



March 11, 2007

## *Common Sense*

Last week I wrote about a program which discussed the possible discovery of the tomb of Christ. Before discussing any particulars about the program I thought it would be good to get some idea of what it would take to create the most successful lie in history. Is Christ really in a tomb in Palestine, hidden for centuries by layers of conspiracy and clandestine actions, or is the Bible true? Someone once defined common sense as a “knowledge of the obvious”. In other areas of investigation and critical thought it has been decided that many times the real answer is also the simplest. If we apply this reasoning to the Bible story of Christ and the things that the scriptures reveal about him what will we find? We are going to examine some points from a biblical, social and psychological perspective to reach a conclusion. To say that this is unbiased would be inaccurate since I believe that the Bible is true and the revelation of Christ to be accurate. In short, Christ is the son of God and lived as the Gospels state, died and was resurrected by God. This is not a scientific inquiry, but then the Bible was not written to provide a scientific explanation for the events that are recorded. We will rely on a “common sense” approach to examine the scriptural record and compare that to what we know of other conspiracies and cover-ups. When we are through we will discuss the discovery in Palestine and attempt to offer a reasonable statement concerning those findings. First, let’s take a look at the conspirators who would craft and perpetuate this story. The New Testament was written by eight individuals who, as the Bible states, wrote by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It is the character and nature of the writers themselves that will shed some light on the possibility of success in such an endeavor. The writers of the New Testament are Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, Paul, James and Jude. There is some question as to the identity of the writer of Hebrews but for the sake of argument we will accept this as being the apostle Paul. Peter and John first of all stand out as principal figures in the story of the Gospel. Both of these men were fisherman and are described as being somewhat ignorant in the eyes of learned men of the

day. After healing a lame man (**Acts 3.1-9**) and teaching in the temple, Peter and John were arrested and brought before the religious leadership. Peter made a defense for what they were doing. Note the observation that is recorded. **“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.” (Acts 4.13)**. In the eyes of the “learned” men of the day, they recognized a lack of sophistication that the apostles had and yet were amazed at the presence of mind that was demonstrated. This is a stark contrast to where they had been earlier. As Christ was being tried before the council, Peter denied that he even knew Christ (**Matt 26.74-75**). Mark, possibly John Mark who accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their preaching trip, was a younger Christian, who for reasons not stated, left the work that he had set out on (**Acts 13.13**). We also find that Peter was one who had apparently returned to his fishing following the death of Christ along with several of the other disciples (**John 21.1-14**). Accepting that these descriptions are accurate, there appears to be a lack of belief, or awareness, that Christ indeed was risen. What would have prompted such a group to reconvene their ranks and formulate the story of Christ as recorded in the New Testament. What force would have been powerful enough for them to commit to it to such a degree that they were willing to endure beatings and imprisonment and, for some of them, death? Without the resurrection, and the subsequent outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, it seems extremely unlikely that they would have been able to do this and face the hardships that even history records. From ignorance to dedicated preachers of the Gospel. Common sense says that this would not have survived.

(Next week: **The Apostle Paul**)

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