

Erlo Stegen:

The Muslims said that they want to conquer the entire Africa. They try with their violence to conquer the world. Here in Durban there was a radical Muslim, Ahmed Deedat. He was determined to conquer South Africa. He founded the IPCI, and held large meetings where he said that Christianity was wrong, Jesus never died and never rose from the dead and made many other inflammatory claims. He held many debates with Christians. In one such a debate he said that Jesus never claimed that He died and rose again. It was simply fabricated by Paul. Many Christians didn't know how to answer him, but Josh McDowell answered him in the Durban 1981 debate that Jesus Himself said in Rev 1:17-18 that He was dead and is alive for evermore.

Rev 1:17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying to me, Do not fear, I am the First and the Last,

Rev 1:18 and the Living One, and I became dead, and behold, I am alive for ever and ever, Amen. And I have the keys of hell and of death.

We must be armed with the Word of God and be ready to give an answer (1Pet 3:15).

Another point which they use a lot, is to claim that the sign Jesus predicted about Jonah was never literally fulfilled (Matt 12:40), in that Jesus was never three days and three nights in the grave, e.g. if He died on Friday then He was only two nights in the grave. In reply Josh McDowell said that in Gen 1, Esther 4 and in Matt 12 where He refers to being buried for three days and three nights, we must look at His prediction in the context of the time in which He lived.

Firstly, the Jews' measurement of days is that any part of a day is counted as a day and night, for example in Esther we read:

Est 4:16 Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me, and do not eat nor drink three days, night or day. My maidservants and I will also fast in the same way. And so I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law. And if I perish, I perish.

Est 5:1 And it happened on the third day, Esther put on royal clothing, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, across from the king's house. And the king sat on his royal throne in the royal house, across from the gate of the house.

Here in Esther we see that the instruction was that they fast three days and nights, but on the third day Esther already acted and their fasting would be over.

Secondly, in Genesis the Bible refers to "and evening and the morning was the first day". The Jews measured their days as starting in the evening, at 6 in the evening to be precise, and any part of a day is counted as the full day and night of that day.

Jesus died at about 3pm in the afternoon, so on Friday He was already dead and in the grave for almost three hours before the evening of the next day started. In the Jewish understanding any part of a day is counted as a day and night (and even in our own time measurement, for example if a child should be born at 11.59pm, his birthday would still be counted on that day, and if born the next minute his birthday would be counted with the next day. So whether you were born 12.01am or 11.59pm, almost 24h apart, your birthday would still be counted on that day!).

So those three hours on Friday would be counted as a full day and night, according to the Jewish reckoning. Then you have the full Saturday (counting from the evening) and then part of Sunday again (starting in the evening again, counted as a full day and night) when He arose. The full time in the grave would then be counted, as per the Jews way of timekeeping, as three days and nights.

Even though Deedat was shown his errors time and again, he refused to stop with his inflammatory remarks and even became more and more vocal, mocking Christ and the Bible etc. Indian pastors in Durban wrote a letter to Deedat in which they warned him to stop mocking our Lord Jesus Christ (you can find the full letter at the following site, http://answering-islam.org/Responses/Deedat/open_letter.htm), and if he refused they will hand him over to God. Deedat ignored the warning, but not long after that he had a major stroke that affected him so badly that he couldn't speak again. He did not listen to God's warning and God closed his

mouth.

In Luke we read that Joseph of Arimathea donated his sepulcher where Jesus was buried. A huge stone was rolled in front of the entrance. The women on the way to the sepulcher asked who would be able to remove the stone for them. Nicodemus also came as we read in John.

Joh 19:39 And Nicodemus also came, who at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds.

Many Jews would simply wash the corpse and put a nice scent on, but here they came to embalm Him with spices, almost like putting on plaster of paris on a broken arm. The Egyptians did that so that the corpse would not putrefy, and it's likely that that was their aim too. But they forgot that the Bible said that His body would not see corruption (Ps 16:10). The amount of spices and bandages was about 45kg!

When these women came to the grave they found that He was risen indeed and went to tell His disciples. Peter and John immediately ran to the grave, but John being younger, overtook Peter and got to the grave first. But he didn't go in. When Peter came he went right in (John 20:1-10). Now rumor was going around that He was not risen, but His disciples had stolen His corpse. But Peter and John observed that the embalming bandages were simply collapsed on itself, an impossibility unless He had indeed risen from the dead. The only way to get off such an embalming cast that have become hard like plaster of paris around a broken arm is to cut it off. They knew instantly that the body was not stolen for the body cannot be removed from such a cast unless the cast was cut open.

We read the Bible so superficially, but if we read it carefully every detail has a message of immense importance.

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is historical and undeniable. Peter and John were convinced when they saw the shell of the embalming still whole and intact.

Jesus was able to suddenly appear in a locked room where the disciples were present, just like He passed out of the embalming cast. So the women, Nicodemus and Joseph embalming Him only made the case watertight that He is risen indeed from the dead!

The Resurrection of Jesus is exalted and indescribable. Woe to us if we do not fulfill His great commission to preach this Gospel to the ends of the world.