

ENGAGE

- As you approach the text you may find these questions and thoughts to be helpful?
 - What is Easter all about, anyways?
 - Why is it important that the resurrection happened?
 - What does the resurrection of Jesus mean to you personally?

EXAMINE

The events of the first Easter Day have been tabulated by Professor Westcott, in what he terms a provisional arrangement, as follows: - APPROX. TIME. Very early on Sunday

- The Resurrection, followed by the earthquake, the descent of the angel, the opening of the tomb (Matthew 28:2-4). 5 a.m....
- Mary Magdalene, Mary the [mother] of James and Salome, probably with others, start for the sepulchre in the twilight. Mary Magdalene goes before the others, and returns at once to Peter and John (John 20:1, etc.), 5:30 a.m....
- Her companions reach the sepulchre when the sun had risen (Mark 16:2). A vision of an angel. Message to the disciples (Matthew 28:5, etc.; Mark 16:5, etc.). 6 a.m....
- Another party, among whom is Joanna, come a little later, but still in the early morning (Luke 24:1, etc.; comp. Mark 16:1, note). A vision of "two young men." Words of comfort and instruction (Luke 24:4, etc.). 6:30 a.m....
- The visit of Peter and John (John 20:3-10). A vision of two angels to Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-13). About the same time the company of women carry their tidings to the apostles (Luke 24:10, etc.). 7 a.m....
- The Lord reveals himself to Mary Magdalene (John 20:14-18; Mark 16:9). Not long after he reveals himself, as it appears, to the company of women who are returning to the sepulchre. Charge to the brethren to go to Galilee (Matthew 28:9, etc.). 4-6 p.m....
- The appearance to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24:13, etc.; Mark 16:12).
- After 4 p.m... An appearance to St. Peter (ch. 24:34; comp. 1 Corinthians 15:5).
- 8 p.m.... The appearance to the eleven and others (Luke 24:36, etc.; Mark 16:14; John 20:19, etc.).

In the above table one point must be specially noticed: two companies or separate groups of women are mentioned as going to the sepulchre with the same pious object of assisting in the final embalming of the sacred body. If this be assumed to be the fact, there will be nothing

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improbable in the supposition that both these groups of women, all doubtless intimate friends belonging to the little company of the Master, but living probably some distance apart in Jerusalem, came together some time on the sabbath day, and then arranged to meet early on the first day at the sepulchre. Probably the spices purchased in some haste just before the sabbath commenced were judged inadequate.

(1) For in Luke 23:56 we read of a company of women, most probably including all, i.e. both groups, of holy women, who, after beholding the sepulchre, "returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day."

(2) In Mark 16:1 we read, "When the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought [not had bought] sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him." This company (alluded to in Mark 16:1) arrives the first at the sepulchre, and sees the vision of one angel (Mark 16:5). The other company (alluded to in Luke 24:1) arrives not long after at the sepulchre, and sees the vision of two angels (Luke 24:4). In considering the accounts of the Resurrection, the following memoranda will be found suggestive: -

(1) The holy women are the principal actors in all the four accounts of the circumstances connected with the tomb. But their assertions were not believed by the disciples until their statements were confirmed by the Lord's personal appearance.

(2) When St. Paul (1 Corinthians 15:5-8) sums up the great appearances of our Lord, the basis of our faith, he makes no reference to his appearance to Mary Magdalene (John 20:14, etc.; Mark 16:9) or to the women (two Maries mentioned Matthew 28:9, 10).

(3) No evangelist describes the Resurrection-no earthly being having been present. St. Matthew is the evangelist who, in his narrative, goes furthest back. He mentions the shock of the earthquake, the awful presence of the angel, the benumbing terror which seized the guards who were watching. Most probably these signs accompanied the Resurrection.

(4) The risen Lord appeared only to his own.

