



Who Moved the Stone?

Frank Morison , Lee Strobel (Foreword by)

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"I owe Morison a great debt of gratitude. Who Moved the Stone? was an important early link in a long chain of evidence that God used to bring me into his kingdom. Morison's stirring intellectual exploration of the historical record proved to be an excellent starting point for my spiritual investigation." --From the foreword by Lee Strobel English journalist Frank Morison had a tremendous drive to learn of Christ. The strangeness of the Resurrection story had captured his attention, and, influenced by skeptic thinkers at the turn of the century, he set out to prove that the story of Christ's Resurrection was only a myth. His probings, however, led him to discover the validity of the biblical record in a moving, personal way. Who Moved the Stone? is considered by many to be a classic apologetic on the subject of the Resurrection. Morison includes a vivid and poignant account of Christ's betrayal, trial, and death as a backdrop to his retelling of the climactic Resurrection itself. Among the chapter titles are: * The Book That Refused to Be Written * The Real Case Against the Prisoner * What Happened Before Midnight on Thursday * Between Sunset and Dawn * The Witness of the Great Stone * Some Realities of That Far-off Morning Who Moved the Stone? is a well-researched book that is as fascinating in its appeal to reason as it is accurate to the truthfulness of the Resurrection.

Who Moved the Stone? Details

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J. says

An in-depth, thoughtful, and imaginative analysis of the four Gospels and various apocrypha, piecing together what really happened (and why) on the night Jesus was betrayed by Judas, through the crucifixion, on the first Easter Sunday, and in the weeks that followed. Why was Judas's betrayal even important? After all, Jesus had been preaching and teaching in the city for several days, and everyone knew the entire group returned to Bethany each night. He was hardly a stranger to the high priests and shouldn't have needed that kiss of betrayal for identification purposes.

How did it fall out that Peter and John remained in Jerusalem overnight but the other disciples weren't there? And why did Mary (wife of Clopas), Mary Magdalene, and Salome watch the crucifixion, but only the two Marys watched the burial? Where'd Salome go?

It's all fascinating and makes a ton of sense. The one question not outright answered is the title. The reader is left to insinuate that Jesus moved the stone from inside the tomb, which is certainly more logical than some of the suppositions I've read — but it's not simply stated by the author. Seems a bit odd, considering the intense clarity of detail everywhere else in the book.

This one's a keeper. One star subtracted for the occasional difficult passage. Four stars for one of the best analyses I've read.

Marsha Stokes says

I was really impressed with this book. The author is a former journalist who really knows how to do his homework. As the story goes, originally this man was a skeptic about the divinity of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He started out his research attempting to disprove the theory. However, after trying to unbiasedly look at all the evidence, he eventually changed his beliefs.

Starting with the night Christ was arrested, this book mainly looks at those events surrounding the arrest and the events following the resurrection. I not only appreciated how slowly this man tried to uncover the facts, but how he also incorporated the historical and cultural settings of the time, and the psychology of the people involved. Those two things shed much light on the events surrounding the resurrection, giving me access to an insight I would never be able to have on my own without several history and cultural lessons!

The only reason I gave the book one star short from a perfect score, is that it could be a little difficult to read at times (the author lived almost 100 years ago and uses some pretty BIG words) and I never could figure out conclusively who the author thought "moved the stone." I could be wrong, but I gathered from the concluding chapter that the author insinuates that Christ opened the tomb himself, but he never directly affirms that insinuation. Of course, it probably is something that can never be conclusively proved anyway, but I was at least hoping to come away knowing what the author assumed happened.

James Fields says

Frank Morison was a journalist during the late 1800s. He was a naturalist who wanted to disprove the resurrection. So he some time looking into the historical record using his journalist training to discern what really happened. He writes about his take on the week leading up to Jesus's crucifixion and ends a week after.

Morison dissects the psychological ramifications of the events, the way stories tend to be told and develop, and the historical facts of how the religions and governmental bodies of the day worked and where this story deviated from they way they were supposed to operate.

Morison moves through these points with remarkable depth and clarity. Some of the things he points to I had never thought of despite these events being a matter I've pondered for ages. I'm not sure my words can possible due Morison justice. He went into such remarkable depth in his study that I'm not sure it could be said that anyone else's study compares.

If you have ever pondered these events and wonder what actually happened during the week before and after Jesus's death, you owe it to yourself to read this book. It's \$11 retail or free at your local library. And with its brevity you can easily read it in a week.

