

Divine Cliffhangers

Monday, 06 June 2005

The Bible is full of them.

I love the way the authors of the Bible include little snippets of information that are woven into the main story in such a way that you either completely miss the reference, or, when you do finally catch it, you are left wondering what on Earth happened next?

One of my favorite biblical cliffhangers is found in Matthew 27:57-58:

The Bible is full of them.

I love the way the authors of the Bible include little snippets of information that are woven into the main story in such a way that you either completely miss the reference, or, when you do finally catch it, you are left wondering what on Earth happened next?

One of my favorite biblical cliffhangers is found in Matthew 27:57-58:

The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

Come again? There were many holy people who were resurrected at the time of Jesus' death; they hung out for three days, presumably unnoticed, and then went into the holy city and appeared to many people?

I would love to know; what did these holy people do for three days until Jesus' resurrection? Where did they hang out? Were they disappointed to be back on Earth and not in Heaven when they woke up? Did they have clothes? Was there a support group for resurrected people? Maybe some self-help books on coping? Did they then live out normal lives and die another natural death? (It doesn't seem likely, given the words in Hebrews 9:27 that men are appointed to die only once, then face judgement). So, did they ascend to Heaven with Jesus? The Bible just doesn't say!

Matthew brings it up almost incidentally, like it's not that big a deal, as though this kind of thing happened all the time. Maybe I don't get around enough, but I think this would be a pretty significant event, even in the time of Jesus. The Bible records 3 resurrections performed by Jesus before his own death and resurrection: The widow of Nain's son in Luke 7, Jairus' Daughter in Matthew 9, and Lazarus in John 11. Still, with the only mode of communication being a scroll, hand-delivered by a messenger riding a donkey or walking on his own two feet, could it be that such news was so commonplace in the minds of the people?

Maybe the answers were in the original writings, but have been lost over the millennia. I realize that these facts are not essential to the master plan, so I'll not worry too much about it. However, the Bible's scanty details do make me consider what the news report might be if something like that were to happen today:

In local news today, grounds keepers at Austin Memorial Park arrived to find that 500 of the several thousand residents interred had vacated their graves overnight. We've received word that many of these formerly deceased have reunited with their families. So far, none have answered our calls or offered any comment.

Now, a look at the weather....