(5) That no future doubt should be thrown on the reality of the appearances of the Risen, he showed himself not only to solitary individuals, but to companies, i.e. to two, to the eleven (repeatedly), and to above five hundred brethren at once. And these manifestations took place

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(a) at different hours of the day;

(b) in different localities - in Judaea, in Galilee, in rooms of houses, in the open air. Verses 1-12. - The Resurrection. At the sepulchre. Verse 1. - Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. In the foregoing general note on the Resurrection, the probability has been discussed of the holy women having been divided into two companies who separately came to the sepulchre. St. Luke's notice here refers to the party who arrived the second at the tomb.

Jesus' vindication involves the exercise of God's power bringing him to life in a new, glorified state. After the discovery of the empty tomb (vv. 1-12), Luke narrates the conversation with the Emmaus-bound disciples, an account unique to him (vv. 13-35). Then follows the Gospel's closing scene, where Jesus visits the disciples (vv. 36-53). This final visit also is unique to Luke. Here Jesus appears to them (vv. 36-43) before giving them final instructions and departing (vv. 44-53).

A key feature of this section is the note of surprise among the disciples that Jesus is raised. Among the women, the disciples and the Emmaus travelers there is no hint that resurrection was anticipated. Such surprise is important, because it shows that even Jesus' own followers had to be convinced of his resurrection. They were not a gullible group that simply took resurrection as a given. Their surprise itself might seem strange, given Jesus' predictions of his resurrection as early as 9:22. But as late as 18:34, it is clear that the disciples never grasped the point of what Jesus was promising.

God's power underlies Jesus' resurrection. In addition, Scripture's claim (24:44-47), Jesus' promise (24:5-7), the angelic messengers' testimony (24:3-5, 23) and the testimony of disciples, both men and women, make up an impressive range of witnesses to this event (24:1-35). God's power stands behind the resurrection, because a passive verbal idea points to God's being responsible for it. This event is part of the reassurance Luke promised Theophilus in 1:1-4. The resurrection leads to the ascension and the events that grow from it.

As we come to the end of the Gospel, it is important to recall that Luke is only half finished with his story. The sequel comes in Acts. The resurrection-ascension is the link between the two

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volumes. That Luke regards the ascension as crucial is clear from Peter's speech in Acts 2. Now that Jesus is raised and seated at God's right hand, the mediating Ruler at the Father's side can pour out the blessing of God's Spirit (Acts 2:30-36). As the first ten chapters of Acts will make clear, the gospel can go to all because Jesus is Lord of all. The apostle Paul becomes the supreme example of a mission to all of humanity. The Resurrection Discovered (24:1-12)

First thing in the morning, the women come to the tomb with their spices, fully expecting to find Jesus' remains. All the accounts agree that it was early morning. Matthew 28:1 and Mark 16:2 refer to the dawn or early morning, while John 20:1 notes that it was still dark when they started their journey.

The following point cannot be stressed too strongly: these women did not go believing in resurrection. They did not go to check and see if the tomb was empty. The fact that they took spices along to anoint the decaying body shows what they expected to find, and this despite six resurrection predictions in Luke. So the first people who had to be convinced of the resurrection were the disciples themselves. They may have belonged to the era of the ancients, but they did not think as a matter of course that resurrection would occur. In a real sense they were the first skeptics to become convinced that Jesus was raised!

The first hint that something had happened was the rolled-away stone. This stone, as was typical of ancient tombs, had covered the entrance. It was laid in a channel that had been carved out for it. While Mark 16:3 shows that the women had debated how they would get the heavy stone moved, Luke simply presents what confronts them on their arrival: They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

The women are at a loss, stymied, filled with perplexity. Their quandary is broken by the appearance of two men in clothes that gleamed, a description that suggests Luke means angels. Heavenly appearances are often bright (9:29; 10:18; Acts 9:3; 22:6). Any doubt that Luke means they are angels is removed in verse 23. The presence of the pair may invoke the "two witnesses" theme of the Old Testament (Deut 19:15). Luke's noting of two angels corresponds with John 20:12, while Matthew 28:2-4 and Mark 16:5 mention only one figure. The angelic appearance frightens the women, who bow to the ground in reverence. They know heaven is visiting the earth (Dillon 1978:26-27). The reason becomes clear in the angels' response.

