



Luke 24:1-12

## He is Not Here – He is Risen!

R. W. Dale was pastor of Carr's Lane Chapel in Birmingham, England for many years. He was studying the resurrection of Jesus for a length of time. He rose from his chair, pacing back and forth in his study declaring over and over again, "He's alive! He's alive! He's Alive!" "I want my people to know Jesus Christ is alive!" From that Sunday on through the rest of his great ministry R. W. Dale's congregation sang at least one song on the resurrection every Sunday. Indeed, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the center of history.

The Gospel writer Luke, who gives the most complete account of the resurrection day, simply gives us the evidence on the first day of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. When we study the New Testament and early church history it is evident that belief in the resurrection of Jesus did not evolve over a period of time. Three days after He was crucified Jesus appeared to both men and women. Then He kept it up for 40 days, appearing and disappearing to His disciples in public settings, even to over 500 on one occasion.

The scholar Volkmar said: "It is one of the most certain facts in the history of humanity, that shortly after His death on the cross, Jesus appeared to the apostles, risen from the dead. . . which is without analogy in history."

For six months before He was delivered over to be crucified, Jesus repeatedly taught His disciples that He would be crucified, buried and rise again after three days.

Jesus was buried shortly before sunset on Friday afternoon, lay in the tomb through Saturday, and rose from the dead sometime before sunrise on Sunday morning.

### Women go to the Tomb at sunrise on the First Day of the Week (Luke 24:1-5)

"On the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared" (Luke 24:1, NASB95). All Scripture is from the New American Standard Bible 1995 Update unless otherwise noted.

The Sabbath was the seventh day of the week, therefore "the first day of the week" was

our Sunday. According to Jewish reckoning the Sabbath would have ended at sunset on the Saturday or the first sign of light of a star in the sky. Ray Summers suggests, "If Jesus had been buried any day except the day before the Sabbath, further anointing would have been done on the next day. The Sabbath prevented that."

The resurrection act itself is not described in the Gospels. The focus is on the Risen One, the Lord Jesus Christ who is seen alive after His crucifixion. The evangelists bear witness of Him.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a historical event that took place on a certain day and a specific time and place. It was on "the first day of the week," at "early dawn" at "the tomb."

In order to continue the burial process on Sunday the women probably made their final preparations of the spices on Saturday night. The women rose early on Sunday morning, and went as soon as possible to the tomb. It was probably still dark when they started out from their homes that Sunday morning, and by the time they arrived at the tomb the sun had risen (Mark 16:1-2; Matt. 28:1; Luke 24:1; John 20:1). "They came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared." They will continue this process of coming to the tomb and applying the spices and ointments for several days. Verses five and ten make it clear that the "women" are the ones who went to the tomb. They were Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Mary the mother of James. There may also have been others.

#### *Who rolled the stone rolled away? (Luke 24:2)*

The Gospel writer Mark tells us as the women walked along the way to the tomb they wondered how they would roll back the heavy stone door guarding the entrance (Mark 16:3).

When the women arrived at the tomb "just after sunrise" "they found the stone rolled away from the tomb." The heavy stone disk shaped door had been rolled across the entrance of the tomb into place sealing it to keep trespassers and animals out of the tomb by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea on Friday afternoon. It would have taken several men to push the heavy stone disk back to allow the women to enter.

Matthew tells us "a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it" (Matthew 28:2).

#### *No body is in the tomb (Luke 24:3)*

After going into the chamber of the tomb the women "did not find the body of the Lord Jesus." This basic fact never varies. They do not find a body in the tomb. Jesus is not

there. The simple fact of the empty tomb never changes. It is a matter of fact.

Later in the days two men walking along the road to Emaus discussing the events of these women who "did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see" (Luke 24:23-24). The body had vanished. It was no longer there. They found the stone rolled away, but they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

As an aside, it is interesting to observe that the expression "Lord Jesus" is found only here in Luke, but after the resurrection it is the common title of Christ in the book of Acts.

The women are "perplexed" as they gaze into the empty tomb. They "were at a loss," "in doubt" or "uncertain" as to what to make of the empty tomb. The term suggests a high state of confusion and anxiety.