Mick Leach says

As utterly compelling an investigation as it was when I first read it, 35 yrs ago. You can never "prove" anything in history (in as much as, unlike science, it's not something you can repeat and obtain the same answer), but my approach to ultimately faith (that final leap of believing) was intellectual, not experiential and this book was a part of it. If you're interested, be prepared for the journalistic or legal style of its time (1920s), and a very broad lexicography. (If I hadn't temporarily mislaid it, I'd now be on that other literary pillar that bridged my approach, C S Lewis - Mere Christianity, but it'll have to wait until I've enjoyed an Iberian adventure story, in Spanish.)

David says

This is one of my favorite Christian books. Since discovering it five decades ago, I have read it through several times. It is non-fiction and is the personal story of newsman who sets out to disprove the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Instead of achiving his goal, he finds the overwhelming weight of evidence supporting the historicity of the resurrection. Eventually, he becomes a follower of Christ.

This is good reading and a great story. Christ's resurrection is the key to Christianity. If it did not happen, our faith is meaningless. If it did happen, it validates everything else about Christianity.

MaryEllin says

I try to read this book every Easter. I love it. My Kindle version has more than a few typos, even after an

update pushed out to supposedly correct them. Still, I love Morison's logic as he details his research into the circumstances surrounding Christ's arrest, death, the empty tomb, and the beginnings of Christianity. Wish the book had detailed footnoting and a bibliography, but unsure if that's a factor of my apparently poorly edited Kindle version. Highly recommend despite these flaws.

Karol says

It took me awhile to work through Frank Morrison's book, although I found it immensely interesting. It looks at the details behind the burial and reported resurrection of Jesus Christ, weighing the evidential value of the gospel and other accounts. The author's approach was logical, and in many senses broad. It's my understanding that he approached the topic as objectively as possible, but from the viewpoint of someone who did not believe in Christ. However, after doing his research, he reached the conclusion that the gospel accounts were entirely true.

As he wrote about the different people involved in the events, the final days of Christ's life before his crucifixion took on deeper layers of meaning for me. Morrison reached the same conclusion as I did about whether the resurrection really happened - which is that there were credible eyewitnesses who in fact, did see Christ after he rose from the grave. That is backed up very strongly by the fact that all of his disciples but one faced death because of their beliefs and yet they did not waver. (The one who lived to an old age was exiled for his beliefs). Perhaps one or two zealots might die for a cause that was not strictly rooted in truth - but every single one? Not likely.

Although the language in this book is formal and not the most exciting thing you'll ever read, as I said before it is immensely interesting.

Marsali Taylor says

This isn't a new book, so I'd love to read something on the same topic which takes account of the latest Biblical scholarship. However it's a beautifully lucid introduction to Biblical criticism. I'll try to reduce the argument - but you need to read the book for the subtle reasoning. Basically 1: Jesus was a historical figure who died as told in the Gospels. (I think there's nobody who seriously argues with that one). 2: something changed His disciples from 'scattered sheep' to men who preached His conquering of death, from the earliest period (again, generally agreed) and were willing to die for that belief (historical record) 3: that preaching began in Jerusalem, where Jesus' tomb was, within weeks of his death (generally agreed) - therefore 4: that tomb must have been known to be empty to everyone in Jerusalem, backing up the belief in Jesus risen in the body.

Too simplistic - I recommend reading this one for yourselves. Try not to get too annoyed at the sentences beginning 'Personally ..' or any generalisations about 'women' eg prone to delays on joint excursions. When he was writing we hadn't got the vote yet.

A really worthwhile pre-Easter reading, especially if you missed out on church as a child, and aren't sure what the fuss is about.

kris says

It was an excellent read for the most part. The author used logic to prove that something out of the ordinary happened between Christ's arrest and the discovery of the empty tomb. Using the gospels and other sources from the 1st century to destroy the theory's that ranged from Christ's body being stolen, to passing out on the cross only to revive later. Also dismantling the idea that there was no trial and execution. This book points to the only possible explanation that Christ was resurrected and appeared to His followers. Despite how extraordinary this claim is, it is the only one that can account for the change of the apostles from cowards who ran away and denied Christ; to boldly proclaiming the Word even when it led to their own grisly deaths. Special consideration is made for Saul/Paul who went from bitter adversary to greatest spokesman for the new faith.

KamRun says

[illegible][illegible]

Niel Knoblauch says

3.5 stars

Paul Creasy says

Great book

Highly readable and very compelling. A good book to add to any person interested in apologetics' library. Highly recommended without reservation.

