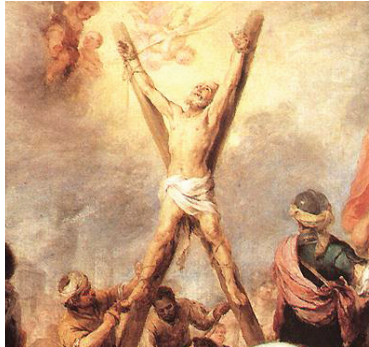


If Jesus' resurrection was fiction, why endure such harsh reality?



THE TWELVE APOSTLES:

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. Andrew - crucified | 7. Matthew - speared to death |
| 2. Bartholomew - beaten then crucified | 8. Peter - crucified upside down |
| 3. James, Son of Alphaeus - stoned to death | 9. Philip - crucified |
| 4. James, Son of Zebedee - beheaded | 10. Simon - crucified |
| 5. John - died of old age while exiled for his faith | 11. Thomas - speared to death |
| 6. Judas (not Iscariot) - beaten and stoned to death | 12. Matthias - stoned to death* |

**source: Fox's Book of Martyrs*

Three days after being crucified and buried, Jesus was missing from his burial tomb. Some say Jesus' disciples stole his body and concocted a story that he rose from the dead. If that's true, why would they die for something they knew was a lie? Would you?

And theirs wasn't a mass suicide, where they bonded together in some delusional facade. Each of them left family and jobs, traveling to distant countries, preaching that Jesus died and came back to life. If the disciples were making it all up, each of them chose to die prematurely for something they knew wasn't true. Doesn't make sense.

What does make sense are the historical facts. Even while being tortured, the disciples insisted that they, as well as hundreds of other Jews, had

seen Jesus alive. When some were arrested and ordered not to speak about Jesus' resurrection, they responded, "We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard!"

They knew Jesus had been beaten, whipped, nailed to a cross, where he died in public display. A spear was thrust into his side to confirm his death. Roman soldiers were stationed at Jesus' tomb, because Jesus had stated that three days after being crucified, he would rise from the dead.

On that third day, the guards fled, the two-ton boulder sealing the tomb's entrance was up a slope, and Jesus' body was gone. Inside the tomb, Peter and John saw the burial cloths still lying there, empty.

After that, the disciples saw Jesus physically alive multiple times. They even had lengthy conversations with him and ate with him—all after his death by crucifixion. These disciples went to their deaths proclaiming what they had no doubts about—that Jesus had risen from the dead, proving that he was everything he claimed to be...the Son of God.

What do you think? You may not ever have to die for your belief in Jesus like they did, but you can become just as sure. To learn more about Jesus and the facts supporting his resurrection, read the section called "John" in the Bible. And see the feature article BEYOND BLIND FAITH at EveryStudent.com.

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