

Matthew Chapter 26-28 – The Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus – Part 13
Matthew 28:1-15 The Resurrection

Introduction

When we last met, we looked at the historical account of Jesus being buried. The details of the burial are clear: Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Sanhedrin, who is a secret disciple of Jesus, breaks his secrecy and buries Jesus in his own, new, unused tomb.

Why is the account of the burial recorded?

To account for the resurrection, many began to say that He never really died, that Jesus merely swooned. The burial is vital because we have witnesses that Jesus was indeed dead, that His body was prepared by people whom the initial readers could question, and the women were also there to provide further witness that Jesus was indeed dead and placed in the tomb. This point is so important that it becomes part of the Gospel presentation (Acts 2:29-36; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

Why is the account of sealing and the guard here?

This was to show that any claim of deception of having His body stolen by His disciples was a lie. The tomb was hewn out of solid rock, sealed with a large stone, sealed with the Roman seal, and guarded by well-trained and well-equipped guards.

The Pharisees' actions did not prevent their thought of a resurrection; it actually substantiated the resurrection.

The tomb was completely impenetrable. The only valid explanation would be that a supernatural God enacted the resurrection that no one could have stopped.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ – Matthew 28:1-15

Matthew 28:1– Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, who we are told elsewhere was the mother of James the Less, were the first to the tomb. Mark and John also state that two other women were present. These women, after the Sabbath, set out to the tomb on the first day of the week. It was still technically night when they set out; it was before dawn broke, but the sun was probably beginning to light their way.

Matthew 28:2 – A severe earthquake indicates that Jerusalem and the surrounding area felt this event. As we saw at the cross, earthquakes were not uncommon in this area, but the timing of this earthquake is not coincidental (Matthew 27:51-54).

The cause of the earthquake was the activity of the angel. “A great earthquake had occurred because an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it.”

Matthew 28:3-4 – Matthew records the activity of the angel prior to the women coming to the tomb. It is not recorded how Matthew got his information; I assume that it was divine revelation. Why do I assume this? Because of the conspiracy found in verses 13-15.

The word “hos” is used here, indicating that they did not die but probably all froze and fainted. When they came to, they probably all left because the body of Jesus was not there. I also do not

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believe that they saw Jesus come out of the tomb; I believe that if they had, it would have been recorded.

None of the accounts have the women or Peter and John encountering the soldiers. They were already gone, but the angel waited for the women to report that Jesus had risen from the dead.

Why was the stone rolled away? It was not to let Jesus out but to show that He was not there.

Matthew 28:5-6 – This is the account of the angel's interaction informing the women that Jesus was indeed risen from the dead.

Do not be afraid – This is a negative particle with a present imperative verb. This is literally translated as “You all, stop fearing.”

The angel states that they are looking for Jesus. *Looking* is “ζητέω zeteo.” This word is used to mean “to try to find something” or “a significant investigation.” They know where Jesus was buried, why would the angel say this?

If you look at the other three gospels, the picture becomes clearer (Mark 16:4-6; Luke 24:2-5). These women found the stone rolled away, entered into the tomb, became perplexed, and were filled with anxiety and fear (thinking that someone stole His body). Then they began looking intently in the tomb and probably began to investigate where someone must have taken Jesus. Then they saw the angel, their fear deepened, and they were told to stop fearing and that he (the angel) knew they were earnestly seeking Jesus.

The angel then refers to Jesus as *who has been crucified*. This is an articular participle; this is an adjective giving Jesus this attribute – “the crucified One” (1 Corinthians 1:20-23, 2:1-2).

In Revelation, a different word is used, but the same message is conveyed (Revelation 5:12, 13:8) “The Lamb, the One having been slain....”

He is not here. Why? Because He has risen.

He has risen - ἐγείρω egeiro – Aorist Indicative – a one-time event. Passive – The act of raising was done to Him. But this is not the whole story.

Acts 2:29-33; Romans 6:4; Galatians 1:1 – The Father raised Jesus.

Romans 8:9-11 – The Holy Spirit raised Jesus.

John 2:16-22, 10:17-18; Acts 2:22-24 – Jesus raised Himself.

The resurrection is an activity of the Triune God.

Then the angel shows the place where Jesus had been lying. In John, we see what they saw (John 20:3-7). The place where Jesus was lying had the burial cloths lying there, and the face-cloth was not with the burial cloths but was off to the side.

Matthew 28:7 – Matthew skips ahead to the meeting in Galilee. Jesus appears to the disciples between this day and the meeting in Galilee (Matthew 28:16), but it is not recorded in Matthew.

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This angel's statement is a bookend for Jesus' words in Matthew 26:32. There was a specific place where they were to meet after the resurrection; the women were sent to witness and remind the eleven of this plan.

Matthew 28:8-10 – Jesus then meets up with the women; a descriptive account of Mary Magdalene is recorded in John 20:11-18, but Matthew makes it clear that at least two of the women saw Jesus.

Jesus reiterates the words that they are to say and sets the plan for Him to meet the disciples in Galilee.

Once again, a complete review of the four accounts indicates that Jesus met the disciples several times before the meeting in Galilee. Why the repetition? We see that the women and the disciples have trouble believing what they are experiencing. Their emotion has clouded even their own senses.

The angel and Jesus both take great care and patience with them until they have all come to terms with the truth – Jesus is risen from the dead.

Matthew 28:11-15 – This is simply the explanation of what had become the conspiracy to cover up the resurrection. The initial readers would have already heard this story, and Matthew is giving the full account of what the soldiers were supposed to say. Obviously, the story of the Pharisees and the now-bribed soldiers do not add up.

Their failure meant that the soldiers were to have been executed. Why would Roman soldiers self-incriminate and proclaim their own shame if not for a significant bribe and promise of protection from Pilate?

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ – Importance

The truth of resurrection is an indispensable part of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And when we talk about the resurrection, we are talking about the literal, bodily, and physical resurrection of Jesus Christ, the One who was crucified.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4, 12-19 – Without the resurrection, the death on the cross is pointless. The Gospel is incomplete without both the crucifixion and the resurrection.

The Gospel is a proclamation of the person, activity, and offer of Jesus Christ. The activity of Jesus Christ is bound to His death, burial, and resurrection.

If we desire to proclaim the Gospel accurately, we must proclaim and teach the truth of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.