BIBLE STUDY – RT. 10&301 SHONEY’S, NOON – WYTESTONE PLAZA – 8<sup>TH</sup> & MAIN – 2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM  
FRIDAY @ 7:00 AM –BIBLE STUDY – IN THE TIDEWATER AREA (CALL 804-683-2285 FOR SPECIFICS)

# Virginia

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life.”<sup>1</sup> They knew that they deserved the death penalty for allowing the one that they were responsible to guard to escape (Acts 12:19, 16:27)! Since the body was gone by supernatural means, “*some of the guard*” risked deserting their position to go and tell the chief priests that they had failed in their mission and Jesus had risen from the dead!

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**“AS ABRAHAM TOLD THE RICH MAN IN JESUS’ PARABLE, ‘IF THEY DO NOT LISTEN TO MOSES AND THE PROPHETS, NEITHER WILL THEY BE PERSUADED IF SOMEONE RISES FROM THE DEAD’ (LK. 16:26). THE HEART THAT IS HARDENED TO GOD WILL NOT BE PERSUADED BY ANY MIRACLE OR BY ANY AMOUNT OF EVIDENCE, NO MATTER HOW COMPELLING.” JOHN MACARTHUR**

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### II. THE SANHEDRIN’S RESOLUTION MT. 28:12-14

After listening to all the evidence and weighing all their options, the Sanhedrin (Congress of Israel) passed a three point resolution: 1) Bribe the soldiers, 2) Perjure the soldiers with their precise lie, 3) Protect the soldiers from any harm due to their lie. The legislators demanded of the guards, “*You are to say, His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.*” But in the providence of God, this lie would provide greater evidence for the resurrection, just like their procuring the guard had done. Not only does it prove that the tomb was empty on the third day, but that a guard of sixty men had been witnesses of it! The lie has many impossibilities: 1) It is impossible for sixty elite soldiers doing two to three hour shifts guarding the tomb to all be asleep at the same time when their lives and careers were at stake. 2) If it were possible for all sixty to be asleep together, it would be impossible for none to wake up at the vibration and noise of the great earthquake and the noise of the large stone being removed and the body being stolen. 3) The disciples being so timid that they would not even appear at the cross among the crowd, being few in number and unarmed, they would never dare to attempt overcoming

an entire guard of legionnaires who risked death if the body was stolen. 4) The disciples would never presume that all the guard would be asleep at one time to strategize such a theft. 5) Had the disciples been able to find the guard sleeping through the earthquake and move the stone without waking anyone up, they would have never taken the time to unwind the grave clothes and carefully fold them and leave them (Jn. 20:6-7), instead they would have taken the grave clothes with the body as quickly as possible. 6) Most obvious, if the soldiers were all asleep it was impossible for them to know a) that the body was stolen, b) who stole it, c) why the grave clothes were still in the tomb. 7) It is impossible to believe that without a bribe and protection, the soldiers would tell anyone they were all asleep at their post when everyone knew they were risking their career and even death to do so. Therefore the perjury continually produces at least seven more proofs of His resurrection by His enemies!

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**“IF THE JEWS REALLY BELIEVED THE ACCOUNT WHICH THEY THEMSELVES HAD GIVEN, WHY DID THEY NOT APPREHEND THE APOSTLES, AND PROVE THEM GUILTY OF THE THEFT AND FALSEHOOD?—THINGS WHICH THEY NEVER ATTEMPTED AND WHICH SHOW, THEREFORE, THAT THEY DID NOT CREDIT THEIR OWN REPORT.” ALBERT BARNES**

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### III. THE SOLDIERS’ RUMOR MT. 28:15

Because people are willing to believe what is even impossible to believe, in order to disbelieve God and therefore not be responsible to Him, this rumor and many other lies, are embraced by the unthinking masses. Because it was more convenient and lucrative, “*they took the money and did as they had been instructed; and this story was widely spread among the Jews, and is to this day.*” Any sincere person, studying the resurrection, will find it irrefutable!

<sup>1</sup> Daniel M. Doriani, *Matthew*, vol. 2 (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2008), 520.

#### Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Are you willing to believe that which disagrees with God’s revealed truth in the Scriptures?
- 2) How much money would you have to be paid in order to persuade you to promote that which you know is not true?
- 3) In order to continue in sin do you choose to accept what you know is false and “*suppress the truth in unrighteousness?*”