

Monday Week 43 The Resurrection of Christ

Luke 24:1-7

Q 169 Early Sunday morning, what did the women find at the tomb?

A. The stone was rolled away and the body of Jesus was gone.

Two boys got up very early one Easter Sunday morning. They were sure that their mother had some Easter baskets somewhere. No one else was awake, so they tiptoed through the house as they searched. When they looked in the extra bedroom, their eyes grew wide as they saw two baskets in the dim light. Their eyes grew even wider as they saw a brand new baseball bat lying on the stand beside the baskets. The boys crept back into their beds for a little more sleep, with a warm feeling in their hearts about the surprise they had found. They could hardly wait until Monday to try out the new bat.

When the women went to the tomb very early in the morning, they wondered how they would move the stone that covered the entrance. What they saw when they got there was a great surprise. The stone was rolled away and the tomb was empty! Then they saw two angels who told them that Jesus had risen from the dead. They could hardly wait to tell the disciples what they had seen.

Thinking Deeper

Before his death, Jesus very clearly told his disciples that he would rise from the grave. "For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day" (Mark 9:31, see also Mark 10:34). However, they didn't understand. When the first day of the week arrived, the women went to the tomb with spices for the body. What they found amazed them. The stone was rolled away and the tomb was empty. Jesus was gone. Mary Magdalene's initial response was "they have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid him." Why didn't they connect the absent body of Jesus with the resurrection?

Jesus had already told them he would rise on the third day. The evidence was right before them that something extraordinary had happened. The angels at the tomb told them that "He is risen." Yet they didn't understand.

Believing something so fantastic as the resurrection was difficult, even for those who had the most reason to believe. No wonder Jesus said, "Blessed *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed."

Tuesday Week 43 The Resurrection of Christ

John 20:1-10

Q 170 What did Peter and John find in the tomb?

A. Peter and John found the grave clothes and the face cloth.

Some boys in Israel were chasing goats in the hills. They saw a cave in the hillside and threw a rock into the cave. Crack! They heard the sound of pottery breaking. What could be in the cave? The next day they climbed up to the cave and explored. They found pottery, some with the lids still on, that had been there for two thousand years. Inside the jars were scrolls. They didn't know it, but they had discovered very old copies of the Old Testament. These are called the Dead Sea Scrolls. The world was amazed by what the boys found in the cave.

Many years before those boys found the treasure in the cave, some ladies went to Jesus' tomb on Easter morning and found something that amazed the world. They found the tomb of Jesus empty and his grave clothes still there. People have been talking about the resurrection of Jesus Christ ever since.

Thinking Deeper

When Peter and John went into the tomb of Jesus, they saw something that made at least John believe. What did he believe? Evidently he believed that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead. What made him a believer? The only two notable items in the tomb were the clothes that had been wrapped around Jesus' body and the head cloth. That's what they saw. What they didn't see was a body. Jesus was gone! The notable thing was that the clothes were undisturbed. In other words, they were lying there just as they had been when Jesus was laid in the tomb. And the head cloth was still wrapped together as it had been when it was wrapped around Jesus' head. But the clothes were empty. Imagine the grave clothes with up to a hundred pounds of spices sprinkled in them making a sort of soft body cast. Peter and John saw them collapsed but neatly in place. For John, that was enough. The only explanation of those clothes lying there was that Jesus had actually risen from the dead and passed through the grave clothes, much like he later did when he exited the room of the disciples by passing through the wall.

Everything about the resurrection is miraculous. God intended it that way.

Wednesday Week 43 The Resurrection of Christ

Mark 16:9-14

Q 171 How did the disciples know that Jesus was risen?

A. Jesus appeared to the disciples after he arose from the dead.

During a war a mother got word that her son had been killed. She was very sad. But some time later an official from the government came to her house. “We have good news for you,” said the man. “We have found out that we were mistaken. Your son was not killed. He is alive and is on his way home.” The mother was very happy to hear the good news.

The disciples were very sad when Jesus died on the cross. Before he died, Jesus told them that their sorrow would be turned to joy. When they saw Jesus alive, they were very glad. We still rejoice that Jesus is alive. He is our savior and friend. Thank God He is alive.