#### *Surprise Visitors (Luke 24:4-5)*

Suddenly two men stood near them in dazzling, bright shining clothing. Their white garments "gleamed like lightning" (NIV).

"While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling clothing; and as the women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, 'Why do you seek the living One among the dead? He is not here, but He has risen. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee, saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again'" (Luke 24:4-7).

The sudden visitors were men in appearance, but with angelic raiment.

Now in addition to their heightened anxiety they are now "terrified" (v. 5). The present tense describes the attitude of the women at the moment the angels begin to speak. Perhaps in an attitude of respect to the angelic hosts or to avoid the bright resplendent light from the angels the women bow their heads.

#### **The message of the angels (Luke 24:5-6)**

##### *"Why do you seek the living One among the dead? (Luke 24:5)*

Almost with surprise or mild criticism the angels ask, "Why do you seek the living one among the dead?" This is not where you would expect to find the risen Christ. They have

come to the wrong place. Jesus is not to be sought among the dead. The simple message is Jesus is alive; He is no longer among the dead. Jesus is alive, so why do you look for the living among the dead?

He is "the living One." He is not in the tomb. Living people are not to be found in tombs. Since Jesus is "the Life" He could never be imprisoned by the chains of death.

*"He is not here, He has risen" (Luke 24:6)*

Jesus is the living One. The angels have no hesitation about His resurrection. The living One has risen.

"He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying." (Matthew 28:6). An angel dressed in a white robe he said to the women, "Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here; behold, here is the place where they laid Him" (Mark 16:6).

Some references to the resurrection of Jesus in the New Testament refer to Jesus rising from the dead as if in His own power. Other passages refer to God raising Him from the dead. Others simply state "He is risen."

Jesus has been raised. Scholars refer to the passive voice here as a "divine passive," pointing to the fact that God raised Jesus from the dead. The verb is "has risen" is an aorist passive and implies that God is responsible for Jesus' resurrection.

Peter declares in Acts 3:15 "but put to death the Prince of life, the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses" (Acts 3:15). God is the main character. Literally, "whom God raised from the dead." Acts 4:10, "by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene whom God raised from the dead." Acts 5:30-31, "God of our forefathers raised up Jesus . . . God exalted Him to His right hand as leader and Savior . . ." Acts 13:30, "God raised Him from the dead." Acts 13:37, "the One whom God raised up did not experience decay."

The ascension of Jesus is also referred to as a divine passive. "While He was blessing them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven" (Luke 24:51). Acts 1:11, the angels said to the disciples, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

The angels tell the women, "Keep in mind" or "call to mind" or "remember" what Jesus said while He was still in Galilee? (v. 6)

*"The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men" (Luke 24:7).*

The Greek word, *dei*, "must" denotes the divine must, the divine compulsion. God is at work in the delivery, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. Luke says God's eternal plan of redemption is promised in the Old Testament Scriptures and worked out in the life of Jesus.

Wicked, evil sinful men are the ones who deliver Him up to crucifixion. "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know— this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power" (Acts 2:22-24).

*The Son of Man must "be crucified" (v. 7)*

Jesus foretold His own death and resurrection right after Peter's great confession of faith and Jesus' transfiguration in Matthew 17. "And while they were gathering together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men; and they will kill Him, and He will be raised on the third day." And they were deeply grieved." (Matthew 17:22-23). "From there they went out and began to go through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know about it. For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, "The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later" (Mark 9:30-31).

*The Son of Man must "on the third day rise" (v. 7)*

The Gospel records show that seven times Jesus said He would rise from the dead "on the third day." The method of calculating time among the Romans, Greeks and Jews would make "three days in the tomb" mean one whole day and any part of each of the two other days, similar to the way we calculate time in our culture as well. It does not mean seventy-two hours.

You would think, how in the world could they forget? None of the disciples should have been caught by surprise. In spite of all the teaching of Jesus regarding His death and resurrection, no one was waiting at the tomb expecting Him to rise from the dead. They were all caught by surprise. That fact leads to the authenticity of the historical record of the resurrection. Another fact is women were the first to report the empty tomb, and the first appearance of the resurrected Jesus was to women. In the first century the testimony of women was not held in esteem. If the story was made up the writers would not have put the emphasis on the testimony of women. Culturally the first century church would never have created a resurrection story whose main witnesses were women. The Jewish people would never have accepted their witness.

