

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact Information:

Per Ewert

mail@perewert.com

+46 709 515137

<http://perewert.com>

Sherlock: The Case of the Empty Tomb

by Per Ewert

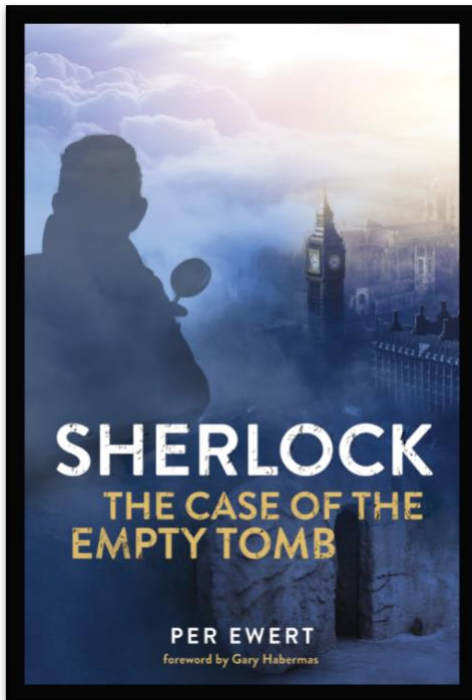
Wipf & Stock, an imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers

978-1-5326-6514-1 / paperback / \$19

www.wipfandstock.com

New Title from Per Ewert *Sherlock: The Case of the Empty Tomb*

“The first Easter, eh? That would have been something for a sharp-eyed Roman investigator.” He barked a short laugh: “One executed prisoner, mission accomplished and . . . boom—all of a sudden they stand there with an empty tomb! Well, isn’t that something . . .”



The conversation came to an end. The only thing that broke the silence was the sound of the ripping of envelopes and flicking through of papers. Had John H. Watson lifted his eyes, he would have seen that something had changed in the other man’s appearance. The listless expression on his face had disappeared, and was now replaced by intense concentration.

Sherlock sprang up from his chair, his eyes crystal clear, in that unmistakable way that bore witness that something had awoken inside his brain. He turned to John and emphatically declared: “I’ll take the case!”

How would the world’s greatest investigator handle the strangest disappearance in history? From Ash Wednesday to Easter Morning, Sherlock Holmes and John Watson travel through present-day England to establish what actually happened to the executed prisoner Jesus of Nazareth. Can Sherlock solve all problems which may arise along the way? And what is the solution to *The Case of the Empty Tomb*?

Per Ewert is the director of the Clapham Institute, Sweden’s leading Christian think tank, and he is writing his PhD on the history of secularization. Ewert has written several books in Swedish on apologetics and the role of faith in society. He lives with his wife and four children in southern Sweden. This is his first book in English.



Interview with Per Ewert

Per Ewert - Who are you?

I work as director of the Clapham Institute, Sweden's leading think tank. As a scholar, my main topic is history. I'm currently working on a PhD thesis on the historical driving forces behind the high level of secularization and individualism in Sweden. I have written six books in Swedish, and this is my first book in English.

What gave you the idea to write a book about this peculiar connection between Sherlock Holmes and Jesus of Nazareth?

I have been a huge fan of Sherlock Holmes since young age, and I have been writing, lecturing and debating the defense of the Christian faith for several years. Some time ago, I noticed a newspaper article about a priest who delivered a sermon, dressed up as Sherlock Holmes. That awoke a spark inside me: What if the world's greatest detective should investigate the most astonishing disappearance in history: The Case of the Empty Tomb? At the end of that day, I had more or less come up with a story that could carry this investigation from beginning to end.

Hasn't someone tried this way of discussing the evidence for the Resurrection before?

When the idea came up inside my head, I first imagined that someone must have written this story before. To my surprise, that didn't seem to be the case. However, when the word spread about this project of mine, someone informed me that an author in the early 18th century actually explained the evidence concerning the death of Jesus and its aftermath, in the form of a court process. As a quite amusing matter of fact, this author's name was Thomas Sherlock!

Was it a fun book to write?

My earlier books took much longer time to write, but in this book project I had the first script completed in just a few months. It was such a great experience to write a story about my old acquaintances Sherlock Holmes and Dr John Watson. Rather soon, I decided to let the story develop in a modern setting, instead of the Victorian age - not least because I wanted to include the latest historical and medical research on the facts presented in the book.

Who else has contributed to this book?

I'm very honoured that Dr Gary Habermas, arguably the world's greatest expert on the resurrection of Jesus, was willing to write a foreword to this book. I met Gary when he was on a speaking tour in Sweden some years ago, and we have kept in touch ever since. I'm also glad to have had the book endorsed by Kelly Monroe Kullberg, founder of the Veritas Forum, and Mike Licona, another well-known expert on the resurrection.

Wouldn't it be a bit dull to listen to Sherlock and Watson discuss an ancient problem for 24 chapters?

Yes, I had the feeling that such a setting would appear somewhat dull. Therefore, I included another parallel case, where a priest pays a visit to 221B Baker Street when a medieval silver cross has mysteriously been stolen from his church hall. By seeming coincidence, this priest also happens to be a New Testament historian. So Sherlock, John and the priest give themselves a period for of 40 days from Ash Wednesday till Easter Morning to do all in their might to solve both these riddles.

