

Post Resurrection Events
Matthew 28:1—15

(Also Mark 16:1—9; Luke 24:1—10; John 20:1—18)

There is very little information concerning the actual resurrection. From Matthew 28:1—4 we know that a severe earthquake occurred when an angel of the Lord came down and rolled away the stone then sat on it. The guards who witnessed the resurrection feared greatly and fainted upon seeing the brilliance of the angel and experiencing the earthquake. Matthew 27:52—53 gives an interesting tidbit about the tombs being opened and many bodies of dead believers rising and coming into the city of Jerusalem. Can you imagine what people thought when confronted by loved ones they thought were dead? Since this event was recorded after Jesus died, many assume that they were raised up when He died. Verse 53 clearly states that this happened after the resurrection and not before. This is important because Jesus Christ was their (and is our) Firstfruits (1 Corinthians 15:20—23). Christ is the Firstfruits of all believers because He was the first to be resurrected. This is not to be confused with being raised from the dead. Lazarus was raised from the dead only to experience death again. Resurrection means being raised from the dead and given a new, incorruptible body (1 Corinthians 15:42, 52). Daniel 12:2 gives the first indication that both righteous and unrighteous will be resurrected. The righteous will go into everlasting life while the unrighteous to everlasting contemp.

Please note that Daniel and Matthew tell of what will happen to believing Israel and Gentiles who come to God through Israel. Kingdom believers will be resurrected to walk upon the earth in the Millennial Kingdom. Believers in the Body of Christ will also be resurrected. Those who are already in the grave will come out of the grave and ascend to meet Jesus Christ in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:13—18, 1 Corinthians 15:20—21, 51—52). The two destinations for Kingdom believers and Grace believers are described in 1 Corinthians 6:2—3. They (Paul does not include himself) will judge (or rule) the world while we will rule angels. They have an earthly hope while we have a heavenly hope.

Early morning

By piecing together the four accounts of that Sunday morning we can get a fuller picture of all that transpired. Mary Magdalene was the first to get to the tomb early Sunday morning before dawn (John). It was she to whom Christ first later appeared (Mark). She probably looked in the tomb then left to tell the Disciples. She later came back as recorded in John. Shortly after dawn, after Mary Magdalene left, Luke records that the women who came out of Galilee with Jesus and watched Joseph bury Jesus, went to the tomb at early dawn to properly prepare Jesus for burial since there was not enough time to do so the day He died. Among these women were Mary mother of James, Salome (Mark) and Joanna (Luke). Matthew also speaks of the other Mary, who could be Mary the mother of James. Luke also mentions that other women were present. When they entered the tomb they were perplexed that the body was gone. Suddenly, two men appeared wearing dazzling clothing. One of the angels told the women that Jesus was not here, He has risen.” The angel reminded them that Jesus taught them that He would die but rise again the third day. They went and reported this back to the apostles who thought they were speaking nonsense.

Angel discrepancy?

Luke records that two men wearing dazzling clothing suddenly appeared after they had entered the tomb. Matthew’s account says an angel of the Lord talked to the women while Mark says the women entered the tomb and saw a young man sitting at the right. Although many use this to prove the Bible cannot be trusted, there is really no contradiction if you understand each writer is recording specific details occurring at different times. When the women show up, two angels suddenly appear. Matthew records only the one who was talking and Mark does the same thing without mentioning that two angels appeared suddenly. People desire to destroy Scripture because their hearts are evil and therefore hate anything that even suggests godliness.

Later that morning

Having heard of the empty tomb, Peter and John run to see for themselves. This probably happened after the group of women left the tomb. John stops at the mouth of the tomb and when Peter catches up he runs inside followed by John. There they see the grave cloths neatly folded. According to John 20:9 they still did not understand that Jesus would rise from the dead.

Mary Magdalene comes back to the tomb after Peter and John, She is mentioned at least 12 times in the Gospels. She became a faithful follower of Jesus after being delivered from seven demons. She followed Jesus from Galilee, watched Him dying on the cross and was the first at the tomb Sunday morning. She was the first person Jesus came to after His resurrection.

As she stood weeping outside the tomb, She noticed two angels inside the tomb who asked her why she was weeping. She answered that it was because they took away her Lord. She turned around and saw a man standing outside the tomb. She didn't recognize that it was Jesus. He asked her why she was crying and whom was she looking for. Thinking it was the gardener she asked Him what He did with the body. Jesus answered her by saying "Mary." With that her eyes were opened and She recognized whom she was talking to.

She was clinging to Jesus so as to never lose Him again. However, Jesus had many things that He needed to accomplish before His ascension and He needed her to go tell the Disciples that she saw the risen Jesus Christ (John 20:17—19). Although some people think Jesus needed to ascend to the Father before He could be touched, it's obvious that Mary was hanging on to Him and later we see Jesus inviting Thomas to touch His hands. She needed to realize He would only be with them for a short period of time before leaving.

Importance of the Resurrection

So many people emphasize the importance of Christ shedding His blood on the cross while ignoring the resurrection. It must be remembered that Jesus didn't prove who He was through His death, but through His resurrection. Anyone could die on a cross but only God can resurrect. It was through the resurrection that God's power was manifested (Philippians 3:10). It was the resurrection that proved Jesus Christ was the begotten Son (Acts 13:33). This was proof that Jesus came from the Father and shares the same divine nature as God.

Christ's resurrection also gives us the hope of glory. If Christ was not raised from the dead how could we have the hope of a resurrection (Romans 8:11; 1 Corinthians 15:15—17)? Our hope for an eternal life with Christ rests on Him having been raised from the dead. Our present life is also dependant upon Christ's resurrection. He is currently sitting on the right hand of God making intercession for us (Romans 8:34). What a wonderful thought that Jesus Christ is pleading our case in front of the Father. He is the only reason we can approach the Father in prayer and the only reason we will be allowed into heaven in God's presence. We will not experience condemnation because Jesus Christ paid the full penalty of our sins (Romans 8:1).

Also, just as Jesus Christ received a new body, we will have a new, incorruptible body. At the resurrection we will be changed, given a new body that will never wear out and will be perfectly suited to serve Christ forever (1 Corinthians 15:52—54). Without a new body, we would physically be unable to be caught up to meet Him in the air.

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