

# **Who Moved the Stone?**

## **A Courtroom Drama**

by Jonathan Prime

## **CHARACTERS**

### **JUDGE**

Older person - serious and weighty.

### **COURT USHER**

Loud voice.

### **LEGIONNAIRE AUGUSTUS**

Younger man - soldier.

### **PROSECUTOR**

Without humour, sardonic, clever.

### **DEFENCE**

Lively and passionate.

### **PONTIUS PILATE**

Older - thinks highly of himself.

### **CENTURION PETRONIUS**

Tough old soldier, who answers thoughtfully.

### **JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA**

Sincere.

### **MARY MAGDALENE**

Graciously indignant when her answers are questioned.

### **SIMON PETER**

Big bloke.

### **THOMAS THE TWIN**

Gentle but firm.

### **PAUL**

Not impressive looking, but clear and resolute.

### **WITNESS**

Someone to give their testimony.

### **THE JURY**

The audience

## **SETTING**

A modern court room.

## **TIME**

A cross in space and time, where a modern court, Roman officials, Jesus' disciples, the apostle Paul, and the audience themselves all exist in one place.

ACT I

Scene 1 The courtroom. The Prosecution.

ACT II

Scene 1 The courtroom. The Defence.

# ACT I

## Scene 1

*(Lawyers take their seats. Usher escorts accused into court and places him in the dock.*

*Usher then opens door for JUDGE and as he enters.)*

**USHER**

All rise.

*The JUDGE enters - all stand. JUDGE bows towards audience - the actors bow back. He sits, everyone sits - if people don't the Usher tells people to.*

**JUDGE**

Would the accused please stand. You are Legionnaire Augustus?

**LEGIONNAIRE AUGUSTUS**

Yes

**JUDGE**

You are charged with failing to carry out the orders of a superior officer, in that you were negligent in guarding the tomb in which the body of Jesus of Nazareth was laid. How do you plead?

**LEGIONNAIRE AUGUSTUS**

Not guilty.

**JUDGE**

You may sit.

*(Judge looks at jury.)*

**JUDGE**

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, your task is a simple one. Evidence will be laid before you. Listen to it. On the basis of what you hear you must decide whether the accused is guilty or not of the crime with which he is charged.

*(Judge looks at the PROSECUTOR.)*

**JUDGE**

Prosecuting counsel (or Mr or Miss [surname]): you may begin.

**PROSECUTOR**

Thank you, my Lord. Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I will present before you three witnesses. You will hear conclusive evidence that Jesus of Nazareth was **dead** when his body was laid in the tomb. I will show that the tomb was later found empty and that the body could **not** have been taken without the perpetrators being seen by the guard. These facts, taken together, show beyond any doubt that the accused was guilty of gross negligence in guarding the tomb. My first witness is Pontius Pilate...

*Pontius Pilate is called by the Usher in from the corridor. This is repeated for all witnesses. Usher leads them to witness box.*

**USHER**

Pontius Pilate

**PROSECUTOR**

Your name is Pontius Pilate?

**PONTIUS PILATE**

It is.

**PROSECUTOR**

What is your profession?

**PONTIUS PILATE**

I was the Roman Governor of Judea.

**PROSECUTOR**

How long did you hold that post?

**PONTIUS PILATE**

For 11 years.

**PROSECUTOR**

Was it during this period that there was a local preacher called Jesus of Nazareth in Judea?

**PONTIUS PILATE**

Yes

**PROSECUTOR**

Did you meet this man?

**PONTIUS PILATE**

Yes

**PROSECUTOR**

How often?

**PONTIUS PILATE**

It was on one particular day.

**PROSECUTOR**

When was this?

**PONTIUS PILATE**

It was one year during the Jewish Passover celebrations when Jerusalem was particularly busy.

**PROSECUTOR**

Could you explain to the Court how you came to meet Jesus?

**PONTIUS PILATE**

He was brought to me by the Jewish priests in order for me to condemn Him to death.