Will the Sherlock Holmes fans find a familiar portrayal of the character in your story?

I certainly hope so! I have watched some modern versions of the famous detective. Some of these portray Holmes and his personality in a way that we recognize from Conan Doyle's stories, while I think others miss the point. I imagine the Sherlock character in this book as somewhere between Conan Doyle's classic figure and the great portrayal that Benedict Cumberbatch gives in BBC's "Sherlock". When you write a story like this, you also get the opportunity to include some classical Holmesian deduction, where the detective reveals facts invisible to the untrained eye. I can tell you that was great fun to write!

How do you hope this book will be used and discussed?

This book is intended for anyone who, just like Sherlock Holmes, is passionate about the truth. Myself, I have participated in debates, lectures, and other gatherings with the Swedish edition; in universities, churches and other arenas - all kinds of places where an open search for truth is a matter of priority.

Finally, how would a super-sceptic and very rational mind like Sherlock Holmes evaluate circumstances as extraordinary as the claim that a dead man rose again?

Well, it would be unwise of me to reveal how the book ends. But I'm certain that if all people were as devoted to discovering reliable facts and explanations as Sherlock Holmes is, the world would be a better place. The amount of facts surrounding the death and burial of Jesus of Nazareth, as well as the circumstances following his burial, are astonishingly well recorded as historical events. I wish everyone welcome to study them thoroughly, through the eyes of the great Sherlock Holmes. Let the game begin!

An Excerpt from *Sherlock: The Case of the Empty Tomb*

John frowned as he continued: “But surely we must be able to criticize the gospels as a quite peculiar kind of source material. After all, they’re documents of faith, rather than strict biographies.”

A smile spread across Sherlock’s face. “Well done, John! I actually thought exactly that way when we entered this project. But since then, I’ve had time to study some current research on ancient biographies. And it turns out that the gospels have the same basic outline as common Greco-Roman biographies. And that’s one of the reasons we may also treat them with the same kind of critical scrutiny as we do with other historical documents.”

John murmured, agreeing: “That makes sense. So what should we say then about this Joseph of Arimathea?”

“I’d say that this piece of information has the typical characteristics of a reliable description. People or events who are mentioned just briefly, but still so clearly identifiable that a contemporary reader would easily be able to check the information—such statements are almost never made up.”

“You mean that a more fanciful rendition would begin ‘Once upon a time . . .’”

“Yes. But in our case here, we have four different authors that describe the burial in slightly different words, but they all give the same basic facts. That indicates that this description of Jesus’ burial was commonly accepted at the time after the crucifixion.”

John wiped his mouth one last time with his napkin. He still wasn’t completely ready to let the discussion come to a close. “But why a man from the same group that had just sentenced Jesus to death?”

“Yes, it certainly seems a little odd. The only writer who gives a clue is Luke—who by the way was a physician by occupation.”

“I like him already!” smiled John, though with a touch of irony.

“Luke states that Joseph hadn’t agreed to the decision to kill Jesus,” continued Sherlock “He might have voted nay, he might have been absent from the meeting. We don’t know. But the fact that a familiar figure is described as having taken care of the burial would obviously have made the Christian story completely absurd from the very beginning, if such a man hadn’t existed!”

“Well, I don’t know if that would be sufficient for us today,” John figured. “People have an amazing ability to come up with the most outrageous stories.”

“ . . . about things that nobody can check!” Sherlock interrupted. “In those situations people show an enormous creativity. Though it’s very unusual that people lie about details where someone may actually call their bluff.”

Sherlock leaned closer on the bench and said in a low voice: “However, what’s truly fascinating is what the greatest critics of Christianity said about alternative grave sites.”

John looked bewildered. "I thought that there were no rumours at all about any alternative tomb?"

Sherlock leaned back again with a pleased look on his face. "And that, John, is precisely what's so interesting. Not a single one of the early critics of the Christian faith put forward any such suggestion."

John thought intensely, and in the meantime he rolled up what was left of his breakfast bag into a ball. He decided to try to follow Sherlock's train of thought.

"So you mean that . . . as no critics suggested any other grave site, we may deduce that . . ." John took a moment's pause. Sherlock didn't fill it, so he continued: ". . . that all parties agreed on the site of Jesus' tomb?"

"Bravo!" Sherlock's smile widened a bit more. "Now, I don't think I can emphasize this enough. After Jesus' crucifixion, the location of the tomb was well-known in Jerusalem to anyone who wanted to investigate things further."

Praise for *Sherlock: The Case of the Empty Tomb*

“Per Ewert’s *Sherlock* delights the reader as we discover the intelligent basis for our greatest hope. Could it be true that death does not have the final say? That we’re offered life and joy, both now and forever? This is the book I will most freely give to friends, and to myself.”

—**Kelly Monroe Kullberg, Founder, the Veritas Forum; author, *Finding God Beyond Harvard: The Quest for Veritas***

“Suspenseful and entertaining, Ewert’s *Sherlock* leads readers on a trail to discover what really happened to Jesus. Did he actually rise from the dead? What is the evidence, and is it conclusive? Whether you agree with Sherlock's conclusion or not, you will enjoy the story!”

—**Michael R. Licona, Associate Professor of Theology, Houston Baptist University**

