**He Has Risen**

Based on [Matthew 28:1-10](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Mt28.1-10)

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Easter Day

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The Easter morning account of the Empty tomb and Jesus risen from the dead is told in the same sober way as is the account of the crucifixion and the death. The great facts that occurred are reported in an entirely dispassionate way. Our faith is to rest on these facts. One of the decisive tests of the Christian faith is belief in these facts which declare that Jesus rose from the dead.

First it says that “after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.” It is fitting that on Saturday, the Sabbath day, Jesus rested in the tomb, because it was the day God commanded his people to rest. “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.” Jesus rested from his labours, the greatest labour the world had ever know, the work of suffering and dying on the cross to atone for the sin of the whole world. Jesus deserved a rest. And it’s fitting, even in death he continued to keep God’s commandments.

Jesus died just before Friday ended. You might remember that the Jews asked the soldiers to break the legs of Jesus and the other crucified criminals to speed up their death, because the Sabbath was approaching and they couldn’t remove and bury them on that day. We know from other scripture that these women were wanted to anoint him with the customary burial spices. That is why they “after” the Sabbath, not Saturday but Sunday, the first day of the week, to see the tomb.

Sunday, the third day after his death, the first day of the week is the day Jesus rose from the dead. And we learn three things about these women they love Jesus dearly, enough to ensure a proper burial. They were pious, God-fearing women, who observed God’s commands and kept his Sabbath command not to work, and like everyone else who knew and followed Jesus, they had fallen away from faith. It’s not that they didn’t love Jesus and wish he were alive. It’s that, by returning to the tomb to finish the burial customs, they behave as though Jesus is going to be dead for good.

This is a great comfort for those with weak or confused faith. They do not understand rightly what Jesus had taught them—but they love Jesus and they keep God’s command. Peter preaches in our reading from Acts, “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.” God promises to love you and provide for you forever; but you suffer with a health condition, or experience a crushing tragedy that makes you feel like God has failed you. You know he hasn’t but you don’t understand what happened and why. Those who then curse God are under his wrath and disapproval, but anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to God.

Though these women fail to remember Jesus promise to rise, we must not think their stumbling faith means they have offended God. Rather, these women continue to fear God and love Jesus. Indeed their faith is weakened by witnessing the brutal treatment and death of their master. Perhaps they should have had faith to move mountains, remove the stone themselves and already know he had risen because he had said he would. But god approves of anyone who fears him and does what is right and acceptable. Their faith was shaken and troubled as they wait, and so God doesn’t rebuke them, instead he sends more assurance, more proof that he has fulfilled his word.

“**And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.”** At the moment Jesus died there was an earthquake (Matthew 27:51), and so also an earthquake heralds to his resurrection as well. An earthquake, when recorded in the scriptures, indicates divine judgment. Here it specifically attends the coming of an angel of the Lord from heaven come to roll back the stone from the tomb. The stone was rolled away, not to let Jesus out. Jesus is raised to new life in exalted glory, exercising the full power of God. He can walk through walls; enter rooms where the doors are shut. No, the stone is rolled away so that, when the women and others get there, they can look in and see that the tomb is empty; the body of Jesus is missing.

**“His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men.”** Soldiers were sent to guard the tomb because the Jews thought that some of Jesus disciples would try to steal the body away to make it look like he’d risen. **The Chief Priests and Pharisees said to Pilate, “Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, “After three days I will rise.” Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people he has risen from the dead**.”

If the women and other disciples forgot Jesus words that he would be raised on the third day. Oh how they would have been comforted through all of this had they heard these words and taken them to heart. But Jesus’ enemies, they do remember his words, not to believe them but to prevent them. Those who lie expect to be lied to. Those who are untrustworthy themselves suspect evil of others. So Pilate sent soldiers to guard.

This angel appearing in glory as Jesus did in his own transfiguration was so overwhelming the soldiers fainted for fear. According to the bible, angels are both messengers and soldiers. This angel didn’t seem to come to fight, but he came in power and glory, stopping the soldiers set in place. Later, they would be paid off to keep the missing body and the appearance of the angel secret.

**“But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for He has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee: there you will see him. Seem I have told you”.**

This is the further proof God sends to increase the women’s faith. The angel was a terrible sight to the soldiers who were working against God’s purposes. But the women he came to comfort them and says, “Do not be afraid, you seek Jesus who was Crucified. He is not here, for He has risen.”

**So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples.**

They believed the message of the angel and ran to tell the other disciples immediately. Such sorrow and sadness began their day; such good news to spread now. Jesus is alive and intends to meet them in Galilee.

**And behold, Jesus met them and said, ‘Greetings!’ And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”**

Greater thing still, Jesus met them on their way and greeted them. And they worshiped him. A clear testimony that Jesus is in fact God. No one, not kings, not rulers, not angels are to be worshipped. “Worship the lord your God, and him only shall you serve.” These women know the commandment and so they worship Jesus. He doesn’t rebuke them, because he is God and their worship is right. But there is more to be done, a gathering and regrouping of the disciples. Christ is risen, now this gospel must be taught to all nations who will be baptized into his death and resurrection. Even as this message has reached your life today.