**PROSECUTOR**

What was the charge against him?

**PONTIUS PILATE**

They said that they had found this man subverting the nation. And also that he opposed payments of taxes to Caesar and that he claimed to be Christ the King.

**PROSECUTOR**

Did you examine him and the case against him?

**PONTIUS PILATE**

I did.

**PROSECUTOR**

And as a result of the trial did you order him to be crucified?

**PONTIUS PILATE**

I did - he was sentenced to be crucified on a cross along with 2 other criminals.

**PROSECUTOR**

Did you actually see his death?

**PONTIUS PILATE**

No I handed him over to an experienced centurion and his squad.

**PROSECUTOR**

Was that the last you heard of Jesus?

**PONTIUS PILATE**

No - in the evening.....

**PROSECUTOR**

Of the day he was crucified?

**PONTIUS PILATE**

Yes

**PROSECUTOR**

Please continue

**PONTIUS PILATE**

In the evening of the day he was crucified a respectable Jewish man called Joseph of Arimathea came and asked me for the body of Jesus so that he could bury him.

**PROSECUTOR**

Did you let him have it?

**PONTIUS PILATE**

Not straightaway; I was surprised that Jesus was dead so soon.

**PROSECUTOR**

Did you check that Jesus was dead?

**PONTIUS PILATE**

Yes - I called in the centurion in charge of the execution; He certified that the man was dead.

**PROSECUTOR**

And you gave the body to Joseph?

**PONTIUS PILATE**

Yes

**PROSECUTOR**

Do you know where he was buried?

**PONTIUS PILATE**

Yes it was a tomb in Jerusalem not far from where the crucifixion had taken place.

**PROSECUTOR**

Is it right Governor Pilate that you ordered a guard to be posted at the tomb?

**PONTIUS PILATE**

That is correct.

**PROSECUTOR**

Why did you do this?

**PONTIUS PILATE**

Because the Jewish leaders asked me to. They came with a story about something Jesus had said about rising again on the third day, and about his followers - disciples I think they were called - stealing the body. So to appease them I ordered a guard to be posted at the tomb.

**PROSECUTOR**

Was the accused one of the guards?

**PONTIUS PILATE**

Yes

**PROSECUTOR**

And did he guard it satisfactorily?

**PONTIUS PILATE**

No - early on the Sunday morning the tomb was found to be empty and the body had disappeared.

**PROSECUTOR**

Thank you - I have no further questions.

**JUDGE**

Thank you. Defence Counsel. Your witness.

**DEFENCE**

Thank you my Lord. Governor Pilate - you said a moment ago that the Jewish leaders brought this man Jesus to you charged with subverting authority, and opposing payment of Roman taxes. Did you find him guilty of these crimes?

**PONTIUS PILATE**

No.

**DEFENCE**

Did you find him guilty of any crime?

**PONTIUS PILATE**

No.

**DEFENCE**

Do you think the Jews had any real charge against him?

**PONTIUS PILATE**

No - I think they were envious of him because of his following, and his teaching showed up their hypocrisy.

**DEFENCE**

Then why did you hand him over to be crucified?

**PONTIUS PILATE**

I didn't want to. I had intended merely to have him flogged and then set him free - but the crowd wanted his death. They would have rioted if I had not sentenced him.

**DEFENCE**

So you acted to please the crowd?

**PONTIUS PILATE**

I suppose it could be looked at that way.

**JUDGE**

Excuse me Governor Pilate - how did you know what the crowd wanted?

**PONTIUS PILATE**

(Hesitating) I had a tradition of releasing one prisoner at Passover time - at the request of the people. And at the time of Jesus' trial I had a terrorist called Barabbas in custody - so I decided to give the people the choice between the two. I thought they would choose Jesus but they chose Barabbas.

*Judge looks to Defence counsel.*

**JUDGE**

Defence counsel?

**DEFENCE**

You said in your evidence that you handed Jesus over to be crucified. Are you sure that your orders were carried out?

