

## THE EMPTY TOMB

*Jesus Is Risen*

Matthew 28:1-10

The powerful climax of God's purposed plan for the redemption of man is the resurrection of Jesus Christ...the *payment for the wages of sin...victory over death...His gift of eternal life*. The resurrection is the cornerstone of the Christian faith. Everything that we *are*...everything we *have*...everything we *hope*...is predicated on its reality. **There would be no Christianity if there were no resurrection.**

The message of Scripture has always been a message of resurrection hope...a message that death isn't the end for those whose belong to God. For the believer, death has never been an end...but rather the transition that leads to eternity with God.

The promised hope of God's people throughout history is predicated on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. That's why **Paul** wrote...

*“Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied. But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep...The last enemy that will be abolished is death.”*

~I Corinthians 15:12-20, 26

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the single greatest event in the history of the world. It's so foundational to Christianity that no one who denies it can be a true Christian. Without resurrection there is no Christian *faith...no salvation...and no hope*.

Jesus Himself even stated...

*“I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies.”*

~John 11:25

## I. THEIR COMPASSION: (vs. 1)

Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave (vs. 1)...

As it began to dawn...**John** states that *it was still dark (John 20:1)* ...on the first day of the week...**Sunday**... several women went to the tomb of Jesus. **Matthew** mentions **Mary Magdalene and the other Mary** (the mother of **James the Less** and **Joseph**). **Mark** adds **Salome**...the wife of **Zebedee** and the mother of **James** and **John**...while **Luke** mentions **Joanna**. These are the same women who kept vigil from a distance during the crucifixion.

**Came to look at the grave**...They hadn't come to come see Jesus *risen*...they expected His body to still be there. They knew where the Lord had been laid for they had seen **Joseph** and **Nicodemus** lay His body in the tomb and roll the stone over the door of the tomb (**Matthew 27:56**).

But now, the women were returning to the tomb since the **Sabbath** was over in order to anoint Jesus' body for permanent burial.

*“When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that they might come and anoint Him.”*

~Mark 16:1

As they approached...they were talking among themselves and were wondering how they were going to get into the tomb since the stone that had been place over the entrance to the tomb was a very large stone.

*“They were saying to one another, ‘Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?’ Looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away, although it was extremely large.”*

~Mark 16:3-4

## II. THEIR FEAR: (vs. 2-5)

And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it (vs. 2)...

As they were approaching...there was a **severe earthquake**. An **angel** had come down **from heaven** to open the secured and sealed

grave...and when he arrived, he **rolled the stone away** from the entrance of the tomb. When they arrived they saw him sitting **upon** the stone.

The **angel** moved the **stone** not to let Jesus out...but to let the women and the apostles in!

**And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow (vs. 3)...**

The **appearance** of the angel **was like lightning...electrifying...and his clothes were white as snow**. The description suggests that God transmitted some of His own *Shekinah glory* to the angel...just as He had done to **Moses** on **Mt. Sinai (Exodus 34)**.

**Mark** and **Luke** add that there was a *second angel* inside the tomb, also wearing a *dazzling white robe (Mark 16:5; Luke 24:4)*.

**The guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men (vs. 4)...**The **Roman** soldiers guarding the tomb were so frightened by the angel and the events that were taking place, that they **shook** and apparently fainted...completely traumatized. They **became like dead men**.

**Shook...**A **Greek** term that has the same root as **earthquake** in **verse 2**...indicating that the soldiers experienced a kind of personal *earthquake...a seizure*.

The soldiers had been sent there to *seal* and *guard* the tomb, but their power was useless before this angelic messenger.

**The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified.” (vs. 5)...**

Though the soldiers were afraid, **the angel** had a special message for **the women**. He said to them to **not be afraid** as he announced the fact of the *Resurrection*...for the One they sought was no longer there. **Luke** adds the quote...

