

GUARDS AT JESUS' BRIBED TO LIE THAT THE DISCIPLES STOLE THE BODY?

The Christians believe that Jesus rose physically - yet changed- from the dead. They say that he was entombed and vanished from the tomb and appeared alive soon after. The tomb was found empty. The evidence is that he might not have been buried. The gospels merely say he was put in the tomb and that was observed but what if he was secretly spirited out before the stone closing the tomb was put in place? They don't give a minute by minute evidence or case for certainty. There is a gap at every vital point.

The Matthew version of events is that there were Guards at Jesus' tomb to make sure nobody purloined the body and claimed Jesus rose. An angel opened the tomb on Sunday morning causing them to faint in terror. Some of them came around and went to the Jews. These were bribed to testify that they slept on duty and during that time the body was stolen by Jesus' disciples.

Matthew gave no evidence that the bribe took place. How could he know? It could just be his opinion but an opinion is not evidence. The Jews and the soldiers weren't going to tell. He didn't say how he came across this information leaving us free to surmise that it was gossip and speculation.

The tomb being empty indicates that something very suspect was going on. Matthew says that an angel that looked like lightning moved the rock but be careful. He says that the sight of the angel scared the guards but not that the guards saw the stone being moved, the women may not have seen it either even if they were near. So, the gospels never say anybody saw it. We don't know exactly when the stone was moved or how. Perhaps it was moved before and replaced sloppily and fell that morning. If Jesus was not moved until Sunday morning he would have been treated in the tomb. If he was removed as soon as possible after internment then evidence for theft by somebody else had to be manufactured which meant the tomb had to be reopened long after the body was gone for it to work. The disappearance would come out and had to be prepared for.

The guards story is meant to silence those who think Jesus was stolen from his tomb. Matthew however claims that those soldiers at the crucifixion scene were scared by the miracles that took place such as the tombs opening and the saints appearing out of them and the earthquake. If they made up the guard at the tomb, they had a further shock - the ferocious angel appearing and another earthquake. You would not expect men like that to be good guards - they needed time off after all those horrors. After the display of hostile divine power at Jesus' death, would they really collaborate in a plot to make Jesus look like failed Messiah? Would they take a bribe to lie about what happened at the tomb and to accuse Jesus' disciples of the capital crime of taking his body? No way! Would you take a bribe and lie after seeing an angel that scared you to death almost? The gospel of Matthew is lying.

FACT 1: The soldiers would not have went to the Jews. Policemen that have a problem go to their superiors not to a bunch of callous liars. The gospel says that the Jews accused Jesus of doing miracles that were all fraud. Romans would have been more open to the idea of the supernatural in Jesus' life than Jews. They would have been too afraid of the angel they supposedly saw to lie. The soldiers could have been accused of telling lies about the angel and the rest and reported by the Jews. Plus the Jews were the temple priests – Sadducees. Sadducees had no belief in the afterlife or in angels. To them, the Old Testament angels were just appearances of God. They didn't believe in any resurrection and would not have believed the soldiers had they testified that Jesus rose. The Jews would not have believed it about the angel. They would have had the soldiers in big trouble for they would have thought they were lying.

Even Matthew does not say the guards made such a testimony. All he says is they went to the Jews and said they would make it. And Christian liars often say they did make the testimony to inflate the evidence for the resurrection. Matthew doesn't say the guards found the tomb empty.

FACT 2: They did not admit to the chief priests that they were unconscious yet the Gospel says they did.

The chief priests collaborated with Rome but they would have liked to get at them by accusing them of sleeping on duty when they had the legal chance for their racist scriptures told them to prefer Jewish rulers. They only licked Roman boots because they felt that there would be big trouble for the land if they did not. Moreover, these Jews were sceptical about the miracles of Jesus for they said his resurrection would have to be a fraud like everything else he did. Knowing their sceptical attitude – the chief priests were Sadducees who rejected the afterlife and current miracles and angels - how could the soldiers have approached them?

It is thought that it had to be confessed for they could not deny it. You cannot say that they knew the women saw them for there is no evidence of that. So this has to be left out of the argument for it is speculation.

The guards could have stopped the women talking by threats or simply contradicted them. Women were disbelieved more readily than men. It was only the word of a couple of women against a number of guards and everybody believes the guards.

The men could have said that they were lying down resting but not asleep and accuse the women of being mistaken or lying had the women seen them sleeping.

Anyway, the women would not dare tell when it involved the ruthless soldiers. And the Jews and Romans would have dismissed it as gossip for they would not have got the information first-hand. The apostles would not have been allowed to tell about the women.