**PONTIUS PILATE**

Yes.

**DEFENCE**

Are you sure he was dead when he was buried?

**PONTIUS PILATE**

Yes.

**DEFENCE**

Were you surprised that the tomb was found to be empty?

**PONTIUS PILATE**

Yes my troops are of the highest quality. There must have been either a gross neglect of duty or an extraordinary explanation.

**DEFENCE**

Thank you. I have no further questions.

**JUDGE**

Governor Pilate, you may go.

*Judge looks to Prosecuting counsel.*

**JUDGE**

Prosecuting counsel?

**PROSECUTOR**

My next witness is Centurion Petronius.

*Petronius is called.*

**USHER**

Call Centurion Petronius

**PROSECUTOR**

You are Petronius?

**PETRONIUS**

I am sir.

**PROSECUTOR**

What is your profession?

**PETRONIUS**

Soldier, sir.

**PROSECUTOR**

What is your rank?

**PETRONIUS**

Centurion, sir.

**PROSECUTOR**

And were you stationed in Judea under Governor Pilate?

**PETRONIUS**

Yes Sir, I was.

**PROSECUTOR**

Do you remember crucifying the man Jesus of Nazareth?

**PETRONIUS**

I do, Sir.

**PROSECUTOR**

Were you in charge of the squad assigned to this task?

**PETRONIUS**

Yes Sir, I was.

**PROSECUTOR**

Was he the only one crucified that day?

**PETRONIUS**

No sir, there were two others. One on each side and Jesus in the middle.



**PROSECUTOR**

Was Jesus killed?

**PETRONIUS**

Yes Sir.

**PROSECUTOR**

What did you do with his body?

**PETRONIUS**

Pilate, the Governor, ordered me to give the body to a Jewish man - Joseph of somewhere or other - I think his name was. So I obeyed my orders.

**PROSECUTOR**

Did you have anything further to do with the matter?

**PETRONIUS**

Yes - the next day I was assigned, along with my squad, to the Jewish priests and ordered to seal and guard the tomb where the dead body of Jesus had been buried.

**PROSECUTOR**

Was the accused - Legionnaire Augustus - one of the guards?

**PETRONIUS**

He was, Sir.

**PROSECUTOR**

What were his orders?

**PETRONIUS**

To guard the tomb.

**PROSECUTOR**

Did he obey these orders?

**PETRONIUS**

No - he can't have because on the Sunday, the next day, the third day after Jesus' death, the body had disappeared from the tomb.

**PROSECUTOR**

Thank you.

*Judge looks to Defence counsel.*

**JUDGE**

Defence counsel?

**DEFENCE**

Centurion Petronius - how long have you been a soldier?

**PETRONIUS**

Longer than I remember Sir.

**DEFENCE**

You have carried out many crucifixions?

**PETRONIUS**

Yes sir.

**DEFENCE**

Was the crucifixion of Jesus different from the others?

**PETRONIUS**

It certainly was. It was strange.

**DEFENCE**

Could you tell the jury why it was strange?

**PETRONIUS**

It was the man first of all. He was different. We - that is the rest of my men and I - were really cruel to him. We mocked him and put a crown of thorns on his head. Looking back, what we did was shameful and pathetic. We spat on him and when he was on the cross folk made fun of him. We joined in. But what struck me was that he didn't complain or get angry. He didn't answer back.

**DEFENCE**

Did anything else unusual happen?

**PETRONIUS**

Oh I'll never forget it! For about 3 hours while Jesus was on the cross it was completely dark - and I mean really really dark - and there was an earthquake and the ground shook just as Jesus died.

**DEFENCE**

You say that Jesus died. Did you make sure that he was dead?

**PETRONIUS**

Yes sir. Pilate had ordered that the bodies weren't to be left on the cross on the Jewish Holy Day and so I told my men to break the legs of the men being crucified so that they died quicker. They broke the legs of the two other men, but when they came to Jesus they found that he was dead already. One of my men pierced his side with a spear and blood and water flowed out. That showed he was definitely dead.

