



RAISED!

Salvation comes through Jesus' death and resurrection.

LUKE 24:1-12

Think about the most awe-inspiring sight you've ever witnessed. Now, imagine walking through the darkness of a Sunday morning and finding something even more amazing: an empty tomb. The women who came to anoint Jesus' body expected to find a stone that needed to be removed. Instead, they found a doorway to eternity. The world had been changed forever. We're still experiencing the benefits of that change today.

List and rank awe-inspiring sights you have seen. What caused the feelings of awe?

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

LUKE 24:1-53

Throughout the first half of his letter to the Romans, Paul explained sin and salvation. He wrote about dying to sin, being buried with Christ, and rising again. That imagery was familiar to his audience because their newfound faith was rooted in the truth of Jesus' death and resurrection.

As a historian, Luke paid attention to details. He told his audience—including his friend Theophilus—that he had researched Jesus' life (Luke 1:1-4). But Luke was also a doctor. He understood the agony of Jesus' death. He recognized the stress that resulted in sweating blood (22:44), and he knew the awful truth behind the simple sentence, "they crucified him there" (23:33).

Luke's medical training and historical mind helped him explain what happened on Calvary. What happened next, though, defied human explanation. After His death, Jesus' body had been hastily prepared for burial. Following the required Sabbath rest, a group of women set out for the tomb to finish the job of anointing His corpse with spices and fragrances. But instead of Jesus' dead body, they found an empty tomb and a pair of heavenly messengers who said He was alive again (24:1-8).

Jesus had told His followers this would happen, but His words never connected. As a result, the women were staggered by this new development. They reported the morning's events to the disciples, but even they found it hard to believe (24:9-12).

Later that evening, Jesus appeared to two other disciples walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus. Keeping His identity hidden, Jesus reminded them that the Messiah needed to suffer, die, and rise. Once they realized they had been talking to Jesus, they ran back to Jerusalem—only to find that Jesus had appeared to Peter (24:13-35).

A few days later, Jesus appeared to His disciples. Despite a locked door, He entered the room and shared a meal and His mission for them (24:36-49). He continued teaching them until He ascended to the Father (24:50-53).

Read Luke 24:1-12 in your Bible noting the emotions expressed. What do these emotions reveal about that first Easter?

EXPLORE THE TEXT

DISCOVERED (LUKE 24:1-3)

¹ On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came to the tomb, bringing the spices they had prepared. ² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb. ³ They went in but did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

VERSE 1

Sabbath law had kept Jesus' followers from completely preparing His body before burial. They had to wait through Saturday before returning to the tomb Sunday morning. (See Luke 23:54,56.) Once the day of rest had passed, a small group of His followers got up early on Sunday—*the first day of the week*—to finish the job. While Luke is not specific until later in the account, these disciples were all women.

The women carried spices that would be spread between the layers of the grave clothes. The process may have temporarily hidden the unpleasant odor created by decomposition. It also would have provided some sense of closure to His followers.

VERSES 2-3

The tomb was a cave with a large *stone* rolled across its entrance. The stone would have rested in a ditch, making it more difficult to move. It may have had individual shelves so multiple bodies could be kept; it was not unusual for bodies to share space.

In his Gospel, Mark noted that the women were worried about moving the stone (Mark 16:3). It would have taken several men—possibly using animals—to get the large rock into place. It was not a job that a small group of women could accomplish alone. When they arrived at the tomb, they discovered their first big surprise. The stone had already been *rolled away*.

Some have noted that the stone was not moved for Jesus to get out. He later proved that He could walk through closed doors. Instead, it was moved so His followers could come in—which is what the women did. But when they entered, they discovered their second surprise. Jesus' body was gone. Even though Jesus had talked about rising from the dead on more than one occasion (Luke 9:21-27,44-45; 18:31-34), the idea of a resurrection apparently didn't cross their minds.

The same is true for many today, as individuals deny a supernatural explanation for the empty tomb. For example, some believe Jesus really was not dead when He was buried and revived in the cool tomb. But that does not explain the stone. Others believe that the women went to the wrong tomb, but His enemies could have corrected that error easily enough. Some say His disciples stole the body, but that does not explain why they maintained the ruse for decades at the risk of their own lives. The only explanation for the empty tomb is that Jesus rose from the dead.

How does a person's explanation of the empty tomb expose his or her biases and values?

KEY DOCTRINE: *Jesus*

Jesus was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion (1 Cor. 15:1-8).

REPORTED (LUKE 24:4-9)

⁴ While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men stood by them in dazzling clothes. ⁵ So the women were terrified and bowed down to the ground. “Why are you looking for the living among the dead?” asked the men. ⁶ “He is not here, but he has risen! Remember how he spoke to you when he was still in Galilee, ⁷ saying, ‘It is necessary that the Son of Man be betrayed into the hands of sinful men, be crucified, and rise on the third day?’” ⁸ And they remembered his words. ⁹ Returning from the tomb, they reported all these things to the Eleven and to all the rest.

VERSES 4-5

The women were *perplexed*. They knew something had happened but had no explanation at this point. It could have been that the



empty tomb added to their grief. They had lost Jesus to death; now they had “lost” His body.

