

LEADER'S GUIDE

Discussion Questions: Resurrection of Jesus Christ, He Has Risen!

This event is the most important event for the Christian faith. Without Jesus' resurrection, Christians would have a completely different outlook on Baptism, being born again, and having a relationship with the Lord while living and after death.

It is important to note, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John did not witness the women at the tomb. The women who told this event told the disciples what they saw, heard, and who they interacted with.

- 1) Dawn, Easter Sunday. The first day after the Sabbath (Saturday). (Read the verses outlined in black: Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:1-2, Luke 24:1, and John 20:1) **Who were the two Mary's?** Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James and Joses. This day is also known as the first day of the week, meaning Sunday. Also, notice in John 20:1, where he states it was still dark. This must have been before the sun came up. This is the same Mary Magdalene that Jesus cast out seven demons (Luke 8:3). The other Mary, as she is commonly referred to as, was also the wife of Cleopas, and she was present at Jesus' death (Matthew 27:56). Salome was also there. She is mentioned because she was the daughter of Herod Philip and granddaughter of Herod the Great and Cleopatra of Jerusalem.
- 2) Preparing vs. buying spices (Mark 16:1, and Luke 23:55-56 and Luke 24:1). **Did the women prepare spices or buy spices to bring to the tomb?** There has been some controversy over these two verses. Looking at these two verses closely, you will notice in Luke 23-55-56 and Luke 24:1; Luke states, "spices which they prepared." In Mark 16:1, it states "they bought spices." They probably did both, bought spices and prepared spices. In Luke 23:56, Luke states the women prepared spices, and fragrant oils. The women then rested on the Sabbath, Saturday. If they did not have enough time on Friday to prepare enough spices and oils for Sunday, they would have to buy some spices late Friday or early Sunday morning. This would make both statements true and accurate.
- 3) Bringing spices to the tomb. (Mark 16:1, and Luke 24:1) **Why did the women bring spices to anoint Jesus? Did they really believe he would rise from the dead?** Anointing spices and oils on the dead were a common tradition to keep the body from putrefying and concealing the stench of decay. In either case, by bringing spices to anoint his body, this is proof they did not completely believe Jesus would rise from the dead.
- 4) The great earthquake (Read only: Matthew 28:2a) **What is the significance of the great earthquake?** Matthew is the only one who mentions the earth quaked at the time of Jesus' death, (Read: Matthew 27:51). Matthew is also the only one who mentions a "great earthquake" again in Matthew 28:2a,

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before the angel rolls back the stone. This is perhaps the moment Jesus was resurrected. It cannot be coincidental that both life-altering events of God's son, Jesus' human life, end with an earthquake, and his human lifeform would be resurrected with an earthquake. No one knows 100% for sure when the exact moment Jesus was resurrected. There is scientific proof outside the Bible that an earthquake actually did take place. In 2011, geologists Williams, Schwab, and Brauer (International Geology Review, 2011, An early first-century earthquake in the Dead Sea) took core samples of the Earth near Ein Gedi, west of the Dead Sea. They found evidence of an earthquake that clearly deformed the sediments in the core samples in 31 A.D. +/- 5 years.

- 5) The stone rolled back from the door (Read the verses outlined in red: Matthew 28:2, Mark 16:3-4, Luke 24:2, and John 20:1) **Who or what rolled back the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb?** An angel of the Lord rolled back the stone. Looking at all four gospels, all four agree the stone was rolled back, but only Matthew mentions an angel of the Lord rolled back the stone. Also, notice in Matthew, he does not state the earthquake-rolled-backed stone. He clearly states an angel descended from heaven, rolled back the stone, and sat on it. There is also a passage in Mark 16:3, where the women talked about who will roll away the stone. It was most likely the stone was large enough where the women would not be able to move the stone on their own. Nor did the women mention anything about the Roman guards that were posted there. They were probably unaware of Matthew 27:62-65, where the chief priests and Pharisees went to Pilate asking for the tomb to be guarded and sealed.
- 6) Mary Magdalene leaves the other Mary and Salome (Read verse in green: John 20:2 and Luke 24:8-11). **Why did Mary leave the other women and run to the disciples?** Mary Magdalene was the first one at the tomb. She did not go into the tomb. John does not even mention she even looked into the tomb. All she saw was the stone had been rolled away, and the tomb was open. Her first initial reaction would have been shocking. The stone did not roll away on its own. Someone must have rolled it away and stolen Jesus' body. Notice she did not run to the Roman authorities. She immediately ran to the disciples to tell them what she saw.
- 7) The women enter Jesus' tomb. (Read verses in orange: Matthew 28:3-4, Mark 16:5, Luke 24:3-4, and John 20:11-13) **What did the women find when they entered Jesus' tomb?** A couple of answers are correct to this question. Jesus' body was missing, and one and two angels were present. Matthew and Mark mention there was one angel. Luke and John mention there were two angels. All four agree a celestial being(s) was/were present. Let's help clear up the confusion or contraction of the two different accounts. Look closer at the sentence structure of Matthew and Mark. Both Matthew and