**DEFENCE**

Thank you. I have no further questions.

**JUDGE**

You may go Centurion Petronius.

*Judge looks to Prosecuting counsel.*

**JUDGE**

Prosecuting counsel?

**PROSECUTOR**

My last witness is Joseph of Arimathea.

**USHER**

Call Joseph of Arimathea.

**PROSECUTOR**

Your name is Joseph of Arimathea?

**JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA**

It is.

**PROSECUTOR**

And what is your profession?

**JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA**

I am a member of the Jewish Ruling Council.

**PROSECUTOR**

Did you know the man called Jesus of Nazareth?

**JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA**

I did.

**PROSECUTOR**

Am I right in saying that you had something to do with his burial?

**JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA**

Yes. After he had been crucified I asked Pilate for the body in order to give him a decent burial.

**PROSECUTOR**

Where did you bury him?

**JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA**

In the tomb I had bought for my own burial. It was in a garden near Golgotha.

**PROSECUTOR**

Golgotha - that's where Jesus died?

**JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA**

Yes, that's correct.

**PROSECUTOR**

Would you describe the tomb to the Court please?

**JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA**

It was a cave hollowed into the rock and it was sealed with a huge stone rolled in front of it.

**PROSECUTOR**

Are you aware that a guard was posted?

**JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA**

Yes.

**PROSECUTOR**

Would it have been easy to enter the tomb without being seen by the guard?

**JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA**

No - that's impossible. There was a huge stone to move.

**PROSECUTOR**

Thank you. I have no further questions.

*Judge looks to Defence counsel.*

**JUDGE**

Defence counsel?

**DEFENCE**

Mr Arimathea, why did you want to give Jesus a decent burial?

**JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA**

I had been what you might call a 'secret disciple'. I had believed that he was the Messiah and I wanted to give him my best.

**DEFENCE**

Did you prepare his body for burial?

**JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA**

Yes. A friend called Nicodemus and I wrapped it with spices, in strips of linen.

**DEFENCE**

Are you are sure he was dead?

**JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA**

Yes, absolutely certain.

**DEFENCE**

What do you think happened to make the tomb empty?

**JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA**

I believe Jesus rose....

*Prosecutor rises to their feet.*

**PROSECUTOR**

Objection my Lord! Mr Arimathea is a witness to fact - not to his opinion.

*Judge pauses to think.*

**JUDGE**

Objection sustained.

**DEFENCE**

I have no further questions my Lord.

**JUDGE**

Thank you Mr Arimathea.

**PROSECUTOR**

That concludes my case my Lord.

*Prosecutor turns to the JURY.*

**PROSECUTOR**

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I have shown that the **dead** body of Jesus of Nazareth was laid in the tomb that the accused man was assigned to guard. We have heard that it would have been **impossible** to enter the tomb without being seen...and that the body disappeared on the accused man's watch. These facts prove that the accused failed in his duty to guard the tomb. I therefore implore you to find this man guilty of the charges against him.

**JUDGE**

I think this is an appropriate point to adjourn. Court adjourned.

**USHER**

All rise!

*(All stand. Court rises. JUDGE leaves. USHER escorts  
LEGIONNAIRE AUGUSTUS out of dock.)*

**Interval**

## ACT II

### Scene 1

*(Usher repeats what happened at start.)*

**USHER**

Court rise!

*(All Stand. JUDGE enters. All sit.)*

**JUDGE**

Defence counsel. Do you have any witnesses?

**DEFENCE**

Yes, my Lord, I have five witnesses in defence of my client.

**JUDGE**

Five? Best make a start then!

**DEFENCE**

In brief, the defence is that he did not fail in his duty because Jesus of **Nazareth miraculously rose from the dead**. No guard could guard his tomb! My first witness is Legionnaire Augustus.