Drikus Roux says

Page 129: "Personally, I am convinced that no body of men or women could persistently and successfully have preached in Jerusalem a doctrine involving the vacancy of that tomb, without the grave itself being physically vacant. The facts were too recent; the tomb too close to that seething center of oriental life. Not all the make-believe in the world. could have purchased the utter silence of antiquity or given to the records their impressive unanimity. Only the truth itself, in all its unavoidable simplicity, could have achieved that."

Patience Eastwood says

Although occasionally you realise that this book was written in the 30s - generally when the author takes care to debunk theories which are not commonly held today - it remains an excellent summary of the evidence for the physical resurrection of Christ. The author does not start with the position that the Bible is infallible, which may put some Christians off; however, I am not sure how you could write this kind of book if you did start with that position, or at the least it would be a very short book!

Joshua says

Ok. Morison does not believe in the historicity of all the gospels, nor in the preservation of scripture. His attempt to explain the resurrection therefore treats the texts as historical documents and not God's Word (as they claim to be). In fact, Morison ends up sounding a little like "The Moon Pool," by attempting to explain everything materialistically, barring of course the actual resurrection. Needless to say, such a take is not particularly convincing to Christians, although it might be a useful introduction to a casual skeptic.

Julie Davis says

In attempting to unravel the tangled skein of passions, prejudices, and political intrigues with which the last days of Jesus are interwoven, it has always seemed to me a sound principle to go straight to the heart of the mystery by studying closely the nature of the charge brought against Him.

I remember this aspect of the question coming home to me one morning with new and unexpected force. I tried to picture to myself what would happen if some two thousand years hence a great controversy should arise about one who was the center of a criminal trial, say in 1922. By that time most of the essential documents would have passed into oblivion. An old faded cutting of The Times or Telegraph, or perhaps some tattered fragment of a legal book

describing the case, might have survived to reach the collection of an antiquary. From these and other fragments the necessary conclusions would have to be drawn. Is it not certain that people living in that far-off day, and desiring to get at the real truth about the man concerned, would go first to the crucial question of the charge on which arraigned? They would say: "What was all the trouble about? What did his accusers say and bring against him?" If, as in the present instance, several charges appear to have been preferred, they would ask what was the real case against the prisoner.

Strongly influenced by late 19th century skeptics, Frank Morison decided to discover Jesus' true nature by looking critically at the facts surrounding his death and resurrection. He wound up being convinced of Jesus' divinity but it is a fascinating read even if you had no doubt of that fact. I have never read anything quite like this book which still holds up even though it is over 70 years old. Morison evaluates things that I never thought to question such as why Judas chose that particular night to turn Jesus over to the Pharisees, whether the Pharisees and Pontius Pilate worked hand in hand in Jesus' case, and where the apostles hid out (and why) during the trial and subsequent events. In some ways this reads like a "true life" murder mystery as the author reconstructs events and traces people's actions.

I didn't agree with every conclusion Morison made such as the identity of the young man at the tomb. Nor did I approve of every reference that was used, such as the Gospel of Peter and Gospel of Hebrews, although he did use many reliable sources such as the works of Josephus, the Jewish Historian and the few historical writings on the character of Pontius Pilate. However, those quibbles aside, this is a classic apologetics work and one well worth seeking out. You definitely will examine the facts surrounding Jesus' death with a more analytical eye.

Werner says

While the Bible records many instances of miracles, in most cases Christian faith doesn't depend for its existence on belief in, or literal interpretation of any one of them, and they don't play a significant role in Christian consciousness; for instance, whether or not Jonah endured three days in the belly of a whale makes no difference in how I live my life. Christianity stands or falls, however, on the claim of one central miracle: that the crucified Jesus of Nazareth literally rose from the dead by the act of God, attesting to the truth of his message and the meaning of his death as a sacrifice for human sin, and inaugurating an ultimate redemption of the world from sin and death. If that can be successfully dismissed as a fraud or a mistake on the part of the disciples, then we're free to dismiss Jesus as a lunatic (as one of my college teachers maintained) or a charlatan in the mold of Jim Jones. But if it *can't* successfully be dismissed....?

British journalist Morison, convinced that supernatural religion was a myth, but respectful of the "historical Jesus" of turn-of-century (and modern) liberalism, set out to write a book about the real human drama of this "great teacher's" last days, stripped of the superstitious legends. In the course of his research, he ran squarely into the reality of which another of my college teachers, an atheist who taught the Heritage of the Bible class (not an unusual situation, in a state university!) spoke to a surprised class: while the idea of a miraculous resurrection appears to be a scientific impossibility --at least, if you define miracles as impossible-- all the purported natural explanations for the historical data also appear to be psychological, physical or historical impossibilities; yet *something* happened. Morison's intellectually honest research --not starting from the assumption that the Gospel accounts are inerrant Divine revelation, but rather treating them as human documents subject to historical analysis and verification-- forced him to the conclusion that the literal resurrection of Jesus from the dead is a fact, which the Gospel writers correctly report and interpret. That fact does not, in itself, validate the theology or lifestyles of any particular Christian group; it does not in fact

validate any teaching except Jesus' own. But --if it be admitted-- then it *does* mean that his life and teaching has to become the central starting point for our understanding of ourselves and our world.

