



“The First Resurrection Sunday”

Matthew 28:1–15

The Resurrection of the King

I. The Resurrection Miracle (vv. 1–4)

Verse 1 – Matthew mentions two women came to the tomb. But we know from the other Gospels there were at least five: Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, Salome, Joanna, and Luke mentions “other women” who were with them (Luke 24:10; Mark 16:10). They came to anoint the body of Jesus for burial (Mark 16:1).

Verse 2 – The stone wasn’t rolled away to let Jesus out! It was rolled away to let the women in. Jesus left before the stone was even removed.

II. The Resurrection Message (vv. 5–7)

“Do not be afraid” (v. 5)

“I know that you are looking for Jesus” (v. 5)

“He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said” (v. 6; cf. Matthew 16:21)

“Come, see the place where He was lying” (v. 6) – Jesus was gone, but his graveclothes were still there. They were lying on the shelf in the shape of his body. He had passed right through them, leaving an empty cocoon of linen strips.

“Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead...” (v. 7)

III. The Resurrection Encounter (vv. 8–10)

Why did Jesus appear *first* to a group of women rather than the apostles?

- It had to do with their loyalty and affection for Jesus. They were last at the cross and first at the tomb. They were lingering while the apostles were lamenting.
- It had to do with affirming their value in the kingdom of God. Women have equal access to salvation. As human beings made in the image of God, women are equal with men in value, dignity, intellect, and importance.

Clarification: Matthew implies Mary Magdalene and the other Mary saw Jesus at the same time. Mark states that Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene first (Mark 16:9). John describes Mary Magdalene as being alone when she saw Jesus (John 20:1–18). How do we reconcile these accounts?

- Matthew gives a condensed, simplified description—a composite sketch.
- At least 5 women came to the tomb and discovered it was open.

- Mary Magdalene went to find Peter and John, while the other women searched for the rest of the apostles.
- Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene, then the other women.

IV. The Resurrection Conspiracy (vv. 11–15)

The lie is spelled out in verse 13 – *“You are to say, ‘His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.’”*

This argument doesn’t make sense:

- If the guards were asleep, how did they know what happened to the body?
- The only evidence left inside the tomb was a pile of graveclothes. If the disciples stole the body, why would they take time to unwrap Jesus and leave his burials cloths behind?
- What motive did the disciples have for stealing the body? They had nothing to gain and everything to lose. If the resurrection was a colossal hoax, why would they die for a lie?

Nine proofs for the resurrection of Jesus:

1. The eyewitness accounts of his death and burial.
2. The eyewitness accounts of the empty tomb.
3. The eyewitness accounts of the angels.
4. The eyewitness accounts of meeting Jesus after his resurrection.
5. The fulfillment of prophecy.
6. The seismic shift from worshiping on the Sabbath to the first day of the week.
7. The role of women as the first eyewitnesses of the resurrection.
8. The transformed lives of the apostles.
9. The transformed lives of billions of Christians.

Discussion Questions

1. What interested you or surprised you the most about this passage of Scripture?
2. Why do you think Jesus appeared first to women rather than the apostles?
3. How do you reconcile the various accounts about the resurrection appearances of Jesus?
Does it bother you that some of the details are different in the Gospels?
4. Why is it ridiculous to suggest that the disciples stole the body of Jesus?
5. Which proofs for the resurrection of Jesus stood out to you, and why?