*(LEGIONNAIRE AUGUSTUS escorted from dock to witness box by USHER)*

**DEFENCE**

Legionnaire Augustus, could you confirm your name?

**LEGIONNAIRE AUGUSTUS**

Legionnaire Augustus

**DEFENCE**

Legionnaire, please listen carefully to the questions you are asked and address your answers to the jury. How long have you been a legionnaire?

**LEGIONNAIRE AUGUSTUS**

As long as I can remember.

**DEFENCE**

Where were you stationed when the events before the court took place?

**LEGIONNAIRE AUGUSTUS**

Jerusalem

**DEFENCE**

Can you confirm that your commanding officer is Centurion Petronius.

**LEGIONNAIRE AUGUSTUS**

I can.

**DEFENCE**

What were your orders with regard to the tomb of Jesus of Nazareth?

**LEGIONNAIRE AUGUSTUS**

I was one of the squad of soldiers ordered to seal and guard it.

**DEFENCE**

Were you on the Sunday dawn patrol?

**LEGIONNAIRE AUGUSTUS**

I was.

**DEFENCE**

Could you describe what took place?

**LEGIONNAIRE AUGUSTUS**

Certainly, I will never forget it. There was this great earthquake - the whole place shook. Then this man came down from the sky and rolled back the huge stone sealing the tomb's entrance. Then he sat on it! I'd never seen anything like it! I was scared stiff - my knees had never knocked together with fear before.

**DEFENCE**

You say a man came down from the sky. Would you describe him as an angel?

**PROSECUTOR**

Objection! That is a leading question my Lord.

*(To the DEFENCE after a pause)*

**JUDGE**

Please rephrase the question.

**DEFENCE**

How would you describe the man?

**LEGIONNAIRE AUGUSTUS**

Well I've never seen an angel but this man appeared as lightning and his clothes were white as snow.

**DEFENCE**

Was the tomb empty?

**LEGIONNAIRE AUGUSTUS**

Yes sir.

**DEFENCE**

What did you tell the officers?

**LEGIONNAIRE AUGUSTUS**

Just what I've told you.

**DEFENCE**

Did all the guards tell the same story?

**LEGIONNAIRE AUGUSTUS**

No. Some went to the Jewish leaders - who we had been seconded to - and when they heard what had happened they told the others to spread the story that they dead man's disciples came and stole the body while we slept.

**DEFENCE**

This is a very important question. Do you think you could have done anything to guard the tomb?

**LEGIONNAIRE AUGUSTUS**

No. It was something out of this world.

**DEFENCE**

"Out of this world". Thank you.

*Judge looks to Prosecuting counsel.*

**JUDGE**

Prosecuting counsel

**PROSECUTOR**

Legionnaire Augustus, surely the story told by the other guards is true. You were asleep?

**LEGIONNAIRE AUGUSTUS**

No sir, I'm sure about what I saw.

**PROSECUTOR**

Had you been drinking before you went on guard?

**LEGIONNAIRE AUGUSTUS**

No. That would have meant instant court martial.

**PROSECUTOR**

Are you sure that you were not hallucinating?

**LEGIONNAIRE AUGUSTUS**

Sir, I'm certain. I've told you exactly what happened.

**PROSECUTOR**

I have no further questions my Lord.

**JUDGE**

You may step down from the dock Legionnaire.

**DEFENCE**

My Lord, my next witness is Mary Magdalene.

**USHER**

Call Mary Magdalene.

**DEFENCE**

You are Mary Magdalene?

**MARY MAGDALENE**

Yes.

**DEFENCE**

Did you know the man Jesus of Nazareth?

**MARY MAGDALENE**

Yes, I knew him very well. He had been very kind to me.

**DEFENCE**

Did you see your friend die?



**MARY MAGDALENE**

Yes - though from a distance. It was a dreadful sight. They were very cruel to him.

**DEFENCE**

Were you surprised that he was crucified?

**MARY MAGDALENE**

At the time, yes!

**DEFENCE**

But not now?