## Go and tell (Luke 24:8-12)

The resurrection caught the disciples by surprise. They were skeptical.

The women excitedly run to tell the disciples about the empty tomb. They kept telling or repeatedly announcing to the disciples the events at the tomb. Since the disciples repeatedly met the women's testimony with continuous disbelief, the women kept telling the apostles these things. There is a lot of excited conversation between the two groups. The women trying repeatedly to convince the disciples about the empty tomb, and the disciples responding with repeated disbelief. The disciples refused to believe. The imperfect tense expresses continuous disbelief. The disciples responded to the women as idle talk, nonsense, humbug, empty talk. They received it as "sheer nonsense." The wild talk of the women did not make sense to them. Therefore, they refused to believe.

"And they remembered His words, and returned from the tomb and reported all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. Now they were Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James; also the other women with them were telling these things to the apostles. But these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe them. But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings only; and he went away to his home, marveling at what had happened" (Luke 24:8-12).

Peter finally responded to the women's message by running to the tomb. We know from the Gospel of John that the apostle John outran Peter to the tomb (John 20:1-10). How did they interpret the prophecy of Jesus regarding His death and resurrection? Now they understand His teachings in light of the empty tomb. The empty tomb and the linen wrappings that had been around the body of Jesus are the first evidences of the marvelous event at the tomb. Peter and John saw the grave-clothes without the body. These linen burial cloths had been wrapped around the body of Jesus with spices and myrrh. Now, the body was not in them. Peter and John saw the linen cloths with their hundred pounds of spices and myrrh gum lying as they had been wrapped around the body, still in the form of the body, but without the body in them. The body simply was not there. It had disappeared from the wrappings. Peter went away "marveling at that which had happened," but the apostle John "saw and believed" (Luke 24:12; John 20:8). Peter went home "marveling" (*thaumazo*) "wondering," "amazed," "full of amazement," "astonished." At this point Peter is processing the facts. The sight of the empty grave cloths causes John to believe that Jesus is alive, but for Peter it creates wonder. It provokes him to think further about the facts. He has not as yet reached his conclusion, but he is working it out in his mind. Peter "went away to or by himself, wondering." The body had not been robbed or carried off because the cloths would have been carried off also. The body was not in the deflated wrappings in the tomb. What conclusion do you arrive at considering such evidence? Peter does not come to full conviction of faith until Jesus appeared to him later in the day (Luke 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5).

Luke informs us that later in the day Jesus revealed Himself to two disciples in their home at Emmaus a few miles outside Jerusalem. As they walked along they did not immediately recognize Jesus, perhaps because Jesus' resurrection body was of a heavenly nature.

"And they approached the village where they were going, and He acted as though He were going farther. But they urged Him, saying, 'Stay with us, for it is getting toward evening, and the day is now nearly over.' So He went in to stay with them. When He had reclined at the table with them, He took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, He began giving it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight. They said to one another, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?' And they got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found gathered together the eleven and those who were with them, saying, 'The Lord has really risen and has appeared to Simon.' They began to relate their experiences on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread. While they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst and said to them, 'Peace be to you'" (Luke 24:28-36).

Godet reminds us, "The sudden disappearance of Jesus has a supernatural character. . . . the miracle consisted rather in His appearing than in His disappearing." Jesus vanished from their sight. He will no longer be with them physically as before His crucifixion. We now have communion with Him as our risen Lord and Savior who ascended to heaven in glory. One day we, too, will arise from physical death and be clothed with celestial, glorified bodies and live with Him for all eternity. His presence is a living reality.

William Barclay wrote on the reality of the resurrection: "The risen Lord was no phantom or hallucination. He was real. The Jesus who died was in truth the Christ who rose again. Christianity is not founded on the dreams of men's disordered minds or the visions of their fevered eyes, but on one who in actual historical fact faced and fought and conquered death and rose again" (*DBS, Luke*, p. 297).

Tragically, in our day many people still look for Jesus among the dead.

Yes, Jesus is alive! He is alive! He is alive! God out and proclaim it.

"If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. . . . for 'Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved'" (Romans 10:9-10, 13).

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