In the midst of their confusion, they faced another startling event. **Suddenly**, two individuals appeared in their midst. Luke called them **men**, but that reflects the women’s perspective. These beings were angels. Just as angels announced Jesus’ birth to terrified shepherds (Luke 2:8-14), angels now came to announce the resurrection—bookends to Luke’s Gospel.

Luke highlighted the women’s reactions to the angels. First, they were **terrified**. This probably included a sense of awe and wonder. Second, the women **bowed down to the ground**. This was a common response of humans who encountered angels in Scripture.

The angels introduced their message with a question—“**Why are you looking for the living among the dead?**” This again emphasizes that the women—and really all of Jesus’ followers—had missed the point of His teaching about His death and resurrection. None of them showed up to see the risen Lord, and those who did come to the tomb came for the wrong reason.

What are some ways people seek life among the dead today?

VERSES 6-9

The angels answered their own question with the announcement of Jesus’ resurrection. They reminded the women that this should not have been a surprise at all. Jesus had told them on multiple occasions this would happen. They either did not understand His message because it made no sense to them at the time, or they had failed to recall it in the midst of their grief.

Jesus’ death paid the price for our sins; His resurrection defeated death and guaranteed eternal life. Jesus conquered humanity’s two greatest enemies—sin and death.

Once the women heard the angels’ reminder, Jesus’ teachings came back to them—**they remembered his words**. Ironically, while Jesus’ closest followers had forgotten His words, His enemies had not. In his Gospel, Matthew noted that the religious leaders who had pushed for Jesus’ crucifixion told Pilate about His claims of a resurrection after three days (Matt. 27:62-66). That’s why the

heavy stone was put in front of the tomb and Roman soldiers were charged with guarding it.

Now that things were starting to make sense, the women were given a mission. Matthew recorded that the women were commanded to share the good news of Jesus' resurrection with His disciples (Matt. 28:5-8). Luke also noted that they reported what they had seen to the disciples.

It is worth noting that these first witnesses were an unlikely group. In the first century, women held no real social standing outside of their families. They had no power and no prestige. Yet, because they came to the tomb, they were given the privilege of being the first to learn of Jesus' resurrection and to tell others about it.

BIBLE SKILL: *Use other Scripture to help understand a Bible passage.*

Read Matthew 27:62-66. The chief priests and Pharisees remembered Jesus' words. What steps did they take to ensure that Jesus' body stayed in the tomb? Read Matthew 28:11-15. To what extent did the Jewish leaders go to discredit the reports that Jesus had been raised from the dead? How effective were their efforts in changing the reports about Jesus' resurrection?

CONFIRMED (LUKE 24:10-12)

¹⁰ Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them were telling the apostles these things.

¹¹ But these words seemed like nonsense to them, and they did not believe the women. ¹² Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. When he stooped to look in, he saw only the linen cloths. So he went away, amazed at what had happened.



VERSES 10-12

Luke identified some of the women who visited the tomb. He named three: *Mary Magdalene*, *Joanna*, and *Mary the mother of James*—probably because they were still well known in the church when he wrote his Gospel. Also, as a historian, he likely relied on these women for their eyewitness accounts.

Mary Magdalene had followed Jesus after He drove out seven demons from her (Luke 8:2). Joanna (Luke 8:3) and the other Mary were also known as supporters of Jesus. Luke also noted that *other women* were with them. It is impossible to know for sure how many women actually went to the grave that morning. But each of them had a story to tell and was sharing it with the apostles.

At first, the disciples refused to believe the women. Their skepticism serves as proof that Jesus really did rise. These men were not initially eager to believe reports of the resurrection. Only after they experienced Him themselves were they ready to believe—much less die for—this truth.

Despite his initial skepticism, Peter *got up and ran to the tomb*. John wrote that he (“the one Jesus loved”) went with Peter and actually got there ahead of him. John also pointed out that this first disciple stopped at the tomb’s entrance, while Peter actually went in (John 20:1-10).

At the scene, Peter found things just as the women had described. Jesus’ body was gone, but the grave clothes were still there. Again, this indicates a physical resurrection, not just the rising of a spirit.

Like the women, Peter left the tomb *amazed*. It is not clear if he believed the resurrection at that point, but the experience had an impact on him. Later in his Gospel, Luke explained that Jesus appeared to Peter alone—even before He appeared before all the other disciples. This certainly convinced him that the reports were true—Jesus was alive!

How does God’s Word validate the resurrection of Jesus? How does the Bible help a person understand Jesus’ resurrection?

IN MY CONTEXT

- Jesus' tomb remains empty.
- Jesus was resurrected from the dead.
- Eyewitnesses confirmed the resurrection of Jesus.

What impact does the empty tomb have on your life? How are you living out Jesus' resurrection each day?

Discuss ways people today are guilty of forgetting the words of Jesus. How can you and the members of your Bible study hold one another accountable for remembering and obeying Jesus' words?

With whom can you share about the resurrection of Jesus? Write their initials and begin to pray each day for the opportunity to share.

Prayer Needs