This book is clearly written, lucidly argued, and would be a fairly quick read for most people. But the relatively short time invested in it might well pay great rewards spiritually and intellectually. It's a good resource for Christians who want to know more about the evidence for our faith; but I think it would be an even better read for any atheist or skeptic who values critical thinking and honest inquiry into the questions of ultimate meaning that concern all of us.

David Sarkies says

Discovering the evidence supporting the resurrection

8 October 2010

The original idea behind this book was to demonstrate that the stories of Jesus Christ in the Bible (and in fact the whole Bible) were unreliable and that Christ's resurrection never happened. However the agnostic author, Frank Morison, discovered that it was not possible to actually write that book because he discovered, after a lot of painstaking research, that his original premise simply wasn't true. So, into the draw went his original concept and instead he wrote the book that has since become a world wide best seller.

Who Moved The Stone is not a theological text, and does not pretend to answer the question of who Jesus is and what his death and resurrection represent. It seems that these questions have been left for the reader to consider themselves. Instead, Morison digs through the material that we have to paint a very clear picture on what happened on that weekend over two thousand years ago, and his research and methodology is very impressive. Unfortunately, having a biased view towards these events I cannot honestly say that I have been convinced, but rather I can say that his argument and his exploration of the evidence that we have is excellent.

Many people have gone out to write a book that Morison has attempted to write and some of these books have also been published, however the difference is that Morison went into his project with an open mind. Many of the other writers (who will not be named) have not done this. They already have a direction they wish to head, and will simply make point of fact statements (such as the gospels being unreliable) without actually digging much deeper to provide supporting evidence as to why they believe that the gospels are unreliable.

Even though Morison focuses mostly on the gospels as the source, he applies logic and background information to clearly paint the picture that has been painted in this book. Further, he raises some interesting points that tradition has determined otherwise. The first is the man that was at the tomb when the women arrived that Sunday morning. Tradition says that the man was an angel, however Morison believes that this man was the writer of the gospel, Mark. Secondly tradition has it that the guards at the tomb were Roman soldiers, however Morison, from the text, demonstrates that they could not have been Roman soldiers, but rather the Temple Guards (no Roman soldier would ever have admitted to falling asleep on his post, that was punishable by death). However, there are other events that seem to slip his mind, such as Peter and John (as outlined in the Gospel of John) being told by the women that the tomb was empty, and then going to the tomb themselves to see that what the woman had said was true.

The main point that Morison seems to focus on, though, is the unprecedented rise of Christianity over the

first fifty years of its life. He indicates that a group of scared fisherman become powerful speakers of an unbelievable message, and further people heard and flocked to the message. This, he suggests, could not have happened if Christ had not risen from the dead (and that the body was produced). In the end, though, his main question (which is not answered in the book) is, who moved the stone?

Adam Calvert says

This book started out really good. Being a journalist the author knew how to write well and capture the reader's attention. He made some fascinating historical observations throughout the book, but toward the end he really disappointed me.

I particularly enjoyed the first section of the book where he gives keen insight into how and why Pilate came into the scene of Christ's death and how his actions in regard to it seem to be uncharacteristic for him. But he explains this mystery very well with his grand precision in historical, contextual observation.

But then the book gets pretty boring a little after the midway point, and then tapers off into a chore of a read trying to answer the question 'Who Moved the Stone?' with the last three chapters. But in reality, his answer seemed very strained at best. I wish the last part of the book was as good as the first. (From a Christian perspective, it was very disappointing to see him give so much credence to the gospels of Matthew and Luke as authoritative documents only to later say that they were wrong and that Mark alone has the true record.)

The book brings out some wonderful insights into the events surrounding the passion of Christ, and the author is very fun to read as he uses the principle of induction to put things into perspective. But (in my opinion) he does not really do a wonderful job of answering the title of his book. Overall, this book serves as giving the reader a better appreciation of what went on the last couple of days before Christ's death, but I would not recommend it as a good apologetic for the faith.

Michael Walker says

An attorney investigates the gospel accounts of Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead. This is a 1930 precursor to such modern-day authors as attorney and investigative journalist Lee Strobel.
