

## He Lives!

### Matthew 28:1-10

*The Resurrection of Jesus (Mk 16.1—8; Lk 24.1—12; Jn 20.1—10)*

**28** After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. <sup>2</sup> And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. <sup>3</sup> His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. <sup>4</sup> For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. <sup>5</sup> But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. <sup>6</sup> He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he (*the Lord*) lay. <sup>7</sup> Then go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.’ This is my message for you.” <sup>8</sup> So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. <sup>9</sup> Suddenly Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.” <sup>1</sup>

Blessed Easter morning! Rejoice for Christ has risen as He said! Rejoice because He Lives we have life and hope eternal! Think for a moment...who explained to you that Jesus is alive? How old were you when you began to understand what this meant? We rejoice, but the women who had lingered at the cross came early to the tomb, bringing spices that they might anoint His body. They thought He was dead. In fact, they wondered how they would move the huge stone that blocked the entrance to the tomb (Mark 16:3). But a severe earthquake had occurred” (Matt. 28:2, NASB) and an angel had appeared and rolled the stone away from the door. The soldiers on duty were frightened by this sudden demonstration of supernatural power. However, the stone was not rolled away to permit Jesus to come out. It was rolled back so that the people could see for themselves that the tomb was empty.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Holy Bible : New Revised Standard Version*. Nashville : Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989, S. Mt 28:1-10

The angel spoke to the women and calmed their fears. “He is not here! Come, and see!” Keep in mind that these women, as well as the disciples, did not expect Jesus to be alive. The women were invited to see the empty tomb.

What they saw when they looked in the tomb were the grave clothes lying on the stone shelf, still wrapped in the shape of the body (John 20:5–7). Jesus had passed through the grave clothes and left them behind as evidence that He was alive. They lay there like an empty cocoon. There was no sign of struggle, the grave clothes were not in disarray. Even the napkin (which had been wrapped around His face) was folded carefully in a place by itself.

We cannot examine this evidence in the same way the women, and later Peter and John did that first Easter Sunday. But we do have the evidence of the Word of God. Jesus was not held by the bonds of death (Acts 2:24). He had promised to arise from the dead, and His Word was never broken.

Did you notice that “Come and see!” was followed by “Go and tell!”? The angel sent the women to tell (of all people) Jesus’ own disciples. You would have thought the disciples would have been keeping a vigil at the tomb to greet their risen Lord! They should have been expecting the news, but we know instead, they questioned it even when they heard it.

It is when the women obey the angel that Jesus came to them. Jesus’ first Resurrection appearance was to believing women. These faithful women were not only the last to leave Calvary, but they were also the first to come to the tomb. Their devotion to Jesus was rewarded.

“All hail!” or *Grace* was His greeting to them. The women fell at His feet, took hold of Him, and worshiped Him. There must have been some fear in their hearts, because Jesus immediately assured them with “Don’t be afraid!”

Not only had the angel commissioned them, but Jesus also commissioned them. Jesus instructed them to tell His brothers, calling them brothers revealed the

intimate relationship between Christ and His followers, even after their abandonment. Jesus reinforced the instructions of the angel that the disciples meet Him in Galilee (see Matt. 28:7). In the Garden, Jesus had told His disciples that He would rise from the dead and meet them in Galilee (Matt. 26:31–32).

That day began with the women believing Jesus was dead. Then they were told that He was alive. Following that announcement, they met Him personally.<sup>2 3</sup>

There is something peculiarly fitting in that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary should be the first to receive the news of the Risen Lord and to encounter him. They had been there at the Cross; they had been there when He was laid in the tomb; and now they were receiving love's reward; they were the first to know the joy of the Resurrection.

As we examine this story of the first two people in the world to be confronted with the fact of the empty tomb and the Risen Christ, three imperatives seem to spring out of it.

(i) They are urged to *believe*. The event was so staggering that it might seem beyond belief, too good to be true. The angel reminded them of the promise of Jesus, and confronted them with the empty tomb; his every word was a summons to believe. It is still a fact that there are many who feel that the promises of Christ are too good to be true. Their hesitation can be dispelled only by taking Jesus at His word as found in scripture.

(ii) They are urged to *share*. When they themselves discovered the fact of the Risen Christ, their first duty was to proclaim it to and to share it with others. "Go, tell!" is the first command which comes to the person who has discovered the wonder of Jesus Christ. We must not keep the Resurrection news to ourselves.

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<sup>2</sup>Wiersbe, Warren W.: *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1996, c1989, S. Mt 28:1

<sup>3</sup>Walvoord, John F. ; Zuck, Roy B. ; Dallas Theological Seminary: *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, IL : Victor Books, 1983-c1985, S. 2:92

(iii) They are urged to *rejoice*. It was when they were obeying God's Word that Jesus comes to them. And the word with which the Risen Christ meets them is *Chairete*; that is the normal word of greeting; but its literal meaning is "Rejoice!" The person who has met the Risen Lord must live forever in the joy of Christ's presence from which nothing can separate them anymore.<sup>4 5</sup>

We must never underestimate the importance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ to others. The world believes that Jesus died, but the world does not believe that He arose from the dead. The significance of the Resurrection are many and must be shared:

*The Resurrection proves that Jesus is God's Son.* Jesus stated that He had authority to lay down His life and to take it up again (John 10:17–18).

*The Resurrection verifies the truth of Scripture.* Both in the Old Testament and in the teaching of Jesus, His resurrection is clearly taught (see Pss. 16:10; 110:1). If Jesus had not come out of the tomb, then these Scriptures would not be true.

*The Resurrection assures our own future resurrection.* Because Jesus died and rose again, we shall one day be raised to be like Him (1 Thes. 4:13–18). In fact, the entire structure of the Christian faith rests on the foundation of the Resurrection. If we do away with His resurrection, we have no hope.

*The Resurrection is the proof of a future judgment.* "Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man who He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts 17:31).

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<sup>4</sup> Barclay, William, lecturer in the University of Glasgow (Hrsg.): *The Gospel of Matthew : Volume 2*. Philadelphia : The Westminster Press, 2000, c1975 (The Daily Study Bible, Rev. Ed), S. 375

<sup>5</sup> Richards, Lawrence O.: *The Bible Readers Companion*. electronic ed. Wheaton : Victor Books, 1991; Published in electronic form by Logos Research Systems, 1996, S. 629

*The Resurrection is the basis for Christ's heavenly priesthood.* Because He lives by the power of an endless life, He is able to save us "to the uttermost" (Heb. 7:23–28). He lives to intercede for us.

*The Resurrection gives power for Christian living.* We cannot live for God by our own strength. It is only as His resurrection power works in and through us that we can do His will and glorify His name (see Rom. 6:4).

*The Resurrection assures our future inheritance.* Because we have a living hope, we can experience hopeful living. A dead hope grows weaker and weaker before it eventually dies. But because Jesus Christ is alive, we have a glorious future (see 1 Peter 1:3–5).

Whenever we, as God's people, gather on the Lord's Day we bear witness that Jesus is alive and that the church has received spiritual blessings. When the followers of the Lord gathered that first Lord's Day, they were discouraged and defeated,<sup>6</sup> but we Rejoice because Christ has risen as He said and we have hope of eternal life with God! Now my brothers and sisters go tell it! He lives!

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<sup>6</sup>Wiersbe, Warren W.: *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1996, c1989, S. Mt 28:1