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Mark were fixated on how the women were going to roll away the stone, who rolled the stone away, and concerns the women had about the missing body of Jesus. They were not focusing on one angel or two angels. The first question, "who rolled the stone away?" The answer, one angel. This became the focus of Matthew and Mark's account told to them by the women. Once Matthew and Mark were satisfied with the answer of who rolled the stone away from the door, their attention focused on what happened to Jesus. Both Matthew and Mark answer this question told them by the women what the angel said in Matthew 28:5-7 and Mark 16:6-7. (Upcoming question #8) After the women found Jesus' body was missing, they were greatly perplexed. In Luke 24:4, what were the women perplexed about? They were perplexed because Jesus' body was missing. Then the women see two angels together. This is where Luke and John's narratives play out. Luke's account only mentions the stone was rolled away. So, the tomb was open. Once the women went into the tomb and found Jesus' body was missing, this is where they were greatly perplexed. This is also where Luke is told there were two men in shining garments. They then had interaction with the angels. In Luke 24:5-7. In John 20:11-13. When Mary Magdalene returned to the tomb, she saw two angels, one at the head and one at the foot where Jesus' body would have lain. Mary Magdalene still believes He has not yet risen.

- 8) **HE HAS RISEN!** (Read verses in blue: Matthew 28:5-7, Mark 16:6-7, and Luke 24:5-7) This is the most important part of the lesson. Let us answer some easy questions and then do a deep dive into the resurrection.
- a) **Who is Risen?** Jesus Christ of Nazareth. – Quiz question.
 - b) **Who did the angel(s) say to the women go and tell them Jesus has risen from the dead?** The disciples.
 - c) **Why is Peter called out in Mark 16:7?** Peter denied the Lord. To assure Peter that his sin has been forgiven. It also demonstrates the Love Jesus still has for Peter. Since Peter denied Jesus three times, Jesus wanted to assure Peter, he was forgiven and still showed favor with him.
Deep Dive: The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the focal point of the Christian faith. It is imperative to demonstrate how significant this one event had on human history.
 - d) **The Resurrection is unique to Christianity. Why is the Resurrection unique to Christianity?**
 - i) The resurrection of Jesus Christ is unique to the Christian faith - no other religious figure has ever predicted his own resurrection and then accomplished it. All the other world religions are based on a founder who lived in the past and whose religion is his only legacy. Here are a few other major religions and who founded them:

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- ii) **Who was the founder of the Islam Religion?** Muhammed Abdullah died at age 61 on June 8 642 A.D. in Medina, Arabia.
- iii) **Who was the founder of Chinese Philosophy?** Confucius died and at the age of 71-72 in 479 B.C. Si River, State of Lu, China.
- iv) **Who was the founder of the Buddhism Religion?** Gautama Buddha died at 80 in 483 B.C or 400 B.C. at Kushinagar, Malla Republic, India.
- e) Old Testament Prophecies - Two Old Testament prophecies that specifically reference the coming Messiah's resurrection.
 - (1) Isaiah 53:10-12 (read in more context: Isaiah 53:7-12) **What does this mean?** Isaiah is describing "the suffering servant." The events Jesus will go through. In verse 10, the Messiah is subjected to suffer. The Lord is pleased to see his son voluntarily submit Himself and fully absorb the evil of sin. He is not pleased because he takes pleasure in the suffering of the innocent, but because his Son examined and evaluated the sinner and decided the sinner's soul is worth eternal redemption. Jesus had to die for our sins. In the Old Testament, a burned offering was supposed to be a male animal without blemish to secure the Lord's atonement for sin. The cleansing of our sins through Jesus resurrection purifies our souls in order to enter into His kingdom. Further on in verse 10, Isaiah states, "He shall see His seed." The seed is referred to as a spiritual seed. The Messiah is reborn after His death.
 - (2) Psalm 16:10-11 **What does this mean?** David is describing his escape from death. The path of life David refers to is a path back to the living world. Ultimately, the connection needs to be made for eternal life and not just physical life. There is only one way to achieve eternal life, and that is through the resurrected Jesus Christ. The apostles used this verse when they began proclaiming Christ's resurrection (Acts 2:25-28; 13:35-37), The forgiveness of our sins.
- f) New Testament prophecies: Jesus predicts His own resurrection. **What New Testament verses do you know when Jesus predicted His own resurrection?** We tried to group them:
 - (1) Read John 2:18-22 – The first cleansing of the temple where Jesus overturned the tables of the money changers.
 - (2) Read Matthew 16:21; Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22 – Jesus predicts his death and resurrection.
 - (3) Read Matthew 17:22-23; Mark 9:30-32 – Jesus predicts his death and resurrection a second time.
 - (4) Read Matthew 20:17-19; Mark 10:32-34; Luke 18:31-34 – Jesus predicts his death and resurrection a third time.

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- (5) Read Luke 24:4-7 – Two angels restate Jesus' prediction He would be crucified and then rise again on the third day.
- (6) Read Matthew 27:38-43; Mark 15:27-31; Luke 23:34-38 – Those who passed by when Jesus was derided on the cross through comments they heard him say he was going to destroy the temple and build it up in three days.
- (7) Read Matthew 27:62-64 – The chief priests and Pharisees state to Pilate Jesus' statements, "After three days I will rise again."
- (8) Read Luke 24:44-47 – Jesus' empowered them to fully understand the meaning of the prophecies which predicted his death and resurrection. They could no longer doubt he was the Messiah.
- g) Post Resurrection – **What if there was no Resurrection?** Read the statement from Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:12-19. If there is no resurrection, then Christianity is false. According to Paul, if Christ was not raised, then the following points would be true:
 - (1) Christian preaching is false and useless because the object of the faith, Christ, is not who He said He was.
 - (2) There is no forgiveness of sins.
 - (3) The Apostles are liars for testifying to something that didn't happen.
 - (4) Those who died believing pointlessly died.
 - (5) Without the Resurrection, it is clear that there is no point for Christianity to exist.
- 9) Fear and Joy (Read verses in purple: Matthew 28:8, and Mark 16:8). **Why did the women feel both fear and great joy when leaving the tomb on their way to see the disciples?** Notice in Mark, the women state they trembled and were amazed. Fear and trembled are similar. The women felt fear and trembled, probably because of the miraculous events—first, the stone door. The women talked among themselves, wondering who will roll the stone door away in Mark 16:3. When they saw the tomb from a distance, they were probably astonished to see the stone door had already been rolled away. The closer they got to the tomb, with their eyes widening and mouths starting to open, surprised they would be an understatement. The second is the presence of an angel. Just being in the presence of a supernatural being would increase the woman's nervousness. Notice they did not panic and run away in terror. It was a shock to their system for sure. The third is the state of confusion when they saw Jesus' body was missing. It would be logical for them to conclude perhaps this is not real, that it might not be true, that he really did not rise from the dead, or that maybe someone did take his body. Once receiving the news from the angel Jesus had indeed risen, an immense level of joy or happiness would come over them. To hear the news that their Lord and Savior, Jesus, had truly overcome death and is now among the

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living again would perhaps be served with a more descriptive word in today's expression, "euphoria."

