

# EVENTS SURROUNDING THE MESSIAH'S RESURRECTION

## MATHEW 28:01–15

### *Introduction*

Mathew reports five significant events surrounding the resurrection — events that stir interest and challenge action.

- I. The time of the resurrection (v. 1).
- II. The first witnesses of the resurrection (v. 1).
- III. The miraculous events of the resurrection (vv. 2-4).
- IV. The appeals of the resurrection (vv. 5-8).
- V. The glorious encounter with the Lord of the resurrection (vv. 9-10).
- VI. The attempt to discredit the resurrection (vv. 11-15).

### **I. *Mathew 28:01 The Moment of the Resurrection***

The time of the resurrection. Jesus arose after the Sabbath was over, that is, on Sunday, the first day of the week. There are four facts to note about this.

1. Mathew said, “After the Sabbath” which means late on the Sabbath. Mathew was not speaking of strict Jewish time. This would mean the Sabbath had ended at 6.00 p.m. the preceding evening of Saturday (See *A Day's Time*, Mk. 6:48). He was using the common day-to-day idea of time. He was simply adding the night time to the preceding day (see Mk. 16:1).
2. Jesus arose before dawn, before the sun arose on Sunday morning. This was significant to the early Christian believers, so significant that they broke away from the practice of worshipping on the Sabbath or Saturday. They began to worship on Sunday, the day of the resurrection of their Lord.

*Acts 20:7* On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight.

*1 Cor 16:2* On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.

3. Jesus arose on the first day of the week, on Sunday morning. This means that He arose on the third day just as He had said (Mt. 12:40; 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; Mk. 9:31; 10:34; Lk. 9:22; 18:33; 24:7, 46). His arising from the dead is a triumph, a conquest over death. Death reigns no more. Its rule has been broken. (See *Spirit Gives Life*, Rom. 8:2-4).

*2 Cor 1:9-10* Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered

---

*us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us.*

**2 Tim 1:10** *But it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*

**Heb 2:9, 14-15** *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil — and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.*

4. Again, Jesus arose on the first day of the week, Sunday morning. He was in the grave on the Sabbath, unable to observe the laws governing the great season of the Passover and the Sabbath. He was dead; therefore, the law and its observances had no authority over Him. This is symbolic of the identification believers gain in Christ. When a man believes in Jesus Christ, God identifies the man with Christ, in particular with the death of Christ. God counts the man as having died with Christ. Therefore, in Christ's death believers become dead to the law (Rom. 7:4; See *Christ Fulfils Law*, Rom 8:3; Mt. 5:17-18).

**Rom 6:6** *For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.*

**Gal 2:20** *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

**Col 2:20** *Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules.*

### MARK 06:48 A DAY'S TIMETABLE

Hebrew time was used in the Gospels of Mathew, Mark, and Luke, and the book of Acts. Sunrise (6.00 a.m.) was the beginning of the day. The first hour was 7.00 a.m. and so on. Sometimes Scripture refers to a watch. Both the day and the night were divided into four watches each. A watch was three hours long. The first watch of the day was 6.00 a.m. to 9.00 a.m. The fourth watch of the night mentioned above was 3.00 a.m. to 6.00 a.m. The disciples had been rowing between six and nine hours and had advanced only three miles. The Gospel of John uses Roman time, with the hours beginning at twelve noon and twelve midnight. Note that "twenty-first century time" is the same as Roman time. □

## ROMANS 08:02–04 THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES LIFE

*Because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man. In order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live in according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit. **Romans 08:02-04***

The Spirit gives life. The term “the law of the *Spirit* of life” means two things. It means...

- the *law* of the Holy Spirit
- the *Spirit of life* which is in Christ Jesus

Within the universe there is a law so important that it has become the law of the Holy Spirit. It is called “the law of the Spirit of life.” What is meant by this law? Very simply, life is in Jesus Christ and in Him alone. Whatever life is — energy, being, spirit, love, joy, peace — it is all in Jesus Christ and nowhere else. Within Christ, within His very being is the *Spirit of life*, the very energy and being of life. This fact is important, so important that God has written it into the laws of the universe. It is titled “the law of *the Spirit of life*,” which is in Christ Jesus and in Him alone. The Spirit of life for which we long and ache is available *in* Christ Jesus.

