

“Jesus’ Resurrection”

April 20, 2025

Luke 24:1-12

I. Introduction

The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith. The resurrection isn’t a postscript or epilogue to the life of Christ; it is the culminating climax of His atoning work—a non-negotiable fact. [1 Timothy 1:15](#) says, “Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” In [1 Corinthians 15:3-4](#) Paul wrote, “For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.” In the Book of Acts, the theme of the Apostle’s preaching and teaching was the resurrection—[turn to Acts 4:1-2](#). [Acts 4:33](#) adds, “With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them.”

The resurrection proves that Jesus Christ is whom He claimed to be—the very Son of God. [Romans 1:4](#) (NAS) says, “Who, i.e., Christ Jesus, was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord.” Without the resurrection, the cross would be meaningless and there would be no hope of salvation from sin. As [1 Corinthians 15:17](#) says, “And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.” Paul went on to write that because Jesus has risen, believers have hope both for this life and the life to come. When God raised Jesus from the dead, He verified that Jesus had indeed carried our sins in His own body on the cross—[1 Peter 2:24](#) says, “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wound you have been healed.” [Romans 4:25](#) says, “He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.” The church meets on Sunday not Saturday to continually celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior which happened on Easter Sunday—“The first day of the week.”

All four Gospels report events surrounding Jesus' resurrection. Each writer includes unique features that the others have left out. But each of the Gospels has the same core or base: Jesus died on the cross on Friday afternoon and was buried that evening. He remained in the tomb all day Saturday; but early Sunday morning, when the women arrived to anoint the body with burial spices, the tomb was empty. Luke showed how their confusion turned to wonder and alarm when angels appeared and explained to them that Jesus was alive. After that, Jesus Himself began to appear to His followers. Luke's account begins with the grief-stricken women “on the first day of the week, very early in the morning...”

II. Jesus' Resurrection

A. The Grief-stricken Women The Jews began their days at sundown rather than at midnight, so for them the Sabbath ended on Saturday evening around 6 pm. **Mark 16:1** says that “**When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body.**” Luke added that Joanna and other women were also there; this may have included Mary the mother of Jesus. **Luke 23:55** said that “**The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it.**” Some of the women must have watched Joseph and Nicodemus wrap Jesus' body with spices. **Matthew 27:60-61** adds that “**Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb**” as Joseph “**rolled a big stone in front of the entrance and went away.**” In love and devotion for their Lord, the women wanted to prepare their own spices to anoint His body. Since the Sabbath was about to begin, they didn't have time then. So, after the Sabbath ended, sometime after 6 pm Saturday, they purchased spices in order to make the trip to the tomb “**on the first day of the week, very early in the morning,**” i.e., Sunday morning. In their grief-stricken minds, they gave no thought to how they would move the stone once they got to the tomb.

According to John's account, Mary Magdalene impatiently hurried ahead of the rest of the women and arrived first at the tomb “**while it was still dark ... and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance**” (**John 20:1**). She immediately assumed that someone had stolen Jesus' body and fled to tell the

Eleven. It never crossed her mind that Jesus had risen. In [John 20:2](#) speaking to two angels in the tomb, “she … said, ‘They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!’”

Following behind Mary, [Mark 16:3](#) adds that the other grieving women “asked each other, ‘Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?’” They were obviously not expecting a miracle. They were even unaware that the religious leaders had sealed it on Saturday and set a detachment of Roman soldiers to guard it ([Matthew 27:62-66](#)). They were also unaware of the localized earthquake that had occurred earlier that morning and the arrival of the angel who rolled the stone away and had frightened the guards ([Matthew 28:2-4](#)). But when the women arrived, they realized that they had been anxious for nothing, “They found the stone rolled away from the tomb.” Since, in His resurrection body, Jesus could pass through walls without needing a door ([John 20:19, 26](#))—the stone was moved so that others could get in. The tomb was open so that the women could enter and see that Jesus was not there, and “when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.”

B. The Terrified Women The women were standing in or just outside the tomb, shocked, wondering, or, as other translations put it, perplexed—Jesus’ body was gone. Suddenly, they went from being puzzled to being terrified. As they stood there in the morning light trying to figure out what had happened to the body, “two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them.” ([Matthew 28:2](#) and [Mark 16:5](#) mention only one of the two, the one who gave the message to the women.) The women recognized the two as angelic messengers because of their dazzling clothing; Luke wrote that “in their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground.” They were terrified.

In a mild rebuke, “the men, i.e., the angels, said to them, ‘Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he is risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee: ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified, and on the third day be raised again.’’”

More than once, Jesus had told His followers that He would suffer and die and be raised from the dead ([Matt. 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:17-19](#); [Luke 9:22, 44; 18:31-34](#)). They should have been expecting it, but they didn’t—they had brought spices with which to anoint His dead body.

C. The Witnessing Women After hearing the angels, the women remembered Jesus' words. Matthew added some more to the account of the women—turn to Matthew 28:5-10. Obedient to their commission from the angels and from their Lord, the grief-stricken turn terrified women became the witnessing women. While, as John 20:1-3 says, Peter and John were on their way to investigate Mary Magdalene's report that Christ's body was missing, the rest of the women came back from the tomb to the rest of the apostles and the others gathered in the upper room. They confirmed Mary's report that the tomb was empty and also filled in the details that Mary was unaware of; Mary hadn't looked into the tomb and didn't see either the grave clothes or the angels on her first visit. The women would have told them the words of the angels that the Lord was indeed risen, as He had said He would. They must have also told of their encounter with the risen Lord Himself, whom they had just seen on their way to the apostles.

