

# Matthew 27:57 - 28:20

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## Day 1

### Jesus' Burial. Read Matthew 27:57-66

1. How kind of danger do you see Joseph of Arimathea putting himself in by asking for permission to bury Jesus? 27:57

- Who helped Joseph bury Jesus? John 19:39-40

**FYI:** "[Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus] were both secret disciples...and members of the Sanhedrin... Because it was the highest Jewish authority recognized by the Romans, those who belonged to it were powerful members of society. By asking for Jesus' body...these men risked the enmity of their fellow Jewish leaders who had brought about Jesus' death."  
- Africa Bible Commentary (11)

"Their eagerness to claim the body of Jesus is little short of surprising since by so doing they openly declared themselves as sympathizers with His cause."  
- Merrill Tenney (271)

2. From the four gospel accounts, underline phrases describing Joseph.

- Matthew 27:57 As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus NIV
- Mark 15:43 Joseph of Arimathea came, a prominent member of the Council, who himself was waiting for the kingdom of God; and he gathered up courage and went in before Pilate... NAS
- Luke 23:50-51 Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, 51 who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea and he was waiting for the kingdom of God. NIV
- John 19:38 After these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one for fear of the Jews.... NASU

3. Why was Joseph granted permission by Pilate to have the body? Mark 15:44-45 (Do you see any personal reasons for why Pilate may have wanted Jesus' body buried?)

- How sure would the soldiers have been about Jesus' death? See John 19:34

4. Why would the Jews have wanted Jesus body removed from the cross and not left there as was normally done? John 19:31

5. What did Joseph do with the body of Jesus? 27:59,60a (See Isaiah 53:9)

- How difficult would a job would this have been?

6. What measure did Joseph take to secure the tomb? 27:59-61

**FYI:** "A rich man like Joseph of Arimathea would probably have a tomb that was carved into solid rock; this tomb was in a garden near the place of crucifixion ([John 19:41](#)). The tomb would have a small entrance and perhaps one or more compartments where bodies were laid out...  
The door to the tomb was typically made of a heavy, circular shaped stone, running in a groove and settled down into a channel, so it could not be moved except by several strong men. This was done to ensure that no one would disturb the remains.  
Tombs like this were very expensive. It was quite a sacrifice for Joseph of Arimathea to give his up - but Jesus would only use it for a few days!"  
- David Guzik

7. Who witnessed Jesus' burial? 27:61 (See Luke 23:55,56)

- Why did they wait to prepare the body? Luke 23:56

8. Ironically, what did Jesus' **enemies** remember? 27:62,63

- What did they want to prevent? 27:64
- Sadly, where were the disciples? 26:56 (See also John 20:19)

9. How was the tomb made secure? 27:66 (Note the 3-fold repetition of the word "secure.")

**FYI:** "The **seal** was a rope, overlapping the width of the stone covering the entrance to the tomb. On either side of the doorway, there was a glob of wax securing the rope over the stone. You could not move the rock without breaking the seal...The Roman guards would watch carefully as the stone was sealed, because they knew their careers, and perhaps their lives, were on the line. The Roman seal carried legal authority. It was more than yellow tape barricading a crime scene; to break a Roman seal was to defy Roman authority. That stone was secured by the authority of the Roman Empire.  
A typical **Roman guard** had four soldiers. Two watched while the others rested. This guard might have had more. The soldiers would be fully equipped - sword, shield, spear, dagger, armor. We should also remember that these were *Roman* soldiers."  
- David Guzik

10. List the things that you see in this account that are powerful proofs of Jesus' death. (e.g. *pierced His side; expert soldiers pronounced Him dead...*)

**Applying the Word:** *If the Lord were writing a story about you, what accounts could He include of you turning from fearfulness to courage in your beliefs and stand for Him?*

## Day 2

Jesus is Risen. Read Matthew 28:1

### **The Empty Tomb**

11. Who came to Jesus' tomb first? When and why? 28:1 (See also Mark 16:1)

- What concern did they have? Mark 16:3

12. List what had occurred. 28:2 (Consider: For whose benefit was the stone rolled away?)

- What does the guards' reaction say about the appearance of this angel? 28:3,4 (See Psalm 104:4)

13. How did the angel assure the women? 28:5,6

- What witness and instruction were the women given? 28:6,7 (Why do you think the women were given this honor first?)
- What reaction did the women have? 28:8 (See also Mark 16:8)

**Food for Thought:** "He is not here: These are some of the most beautiful - and important - words ever spoken by an angel to men."  
- David Guzik

### **Jesus Appears to the Women**

14. With what words did Jesus greet the women? 28:9

- How did they react? 28:9b

**Greetings/Rejoice** (28:9) Strong's NT:5463 *chairo*; to be "cheerful", i.e. calmly happy or well-off; impersonally, especially as salutation (on meeting or parting), be well

15. What assurance and instructions did Jesus give? 29:10

16. To whom did Jesus appear first? Mark 16:9 (Read the article at the end of the lesson: *Christ's Resurrection—Four Accounts, One Reality* for a possible sequencing of these events.)

