

## HE IS RISEN, JUST AS HE SAID! (MATTHEW 28:1-10)

### INTRODUCTION

## THE FINAL WEEK (Matthew 21:1-27:66)

### SUNDAY.

Jesus enters Jerusalem and then returns to Bethany for the night.

### MONDAY.

Jesus curses the fruitless fig tree, a picture of the judgment of God on faithless Israel.

He enters the Temple and cleanses it, just as He did at the start of His ministry.

The scribes and priests begin plotting how to destroy Him.

### TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY.

There are multiple confrontations with the scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, and chief priests.

Jesus pronounces judgment against the Pharisees.

He teaches His disciples about end-time events.

Judas agrees to betray Jesus to the chief priests for money.

### THURSDAY.

Preparations are made for the Passover.

Jesus celebrates Passover with His disciples.

He institutes the Lord's supper.

He delivers the Upper Room discourse.

They go to the garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus prays the high priestly prayer of John 17 and for Himself as well.

Judas betrays Him, leading a squad of soldiers to His location.

Jesus is arrested.

### FRIDAY.

#### THE TRIALS.

He is taken before Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest, and a former high priest himself.

He is brought before Caiaphas, the high priest.

He is taken before the Sanhedrin, who plot to put Him to death.

During these trials, Judas committed suicide, and Peter denied Jesus as Jesus had predicted.

He is taken before Pontius Pilate, who sends him to Herod, who sends Him back to Pilate.

#### THE CONDEMNATION.

Pilate is reluctant to condemn Jesus because he sees no reason for it and because his wife had a nightmare about Jesus.

He knows about the custom of releasing a condemned prisoner at Passover and offers to release either Jesus or Barabbas, a notorious insurrectionist and murderer.

The Jews will not be distracted from their purpose and demand that Barabbas be released and Jesus be put to death.

Around dawn, Pilate orders Jesus to be crucified (John 19:14, 6 am using Roman time).

### **THE CRUCIFIXION.**

The Roman soldiers first torture him, and then He is taken to Golgatha, a hill just outside the city, and crucified around 9 am (Mark 15:25, the third hour according to Jewish time).

Around the sixth hour (Mark 15:33, noon according to Jewish time), darkness falls on the earth.

Jesus yields up His spirit around 3 pm (Mark 15:34, the ninth hour according to Jewish time).

Since Jesus was likely crucified in 30 A.D., the date would have been April 7 (by our calendar).

Sunset took place at 7:05 pm, giving plenty of time to verify that Jesus was dead, and for Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus to remove His body, prepare it for burial, and place it in the tomb before the Sabbath began.

### **SATURDAY.**

The Bible says that the crucified Jesus went and preached to the spirits in prison, and freed Old Testament saints from their captivity (not resurrection, though).

The Jews remember that Jesus spoke about rising from the dead.

Ironically, His enemies recalled His words, and His disciples didn't.

They asked Pilate to assign a squad of soldiers to guard the tomb, "otherwise His disciples may come and steal Him away."

Pilate agreed, and soldiers were sent to seal the tomb and protect it.

Here are a couple of things to consider about this event.

First, the Jews remembered what Jesus' disciples forgot: that Jesus said He would rise from the dead.

In all likelihood, the Jews only heard it a few times.

His disciples heard it repeatedly beginning about 6 months beforehand.

Their deep love for Jesus caused them to forget what He taught them.

Second, the Jews assume that the disciples were far bolder than they were.

As far as we know, the disciples remained in hiding on that Saturday.

The Jews believed there was a strong possibility they would go to the tomb, roll away the stone and carry away Jesus' body in public view, and then claim Jesus had been raised.

In any case, the Jews themselves provided a handful of men who became objective witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

**TRANSITION:** There's our introduction.

All of these things took place as the Gospels record.

Because they were actual historical events and were recorded by eyewitnesses (Matthew and John) and men who had direct access to eyewitnesses (Mark and Luke), there are differences in the details.

The Gospels don't contradict one another, as many claim; they simply relate different details.

That brings us to Sunday, Resurrection Day.

## **RESURRECTION DAY! (Matthew 28:1-10)**

### **This was a historical time. (Matthew 28:1)**

*"Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week."*

It happened as the Sabbath day came to a close and the first day of the week began.

If the year was 30 A.D., which it almost certainly was, Jesus died on Friday, April 7, and rose on Sunday, April 9.

Mythology, poetry, and allegory don't need to specify dates and times, and rarely do. Modern fiction will sometime use dates and times, but historical fiction came into existence no more than 1000 years ago.

### **These are historical people. (Matthew 28:1)**

*"Mary Magdalene and the other Mary [probably the mother of James]."*

Were these women alive when the Gospels were written?

No one can say.

But they were alive when the Gospel began to be preached.

*Acts 2:42 says, "And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers." (Acts 2:42)*

The heart of the apostles' teaching was the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The four Gospels name several women:

Mary Magdalene

Mary the mother of James

Salome

Joanna

Luke speaks of other women with them

These women's names were mentioned frequently in those early days before the Gospels were put in writing.

Every time the resurrection was preached, all or some of their names were mentioned.

Mythology and poetry, and allegory don't need to mention real people.

Jesus taught many parables and never bothered to insert a real person into them.

The presence of their names in writing, decades after the resurrection took place, tells us that it was and is a matter of history.

### **These are historical events. (Matthew 28:1-4)**

Mark tells us that as the women walked to the tomb, they wondered how they would get the stone rolled away from the entrance.

When the women arrived at the tomb, they discovered the stone that closed the tomb had been rolled away and saw an angel sitting on it.

The great earthquake was a historical event.

