Empty Tomb, Full Life

Hope That Cannot Be Shaken

Everyone Is Hoping for Something

- Health
- Relationships
- Finances
- Peace

Hope is powerful

"Hope is both the earliest and the most indispensable virtue inherent in the state of being alive. If life is to be sustained, hope must remain — even where confidence is wounded, trust impaired."

— Erik H. Erikson, Developmental Psychologist, *The Erik Erickson Reader (2000)*

But what is your hope built on?

The greatest hope in history is built on one claim

"If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith."

— 1 Corinthians 15:14

An Empty Tomb

THE ONE CLAIM

Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

It conquers death

Every other hope can be taken away by death. This one defeats it.

It's grounded in history

Not a wish about the future, but a claim about something that already happened.

It answers our deepest fears

Guilt, meaninglessness, and death — all addressed in one event.

It cannot be taken away

Health, money, relationships can all be lost. This hope cannot.

Let's Examine This Together

- Not blind faith
- Not blind rejection

What if Jesus Did Not Rise?

1

He didn't really die

2

The body was taken

3

It was made up

Theory 1

He didn't really die?

Roman execution was precise. Soldiers ensured death.

Does this really hold up?

WHAT THE MEDICAL EVIDENCE SAYS

Edwards, Gabel, and Hosmer were medical researchers at the Mayo Clinic who conducted a peer-reviewed study published in one of the world's most respected medical journals, with no theological agenda.

> "Modern medical interpretation of the historical evidence indicates that Jesus was dead when taken down from the cross."

— Edwards, Gabel & Hosmer, Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), 1986

Theory 2

The body was taken?

The tomb was sealed and guarded by Roman soldiers. Anyone attempting to steal the body would have had to get past an armed guard and break a Roman seal — a capital offence.

WHAT A ROMAN HISTORIAN RECORDED

Tacitus was one of ancient Rome's greatest historians — a Roman senator who was openly hostile to Christianity. He had every reason to dismiss it, not document it.

> "Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out."

— Tacitus, Roman Senator & Historian, Annals 15.44 (c. 116 AD)

Theory 3

It was made up?

Then where is the body?

The disciples faced persecution and death for this claim. Who willingly dies for something they know is a lie?

WHAT A JEWISH HISTORIAN RECORDED

Flavius Josephus was a 1st-century Jewish historian — not a Christian — who wrote a comprehensive history of the Jewish people for a Roman audience. He had no motive to promote the resurrection.

> "When Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day... And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day."

— Flavius Josephus, Jewish Historian, Antiquities of the Jews 18.64 (c. 93 AD)

It takes more faith to explain it away

Every alternative theory requires more assumptions, more coincidences, and more unanswered questions than the resurrection itself.

> "If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied."

— 1 Corinthians 15:19

But this is not just about evidence

It's about what it means *for you*

Because the tomb is empty...

Three Truths That Change Everything

Your past can be forgiven

Your present has meaning

Your future is secure

THE FEAR OF GUILT

Your past can be forgiven

Because Jesus rose from the dead, His sacrifice is confirmed, sin and guilt no longer have the final word.

> "He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification."
>
> — Romans 4:25

THE FEAR OF MEANINGLESSNESS

Your present has meaning

The resurrection means Jesus is alive today, and that He is actively at work in your life, giving purpose to every moment.

> "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me."
>
> — Galatians 2:20

THE FEAR OF DEATH

Your future is secure

Because Jesus conquered death, those who trust in Him share in that victory.

> "Because I live, you also will live."
>
> — John 14:19

This is not wishful thinking

This is hope anchored in Jesus Christ

You Don't Have to Have All the Answers

But you can take a step

TAKING A STEP — 1 OF 3

Accept God's Invitation

God is not waiting for you to be good enough. He is inviting you as you are.

> "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

— Matthew 11:28

TAKING A STEP — 2 OF 3

Acknowledge Your Helplessness

Trusting Jesus begins with honesty: I cannot save myself. I need Him.

> "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God."
>
> — Ephesians 2:8

TAKING A STEP — 3 OF 3

Ask for Help

You can pray, talk to someone, or simply tell God where you are. He hears you.

> "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."
>
> — Romans 10:13

The tomb is empty

So your life doesn't have to be

If that's where you are, you can simply say:

> Jesus, I put my hope in You.