**John 1:4** *In him was life, and that life was the light of men.*

**John 10:10** *“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”*

**John 11:25-26** *Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”*

**John 14:6** *Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”*

**John 5:24** *“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”*

**1 John 5:12** *He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

Now for the critical question. How does the Spirit give life? How does a person go about securing “the Spirit of life” so that he may not die but live forever?

1. The Spirit gives life by freeing the believer from sin and death, that is, from the "law of sin and death." The "law of sin and death" simply means the rule and reign of death. Every man dies: death rules and reigns over every man. But the Spirit of God frees a man from the rule and reign of death. This is natural and understandable; it is common sense, for it is a rule of the universe. If a person has the Spirit of life, then he naturally does not have the spirit of sin and death. He is not sinning and dying; he is living righteously and eternally. This is exactly what the Spirit of life does for the believer:

=> He frees the believer from sin and death: from the law or the energy and the power of sin and death.

=> He frees the believer to live righteously and eternally: to live in the Spirit of life or in the energy and power of life.

Stated another way, the Spirit of life frees the believer from both sin and death. The Holy Spirit frees the believer to live as Christ lived, to actually live out the life which Christ lived. The active energy of life, the dynamic force and being of life — all that is in Christ Jesus — is given to the believer. The believer actually lives *in* Christ Jesus. And the Spirit of life which is in Christ frees the believer from the fate (law) of sin and death. This simply means that the believer lives in a consciousness of being free. He breathes and senses a depth of life, a richness, a fullness of life that is indescribable. He lives with power — power over the pressure and strain, impediments and bondages of life — even the bondages of sin and death. He lives now and shall live forever. He senses this and knows this. Life to him is *a spirit, a breath, a consciousness* of being set free through Christ. Even when he sins and guilt sets in, there is a tug, a power (Holy Spirit) that draws him back to God. He asks forgiveness and removal of the guilt (1 Jn. 1:9), and immediately upon asking, the same power (the Holy Spirit) instills an instantaneous assurance of cleansing. The spirit of life, the consciousness of living instantaneously takes up its abode within him once again. He feels free again, and he feels full of life in all its liberating power and freedom. He bubbles over with all the depth of the richness and fullness of life itself. He is full of the "Spirit of life." Life itself becomes once again *a spirit, a consciousness of living*. He lives now and forever.

**2 Cor 3:17** *Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.*

**Gal 5:22-23** *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*

**Psa 16:11** *You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.*

2. The Spirit gives life by doing what the law could not do. The law could not make man righteous because man's flesh is too weak to keep the law. No man has ever been able to keep the law of God, not to perfection or even close to perfection. All flesh has miserably failed — come far short of God's glory and law. Consequently, all flesh dies physically and spiritually. Therefore, righteousness and life just cannot come by the law. *But* what the law could not do, the Spirit is able to do. He can provide righteousness and life.
3. The Spirit gives life by Christ's condemning sin in the sinful man. (See *Christ Fulfils Law*, Rom 8:3).
4. The Spirit gives life by Christ's providing righteousness for us. He provides righteousness for all who do not follow the sinful nature, but follows the Spirit. This is a most marvellous statement, a glorious truth.
  - a. The Spirit "meets the righteous requirements of the law in us." He credits righteousness as being *in* us. When?

=> When we believe that Jesus Christ is our righteousness, the sinless and perfect Son of God.

=> When we believe that Jesus Christ is our Saviour, the One who died *for* us.

When we believe in Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God fulfils righteousness in us; that is, He takes the righteousness of Jesus Christ (which is the righteousness of the law) and credits it to us. He actually places within us the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. He places the Divine nature (righteousness) of God *in* us (2 Pet. 1:4).

It is critical to see this fact, for the Spirit fulfils righteousness *in us, not by us*. He alone meets the righteous requirements of the law in us. We do not and cannot even come close to keeping the law perfectly, but Christ did (See *Christ Fulfils Law*, Rom. 8:3). If His righteousness cannot be credited and fulfilled in us, then we are hopeless and doomed.

