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Some of the Guards Report to the Jewish Rulers
Matthew 28: 11-15
About 7:30 am on Sunday the seventeenth of Nisan

Some of the guards report to the Jewish rulers DIG: Why did the guards go to the Sadducees? Why were they both without excuse? What was their common interest to work together? How had the Jewish religious leaders and Satan try to get rid of Jesus since He was an infant? Why was their devised plan ridiculous? What other false theories have been invented? Would the apostles have allowed themselves to be martyred for something they knew was a lie?

REFLECT: How did the reality of Yeshua's resurrection "dawn" upon you? Where you more of a "quick believer" or a "slow doubter?" Why? How would you argue against the ideas (some still believe) that the apostles stole the body? Or that the resurrection is merely a legend that has caught on?

While the women were on their way to tell **the apostles** that **they** had seen **the Lord, some of the guards went into the City.** Only **some of the guards** went **into Tziyon and reported to the** Jewish religious leaders, probably representatives of the whole group of **guards**, which may have numbered as many as a dozen. For **them** all to go together would surely have reached the ears of Pontius Pilate. If so, the governor would have had **them** arrested and executed immediately for leaving their post and failing to follow orders and protect the body of **the Nazarene** from being stolen from the tomb **(Matthew 27:62-66)**.

They had been eyewitnesses to all the events on Sunday morning – the earthquake, the appearance of the angels, and the empty tomb. Yet **they** had been responsible to guard the tomb in order to avoid any potential problems. The penalty for a **guard** falling **asleep** and failing to protect a Roman seal was punishable by death. Because they were in the temporary service of the Jewish religious leaders,

the soldiers wisely **reported to the Sadducees everything that had happened (Matthew 28:11).** They had much less to fear from the **Sadducees** than from Pilate, and they probably hoped the Jews could some how protect them from the Roman procurator. So a new conspiracy was invented. There is never enough evidence for unbelief.

But despite the firsthand, unprejudiced testimony and their own awareness that **Yeshua** claimed **He** would rise from the dead on the third day, **the Sadducees** showed no interest in verifying the **guards'** story. It didn't really matter to them that **Messiah** was raised from the dead, or that **the Galilean Rabbi** had performed marvelous miracles before **their** own eyes. Some of **the Sadducees** had stood beneath the cross, taunting **Christ**, saying: **He's the king of Isra'el! Let Him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in Him (Matthew 27:41-42; Mark 15:32a).** But **their** treachery was now exposed, because the resurrection was a greater miracle than **coming down from the cross** would have been, and yet they still did not believe. As **Father Abraham** told the rich man in **Meshiach's** parable: **If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, then they will not be convinced even if someone raises from the dead" (Luke 16:31).** The heart that is hardened to **ADONAI** will not be persuaded by any miracle or by any amount of evidence because there is never enough evidence for unbelief. **The Sadducees** were so evil, self-willed, and spiritually blind that they shut **their** eyes to the truth of **Christ's** claims **(Second Corinthians 4:4)**.

The Jewish religious leaders, with the Adversary behind them, had been trying to get rid of **the Prince of Life** since **He** was an infant. Herod tried to eliminate **Yeshua** by slaughtering all the male babies in his province in order to remove **Him** as a supposed threat to his throne (**to see link click Aw – Herod Gave Orders to Kill all the Boys in Bethlehem Two Years Old and Under**). The Sanhedrin had accused **Him** of being demon possessed (see **Ek – It is only by Beelzebub, the Prince of Demons that This Fellow Drives Out Demons**), of being associated with sinners, of breaking the Oral Law (see **Ei – The Oral Law**), healing on the Sabbath, and for blasphemy for claiming to be **the Messiah** and **the Son of God**. They perverted both biblical and rabbinical justice in order to convict **Him**, employed blackmail to get **Him** crucified, used armed force to try to keep **His** body in the tomb, and now they were going to be engaged in bribery to hide the truth of **His** resurrection.

The Roman soldiers' news brought alarm, fear and confusion to the religious

leaders, but it did not bring faith, trust or belief. They were informed about the resurrection but did not try to deny it. **Their** only concern was to keep that news from reaching **their** fellow Jews, fearing that many would accept **Yeshua** as **the Messiah** and that **their** own influence, power, and wealth would taken from **them**.[1668]



When the Sadducees met with the Pharisees, they **devised a** coordinated **plan** called the "stolen body theory." **They gave the soldiers a large sum of money.** The word **money** here is *argurion,* which literally means *silver* and is the same word used by **Matthew** in **26:15** for the bribe given to Judas to betray **Jesus**. **They** told them: **You are to say, "His talmidim came during the night and stole Him away while we were asleep" (Matthew 28:12-13).** This statement in itself is ridiculous. **If the soldiers were** sleeping, how could **they** know who took the body? **Their** own statement exposes **their** lie. **They** even admit that **they were asleep**. How ironic that the very problem that **the guards** were to prevent **then** became the story **they** were directed to tell!

Both the religious rulers and **the** Roman **soldiers** had reason to lie. The members of the Sanhedrin needed to save their positions in the Jewish community and **the guards** needed to save their own lives. **If this report gets to the governor, the Sadducees** reassured **them**, **we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble (Matthew 28:14).** By threatening to make an unfavorable report to Caesar, the Jewish religious leaders had managed to have their way with Pilate. They knew he would not risk trouble with Caesar over the disposition of a Jewish corpse. If the Sanhedrin came to the soldiers' defense, they knew the governor would probably give **the soldiers** no more than a reprimand.[1669]

So, the soldiers took the money, overjoyed that **they** not only would not be punished but would even be rewarded. Thus, **they** put **their** lives into the hands of

the Great Sanhedrin **and did as they were instructed.** In **Matthew's** account, some thirty years after the resurrection, **this story has been widely circulated among the Jews** as the primary explanation for the empty tomb although there have been others **(Matthew 28:15).**

In an effort to deny the resurrection, some people have come up with the "wrong tomb" theory where the women went to the wrong tomb which happened to be empty; the "swoon theory" that states that **Jesus** did not die but merely fainted from loss of blood and was revived in the cool tomb. But in the final analysis, neither of these (or any other explanation) hold up under detailed information. But not only that, we can read about the dramatic transformation of **the apostles** in the following days. If they had conspired to steal the body, how can one account for their amazing spiritual change.

If the body of **Yeshua** had been stolen there would have been only two groups interested in stealing it: either **Christ's** friends or **His** enemies. It would have been foolish for anyone else to risk their lives for no reason. If the body was stolen by **His talmidim** it seems almost impossible to believe that **they** would be willing to die on the cross for something **they** knew was a lie. Ten of **the** twelve **apostles** died a martyr's death (see **Cy – These are the Names of the Twelve Apostles**). Only **John** died of natural causes. If **His** enemies had stolen the body, they had an easy way of stopping the continuing advance of the Gospel – merely produce the body! They didn't produce the body because they didn't have one. **It takes more faith to believe in the stolen body theory than it does the written text of the Bible!**

No, the most logical explanation for the empty tomb is that **Christ** has risen! **He** has risen indeed! More than 2,000 years later, we are still talking about it, and countless millions can attest to a personal relationship with **Yeshua Ha'Meshiach**.