Frank Morison says that the guards probably worked round the clock since Jesus was arrested for trouble over Jesus was feared so it would have been no wonder if they fell asleep (page 190, Who Moved the Stone?). But there is no probably about it for it could have been the guards who rested or other guards. Nobody posts guards who had to be suffering from fatigue.

FACT 3: The Jews would not have told the guards to say they slept on duty and neglected the tomb to stop anybody saying Jesus rose nor would the guards have agreed to do it.

The Jews allegedly told them they would keep them out of trouble if the Governor, Pilate, heard about their indolence. This is laughable because he would hear about it if they went about telling that. And it would still be a black mark on them that could come back to haunt them. It would be a huge hitch if men who claimed to sleep on duty got away with it. They wouldn't have been allowed to say they did it. The Jews could not guarantee protection and it is impossible to see what they could have done. Pilate did not do everything they told him to.

The Jews would have been delighted to have the soldiers arraigned before Pilate to see them punished and found guilty of sleeping on duty and letting Jesus be stolen for that gave the perfect cover for what really happened. That was why the soldiers would not have gone to them for they would have had to expect this. The Jews knew that people would see the authorities were covering something up if soldiers could go around freely saying they let the body be stolen and were not punished. They would have drawn the conclusion that Jesus had risen. Matthew has the Jews doing exactly what they did not want to do! What a daft wonder-tale!

The Jews would have been in trouble for Pilate would have to find out that they claimed to know the Guards slept and never informed him.

The guards might have said they were attacked and knocked out or drugged instead of saying they fell asleep for sleeping on duty brought more than the sack, it inevitably brought the death-penalty (page 223, Evidence that Demands a Verdict, Vol 1).

No soldier would have been willing to slander and endanger himself for a religion that he hated and to destroy a religion that was as good as dead and could be handled by the sword.

If they said the tomb was robbed one moment their backs were turned they would have been in less danger for these things happen. That is what they would have been told to say.

Or the Jews could have told them to admit that they fainted and blame a man dressed up as an angel for it. If an earthquake happened as Matthew says that could have scared them badly.

FACT 4: Upon finding the tomb empty, if they did that, the soldiers could have sealed the tomb again and said nothing not even to the Jews. They would have in case they would not be believed and would have been legally obliged to in case people would see the body was gone. Nobody would have known a thing. Or if they had to tell the Jews and their bosses there was no sense in telling everybody else that Jesus had disappeared. They could have acquired a body to put in the tomb and claim that it was Jesus' and forbid entry. The Jews would have persuaded them to do that if they had gone to them. It is better to have a body in the tomb to refute the disappearance than to have word of mouth. The Jews knew the people placed no trust in the Romans.

FACT 5: If the Romans were going to tell a lie saying the disciples took Jesus when they were asleep why didn't they tell the Jews that the tomb was robbed when they slept on duty even if it wasn't true in the first place? They knew that those Jews were sceptics about the paranormal.

FACT 6: The Jews would not have told them to be so silly and say they knew who took the body while they were dead to the world.

Who would swallow such an asinine story? Who would believe that they were all asleep? Some had to stay awake to watch over the sleepers for Roman soldiers were widely hated and in danger. Who would believe that the grave robbers were so quiet that they didn't waken anybody? People would know that if they did sleep they would have lain around the tomb in such a way that nobody could interfere with it without disturbing them. The guards would have been seen to have not been asleep for they were near the city and there were lookouts on the walls. The guards did not claim to be asleep for blatant lies would only make people think they had seen Jesus rise. The Gospel maker is lying when it says the Jews still accepted this story at the time he wrote for they wouldn't have believed it for five seconds.

FACT 7: The story never gives any evidence that the soldiers lied when they said that the body was stolen so maybe they were telling the truth about that. Even Matthew never actually says it was a lie. He never says the reason the body vanished was because it rose all in one piece. The lie was in saying they slept during the theft for they had fainted. The lie was told to make the Christians look dishonest so that nobody would believe any resurrection story.

Matthew does not put the story in to prove the body was not stolen for his narrative shows that it could have been taken when the men were in a faint. It shows the Christians made up stories that served no useful purpose. If God really sent an angel that did not make the women faint but made the guards faint then God wanted the guards to faint so it was a miracle and that is a crazy suggestion. The angel was not supernatural or perhaps the Devil sent him. If there were guards then they were telling the truth when they said that they slept thinking nothing would happen and woke to find the tomb robbed. Matthew just assumed that it was a faint. He does not say he has evidence that they fainted. He couldn't have for the men could not tell the public they were so negligent even if it were true.