Thinking Deeper

There is an old story about a hunter who was shaken awake early in the morning by his Indian guide. It had snowed the night before and the crisp morning in the Rocky Mountains greeted the hunter along with a whisper from his guide. “Elk tracks in the back of camp.” The hunter was wide awake. “Are they fresh?” the hunter asked excitedly. “Elk still in ‘em,” answered the guide. The hunter was convinced by an eyewitness account.

When Jesus appeared to the disciples, their doubts about his resurrection were over. It appears that there was mixed reaction to the events on early Easter morning. The women went to the tomb and found it empty. They came with the amazing report to the disciples. Peter and John went to look. John believed, but Peter seemed to still have doubts. The other disciples had mixed reactions. They were “slow of heart to believe.” But when they saw Jesus, their doubts vanished. They were convinced of the truth.

At the heart of preaching the gospel in those early days was the claim that Jesus had risen from the dead. The gospel message is still not complete without the preaching of the resurrection. Christ is risen!

Thursday Week 43 The Resurrection of Christ

I Cor. 15:3-8, 13-20

Q 172 Why is the resurrection so important?

A. If there is no resurrection, we have no hope.

A man named Voltaire was a famous atheist. He didn't believe in God. When he was dying, he spoke to his doctor. "I will give you half of what I am worth if you will give me six months' life." The doctor told him he couldn't give him more time to live. "Then I shall go to hell," said Voltaire. He had no hope when he was dying.

Christians have hope when they are dying because of the resurrection. Because Jesus arose, those who trust him will also rise from the dead to be with him forever. People who don't trust in Jesus don't have that hope. If there is no resurrection, no one has hope.

Thinking Deeper

Theologian Lloyd Greening has stated that the resurrection of Jesus "has to do with faith rather than objective fact."* For Greening, there is no compelling historical evidence that Jesus ever rose from the dead. But for Presbyterian minister Greening that does not mean abandonment of the hope of the resurrection. The hope of the resurrection means "not the endless prolongation of a conscious self." Rather, it means there is some hope for meaning "in the lives of men who follow." If you follow Greening's thinking and compare it to Hinduism where the individual completely loses self-awareness and becomes one with the universe, you find no difference. Ravi Zacharias calls it a religion of death to the individual.

In contrast to these systems that see death to the individual as ultimate, the Biblical message of hope presupposes eternal life. Jesus said that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob "is not the God of the dead, but of the living." The resurrected Christ will raise up us also, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Christ is risen!

*www.religion-online.org/showbook.asp?title=2734

Friday Week 43 The Resurrection of Christ

Review the Week's Questions

Q 169 Early Sunday morning, what did the women find at the tomb?

A. The stone was rolled away and the body of Jesus was gone.

Q 170 What did Peter and John find in the tomb?

A. Peter and John found the grave clothes and the face cloth.

Q 171 How did the disciples know that Jesus was risen?

A. Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was risen from the dead.

Q 172 Why is the resurrection so important?

A. If there is no resurrection, we have no hope.

Do you believe in angels? A family in Africa did. Their little girl was lost in the wild. For a whole night she stayed by herself. In the morning her father found her. He asked his daughter if she had been afraid. The girl told him that some nice yellow dogs stayed with her all night. The father looked around and saw lion tracks all around where the girl had stayed. That family believes that God's protecting angels stayed with the little girl through the night.

Angels were important in the story of the resurrection. An angel rolled the stone away from the tomb. Angels told the women that Jesus had risen. They told the women to take the message of the resurrection to the disciples. God still uses angels. They are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation."

Thinking Deeper

Historic Christianity is a supernatural religion based on significant activity of God in the world. God created the world from nothing. God killed animals and made clothes to cover Adam and Eve after they sinned. God called Abraham. God spoke to Moses from a burning bush. God parted the Red Sea and the Jordan River. God spoke to prophets. God's Son came to earth in the form of a man, died and then rose from the dead. God confronted Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, spoke to him and changed his life. God continues to call men to follow Him and does miracles in the lives of people who believe Him.

The humanists/naturalists/materialists can't allow for any of these miracles. By definition they can't admit to anything supernatural. But they can neither refute miracles nor stop them. Sinners still get saved and God still provides for His people. Christ is risen! Believers trust Him who said, "I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for me?"