**2 Cor 5:21** *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

**Gen 15:6** *Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.*

**Acts 13:39** *Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses.*

**Rom 4:23-25** *The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness — for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.*

**Phil 1:11** *Filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ — to the glory and praise of God.*

b. Now note: righteousness is not fulfilled or credited *in* everyone. It is only fulfilled in those...

- who *do not* “live according to the sinful nature”
- who *do* “live according to the Spirit “

You can tell who is righteous and who is not; you can actually see who is fulfilling righteousness and who is not. All we have to do is look and see:

=> Is a man living according to the sinful nature?

=> Is a man living according to the Spirit?

The point is this: the Spirit gives life to men, but He gives life only to those who forsake the sinful nature and live according to the Spirit. The spiritual man, the man who lives according to the Spirit, loves Christ and wants to honour Christ *in all that he does*. Therefore, he strives to follow Christ and His example. Such love and honour of Christ pleases God to no end, for God loves His Son with a perfect love. He loves His Son so much that He will take whatever honour a man gives His Son and match it for the man. Whatever recognition and honour a man heaps upon Christ, God matches it for the man.

=> If a man trusts Christ for righteousness, then God gives that man righteousness.

=> If a man trusts Christ for meaning, purpose, and significance, then God gives the man meaning, purpose, and significance.

=> If a man trusts Christ to lead him through some trial or need, then God leads him through the trial or need.

=> If a man trusts Christ for healing, then God gives the man healing.

Whatever the man sows in Christ, he reaps: God matches it. Whatever a man measures out to Christ, the same is measured back to the man: God matches it. In fact, Scripture says that God will even go beyond and do much more than we ask or think (see Eph. 3:20).

Therefore, the man who lives according to the “Spirit of life” which is in Christ Jesus is given the Spirit of life. The Holy Spirit fulfils and credits him with the righteousness of the law, with the right to live eternally.

**Rom 6:4** *We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*

**Rom 8:1** *Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

**Rom 8:13-14** *For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.*

**Gal 5:16** *So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*

**Eph 4:1** *As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.*

**Eph 5:2** *And live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

**Col 2:6** *So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him.*

**1 John 1:7** *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*

**1 John 2:6** *Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did. □*

### ROMANS 08:03 CHRIST FULFILLS LAW – SIN

*For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man. **Romans 08:03***

Christ condemned sin in the sinful man, in the flesh by three acts.

1. Christ pointed to sin and condemned it as being evil. The very fact that He never sinned points out that sin is contrary to God and to God's nature. Christ rejected sin, and by rejecting it He showed that it was evil, that it was not to be touched. He condemned it as evil and unworthy of God and man.
2. Christ secured righteousness for all men. When He came into the world, He came with the same human nature, the same flesh that all men are born with — the same human nature, the same flesh with all its desires, passions, and potential for evil. However, He never sinned, not once. Therefore, He secured a perfect righteousness; and because His righteousness is perfect and ideal, it becomes the model and pattern for all men. It stands for and covers the unrighteousness of all men. His perfect righteousness overcomes sin and its penalty — it condemns sin. It is to be noted that He condemned sin “in sinful man, in his flesh;” therefore, all flesh finds its perfection and ideal in His righteousness and perfection. All flesh finds its power to condemn sin “in Christ,” in His ideal righteousness.

**John 8:46** *“Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me?”*

**Heb 4:15** *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin.*

**2 Cor 5:21** *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

**Heb 7:26** *Such a high priest meets our need — one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.*

**Heb 9:14** *How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!*

**1 Pet 1:19** *But with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*

**1 Pet 2:22** *“He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.”*

**1 John 3:5** *But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin.*

3. Christ allowed the law of sin and death to be enacted upon Him instead of upon the sinner. Man has sinned, so the natural consequence is corruption and death. However, Christ approached God and made two requests. First, He asked God to accept His *Ideal righteousness* for the unrighteousness of man. Second, He asked God to lay man's sin and death upon Himself. He asked God to let Him bear the law of sin and death for man and to experience hell for man. He asked God to let Him condemn sin and death “in His body on the tree” (1 Pet. 2:24). He was the perfect, ideal Man. Therefore, He could bear all the violations of the law and all the experiences of death for *all* men. God so purposed, and God bore the awful price of having to condemn sin and death in the death of His very own Son. Sin and its power have been made powerless. Death has been conquered (1 Cor. 15:1-58, esp. vs.54-57), and he who had the power of death has been destroyed, that is, Satan. (See *Judgement of Satan*, Jn. 16:11. See Heb. 2:14.)