It was not caused by seismic activity or shifting tectonic plates, but it was an earthquake nonetheless.

An angel of the Lord really descended from heaven, rolled away the stone, and sat on it.

His appearance was properly angelic: like lightning, brilliant and blinding.

His clothes were white as snow, reflecting the glory of God his Master.

The Roman soldiers quivered in fear at his appearance and fell over like dead men.

They lay there the whole time the women were present, and only after the women left did they stir and go to report to the chief priests.

The chief priests told them to deny the angelic appearance and say they had fallen asleep.

That would typically be a death sentence, but the chief priests promised to intervene if they got into trouble.

All these things took place in history, just as the Scripture says.

### **They have a historical tone. (Matthew 28:5-6)**

Yes, it's bizarre that an angel would appear. Yes, it's mystifying that a crucified man would rise from the dead. But the strangeness of these events doesn't mean they aren't true.

The angel's words to the women have every ring of truth.

He first reassured them, "Do not be afraid." This isn't mythology, poetry, or allegory; the sight of an angel would cause terror to any sinful human being.

He knows what they are doing at that moment: looking for Jesus.

He knows that Jesus was crucified, died, and buried.

He also knows that Jesus is alive again: "He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said."

May I say that the angel is not simply the narrator of the story?

He is an observer of God's purposes being carried out in history.

The Scripture says (First Peter 1:10-12) that the angels long to look into the facts and truths of the Gospel.

They were not in the know about every purpose and plan of the Father.

What an honor it was for THIS angel to be the one to roll back the stone, not so that His Lord could get out, but so that the human witnesses could get in.

Then the angel speaks a profound truth in simple words: "Come, see the place where He was lying."

Jesus was undoubtedly dead.

He gave up His spirit on the cross.

He was taken down dead by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus.

They prepared His body for burial, anointed Him with 100 pounds of myrrh, aloes, and spices, and wrapped Him in a linen shroud.

They carefully laid His body on the stone bench in the tomb, then rolled the stone across the opening.

They expected to come back in a year and find Jesus' dead remains where they left them.

They planned to unwrap the remains, clean the bones, place them in an ossuary (a bone box), and then place the ossuary in a niche in the wall.

This new, unused tomb belonged to Joseph, and perhaps he thought about one day being laid in that tomb himself, and eventually his remains laying close to those of Jesus.

But it was now the place where Jesus had been lying, not where He was currently lying.

The body was gone; just the wrappings remained.

### **They call for historical action. (Matthew 28:7-8).**

The women are to quickly, immediately, go tell Jesus' disciples that He had risen from the dead, and that they should go to Galilee, where they would see Him.

They begin to do exactly what the angel said; there was no time to waste.

### **The women have a historical encounter. (Matthew 28:9-10).**

But the women haven't gone far when Jesus Himself approaches them and greets them.

They took hold of His feet and worshiped Him.

He was not a ghost or a spirit; He was flesh and blood.

Jesus repeated the angel's words: they were to tell His disciples to go to Galilee, and He would see them there.

Luke writes that the disciples didn't believe them; they thought the women were speaking nonsense.

Peter and John ran to the tomb to see for themselves.

John believed.

Peter was not convinced.

It wasn't only Thomas who was slow to believe the testimony of others; faced with the empty tomb, Peter did not believe.

This has the ring of truth to it.

People don't come back from the dead after three days wrapped in 100 pounds of sticky ointment from head to toe and wrapped tightly in a burial shroud.

They do what Martha said her brother Lazarus did after several days in the tomb: they stink with decay.

Jesus' disciples were not quick to believe the women; they weren't looking for reasons to believe.

So they didn't leave for Galilee; instead they stayed where they are.

Jesus came to them in the upper room, as we see in Luke 24:36-43, and they still have a hard time believing.

This is history. This took place on the evening of April 9th, 30 A.D., in the same room where He had celebrated Passover with them on Thursday, April 6th.

## **BRINGING IT HOME**

### **What difference did the resurrection make to Jesus' disciples?**

It made all the difference in the world.

These timid, fearful fishermen became bold, courageous preachers.

They suffered for the sake of the Gospel.

Some of them traveled vast distances to preach Christ:

**Andrew** is said to have preached in what we know as Ukraine, Russia, and Kazakhstan.

**Nathanael** is reported to have preached in Persia and India.

**Thomas** is said to have been martyred in India.

**Simon the Zealot** may have reached England.

### **What difference has the resurrection made in human history?**

It's made all the difference.

Sinners have become godly men and women through faith in the risen Jesus Christ.

The slave-ship captain John Newton became a pastor and hymn writer.

Whole cultures have been changed for the better.

Members of one Huaorani tribe of Ecuador abandoned their cannibalism and violence for the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and have been active in evangelizing other natives in the region.

Modern atheism and agnosticism claim that Christianity is the problem.

Communism murdered hundreds of millions of people in the 20th century.

Born again Christians have built hospitals, schools, orphanages, remained to serve those afflicted with plagues (often dying themselves), and sacrificed to make the world a better place.

Most importantly, they have devoted themselves for 2000 years to preaching the risen, glorious Jesus Christ, the Savior, the Lord of Glory!

### **What difference does the resurrection make to us today?**

It is the basis for justification.

It gives born-again Christians the courage to stand firm no matter the opposition.

It comforts us in our suffering.

It assures us of God's promise to save us through Jesus Christ.

It allows us to recognize the truth and difficulty of our circumstances and, at the same time, rejoice that Jesus will be victorious in and over us.

It reminds us that we serve a living Savior and Lord and that regardless of how things appear, He is entirely in control of His creation.