***Digging Deeper***  
See Peter and John's reaction to the news in John 20:1-10

- From Mark 16:10-14, Luke 24:10-12 how did the disciples respond?

***FYI:*** "In first-century Israel, women were not allowed to testify in a court of law: They were considered unreliable witnesses. Yet when Jesus was raised from the dead, and He wanted this fact proclaimed to the world... The very first person to be commissioned was a woman. And she was commissioned to go to men to share her testimony...and then also to give His Word.' (Anne Graham Lotz)" - J. Lee Grady @ crosswalk.com  
"This story is a testimony that lifted these particular women, and womanhood in general, to a position of honor in the eyes of the apostles and therefore before the whole world." - Africa Bible Commentary (1169)

17. How do all of these embarrassing details about the disciples' cowardliness, lack of faith, and slowness to understand add historical credibility to the New Testament writings?

***FYI:*** [Embarrassing details] "make up the strongest proof that the New Testament is historically reliable. The evangelists have the first great characteristic of honest witnesses." C.S. Lewis, "The World's Last Night" (1960)

***Applying the Word:*** *What do you think is the most convincing evidence for the truth of Jesus' resurrection? What does this truth mean to you?*

Day 3  
Read Matthew 27:35 -

**Attempted Cover-up**

18. Why do you think some of the guards told the chief priests what had happened? 28:11

- How did the chief priest respond? 28:12,13 (What does this indicate about their understanding of the resurrection?)
- How credible was a story of "sleeping" Roman guards?

19. What compelled the soldiers to spread this report? 28:14,15

**FYI:** "It is amazing that the custodians of the truth of God should sink so low as to resort to outright deceit to keep up appearances!"  
- Africa Bible Commentary (1169)

### **Jesus Appears to the Disciples in Galilee**

20. Amazingly, what happened when Jesus appeared to the disciples in Galilee? 28:17 (See John 20:19-30 for Jesus' appearances to them earlier in Jerusalem.)

- What commission/instructions did He give them? 28:19-20a (See also Acts 1:8)
  
- What assurance? 28:20b

**Make disciples/teach** "Strong's NT:3100 *matheteuo*...to become a pupil; transitively, to disciple, i.e. enroll as scholar: KJV - be disciple, instruct, teach.

21. Besides the women, to whom did Jesus appear? 1 Corinthians 15:5-8

22. Acts 1:2-4 reads: "...I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day He was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. 3 After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. NIV

What are some things that Jesus said and taught in His post-resurrection appearances?

- Luke 24:25-27 (Disciples on the road to Emmaus)
  
- John 20:19-29 (Disciples and Thomas)

**Applying the Word:** What do you think it means to disciple someone? What different things can that involve? (What attitude needs to always be present? See 1 Peter 3:16-17; 2 Timothy 2:22-25; Colossians 4:5-7)

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## Day 4

- What is one of the most meaningful or surprising things you learned from studying the gospel of Matthew?
- What is one of the most memorable and fun times you had in small group?
- How have you been helped most in studying the Bible?
- What do you hope to take away from this study of the book of Matthew that will impact your life from now on?

(Excerpts from):

## **Christ's Resurrection—Four Accounts, One Reality**

by Tim Chaffey on April 5, 2015

*Christ's Resurrection led to a confusing day, as His followers raced around the city. Skeptics point to alleged contradictions ... Can the four Gospels be reconciled?*

How many women went to the tomb and when did they leave? How many angels visited the tomb? Did Jesus appear to all the women or just Mary Magdalene?...

### **When did the women go to the tomb, and how many went?**

The Gospels refer to different times and name different women who arrived at the tomb. Matthew states that "Mary Magdalene and the other Mary" came to the tomb as it "began to dawn" (*Matthew 28:1*). Mark adds Salome to the group and claims that they came "very early in the morning" (*Mark 16:1-2*). Luke agrees that it was "very early in the morning" and names "Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women" as those who came to the tomb (*Luke 24:1, 24:10*). John wrote that "Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark" (*John 20:1*).

...John may have described when the women initially left for the tomb, while the other Gospels described when the women arrived. If they lodged in Bethany, as they had done earlier in the week, then the women would need to travel about two miles to reach the burial site (*John 11:18*), plenty of time for the sun to rise.

Resolving the differences in the number of women listed is straightforward. At least five women went to the tomb, since Luke names three of them and then says "other women" went too (at least two). Notice that Matthew does not say that *only* two women were there. Mark does not say *only* three women were there. They simply focus on the women they name. Although John names only Mary Magdalene, he is clearly aware that she was not alone. Reporting to Peter and John, she said, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him" (*John 20:2*, italics added)...