**Rom 5:6** *You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.*

**Rom 5:8** *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

**1 Cor 15:3** *For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.*

**2 Cor 5:15** *And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.*

**Gal 3:13** *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.”*

**Titus 2:14** *Who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.*



**Heb 2:9** *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.*

**Heb 9:28** *So Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.*

**1 Pet 2:24** *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*

**1 Pet 3:18** *For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.*

**1 John 3:16** *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. □*

### JOHN 16:11 JUDGEMENT OF SATAN

*“And in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.” **John 16:11***

This passage concerns the judgment of Satan. The judgment of Satan was executed by Christ upon the cross. It was upon the cross that Jesus Christ judged and condemned the devil in all his authority and power. How? There were two ways.

1. Satan is judged and condemned by the obedience of Christ upon the cross. God is perfectly pleased with Christ, for Christ did exactly what God wanted: *He obeyed God perfectly*. Therefore, God is bound to be perfectly pleased.

The point is this: what God wanted most of all was for Christ to die *for man*. Christ Himself said, “I do exactly what my Father commanded me” (Jn. 14:31). The ultimate commandment that would show perfect obedience was for Him...

- to die for man's sin
- to receive the judgment of (physical and spiritual) death for man's sin
- to suffer separation from God for man

It was upon the cross that Christ obeyed God in the supreme, ultimate, and absolute sense. It was because he died — because He obeyed God perfectly — that God...

- has highly exalted Him (see Phil. 2:9-11).
- has given Him a name that is above every name.
- has destined that every knee will bow before Him, of things *in heaven*, and things *on earth*, and things *under the earth*.

- has destined that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.
- has judged the world and appointed that it will be recreated and made into a new heaven and earth (2 Pet. 3:10-13).
- has thrown out Satan and enthroned Christ, giving Him the loyalty of man and the kingdoms of the whole world (Jn. 12:31-32).
- has assured the return of Christ and His rule and reign (Tit. 2:12-13).
- has promised that Christ will rule and reign over a new heaven and earth, over all throughout the universe (2 Pet. 3:4-5, 8-13)

2. Satan is judged and condemned by the belief of men in the cross, in the death of Christ (See *Jesus Christ, Cross*, Jn. 12:32).

The cross judged and condemned Satan in all his authority and power. The judgment can be summed up in three areas.

- 1) The cross judges and breaks the power of Satan over the world (Jn. 12:31). Satan is the ruler, the prince, the power of the world. This is taught by the Bible (Jn. 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2). The one example of his dominion familiar to most is the temptation of Christ. Satan offered the kingdoms of the world to Christ if Christ would worship him (Lk. 4:6). He possessed the kingdoms to offer. But Christ refused to yield to the temptation. Instead He chose to obey God, to secure the authority over the kingdoms of the world by way of the cross. In this particular passage, Christ proclaimed the coming triumph of the cross. The cross broke forever the power of the devil over the kingdoms of the world, and it assures the return of Christ to rule and reign throughout the universe forever.

***Col 1:13*** For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.

***Col 2:15*** And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

***1 Cor 15:24-25*** Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

***Phil 2:8-11*** And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- 2) The cross judges and breaks the authority and power of Satan over death (Jn. 12:31). Satan holds the power of death. It is his selfish and sinful influence that has brought corruption, decay, and death to the earth. But Christ has broken the

devil's grip over death forever. The cross delivers man from the fear and bondage of death and assures Christ the authority over life and death.

**Heb 2:14-15** *Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil — and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.*

**1 Cor 15:25-26, 55-57** *For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

- 3) The cross judges and breaks the authority and power of Satan to corrupt men through worldliness and sin (Jn. 12:32). Satan uses the world — its pleasures and desire for power and wealth and fame — to attract and enslave men, and enslavement inevitably leads to destruction. But the cross brings power to a man, spiritual power...