*“...Why do you seek the living One among the dead? He is not here, but He has risen...”*

~Luke 24:5b-6a

### III. **THEIR JOY:** (vs. 6-8)

**He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying (vs. 6)...**

He had told them several times that He would *rise on the third day (Matthew 16:12; Matthew 17:23; Matthew 20:19)*. If He had failed to rise...He would have been a deceiver unworthy of further devotion. One proof He had **risen** was the empty tomb. There women were encouraged to come and **see the place where the Lord had been lying**.

**Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you (vs. 7)...**

Then the angel told them to **go quickly and tell the disciples that He had risen from the dead**. Soon, **Peter** and **John** would come to the tomb to see for themselves what the women had reported...that the tomb was *empty* and that Jesus had **risen from the dead**.

They also told the disciples that He said that He would be **going ahead of them into Galilee**...just as He had earlier told them (**Matthew 26:32**).

**Galilee**...a key city in the ministry of Jesus.

- It was where Jesus *began His ministry*.
- It was where *the disciples would receive the Great Commission*.
- It was where Jesus *appeared to more than five hundred believers at one time following His resurrection*.
- It was where Jesus *commissioned the eleven to their apostolic ministry*.

They would **see Him** there...and indeed they did (**Matthew 28:16-20; John 21:1-23**). These words didn't preclude the fact that He would appear to them on other occasions...as He did later that same day (**John 20:19-25**).

**And they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy and ran to report it to His disciples (vs. 8)...**

The women obeyed the angel's instructions as they hurried away from **the tomb**, looking for the **disciples** so they could tell them the good news. Even though they were filled with **joy** over the fact of the *Resurrection*...they were *afraid* because there was no way they could possibly comprehend the full implication of this momentous event.

#### IV. THEIR WORSHIP: (vs. 9)

And behold, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him (vs. 9)...

As the women were on their way to tell the disciples what had happened...suddenly **Jesus met them and greeted them**. Hearing His greeting, they recognized Him immediately and they fell at **His feet and** began to **worship Him**.

They did what *every person...unbeliever* as well as *believer*...will do one day. When He comes again...

*“At the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*

~Philippians 2:10-11

By His appearance, Jesus alleviated their fears and repeated the same message the angel had previously given (vs. 5)...**Do not be afraid!**

These women had *heard the angel’s proclamation of the resurrection*...they had *seen the empty tomb*...now they *saw the risen Lord*...and they even *touched His glorified body*. They could now do nothing but *adore* and *worship* Him!

#### V. THEIR HOPE: (vs. 10)

Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and take word to My brethren to leave for Galilee, and there they will see Me.” (vs. 10)...

Jesus told them to **go** and tell the *disciples*...He even called them, **My brethren**. He told them to **go** to **Galilee** and that He would *meet* them there...that He would *appear* to them there...that they would see Him there.

The *Galilean ministry* of Jesus was prominent in **Matthew’s** gospel and it was only natural for Jesus to meet His disciples there. They were all from **Galilee** and that’s where they would have been returning to after the **Feast**.

#### LESSONS WE CAN LEARN:

- **The resurrection of Jesus guarantees your resurrection too**. Life is not a constant repeating cycle of the same old same old. Under God's rule this world is marching toward a conclusion. *Your life is being carried to a glorious end*. There will be a moment when God will raise you out of this broken world, and sin and suffering will be no more.
- **The resurrection tells you Jesus now reigns**. **I Corinthians 15** says that He will continue to reign until the final enemy is under His feet. This world...your world...isn't out of control but under the careful control of One who is still doing His sin-defeating work.
- **The resurrection promises you all the grace you need between Jesus's resurrection and yours**. If your end has already been guaranteed...then all the *grace* you need along the way has been guaranteed as well, or you would never make it to your appointed end. *Future grace* always carries with it the promise of *present grace*.
- **The resurrection of Jesus should motivate you to righteousness and obedience...no matter what you are facing**. The resurrection tells you that God *will win*. Sin *will be defeated*. Righteousness *will overcome evil*. Now, it's just a matter of your obedience.