

A. The risen Jesus.

1. (1-3) Mary Magdalene and Mary of Bethany find an angel at the tomb.

Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone from the door and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow.

a. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb: They came to finish the preparation of Jesus' body, which was cut short by the Sabbath (Luke 24:1-3). So, after the Sabbath on Sunday (the first day of the week), they came to the tomb – fully expecting to find the dead body of Jesus.

b. There was a great earthquake: Matthew alone notes this earthquake. The earthquake did not cause the stone to be rolled away; if anything, the angelic rolling of the stone prompted the earthquake.

i. "The earth shook both at Christ's passion and at his resurrection; then, to show that it could not bear his suffering; now, to show that it could not hinder his rising." (Trapp)

ii. Some think this was not a normal earthquake but refers to the disturbance of the guards at the tomb (Matthew 28:4). "Seismov, a shaking or commotion of any kind: probably the word means no more than the confusion caused among the guards by the angel's appearance. All this had taken place before the women reached the sepulcher." (Clarke)

c. An angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone from the door and sat on it: When the women came to the tomb, they saw the stone rolled away and an angel sitting on the stone. The door to the tomb was wide open.

i. "Indeed there needed not any angel at all to remove the stone, if this had been all he had come down for; He that was quickened by the Spirit, could by the same power have rolled away the stone; but as it was fit that the angels, who had been witnesses of his passion, should also be witnesses of his resurrection." (Poole)

ii. The stone that enclosed the body of Jesus in the tomb had been like the gate of a prison cell, trapping the body of Jesus in the grave. Now it became a place of rest, as the angel sat on it.

2. (4-6) The angel's message.

And the guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men. But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay."

a. And the guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men: The Roman soldiers responsible for guarding the tomb were terrified. The angelic presence made these professional soldiers tremble and faint.

i. “He does not appear to have drawn a flaming sword, nor even to have spoken to the keepers; but the presence of perfect purity overawed these rough legionaries.” (Spurgeon)

ii. “The resurrection of Christ is a subject of terror to the servants of sin, and a subject of consolation to the sons of God; because it is a proof of the resurrection of both, the one to shame and everlasting contempt-the other to eternal glory and joy.” (Clarke)

b. He is not here, for He is risen: For the first time, the followers of Jesus – these faithful women – heard what they did not expect to hear. They heard that Jesus was not in the tomb but risen to resurrection life.

i. There are several examples in the Bible of people being resuscitated before this, such as the widow’s son in the days of Elijah (1 Kings 17:17-24) and Lazarus (John 11:38-44). Each of these was resuscitated from death, but none of them were resurrected. Each of them was raised in the same body they died in and raised from the dead to eventually die again. Resurrection isn’t just living again; it is living again in a new body, based on our old body, perfectly suited for life in eternity. Jesus was not the first one brought back from the dead, but He was the first one resurrected.

ii. We should also say that Jesus still is risen. He ascended into heaven and continues to reign as resurrected man, still fully man and fully God.

iii. In Israel, one may see many graves and tombs – there is an ocean of tombs on the Mount of Olives, and vast sea of graves outside the eastern wall of the temple mount. You can see the tomb of David or the tomb of Absalom – but you won’t find the tomb of Jesus anywhere. He is not here.

iv. As He said reminded these women – and all the disciples – that they should have expected this. It was just what He promised.

c. Come, see the place where the Lord lay: The stone was not rolled away to let Jesus out. John 20:19 tells us that Jesus, in His resurrection body, could pass through material barriers. It was rolled away so that others could see in and be persuaded that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead.

i. “The invitation to see the place where he lay is appropriately addressed to the same people who had watched the body being deposited – so there is no possibility of a mistake.” (France)

ii. “Come and see the niche in which he was laid-it is now empty; nor was there any other body in the place, for the tomb was a new one, in which no man had ever been laid, John 19:41; so there could be no deception in the case.” (Clarke)

iii. The fact of the resurrection is clear enough. We must also grapple with the meaning of resurrection. Simply, Jesus’ resurrection proved that His death was an actual propitiation for sin and that the Father had accepted it as such. The cross was the payment, the resurrection the receipt, proving that the payment was fully accepted.

iv. Those women were later grateful that the angel told them to see the place where they laid Him. It would have – it should have – been enough to merely hear the testimony of the angel. Nevertheless, when they saw it, it gave them ground to stand on even more solid than the testimony of an angel. “One eyewitness is better than twenty ear-witnesses; men will believe what you have seen if they do not believe what you have heard.” (Spurgeon)

- When we see the place where they laid Him, we see that the Father did not forsake Jesus.
- When we see the place where they laid Him, we see that death is conquered.
- When we see the place where they laid Him, we see that we have a living friend in Jesus.

3. **(7-8)** The angel’s instructions to Mary Magdalene and Mary of Bethany.

“And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you.” So, they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word.

a. Go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead: The angel commanded them to be the first messengers of the good news of Jesus’ resurrection. Since these women were some of the few people courageous enough to publicly identify themselves with Jesus, it was an appropriate honor.

i. “Not first to them who were the heads of the Church, as it were, but first to lowly women, did the Lord appear; and the apostles themselves had to go to school to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to learn that great truth, ‘The Lord is risen indeed.’” (Spurgeon)

b. He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him: This assured the women they would see the resurrected Jesus. He wasn’t simply raised from the dead; He was raised to continue His relationship with them.

i. Conceivably, the angel might have said: “He is risen and has ascended to heaven!” That would have been better than knowing He was dead; but the truth was far better. He was risen and risen to have and continue a real relationship with His disciples.

c. Ran to bring His disciples word: The women – filled with fear and great joy – did exactly what the angel told them to do. He told them to go quickly, and they did.

i. “Saints running in the way of obedience are likely to be met by Jesus. Some Christians travel to heaven so slowly that they are overtaken by follies or by faults, by slumber or by Satan; but he who is Christ’s running footman shall meet his Master while he is speeding on his way.”
(Spurgeon)

4. **(9-10)** Mary Magdalene and Mary of Bethany meet a risen Jesus.

And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, “Rejoice!” So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.”

a. As they went to tell His disciples: The women met Jesus as they obeyed the command to tell the news of the resurrection.

b. Jesus met them, saying “Rejoice!” What else could Jesus say to these women? What else could they do other than rejoice?

i. The old King James Version translates “Rejoice!” with All hail! France observes, “‘Hail!’ represents the normal Greek greeting, an almost homely ‘Hello!’ in contrast with the fearsome appearance of the angel.”

c. So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him: When the women met Jesus, they felt compelled to worship Him. An hour before, they thought everything was lost because they thought Jesus was dead. Now they knew everything was gained because Jesus was alive.

i. Notably, Jesus received the worship of these ladies. If Jesus were not God, it would have been terribly sinful for Him to receive this worship. But being God, it was good and appropriate for Him to receive it.

d. Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me: Jesus told the women to do the same thing that the angel told them to do.

i. My brethren: “This is the first time our Lord called his disciples by this endearing name: they no doubt thought that their Lord would reproach them with their past cowardice and infidelity; but, in speaking thus, he gives them a full assurance, in the most tender terms, that all that was passed was buried forever.” (Clarke)