- to break his habits and bondages
- to keep him from damaging and destroying his body and spirit

The cross and its power to deliver and to give life have become the focal attraction of time and eternity. The cross liberates and frees man forever.

**John 14:30** *“I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me.”*

**1 Cor 10:13** *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

**1 John 3:8** *He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.*

**1 John 4:4** *You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. □*

## JOHN 12:32 JESUS CHRIST, LIFTED UP ON THE CROSS

*“But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.”*  
**John 12:32**

The words “lifted up” refer to the cross of Christ, to His death upon the cross. Jesus said that once He is “lifted up,” He will draw all men to Himself. Note two points.

1. Note why the cross of Christ attracts men. It was the cross...
  - that delivered men from sin, death, and hell.
  - that made it possible for men to live abundantly and eternally.
  - that gave to men the presence and power of God's Spirit to guide and care for them day by day.
2. Note how the cross of Christ gives so much to man. Very simply stated, Jesus died *for man* on the cross. When a man believes that Jesus died *for him*, God takes that man's belief and counts it as righteousness. God simply *counts* the man as perfect. The man is not righteous, nowhere close to being perfect. The man, God, and everyone else knows he is not perfect. But the man honours God's Son by believing in Him; therefore, God honours the man.

The point to see is that God will do anything for the person who truly honours His Son. God loves His Son so much that He is willing to do anything for anyone who honours Jesus. If a man honours Jesus by believing and following Jesus, God will take that man's faith and...

- count his faith as righteousness
- deliver him from sin and from death
- give him both abundant and eternal life (Jn. 10:10)
- place the Holy Spirit and His power within the man to help him live day by day (1 Cor. 6:19-20; Rom. 8:1-39; Gal. 5:22-23).

The point is this: it is the cross of Christ that breaks the power of Satan in the world. It is the cross of Christ that "drives out" Satan: his power, his rule, and his reign. Man, by believing that Christ died for him, can now be counted righteous and delivered from the power of Satan, from the evil power that entices him to sin and that causes him to die and face the judgment of God. Man can now know the power of God, the power that freely forgives him and gives him life forever. Man can now experience the marvellous grace of God. □

## II. *Mathew 28:01 The Witnesses of the Resurrection*

The first witnesses of the resurrection. Note several facts.

1. The first witnesses were women, not men, not even his own disciples. The women took the lead in love and care for the Lord Jesus.
2. Two reasons are given for the women's coming to the tomb of Jesus.
  - a. Mathew says the women "came...to look at the tomb." The Greek word *to look at* (*theoresai*) means to contemplate, to gaze, to observe in order to grasp. They came to be close to their Lord, the One who meant so much to them, to mourn over Him, to

think through all that had happened. This is an important point, for it perhaps explains why the women were more prepared to believe the miracle of the resurrection.

**Mark 16:9-11** *When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons. She went and told those who had been with him and who were mourning and weeping. When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, they did not believe it.*

**Luke 24:10-11** *It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.*

**Thought 1.** Thinking and meditating upon the Lord will help us to understand the Lord and prepare us to receive the great truth of His resurrection.

**Isa 1:18** *“Come now, let us reason together,” says the Lord. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.”*

- b. Mark says the women came to “anoint Jesus’ body” (Mk. 16:1). They cared, so they wanted to take care of His body as loved ones do.

**Thought 1.** The women are an example to us in taking care of the bodies of our loved ones.

3. Mary Magdalene stands out as the most prominent of the women who witnessed the resurrection of the Lord. Her love and devotion must have been deep, very deep. Mary had a very special quality about her, possessing a deeper love and devotion than most (see Mk. 16:1, 9; Lk. 24:10; Jn. 20:11-18).
4. The other Mary was the mother of James and Joses. She just could not tear herself away from the body of Jesus which indicates a very special love and devotion for Him (Mt. 27:56, 61; 28:1; Mk. 15:40; Lk. 24:10). She was probably the mother of Cleopas as well (see Jn. 19:25).

### III. **Mathew 28:02–04** *The Events of the Resurrection*

The miraculous events of the resurrection.