That the resurrected Christ appeared first to women elevated women, who held an inferior position in Jewish society. It was also a testament to their love, devotion, and courage. They had witnessed His death at Calvary, His burial, and had seen the empty tomb. John is the only disciple recorded to have been at the cross, but he did not witness the burial. Joseph and Nicodemus buried the Lord's body, but they didn't see the empty tomb—only the women had seen it all. At first glance Mary Magdalene seems out of place in the group of witnesses that Luke listed. But after her personal encounter with Jesus at the tomb, John 20:18 records that “Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: ‘I have seen the Lord!’ And she told them that he had said these things to her.” Like the other women, Mary Magdalene had seen the Lord.

D. The Unbelieving Disciples Luke wrote about the women, the angelic messengers, and, finally, about the unbelieving disciples. Sadly, but predictably, the disciples “did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.” The apostles were totally skeptical—such a thing had never happened before. Even when the women they knew well told them of their experiences, the apostles refused to believe. Only irrefutable evidence would convince those skeptics.

Luke then added a brief note about Peter's visit to the tomb with John, which happened before the other women and Mary Magdalene returned. After Mary Magdalene's first report, “Peter, along with John,

got up and ran to the tomb.” According to John 20:1-9, John outran Peter and got there first but did not go inside. Peter arrived and, “bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves.” Puzzled and not yet sure what to make of it, “he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.”

III. Conclusion

As we read earlier from 1 Corinthians 15, belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ is **NOT** optional. But no supernatural happening, such as the resurrection, can ever be proven by natural evidence; it can only be inferred by physical facts that are consistent with such an event. Neither empirical evidence nor intuitive reasoning can verify such Truths as the Creation, the Incarnation, or the Resurrection. Like the first readers of the Gospel of Luke, we have only the reports from the eyewitnesses to confirm the resurrection, no scientific proof. God’s Word is the basis for our belief.

Charles Colson, the former counsel of President Nixon, a convicted conspirator in the Watergate scandal, wrote that the Watergate cover up was the final straw convincing him that Jesus was raised from the dead. He wrote: *“There were only 8 or 10 of us in the inner circle around the president who really knew what was going on. All we had to do was stonewall for a couple of months and the Watergate scandal would be over. We had all the power and prestige of the presidency at our fingertips. And if the truth broke there would be embarrassment and perhaps a prison sentence. There was no grave danger, our lives were not threatened, but we couldn’t hold the conspiracy together for more than 3 weeks. We could not contain the lie. Once prosecution was possible, the natural instincts of self-preservation were so overwhelming that one by one the conspirators caved in and stood in line at the prosecutor’s office to escape jail.”*

Colson concluded, *“I know that the disciples could not perpetuate a lie like the resurrection, because it was not just their reputations that were at stake, their lives were in danger. They had no clout, they had nothing to gain by the lie, and yet every one of them stood fast in the conviction that Jesus was alive. Take it from one who saw firsthand how vulnerable a cover up is: nothing less than a witness as awesome as the resurrected Christ could have caused those men to maintain to their dying whispers that Jesus is alive, and He is Lord! Each apostle, except for John, died a martyr’s death.”*

Think about it, the Apostles died rather than recant their belief in the resurrection. Would you die for a lie? I doubt that the disciples would have died for a lie either. History has shown that people will give their lives for what they believe is true, but not for what they know is false. The lives and gruesome deaths of those early Christians are undeniable proof of their belief in what they had seen and believed. This is on what we base our hope and faith—on God and His power and His love. *He is risen!*

Intellectual acknowledgement of the historical fact of Jesus' resurrection is necessary to be saved, but in itself such knowledge is not sufficient to save. Satan was there, he knows. **James 2:19** says, “**You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that-- and shudder.**” Saving faith goes beyond a mental acceptance of the facts; it must instill in one’s heart love for Christ and submission to His will in obedience to Him as sovereign Lord of one’s life. As **Romans 10:9** says, “**If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.**”

For believers, the fear of death is removed, and the hope of glory is assured by Jesus' resurrection. He has conquered the grave and promised the same victory to all who embrace Him in saving faith—**turn to 1 Corinthians 15:51-57.** As one commentator wrote, “*The resurrection of Christ announced that He has conquered every enemy. He has vanquished every foe. He has risen triumphant from the grave. Neither death nor life, neither hell nor anything else, can prevent or delay the coming of His Kingdom in all its glory. He alone is King of kings and Lord of lords.*”

For Christians, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is our symbol of hope. Whatever may happen to us in this life, we know the rest of the story. If the Lord tarries, we shall all die, but we shall rise again. He has gone to prepare a place for us, and He will come again to take us to be with Him. Jesus said in **John 14:2-3**, “**I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am**” If you are a believer, if Jesus Christ is your Savior and Lord, today is a day to celebrate. Jesus Christ the Son of God is risen! He is risen! He is risen indeed!!