



What Was the First Error? (Matthew 27:60-66)

Our blessed Lord Jesus was crucified for blasphemy: “The Jews answered [Pilate], We have a law, and by our law [Jesus] ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God” (John 19:7; cf. Matt. 26:63-66). By claiming to be the Son of God Jesus was making Himself **equal with God**: “Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because...[He] said that God was His Father, **making Himself equal with God**” (John 5:18). For a mere man to claim to be equal with God would indeed be blasphemy, but Jesus was in fact “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16:16).

Following Christ’s unjust but divinely planned execution, the chief priests and Pharisees met with Pilate saying, “Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while He was yet alive, After three days I will rise again” (Matt. 27:63). These leaders then recommended that Pilate take action to prevent the disciples of Jesus from spreading false rumors: “Command therefore that the sepulcher be made sure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night, and steal Him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so **the last error shall be worse than the first**” (Matt. 27:64).

What was the first error? “Error” means **deception** and is akin to the term “**deceiver**” in Matthew 27:63. The leaders considered the first error or deception to be when “the deceiver” predicted His resurrection (v. 63). For the disciples to steal the body and claim that He had risen would be a far worse error with far worse repercussions.

Their greatest fear, an empty tomb, was realized, yet the disciples had nothing to do with it! Christ’s triumphant resurrection gave proof that **He was everything He claimed to be**. He was “**declared to be the Son of God**...by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom. 1:4).

Later, the chief priests propagated the same **deception** which they had earlier pinned on the disciples. They paid a large sum of money for the soldiers to tell this lie: “His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we slept” (Matt. 28:12-13).

—George Zeller: www.middletonbiblechurch.org



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