



The DAILY JESUS NEWS #331 Jesus' Resurrection and Eternal Ministry

The Empty tomb

Faithful Women Discover the Empty Tomb
Acts 1.3; MT 28.1-4 (Parallel Texts: MK 16.2-4; LK 24.1-3; JN 20.1)

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After his suffering, Jesus revealed himself to the apostles and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God... (Acts 1.3)

¹ ^{MT}After the Sabbath, ^Jon the first day of the week, very early in the morning--while it was still dark-- Mary Magdalene, ^{MT}the other Mary, ^MSalome, ^Land the other women took the spices they had prepared and left for the tomb.

² There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it.³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. ⁴ The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

^{MT}At dawn on the first day of the week, ^Mjust after sunrise, as they were on their way to the tomb they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"

But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. ^LWhen they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

CONTEXT DIGEST	
Location	The New Garden Tomb, Near Golgotha
Timeline	Early April (Month 39)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage IX: The Resurrection and Eternal Ministry of Jesus
	The Resurrection and 40 Day Ministry of Jesus
	Early Sunday Morning: The Empty Tomb

Title:	Faithful Women Discover the Empty Tomb
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With today's reading we begin the apostle's eye-witness testimony of the resurrection and 40 day ministry of Jesus that led up to his ascension back to the right hand of the Father in heaven. This is Stage IX of Jesus' life--the most important of the nine stages because it is the eternal phase of his life that we, and all the universe will relate to for the rest of eternity. Everything in the first eight stages of Jesus' life led progressively to their fulfillment in Stage IX.

This is also the first of three readings the precede Jesus' eleven resurrection appearances recorded in Scripture, occurring over 40 days. In these three readings the empty tomb is discovered by the women (#1), who receive the angel's announcement of Jesus' resurrection (#2), and the empty tomb is verified by Peter and John #3).

After these three events occurred, Jesus began to show himself alive with five consecutive resurrection appearances on Easter Sunday.

A final note before getting into today's text. All four gospels record some of the details of what happened with the women at the tomb. However, there is a crucial difference in perspective from John, and the Synoptics. John chose to focus exclusively on Mary Magdalene, writing about her as the only woman in his narrative. However, the Synoptic writers described the entire group of women who were actually involved.

There is no conflict between John and the Synoptics concerning the facts--they blend perfectly, but their approach is decidedly different. What accounts for this key difference?

John focused on Mary Magdalene alone because he was leading up to her personal encounter with the resurrected Jesus, which happened when she was alone. Mary's meeting with the risen Jesus was the first in history! It therefore has huge historical and spiritual significance for all of us. For this reason, John chose to focus exclusively on Mary from the beginning of his resurrection Sunday narrative.

The other women met Jesus later on, as a group. Their collective witness to the risen Jesus is also critical to the true story of Jesus' resurrection. The Synoptic authors chose to make their emphasis here.

We know at least four of the women who went to the tomb by name from the various accounts: Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of James (also called "the other Mary"), Salome, and Joanna. There were "other women" in the group as well--we do not know how many.

Three references to the timing of the story show us that the women arrived very early in the morning. John said they started out from Jerusalem *"while it was still dark."* While they were walking on the road *"dawn"* broke (MT), and they arrived at the garden tomb *"just after sunrise"* (MK).

While the women were still on the road the violent earthquake probably occurred, and the angel rolled back the stone. The earthquake served as an announcement of the creative power of Jesus' resurrection, which transformed the remains of his physical body into a new kind of matter--a "spiritual body" that is an eternal, living organism in the same basic shape and appearance of Jesus' flesh and blood body, but with the ability to appear or disappear from human sight at will, or transport itself through physical objects like stone or wood.

We will see convincing proof to these and other qualities in future readings. In any case, the angel moved the stone so that the women could enter the tomb, not to let Jesus out.

The appearance of the angel almost scared the Roman guards to death. They shook so hard they almost became a secondary cause of the earthquake! Then they fainted from fear, or "*became like dead men*" (MT) so they did not see the women come to the tomb.

We see the extraordinary courage and desire of the woman to take care of Jesus' body by the way they entered the tomb. They had come to further anoint his body with the burial paste they had prepared. (Apparently they did not fully approve of the hasty work that Joseph and Nicodemus had done to prepare his body on Friday evening.)

In spite of seeing the guards lying unconscious on the ground, and the severe consequences of violating the Roman seal on the tomb, they woman risked everything by going inside. Nothing could have stopped them. Their courage would be rewarded, and tested by the appearance of the two angels that will make up our next reading.

APPLICATION:

No one witnessed the resurrection of Jesus as it happened. God does his greatest work in secret.

The Trinity has no need to impress anybody with demonstrations of power. Creation itself is a constant witness to that! However, Jesus remained on earth for forty days after his resurrection to provide much convincing proof that he was actually alive, including eleven appearances recorded in Scripture. There is no doubt that Stage IX of his life began, just as it is written.

The forgiveness of our sins, gift of eternal life, indwelling by the Holy Spirit, and gifts of the Holy Spirit are all invisible, like the resurrection event itself. In fact, all of the most important things in life are invisible to the human eye! How do we know they truly exist? Because the Scriptures testify truthfully to what Jesus said and did to reveal them to us.

Jesus' resurrection is like that, too. He constantly commanded his disciples to believe what the Scriptures promised about his resurrection as the basis of their faith. We must do the same.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how well do you know the Scriptural story of Jesus' resurrection and 40 Day ministry?

Where do you need to concentrate further study? How will do that?