

Christ is Risen

Key Verse: *“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 28:9

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 28:1-17

ALL FOUR GOSPELS PRESENT different, but not conflicting, details as to the historical account of Jesus’ resurrection and subsequent appearances during the forty days before his ascension into heaven. In today’s lesson, we will examine the perspective of Matthew’s gospel. It is evident from the Matthew account (and others) that it was some of the women followers of Jesus who were the first to understand and believe

that he had been raised from the dead. Matthew specifically identifies Mary Magdalene and “the other Mary” as coming to the sepulchre early on the “first day of the week.” (Matt. 28:1) Mary Magdalene was one out of whom Jesus had cast seven demons (see Luke 8:2), and she subsequently became a close follower of him. ‘The other Mary’ mentioned here was Mary, the mother of James and Joses, and is supposed to have been an aunt to Jesus (compare Matt. 27:56,61 and John 19:25).

How the eleven disciples, later on, must have felt humbled by the fact that these women, along with other women mentioned in the Mark, Luke, and John accounts, were the first ones given the privilege of knowing of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. Their simple but strong faith in the Master was rewarded in this way. When they arrived at the sepulchre early in the morning,

the stone covering the entrance was rolled away and, in fact, was being sat upon by an angel of God. (Matt. 28:2) The account says that the angel's countenance terribly frightened the keepers of the sepulchre, but there is no record that the women were afraid. The angel said to them, "Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay."—vss. 5,6

The angel then instructed the women to go tell the eleven disciples that Jesus was risen from the dead, and that he would soon go before them to Galilee, where they would see him. The women, again displaying their faith, did exactly as the angel had instructed and ran to bring the disciples word of what they had witnessed. (vss. 7,8) Our Key Verse indicates that as the women went to tell the disciples of these things, Jesus himself appeared in their midst. They immediately prostrated themselves at his feet and worshipped him. Worshipping him literally at his feet was a sign of humility, deep devotion, and servitude, and most certainly was pleasing to God. Confirming the words of the angel at the sepulchre, Jesus instructed the women, "Go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me."—vs. 10

Matthew's gospel continues by saying that the eleven disciples followed the instructions related by the women and traveled to Galilee where they indeed saw the resurrected Jesus. The account says, "When they [the disciples] saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted." (vs. 17) The final verses of Matthew's gospel record Jesus' acknowledgement of his high position, his commission to the disciples, and his assurance that he would be with them always. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world [age]. Amen."—vss. 18-20 ■