

### • The Sabbath

The last phrase of Luke 23:56 tells us that the women who had witnessed Jesus' death rested on the next day, which was the Saturday Sabbath. What would everyone have been thinking about on this day? The Mosaic law forbade much moving about or travelling. Everyone would have stayed where they were.

### • Early the next morning the women go to the tomb

The next day the women make their way to the tomb<sup>1</sup>. It is very early in the morning. They leave before dawn and dawn breaks as they are going to the tomb<sup>2</sup>. They were planning to anoint the body of Jesus<sup>3</sup> but when they get to the tomb the stone is rolled away<sup>4</sup> and the body of the Lord Jesus is not there<sup>5</sup> (for the first time Jesus is called 'the Lord Jesus').

### A crucial fact of history

**Here is a crucial fact of history.** On Friday night Jesus was dead and buried. On Sunday morning Jesus' tomb was empty. The Jewish authorities certainly did not have the body of Jesus (for they would gladly have produced it to show that He was dead). The same documents that tell us that Jesus was dead and buried also tell us that within forty-eight hours the tomb was empty. Nothing in our story so far gives us any reason to think the disciples had the body. So what happened to the body of Jesus? Jesus was raised from the dead! It would have been impossible for the disciples to have preached the resurrection so soon after Jesus' death if they had known that it was not true. They were willing to suffer terrible persecution when their enemies got angry about the preaching of Jesus' resurrection. Why suffer persecution for something that is not true? The willingness of the early Christians even to die for their faith was because they knew that it was a sheer fact that Jesus had been raised from the dead.

### • What happens to the body?

### • Only the resurrection fits the facts

### • All other explanations fail: Jesus really was raised

What other explanation is possible? If the Jews had the body they would have produced it. If the disciples stole the body it is hard to believe that they would endure such persecution and show such heroism for preaching something they knew was untrue. Why preach an untruth when it will only bring suffering? The disciples could hardly have been imagining Jesus to be alive when He was not. They were not expecting Jesus to be alive; they were slow to believe the story the women told them. All explanations fail except one: Jesus really was raised from the dead.

### Resurrection appearances

At the tomb-site Jesus appears to them<sup>1</sup> but the guards spread a false report<sup>2</sup>. Jesus appears specially to Mary<sup>3</sup>, to the men on the road to Emmaus<sup>4</sup>, to the disciples<sup>5</sup> and to the disciples with Thomas<sup>6</sup>. Matthew records the great commission<sup>7</sup>. Luke records the ascension<sup>8</sup>. John records Jesus' appearing to the disciples by the sea of Tiberias and His recommissioning of Peter<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> see  
Matthew 28:1-8;  
Mark 16:1-8;  
Luke 24:1-12;  
John 20:1-13  
<sup>2</sup> 24:1a  
<sup>3</sup> 24:1b  
<sup>4</sup> 24:2  
<sup>5</sup> 24:3

<sup>1</sup> Matthew 28:9-10

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 28:11-15

<sup>3</sup> John 20:14-18

<sup>4</sup> Luke 24:13-35

<sup>5</sup> Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-23

<sup>6</sup> John 20:24-29

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 28:16-20

<sup>8</sup> Luke 24:44-53

<sup>9</sup> John 21:1-25

- *Angelic announcement*
- *The women return to tell the news*
- *Peter runs to the tomb*

In Luke's story two angels appear to the women<sup>1</sup> and announce that Jesus is no longer to be found among the corpses of the dead<sup>2</sup>. They should have believed all along that He would be raised from the dead because He had spoken about it to the disciples<sup>3</sup>. With this angelic reminder the women remember that Jesus had indeed spoken of resurrection<sup>4</sup>. They immediately go back to where the disciples are staying – in a house in Jerusalem – and tell them the news<sup>5</sup>. Luke mentions three women who had the privilege of being the first to know that Jesus was alive: Mary Magdalene, Joanna, the other Mary (mother of James one of the apostles). And there were other women at the tomb as well<sup>6</sup>. The men can hardly credit what they say<sup>7</sup>, but Peter runs to the tomb and finds that it is true<sup>8</sup>.

1 24:4  
2 24:5  
3 24:6-7  
4 24:8  
5 24:9  
6 24:10  
7 24:11  
8 24:12

- *There is life beyond the grave – Jesus is the proof!*

Jesus is alive! Death is not the end of human life. **There is life beyond the grave.** Jesus proves it; He has died and returned to life. Jesus has power over death. No one takes His life from Him. He lays it down willingly, and He has power to take it again<sup>1</sup>. His sinlessness enables Him to take His life again.

1 John 10:17, 18

- *Jesus' claims proven*

**The resurrection proves the claims of Jesus.** Constantly people asked Jesus for a sign that would prove He was who He claimed to be. You would have thought that His many miracles were enough, but they wanted more! Jesus told them that no sign would be given except the sign of the prophet Jonah – the resurrection<sup>1</sup><sup>2</sup>.

1 11: 29-30  
2 also John 2:18-22

- *The whole human race will rise*

**The resurrection of Jesus is the cause in some way of the resurrection of the entire human race.** Jesus is the resurrection and the life<sup>1</sup>. In Christ all of the human race will be physically made alive. This does not mean that all will inherit salvation, but all will rise to give an account of the deeds done in the body.

1 John 11:25

## The Christian is raised with Christ

- *Resurrection-power in every Christian*

**The Christian is raised with Christ.** The same resurrection- power that was used when Jesus took His life again is the power that is at work in the Christian. When a person believes in Jesus, he or she is joined on to the resurrection-power of Jesus. Christ is totally victorious over death. Paul says, '*Since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again. Death no longer has dominion over him*'<sup>1</sup>. Then he adds, '*Reckon yourselves to have died to sin, and reckon you are people who are alive to God in Christ Jesus*'<sup>2</sup>. The resurrection power of Jesus is already at work in every Christian. The Bible tells us to believe and live confidently and boldly for God.

1 Romans 6:10  
2 Romans 6:11



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