

Not Gullible

Matthew 28:1-10

Easter Sunday April 9, 2023

Some believe that when you die is it like a candle going out.
“I was not. I was. I am not. I don’t care.” – ancient tombstone epitaph.

Some of the eastern religions, believe that life is an endless cycle.

The ancient Hebrews believed in Sheol or Hades. Everyone who died went to this underworld where spirits of the departed had a shadowy existence. (The Sadducees would have still believed this).

Around 500 BC, with the writings of the prophets, Jews began to believe that there was a resurrection. The belief was that at the end of history God would bring the righteous back to life and heal all of creation.

Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” John 11:23-24.

An individual being resurrected prior to the end of all things was something they didn’t even consider.

They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again, he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him. “We are going up to Jerusalem,” he said, “and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.” Mark 10:32-34.

The disciples couldn’t connect with this because it was so foreign to their understanding.

Two things changed their minds.

1. They saw the empty tomb. (But by itself, this wasn’t enough to cause them to believe)
2. Jesus appeared to the disciples.

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 1 John 1:1.

The New Testament writers included something that would have made people less likely to believe the story of the resurrection. The first witnesses to the resurrection were reported to be women.

So, the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.” Matthew 28:8-10.

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. Isaiah 53:5-6.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23.

“And everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.” Romans 6:23.