**MARY MAGDALENE**

No, and not since the day he rose from the dead. The angel I met at the tomb reminded me that Jesus had foretold his death and resurrection. Jesus had told us he had to die but we did not understand it at the time.

**DEFENCE**

So, you went to the tomb on that day?

**MARY MAGDALENE**

Yes, I went with a friend to anoint the body.

**DEFENCE**

And what did you see there?

**MARY MAGDALENE**

The stone over the opening had been moved away and an angel in white robes was sitting on it.

**DEFENCE**

Did he speak to you?

**MARY MAGDALENE**

Yes, he told me that Jesus was alive, just as He had said He would be. He said that I was to tell the disciples to meet Jesus in Galilee.

**DEFENCE**

You say the angel told you Jesus was alive. Did **you actually** see him?

**MARY MAGDALENE**

Yes, I was still very confused and couldn't believe it, but as I was leaving the garden I met Jesus and He spoke to me.

**DEFENCE**

Thank you, Miss Magdalene.

*(JUDGE looks to Prosecuting counsel.)*

**JUDGE**

Prosecuting counsel? Do you have any questions?

**PROSECUTOR**

Thank you, my Lord. Miss Magdalene, were you upset by Jesus' death?

**MARY MAGDALENE**

Yes.

**PROSECUTOR**

It is not possible that you were so upset that you went to the wrong tomb?

**MARY MAGDALENE**

No - I watched Jesus' body being put there on the day He died.

**PROSECUTOR**

Are you sure that you were not just hallucinating on account of your grief?

**MARY MAGDALENE**

No.

**PROSECUTOR**

Perhaps it was a ghost you met?

**MARY MAGDALENE**

It can't have been, I actually touched Him.

**PROSECUTOR**

Or perhaps you mistook someone else for Jesus?

**DEFENCE**

Objection, my Lord. My learned friend is badgering the witness.

*(JUDGE pauses to think.)*

**JUDGE**

Objection not sustained. Please answer the question, Miss Magdalene.

**MARY MAGDALENE**

No sir, It was definitely him. I knew for certain as soon as I heard His voice. He is my best friend.

**PROSECUTOR**

No further questions.

**JUDGE**

Thank you Miss Magdalene.

**DEFENCE**

My Lord, my next witness is Simon Peter

**USHER**

Call Simon Peter.

**DEFENCE**

What is your full name?

**SIMON PETER**

Simon Peter.

**DEFENCE**

And your occupation please?

**SIMON PETER**

I was a fisherman.

**DEFENCE**

"Was a fisherman". So what is your present occupation?

**SIMON PETER**

I seek to tell others about Jesus Christ.

**DEFENCE**

Were you one of Jesus' 12 special disciples?

**SIMON PETER**

I was.

**DEFENCE**

Did you go to his tomb on the day in question?

**SIMON PETER**

I did.

**DEFENCE**

And what did you find?

**SIMON PETER**

The stone had been rolled away from the entrance and inside the strips of linen were lying where the body lay and the burial cloth that would have been wrapped around Jesus' head was folded up.

**DEFENCE**

Now a woman called Mary Magdalene has told us that she saw Jesus alive. Did you see him?

**SIMON PETER**

Yes I did. Mary told us she had seen the Lord, and later that day He came to us.

**DEFENCE**

Are you sure that it was him?

**SIMON PETER**

Yes. He showed us the nail prints in his hands and the wound in his side.

**DEFENCE**

Did you see him again over a period of time?

**SIMON PETER**

Yes. It wasn't just once. It was a number of times over a period of 40 days.

**DEFENCE**

Did others see him as well?

**SIMON PETER**

Yes. The other disciples did and He appeared to more than 500 people at one time.

**DEFENCE**

And then what happened?

**SIMON PETER**

Well He told us to go and tell the whole world about Him and His death and resurrection, and then He was taken up into heaven.

**DEFENCE**

Was that all?

**SIMON PETER**

No, two angels told us that one day he would come back in a similar fashion.

