

Matthew 28:1 ¶ In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

Matthew 28:2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

Matthew 28:3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

Matthew 28:4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

Mark 16:1–2 “And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.”

In looking at all four gospels, it appears that Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome were the three women to come to the tomb at dawn on the morning after the Sabbath to anoint the body of Jesus more properly with spices. The gospels also indicate that the stone was already rolled away when they arrived. Matthew provides the explanation that God used an earthquake to mark the time at which the angel came to roll the stone away from the door that sealed the tomb.

Mark 16:5 “And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.”

Luke 24:4 “And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments....”

Once again we find a discrepancy regarding the number of angels. Luke tells us that there were two, while Matthew and Mark focus on the spokesman. I think one must have been the main spokesman, and was probably the one that invoked such a response of fear among the soldiers that were guarding the tomb. He is described as a being whose “appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow.” (NIV) In other words, he had a very bright glow about him, and his clothes were a bright white. Maybe the other angel was obscured at first appearance, or maybe he appeared a few moments later.

Regarding the brightness of the angel’s appearance that the pure white clothing, JFB notes: “...the one expressing the *glory*, the other the *purity* of the celestial abode from which he came.”

Matthew 28:5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

Matthew 28:6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

Matthew 28:7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo,

I have told you.

The angel told the women not to be afraid; he knew that they were seeking Jesus, the One that had been crucified. They could see that He was not there because He had risen from the dead—just as He had said He would. The angel then told them to go quickly and tell His disciples that Jesus had risen from the dead and would meet with them in Galilee. Mark adds another interesting bit of information.

*Mark 16:7 "But go your way, tell his disciples **and Peter** that he goeth before you into Galilee...."*

We know that the angels were messengers from God delivering the message they were instructed to deliver. Already the Father is reaching out to restore Peter, the one that failed so grievously by denying His Lord.

Matthew 28:8 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

Matthew 28:9 And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.

Matthew 28:10 Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

The women were both fearful and overjoyed—they could hardly believe what they had seen and heard. They quickly ran off to tell the disciples the good news; and, lo and behold, Jesus appeared before them and greeted them. I loved this quote from Spurgeon on this verse: "Saints running in the way of obedience are likely to be *met by Jesus*. Some Christians travel to heaven so slowly that they are overtaken by follies or by faults, by slumber or by Satan; but he who is Christ's running footman shall meet his Master while he is speeding on his way."

The women fell before Jesus grabbing His feet and worshipping Him. He told them not to be afraid and to go on their way and tell the disciples that they would see Him in Galilee—in affirmation of the instructions from the angels. Both John and Luke add further information; comments can be found in my notes on those journals.

Luke 24:9–12 "And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not. Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass."

John 20:1–18 "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to

the sepulchre. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home. But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her."

Matthew 28:11 ¶ Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.

Matthew 28:12 And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,

Matthew 28:13 Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.

Matthew 28:14 And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.

Matthew 28:15 So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

As the women were headed to tell the disciples the good news, the soldiers assigned to guard the tomb went to the city to inform the chief priests of what had happened. They called a meeting of the Sanhedrin and decided to bribe the soldiers with a large sum of money. They told the soldiers to declare that the disciples of Jesus had come at night and stolen the body of Jesus while they slept. If this explanation reached the ears of the governor, which was highly likely, they would intercede with him for their safety. So the soldiers took the money and did what they were told.

I liked David Guzik's comment on this section: "To believe this, we have to believe:

- All the soldiers were asleep - all of them!
- All the soldiers violated the strict law of the Roman military against sleeping on watch, punishable by death.

- All the soldiers slept so deeply that none of them were awakened by the work and exertion and noise necessary to roll away the stone and carry out the body.
- All the soldiers were so soundly asleep - yet they knew who it was who did this.

Matthew notes that this explanation was still being circulated among the Jews at the time of the writing of his gospel.

Matthew 28:16 ¶ Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

Matthew 28:17 And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

Matthew's account just gives a brief summary compared to the account of Luke and John. Once again, comments can be found in my notes on those journals.

Luke 24:13–49 “And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them. And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."

John's record highlights one who doubted—Thomas.

John 20:19–31 "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

John 21 relates the account of Jesus appearing to His disciples on the shores of the Sea of Galilee and His discourse of restoration with Peter.

Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Matthew 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Matthew 28:20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

I memorized these verses as a teenager and was taught to think of them as “the great commission.” Before Jesus ascended to heaven He told His disciples that He had been given ALL power in heaven and in earth. In His power and authority, He commanded the disciples to go forth and teach ALL nations—about the good news of His death, burial and resurrection—to provide for their salvation is understood. They were to baptize people in “the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”—one God in three persons. They were to teach the people to obey the commands of Jesus according to how He had taught them.

Then He gave them precious words of promise—“I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” That is a truth so far beyond my understanding. Our God is so amazing that He can be with each one of His followers at all times—a phenomena that we can omnipresence; God is everywhere present all the time. Note that He says that He will continue to be with His followers “unto the end of the world.” The Greek for “world” includes “an age...forevermore...and world (without end).” In other words, I believe He is saying that He will be with His followers forever.

I think the Lord told His disciples that to encourage them that the authority, power and provision of Almighty God was ever with them and available to support and sustain them in their ministry—through good times and bad.

Luke provides a more complete account of this event.

Acts 1:1–11 “The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”

He tells us that Jesus appeared to the disciples over a period of forty days to encourage and strengthen them in their faith while instructing them in the ways of the kingdom of God. He provided many irrefutable proofs of the fact that He had been resurrected to new life. He also instructed them to stay in Jerusalem and await the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The disciples were eager for the Lord to establish His kingdom in Israel and asked Him when He was going to do that. Jesus told them that it was not for them to know the “times or the seasons, which the Father has put in His own power.” I believe that instruction was specifically to His followers of that day since that time was in the distant future. Jesus is very clear in other scripture that we should be able to recognize the times and seasons that are revealed to us in His word. He even rebuked the religious leaders for not recognizing “the signs of the times” that testified of Him as the promised Messiah.

*Matthew 16:1–3 “The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, **ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?**”*

*1 Chronicles 12:32 “And of the children of Issachar, which were **men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do....**”*

*Daniel 12:9–10 “And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and **sealed till the time of the end**. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; **but the wise shall understand.**”*

*Luke 21:7–11 “And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass? And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them. But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by. Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; **and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.**”*

After commissioning His followers to spread the gospel, Jesus was taken up into a cloud into heaven. In his gospel, Luke tells us that this was from Bethany on the Mount of Olives.

Luke 24:50–51 “And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.”

Once again two angels appeared to deliver one final message to the disciples. They declared that Jesus would come back “in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” Note that the angels said basically, “in the same way,” not necessarily in the same place. We know from the prophet Zechariah that He will

engage in battle with the nations from the Mount of Olives; but I believe that in accordance with the prophecy of Isaiah, He will be coming from Bozrah in Edom, that most commentators associate with Petra in Jordan.

Zechariah 14:3–4 “Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.”

Isaiah 63:1–4 “Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.”