It begins with a mild rebuke that is also an explanation: "Why do you look for the living among the dead?" Put simply, Jesus is alive, so do not expect to find him in a tomb. Then the angels ask

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them to recall the promise he made to them in Galilee. "Remember how he told you, . . . 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again' " (9:22; 18:32-33). God is not surprised at Jesus' resurrection, and neither should they be surprised. Jesus' authority is summarized in the crucial Son of Man title. Here is a man who bears the authority of deity, through judgment given over to him by the Ancient of Days (Dan 7:13-14). Luke 22:69 is coming to pass. In fact, the key term *dei* ("it is necessary") is used here to express the idea of divine design. God, the great cosmic director, has orchestrated what took place here (compare Acts 2:22-24). From the arrest through the death to the resurrection, Jesus walked in God's will. The women need not have wasted their money on the spices to preserve Jesus' body; God has taken care of it and has been in control all along.

The angels' words bring Jesus' words back to mind. The women cannot keep to themselves what has just happened--they return to tell the eleven and those with them. The entourage had included a large group of women, but Luke only names Mary Magdalene (8:2), Joanna (8:3) and Mary the mother of James (Mk 16:1).

Though the women are convinced, the rest are not. They come to belief slowly. Many of the disciples are originally skeptics about resurrection. At first they regard the women as hysterical, telling an idle tale. *Leros* (NIV nonsense), used here for "idle tale," was used in everyday Greek to refer to the delirious stories told by the very sick as they suffer in great pain or to tales told by those who fail to perceive reality (4 Maccabees 5:11; Josephus Jewish Wars 3.8.9 405). The other disciples think these women must be dreaming. Luke notes most of them do not believe their story, except for perhaps one or two present.

Yet Luke 24:12, if a part of the original document, indicates that Peter cannot sit still upon hearing the report. He has learned to trust what Jesus predicts. So he gets up and runs to the tomb, sees the linen clothes by themselves and departs. He wonders, or marvels, about what has come to pass. There is a little debate among interpreters whether Peter believes at this point. In fact, most doubt it, arguing that the term "marveling" (*thaumazo*; NIV wondering) is ambiguous (see 4:22; 11:38; Acts 13:41). But surely it is hard to call Peter doubting here, and the term can be positive (as in Lk 1:21, 63; 2:18, 33; 7:9; 8:25; 11:14; 20:26; 24:41; Stein 1992:607). Something stirs him to check out the story when others are incredulous. In addition, his recent experience with his denials has surely taught him to trust what Jesus says.

QUESTIONS

1. When did Jesus die and where was his body buried? (23:55-56) Who were the women? (10; 8:2-3) How did Jesus love Mary Magdalene? (Lk 8:2, Mk 16:9)

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2. Why did many women follow Jesus to the end? (Lk 23:27, 55) Why had they come to the tomb? (24:1) What did they find? (2)

3. What glorious sight did they see? (4) Who were the two men? How did they react? (5a) What was the message of the angels to them?(5b-6) To whom our message should be directed?

4. What had Jesus prophesied when he was still in Galilee? (6-8; 9:22) What does “He is not here” mean? (6a) What does “He has risen!” mean? (6a, Ac 2:24, 1Cor 15:56)

5. Why is Jesus’ resurrection the eternal victory for all who believe in Him? (1Cor 15:57, 1Th 4:13-14) What is the best news for all people? (6, 1Cor 15:55) Why did the angels remind the women of Jesus words? (6b-7)

6. What did the women do when they remembered Jesus’ words? (8-9) Why is “remembering Jesus’ words” so important? How did the apostles respond? (10-11) What did Peter do? (12)

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