

The Lord Is Risen

Key Verses: “Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen.”
—*Matthew 28:5,6*

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 28:1-10

THE EVENTS REFERRED to in our lesson took place on the third day following the crucifixion of Jesus. Concerning the hours immediately following his death, we are provided this account from the Apostle John: “Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews’ preparation day [the next day being the Sabbath]; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.”—John 19:41,42

The Bible record indicates that Mary Magdalene was at the sepulchre twice on the morning of the “third day.” Her first visit was brief, and she was alone, arriving while it was still dark. Observing that the stone had been removed from the tomb, she quickly left and informed Peter and John. (John 20:1,2) In the meantime, Mary, the mother of James, and other women also came to the sepulchre, and saw an angel who informed them that Jesus was risen.—Matt. 28:1-8; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-9

It was evidently shortly after the women left the tomb that Peter and John arrived, possibly passing them at some distance, or going another way. Peter and John confirmed the fact that Jesus’ body was gone, though they saw the linen grave clothes and the napkin that had been put around his head, all of which were neatly folded and

wrapped, lying inside the tomb.—John 20:3-7

Verse 8 states that the two disciples, upon entering the tomb, “saw, and believed.” Their belief, however, was not that the Lord had risen, but that his body had been removed, as had been reported by Mary. “For as yet they knew [understood] not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.” (vs. 9) Jesus had told his disciples in advance, speaking of himself, “They shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again.” (Luke 18:33) As the events of the “third day” unfolded, Peter and John did not at first make the connection between Jesus’ prior words and the things they were now witnessing. Thus, they went away from the tomb confused.

Mary Magdalene returned to the tomb a second time, upon which she saw two angels sitting where the body of Jesus had lain. When she explained to them the cause for her weeping, that her Lord’s body had been taken away, she turned and saw Jesus, thinking he was the gardener. “Jesus saith unto her, Mary,” to which she replied “Rabboni; which is to say, Master.” (John 20:11-16) By her response, we understand that Mary Magdalene was the first of Jesus’ followers to perceive the reality of his resurrection. What an honor for this devoted disciple of the Master!

While the death of Jesus was the greatest event in human history, without his resurrection mankind would have been left in just as helpless and hopeless a condition as before. Through the love of God he not only gave his son to provide the ransom price, but he also resurrected him by his mighty power. The Apostle Paul states that Christ is “risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.” (I Cor. 15:20) The resurrection of Jesus is the assurance that all who “sleep” in death shall likewise be raised during his Messianic kingdom. “The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth.”—John 5:28,29 ■