**DEFENCE**

Am I right that since this time you have travelled around telling about Jesus?

**SIMON PETER**

Yes

**DEFENCE**

Has your message been well received?

**SIMON PETER**

Yes, many have come to personal faith in the risen Lord Jesus.

**DEFENCE**

Am I right that you have also faced persecution for speaking about Jesus?

**SIMON PETER**

That is true, but I am willing to die for my faith in Jesus. He has promised me eternal life.

**DEFENCE**

Thank you.

*(JUDGE looks to Prosecuting counsel.)*

**JUDGE**

Prosecutor?

**PROSECUTOR**

Thank you, my Lord. There was a rumour going around that you and the other disciples stole the body of Jesus and made up the story of Him being alive? Is this true?

**SIMON PETER**

No. We were too frightened after His crucifixion to do anything but hide. At first, we were as confused as everyone else by the empty tomb.

**PROSECUTOR**

Are you sure that it was Jesus you saw?

**SIMON PETER**

Yes.

**PROSECUTOR**

I put it to you that it was a ghost you saw.

**SIMON PETER**

No, it cannot have been, we touched Him and He ate with us.

**PROSECUTOR**

No further questions.

**JUDGE**

Simon Peter, you may go.

**DEFENCE**

My Lord, I call Thomas the Twin.

**USHER**

Call Thomas the Twin.

**DEFENCE**

You are Thomas the Twin?

**THOMAS THE TWIN**

I am.

**DEFENCE**

Did you believe the story that Jesus had risen from the dead?

**THOMAS THE TWIN**

No I thought it was impossible.

**DEFENCE**

Do you believe it now?

**THOMAS THE TWIN**

Certainly.

**DEFENCE**

Why?

**THOMAS THE TWIN**

Well, I declared that unless I saw with my own eyes the nail marks in His hands and side, I would not believe He was alive. About a week later I was with the other disciples and Jesus appeared. He specifically said to me "Put your finger here. See my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

**DEFENCE**

And did you believe?

**THOMAS THE TWIN**

I certainly did. I had seen Him. He is the Christ, the Son of God.

**PROSECUTOR**

Objection my Lord. No evidence has been led to show that this Jesus was the Son of God.

**DEFENCE**

My Lord, I would submit that if I can show that Jesus rose from the dead that in itself is sufficient to prove His Deity.

**JUDGE**

(After thought) You have a point there. Please continue your examination of the witness.

**DEFENCE**

Thomas, did Jesus say anything else to you?

**THOMAS THE TWIN**

He said, "You believe because you have seen me but blessed are those who haven't seen me and believe anyway."

**DEFENCE**

No further questions.

*(JUDGE looks to Prosecuting counsel.)*

**JUDGE**

Prosecuting counsel?

**PROSECUTOR**

I have no questions for the witness my Lord.

**JUDGE**

Thank you Mr Twin.

**DEFENCE**

My penultimate witness is Paul, my Lord.

**USHER**

Call Paul.

**DEFENCE**

You are Paul, formerly known as Saul of Tarsus.

**PAUL**

I am.

**DEFENCE**

Please state your profession.

**PAUL**

Missionary.

**DEFENCE**

Did you know Jesus while he lived in Galilee?

**PAUL**

No.

**PROSECUTOR**

My Lord, I object to the relevance of this witness' evidence. Of his own confession he did not know the dead man.

**JUDGE**

How do you answer this objection?

**DEFENCE**

My Lord, I seek to show that Jesus rose from the dead and this witness provides essential corroboration.

**JUDGE**

Objection overruled - please carry on.

**DEFENCE**

Do you believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead?

**PAUL**

Yes, I've met Him.

**DEFENCE**

Could you recount to the Court the circumstances of this meeting?

