The Cover Story

While guarding the tomb of Jesus, Roman soldiers witnessed an angel moving the huge entrance stone. Temple priests had asked Pilate to secure the tomb for three days lest disciples of Jesus remove the body and publicize a resurrection which Jesus had already predicted *(Matthew 27:63)*. Because of the public nature of this matter, either Pilate or his unit commander would then choose the most trusted, battle-ready soldiers to prevent such an attempt with brute force. Pilate directed the priests to seal the tomb and post soldiers at the tomb's entrance *(Matthew 27:65-66)* .

When the angel rolled the entrance stone, these hardened men collapsed from fear and ran to the priests who gave them a huge bribe and said: *"We'll take care of Pilate, should he find out. Now, here is your cover story: The disciples of Jesus secretly removed the body while you were sleeping" (Matthew 28:13)*.

Sleeping? How absurd! How illogic! If someone is asleep, they could have no conscious awareness of their surroundings. On the contrary, if someone is consciously aware of their surroundings, they cannot be asleep.

Roman soldiers witnessed the angel moving the entrance stone, no one else. Not the women who said they could not since it was too large *(Mark 16:3-4),* nor did they go to the wrong tomb *(Luke 23:55).* Not Joseph of Arimathea or Nicodemus who placed expensive spices with the dead body of Jesus *(John 19:39-42)*. Not the disciples who dismissed it as nonsense *(Luke 24:11)*. Certainly not the priests who offered the bribe, the cover story, plus a believable defense before Pilate. If there was anyone who wanted the tomb entrance secured, it would have been the priests, for their reputations demanded a closed tomb.

How could there be more compelling evidence for the resurrection of Jesus than the original witnesses of the event who were bribed to remain silent and given a cover story?