FACT 8: If the guards had said they knew it was disciples of Jesus who carried off the body, they would have had to make some arrests and avail of false witnesses to convict the accused but this never happened showing that Matthew was making it all up. There must have been witnesses to enable them to say it was the disciples for soldiers cannot just make accusations. These witnesses are unmentioned. Interesting. Either there were none or Matthew wanted them to be forgotten. Either way something suspicious was going on.

FACT 9: Matthew contradicts himself on the guards and the missing body.

The angel is all Matthew says they saw for they fainted at the sight and left upon coming round after the women left. The angel could have been the Devil who wanted to scare them unconscious so that the body could be stolen so Matthew fails to be convincing if he wants us to think the body left the tomb supernaturally. The Jews could have told them to say that the angel was a demon who had taken the body and asked them to say a good angel raised Jesus.

There was no need for the soldiers to tell anybody that Jesus had simply vanished. They could have said the angel scared them into a faint and somebody must have taken the body when they were out cold.

Matthew infers that the soldiers must have went and told the Jews that Jesus had vanished from the tomb for there would have been no need for bribes if they had just seen an angel that opened the tomb.

How did they know that Jesus was gone supernaturally when the angel scared them when he appeared before he opened the tomb and made them faint?

It is more likely that they did not think the body was missing at all but just assumed it later and happened to be right.

FACT 10: If the soldiers had really been traumatised by a holy angel there would have been no way they would have dared to lie and risk his wrath. If they would have lived on the edge then they would just as easily have taken the body themselves.

FACT 11: If the burial cloths were still in the tomb it would not refute the guards' claim that they saw people stealing the body. Yet Christianity lies that it would (page 355, The Truth of Christianity). The Church says the cloths stand against the testimony of the guards that they saw people stealing the body.

The Christians say that the thieves would not have left the cloths behind. They say the cloths prove that nobody stole the body so Jesus must have risen.

Come to think of it, when the guards went to the Jews the Jews would have seen to it that the cloths were removed from the tomb before anybody would see them. Though the cloths being there would not disprove theft they would lead to Jesus's

followers claiming they were a disproof of theft.

The tomb was left alone so were the cloths found in the tomb the real cloths of Jesus? Somebody could have planted cloths there to confuse the authorities about the theft.

FACT 12: When the story of the angels or men in white at the tomb came out, sceptics could have said they were the men the guards had allowed to steal the body. Men dressed so strangely could have got the body removed from the tomb and put new cloths there as if Jesus had gone leaving the cloths behind.

There was no effort made to rule this out indicating that the angels story was a late invention. The story of the angels would not have been tolerated by the Jewish authorities or the Romans at any time. The witnesses would have been put to death.

FACT 13: The bribe story is a pack of lies.

Acts 1 tells us that the resurrection was kept secret for forty days. This makes the bribe story ridiculous for you do not bribe people to contradict what nobody is saying. You tell them to say nothing until somebody speaks and only then. The soldiers saying nothing until the resurrection tale came out would not have looked bad for this is the pattern with a lot of controversial claims. Confidentiality would have been a good excuse. They could not force the witnesses to speak out by speaking out first.

The bribe must have been substantial when the Romans were prepared to risk everything for it. It must have been worth a lifetime's wages each. This makes it most unlikely that it was offered when Matthew says. There was no bribe.

Matthew says that some of the guards reported to the Jews. Matthew would tell us if the soldiers who had not gone with the rest told his version of events so they didn't implying the rest had not been bribed to lie but were telling the truth. Matthew could not have known if they had really been bribed anyway.

But the gospel lets us think that the ones who didn't go to the Jews could have been as bad as the ones who did. Maybe they were represented.

The Jews did not need to bribe but to say the men admitted to sleeping on duty and use them to blackmail them.

The bribe story is imaginary. If the Christians were so desperate to stop the Jews from saying that the body was stolen by the disciples and were happy to resort to lies it means that it probably was stolen by them. The truth could not refute the accusation. But if theft would not discredit the resurrection then why the cover-up in Matthew? Perhaps Matthew thought the empty tomb might be evidence for the resurrection and put it in, in case it was, which is a lot different from saying it is evidence. He was preparing the way for it to become evidence if that was what it could become. Perhaps the Jews wanted to accuse the disciples of theft so that nobody would believe them if they began to say Jesus rose or did true miracles.

FACT 14: If the guards had accused the disciples of taking the body they would have needed to follow this up and make some arrests. Securing a false conviction would have been dead easy to them when the Jews and they were so corrupt. They were saying they could prove it was the disciples when they accused them.

FINALLY

The lie about the bribe is really about making the Jewish leadership look terrible and of knowing that Jesus rose. Its propaganda. It looks like an attempt to cover up the truth that Jesus was stolen by his disciples.