1. There was a “violent earthquake.” Nothing more is said, only that it was *violent*. The earthquake symbolized that a *historical convulsion* was taking place, an event that never before had happened: a man was rising from the dead, the man Christ Jesus, the Son of God Himself.

Tragically, He had been put to death by the hands of men, but gloriously He was being raised from the dead by the power of God (Rom. 1:4; Eph. 1:19-20). The historical event was a picture of the unbelievable convulsion that God was planning for the end time: the resurrection of all the dead. The resurrection of God’s dear Son paved the way and prefigured the resurrection of all men. History was witnessing the most convulsive event of all time; the quaking of the earth was bound to happen.

2. There was the great stone rolled back (See *Jesus' Tomb*, Mt. 27:65-66). The stone was not rolled back for the benefit of Christ, but for the witnesses to the resurrection. When Christ arose, He was in His resurrection body, the body of the spiritual dimension of being which has no physical bounds. But the witnesses needed to enter the tomb to see the truth (Jn. 20:1-10).
3. There was the radiant figure, the angel of the Lord. Note two facts about the angel.
  - a. He rolled back the stone for the sake of the witnesses. He was a ministering spirit of God, serving by helping God's people (Heb. 1:4-14).
  - b. His appearance was dazzling:
    - => just like lightning — visible, quick, startling, striking, frightening, brilliant.
    - => just like snow — white, pure, glistening.
4. There were the guards and their terror. Mathew seems to indicate that the guards witnessed the flashing appearance of the angel and the rolling back of the stone. The suddenness of the event, the brilliant appearance and the enormous strength of the angel were like a volcanic eruption to them. They quaked, shook, and fell as dead men to the ground. They were either stricken unconscious or were so terrified they pretended to be unconscious.

**Thought 1.** The power of God is awesome and terrifying. The guards had been told they were to guard a dead body against thieving men. They were totally unprepared and unable to stand against the power of God and His messenger (angel). There is a strong lesson here for every unbeliever.

**Luke 1:37** *For nothing is impossible with God.*

**Mat 28:18** *Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."*

**John 10:18** *"No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."*

**Rom 1:4** *And who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.*

**Eph 1:20** *Which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.*

**Job 26:12** *By his power he churned up the sea; by his wisdom he cut Rahab to pieces.*

**Psa 65:6** *Who formed the mountains by your power, having armed yourself with strength.*

**Psa 115:3** *Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.*

**Isa 43:13** *Yes, and from ancient days I am he. No one can deliver out of my hand. When I act, who can reverse it?*

### MATHEW 27:65–66 JESUS' TOMB

Cave tombs were closed by rolling a huge cartwheel-like stone in front of the entrance. They were almost impossible to remove. A deep slanting groove was hewn out of the rock at the base of the entrance for the circular stone to rest in. The stone usually weighed several tons. Such precautions were essential because there were so many tombs ransacked in those days of poverty.

The tomb was further secured by being sealed. When it was necessary to seal a tomb, the huge stone was cemented to the entrance walls or else some type of rope or binding was wrapped around the entrance stone and fastened to both sides of the tomb. Then the binding was cemented with a hardening clay or wax-like substance. In the case of some burials, usually political figures, the seal of the Emperor was also attached to the walls of the entrance. This was to strike fear of Roman retaliation against any intruder.

In the case of Jesus' tomb, further precautions were taken by placing a patrol to guard against any foul play. This guard consisted of a large number of men (Mt. 28:4, 11f). □

#### IV. *Mathew 28:05–08 The Presence of Angels*

The appeals of the resurrection. When the women arrived at the tomb, they saw the dazzling angel sitting on the stone. Mark says they saw “a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side” (Mk. 16:5). Luke says “two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them” (Lk. 24:4). Apparently, many angels were all around the tomb and the surrounding area attending Christ, joying and rejoicing over what God had done. At the right time, one angel appeared to the women, then two. Note that they appeared as men, that is, as messengers of God.

The appeals of the resurrection are a message within themselves.