### **When and where did each woman see Jesus?**

This is the most complex issue concerning the reporting of appearances. Matthew asserts that the women visited the tomb and saw an angel. While they were on the way to tell the disciples, Jesus appeared to them. There would be no difficulty here except that John has Mary Magdalene individually returning from the tomb to report to Peter and John that the body had been taken away. Only *after* her return to the tomb with the two disciples is she granted the privilege of being the first to see the risen Savior. So how can both accounts of women seeing Jesus be accurate? Many Gospel harmonies have been written, and there are a handful of plausible solutions. I believe the following scenario makes the best sense of the available data...

Mary Magdalene and the other women travel from Bethany to Jesus' tomb.

As mentioned above, at least five women set out for the tomb in the early morning, probably from Bethany. As they neared the tomb, they noticed the stone had been removed. Apparently, Mary Magdalene left the other women to alert Peter and John. Based on her comment about not knowing the location of the Lord's body, it seems that she was not among the women who encountered the angels at the tomb.

Meanwhile, the other women entered the tomb and encountered the angels. One of the angels proclaimed that the Lord had risen, and then "the women went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word" (*Matthew 28:8-9*).

So how could Jesus first appear to Mary Magdalene (*Mark 16:9*) and then to the other women? As they headed for the tomb, why didn't Mary, Peter, and John cross paths with the other women who were going to tell the disciples?

The key to resolving these dilemmas is to understand that Peter and John were probably not staying in the same place as the other disciples. Remember, although all the disciples "forsook Him and fled" at His arrest (*Matthew 26:56*), Peter and John were brave enough to enter

Jerusalem to find out what would happen to Jesus (*John 18:15*). Of course, Peter fled in shame at the rooster's crow (*Matthew 26:75*), but John was present at the Cross (*John 19:26*). At some point, John and Peter met up, and they were likely staying together in Jerusalem when Mary Magdalene came to the door on Sunday morning.

Where were the other disciples, then? We cannot be certain, but they may well have stayed in Bethany. After all, this is where Jesus often stayed on trips to Jerusalem, and Bethany was on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives (*Mark 11:1*), the location of Christ's arrest.

If these suppositions are correct, then all of the difficulties are resolved nicely. Mary Magdalene first left the tomb and entered nearby Jerusalem to get Peter and John. During that time, the other women encountered the angels and then left the tomb to set out on the two-mile trip to Bethany to tell the other disciples. They may have stopped along the way to tell Clopas and an unnamed disciple about the morning's events (*Luke 24:22–24*), or they may have split up so that a couple of them could inform these men. In all likelihood, "the wife of Clopas" was among these women (*John 19:25*).

Meanwhile, Peter, John, and Mary raced to the tomb. The men entered the tomb, saw the grave clothes, and then left. Mary stayed behind, weeping outside the tomb. When she looked into the tomb, she saw two angels (*John 20:12*), and after explaining her grief to them, she turned around and saw the Savior (*John 20:16*). After Mary departed to tell Peter and John about seeing the risen Lord, Jesus appeared to the other women who were on their way to Bethany (*Matthew 28:9*).

### Three More Appearances on Sunday

The remaining appearances of Christ on that day are much easier to follow. Luke wrote about Clopas and a companion meeting the Lord while they walked from Jerusalem to Emmaus. They did not recognize Him until He broke bread with them (Luke 24:30–31).

They immediately returned to Jerusalem to share the good news with the disciples, who were gathered together without Thomas (John 20:19–24). Upon their arrival, they were told by the disciples that Jesus had appeared to Simon Peter (Luke 24:34; see also 1 Corinthians 15:5). It is unclear whether Peter saw Jesus before the two disciples saw Him on the road to Emmaus.

As they shared exciting details about the day's events, Jesus appeared to the whole group. At first they were frightened, but the Lord showed them His scars and then ate some broiled fish and honeycomb (Luke 24:40–43).

### Remaining Appearances

Jesus continued to appear to people over a forty-day period (Acts 1:3). Eight days after His Resurrection, Jesus appeared to the disciples again, and this time Thomas was present (John 20:24–29).

Over the next few weeks Jesus appeared to seven disciples at the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1–2). While still in Galilee, the disciples also saw Jesus on a hillside (Matthew 28:16–17). This may have been the event Paul mentioned where Jesus appeared to over 500 people at once (1 Corinthians 15:6). After that, Jesus was seen by His half-brother James, the son of Mary and Joseph (1 Corinthians 15:7).

The disciples returned to Jerusalem, where Jesus appeared to them a final time. He delivered the Great Commission, led them out to Bethany at the Mount of Olives, and ascended into heaven (Luke 24:50–51; Acts 1:9–11).<sup>2</sup>

After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. Acts 1:3 NIV