**PAUL**

I am Jewish and was born in a town called Tarsus. I was thoroughly trained in Jewish law and customs and as anxious to honour God in everything I did. I persecuted Christians - I hounded them to prison and death. I thought they were wrong about this Jesus they were telling everyone about: they believed He was God. I even obtained letters from the authorities to let me take all the Christians in Damascus as prisoners. As a result, I was travelling to Damascus with a band of soldiers. About noon we were only a few miles away when a bright light flashed around me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, "Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?" I asked, "Who are you Lord?" And he replied, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting." I asked Him what I should do and He told me to go to Damascus where I would be told what was assigned to me.

**DEFENCE**

And did you do this?

**PAUL**

Yes

**DEFENCE**

What were you assigned to do?

**PAUL**

To tell others about the crucified Jesus Christ, the Son of God who died and rose for sinners like me.

**DEFENCE**

Thank you Paul, that is all.

*(JUDGE looks to Prosecuting counsel.)*

**JUDGE**

Prosecuting counsel?

**PROSECUTOR**

My Lord, since I fail to see the relevance of this witness I have no questions for him.

**JUDGE**

Thank you Paul.

**DEFENCE**

My Lord, I have one further witness - but perhaps this is an appropriate place to adjourn if my Lord needs a break.

**JUDGE**

No - I think we should keep going, please call your last witness.

**DEFENCE**

My last witness is [real name of WITNESS].

**USHER**

Call [real name of WITNESS].

**DEFENCE**

Could you tell the court your Name?

**WITNESS**

**DEFENCE**

What is your occupation?

**WITNESS**

**DEFENCE**

Do you know Jesus Christ?

**WITNESS**

**DEFENCE**

Could you explain to the court how you can know someone who lived  
2000 years ago.

**WITNESS**

**DEFENCE**

Have you always believed this?

**WITNESS**

**DEFENCE**

Why are you so sure about it now?

**WITNESS**

**DEFENCE**

What difference does knowing Jesus Christ make to your life?

**WITNESS**

**DEFENCE**

Thank you. I have no further questions.



*(JUDGE looks to Prosecuting counsel.)*

**JUDGE**

Prosecuting counsel?

**PROSECUTOR**

[real name of WITNESS], I put it to you that you have been brainwashed to believe this nonsense about a dead man rising from the dead.

**WITNESS**

**PROSECUTOR**

In any event, I put it to you that your faith is just an emotional crutch to lean on.

**WITNESS**

**PROSECUTOR**

No further questions.

**JUDGE**

You may leave the witness box.

**DEFENCE**

My Lord, I conclude my case. My client Legionnaire Augustus cannot be guilty of the crime with which he is charged. He has told you that he could not have done anything to guard the tomb because, as Mary Magdalene and Simon Peter testify, Jesus of Nazareth has risen from the dead. And as Paul and [real name of WITNESS] have confirmed, He is alive today. Members of the jury, my witnesses have testified that Jesus of Nazareth has risen from the dead and is alive today. That is why you must find my client "Not Guilty".

**JUDGE**

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, Legionnaire Augustus is charged with failing to guard the tomb of Jesus of Nazareth. It has been proved that he was on duty there and that the tomb was found empty. In his defence it has been argued that Jesus rose from the dead. It is for you to decide. Did Jesus rise from the dead? If he did the accused is not guilty. If he did and He is the Son of God, nothing the accused could have done would have kept Him in the tomb. The choice is yours.

**USHER**

All rise.

*(All stand. Court rises. JUDGE leaves. USHER escorts LEGIONNAIRE AUGUSTUS out of dock.)*

## Short Talk

A short talk can now be given - 5 to 10 minutes based on 1 Cor 15:1-8:

*Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.*

*For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.*

Why does it matter what we think about the resurrection of Jesus?

- It is of first importance because:
  1. We are all sinners;
  2. We will all die;
  3. After death we will all stand before God as our Judge.
- Jesus died for sinners;
- Jesus rose to give eternal life to all who trust in Him;
- Jesus died and rose again so that all who trust in Him will be declared "Not Guilty" on the day of Judgement.

Offer gospels so that folk can check out the evidence for themselves.