1. Do not fear. There are three reasons why the person who seeks after Christ should not fear.
  - a. God knows the person who is seeking after the Messiah. He knows the movement of every heart. The person who seeks diligently shall find. (Mt. 7:7)

*Mat 7:7-8* “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.”

*Deu 4:29* But if from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul.

*Jer 29:11-13* “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”

- b. Christ has been crucified to save every man.

**John 10:32-33** *But Jesus said to them, "I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?" "We are not stoning you for any of these," replied the Jews, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God."*

**Rom 5:6** *You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.*

**2 Cor 5:15** *And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.*

**1 Pet 2:24** *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*

**Rev 5:9** *And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation."*

- c. Christ has now risen from the dead and conquered death.

**Rom 4:24-25** *But also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness — for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.*

**Eph 1:19-20** *And his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.*

2. Come, see, believe. Note that the angel reminded the women of the Lord's words: "He has risen, just as He said" (see Mt. 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; 26:32). Note also that the women were told to "come and see the place." They were eyewitnesses of His resurrection.

**Thought 1.** Believers can become witnesses of the Lord's death and resurrection — clear witnesses. They can see as though they were eye-witnesses — all by God's Spirit.

**Gal 3:1** *You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified.*

**John 14:26** *But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.*

**Rom 8:16** *The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.*

3. Go quickly and tell the glorious news. Sharing the glorious news is essential. It is the greatest news of all history: Christ is risen. He shall meet you and you shall see Him.

Note three facts.

- a. The women obeyed. They became the very first witnesses for the risen Lord.



- b. The discouraged believers (disciples) were the first ones the women were to tell. The discouraged were to be encouraged and stirred to join the great force of witnesses.
- c. The witnessing was to be done quickly.

#### **V. *Mathew 28:09–10 The Women's Encounter with Christ***

The glorious encounter with Jesus Himself. Note what happened when the women personally encountered Christ.

- 1. Jesus said, "Greetings"; that is, rejoice.

*John 16:2* "They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God."

*Phil 4:4* Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

- 2. The women worshipped Him in amazement, adoration, and awe.
- 3. Jesus said: "Do not be afraid."

*2 Tim 1:7* For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

- 4. He said, "Go and tell my brothers": the commission was repeated because of the extreme importance of bearing the glorious news.

*Mat 28:19-20* "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

*Mark 16:15* He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation."

*2 Tim 2:2* And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

*Col 1:27-29* To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labour, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.

#### **MATHEW 28:06–07 RESURRECTION PREDICTED**

Christ predicted His resurrection time and again.

*Mat 16:21* From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

**Mat 17:23** “They will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised to life.” And the disciples were filled with grief.

**Mat 20:19** “And will turn him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!”

**Mat 26:32** “But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.”

**Mark 9:9** As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

**Mark 14:28** “But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.”

**John 2:19** Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.”

**Acts 26:22-23** “But I have had God’s help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen — that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles.” □

### MATHEW 28:09 GREETINGS (CHAIRETE)

Rejoice. The word means more than just a simple greeting or welcome. Jesus was telling the women to be glad, to celebrate. He wanted them to rejoice because He was with them. He had risen from the dead just as He had predicted. □

### VI. *Mathew 28:11–15 Truth Will Always Prevail*

The attempt to discredit the resurrection. The outline above is adequate to see the event being described.

1. The guards reported the resurrection.
2. The authorities were baffled, and they devised a plan to decide what to do.
3. The authorities bribed and assured the soldiers of protection from Pilate.
4. The soldiers were to claim that Jesus’ body had been stolen by His disciples.
5. The lie was found out; the truth marched on.

**Thought 1.** If the guards were asleep, how would they know what happened? Deception and lying are always contradicted by the truth.

**Thought 2.** Truth will always prevail (v. 15). It may take some time, but its triumph is assured.

**John 8:32** “Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

***Eph 6:14** Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place.*

***Prov 12:19** Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue lasts only a moment. ■*

**MATHEW 28:11—15 PLOTS AGAINST JESUS**

Note the plots against Jesus. The authorities had used treachery to arrest Him; an illegal court to try Him (Mt. 26:59); false charges to accuse Him before Pilate (Mt. 27:1, 2, 11f); and now they were using bribery to discredit His resurrection. □