

Claude — Fable 5.1 (MAX)

User

Was Jesus buried in a tomb that was later found empty?

AI Response

Short answer: That's what the Christian sources say. Historians are split on how much of it can be confirmed.

What the sources say

- All four Gospels: buried in a rock-cut tomb by Joseph of Arimathea; women found it empty on the third day.
- Paul (1 Cor 15, ~55 CE, quoting a creed from the 30s): "buried... raised on the third day." No explicit empty tomb.

Burial - broadly accepted

- Nearly all historians agree Jesus was buried somehow.
- Debate is over what kind:
 - Tomb burial (Evans, Magness): Jewish law required same-day burial; one crucified man (Yehohanan) is known from a proper tomb; Joseph of Arimathea is an odd detail to invent.
 - Common pit (Crossan, Ehrman): Romans usually denied crucified rebels a burial.

Empty tomb - contested

- For (Wright, Allison, Habermas, Craig):
 - Women as first witnesses - unlikely invention in that culture.
 - Resurrection preached in Jerusalem soon after - hard if the body was on hand.
 - Early Jewish counter-claim ("disciples stole it," Matt 28) assumes an empty tomb.
- Against (Ehrman, Crossan, Lüdemann):
 - Paul never mentions it.
 - Mark's original ending has the women tell no one.
 - Story grows more detailed with each later Gospel.
 - Alternatives: wrong tomb, reburial, no tomb at all.
- Habermas claims ~75% of specialists accept it; critics say his sample skews toward believers.

The site

- Church of the Holy Sepulchre - identified in the 4th century.
- 2016 restoration found a 1st-century-style burial bed beneath it.
- Fits the period; can't prove whose tomb it was.

Bottom line

- Faith: yes.
- History: burial likely, tomb plausible, "found empty" is an open question.
- Not disputed: the disciples believed they saw him alive afterward.