- 10) The first disciples ran to Jesus' tomb (Read verses in yellow: Luke 24:12, and John 20:3-10).
- a) Simon Peter ran to the tomb. **Who was the other disciple that went with him that Jesus loved?** (John 20:2) It is commonly agreed this would be the apostle John.
 - b) **What was the first physical proof Jesus' body was not stolen?** (John 20:5) If someone were to steal Jesus' body, they would not have taken the time to unwrap the linen cloths from Jesus' body, and, in John 20:7, take the time to neatly put the linen in one place by themselves. They would have most likely just carried Jesus' body away with the linens wrapped.
 - c) They did not know the scriptures. **At what moment did the disciples believe Jesus was resurrected from the dead?** (John 20:8-9) John was the first to arrive at the tomb. Both Peter and John first believed when they entered the tomb and saw Jesus was missing, but his linen garments were gathered to one place. The word "saw" in Greek is translated to "intense stare," which is more impactful than simply a casual look.
 - d) The disciples missed the opportunity to see Jesus. (John 20:10) **Why did the disciples not see Jesus at the tomb?** After seeing the tomb was empty, the disciples went away to their homes.
 - e) No question. An important observation at this moment. (John 20:11) Mary Magdalene remained at the tomb after the disciples departed home.
- 11) Jesus was taken away. (John 20:12-13) **Who is Mary referring to when she said, "They have taken away my Lord?"** Mary supposed the disciples arrived before she did, the stone was moved, and they had taken Jesus' body away. Mary was speaking to the two angels. It is important to note the angles were not in the tomb when the disciples looked in and did not see Jesus' body. Only Jesus' linen left behind.
- 12) The women see Jesus (Read verses in gray: Mark 16:9-11, John 20:14-17).
- a) **Who appeared to Jesus first?** Mary Magdalene. This is mentioned only in Mark 16:9.
 - b) **Why did Mary not recognize Jesus?** There are a couple of reasons for this. First, it was twilight, so she probably could not see clearly. Second, Mary was not expecting to see Jesus. Third, Jesus now has a glorified body and can be seen in several ways: (1) Jesus was able to enter closed rooms without opening doors (John 20:19). (2) Jesus was able to disappear (Luke 24:30-31). (3) Jesus ascended to Heaven (Luke 24:31).

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- c) Rabboni (John 20:16). **Why did Mary call Jesus Rabboni?** Rabboni is Hebrew for great master. There are 3 forms of this word. "Rab" is "master," "Rabbi" is "my master" and "Rabboni" is "my great master."
- d) Mary attempts to touch Jesus. **Why did Jesus tell Mary not to cling to him, and what does that mean?** (John 20-17) Because He not yet ascended to the Father. First off, Mary did not doubt she was now seeing and speaking to the resurrected Jesus Christ. With every fiber of her being rejoicing, she was probably filled with joy and excitement and probably attempted to hug him. The New King James Version states, "Do not cling to Me," NIV states, "Do not hold on to me," The NLT version states, "Don't cling to me." All three versions imply that Mary temporarily held or grab Jesus. Understandably this is a natural reaction responding to the sight of seeing Jesus resurrected; However, the King James version actually states, "Touch me not." In the original Greek, it translates "Do not Me touch." In both the King James and Greek language, "touch" and "not" have different meanings than "cling to or hold me." As Mary was advancing toward Jesus, He may have halted her advancing by stating, "Don't touch me." For examples such as this event, it is always best to refer to the original text (King James) or even further and look at the original Greek translations.
- 13) Mary Magdalene meets up with Salome and the other Mary. Jesus appears to these three women. (Read verses in light green: Matthew 28:9-10, John 20:18)
- a) **Why did Jesus say to the three women, "Rejoice!?"** The King James version is "All Hail," the word "all" was added by the translators. The word "hail" in Greek means rejoice. Jesus' resurrection is to be celebrated.
- b) **Where did Jesus tell the women the disciples would see Him?** In Galilee. This is mentioned only in Matthew 28:10.
- 14) The Roman Guard reports (read verses in brown: Matthew 28:4 and Matthew 28:11-15) The Roman Guard was ordered by Pilate to guard the tomb of Jesus (Matthew 27:65-66)
- a) **How many Roman soldiers consisted of a "Roman Guard?"** 4 to 16. To guard the tomb, it was most likely 4 Roman soldiers, one for each watch. The Romans divided the night into four watches. The first watch was from sunset to three hours later; the second watch was from the end of the first watch to midnight; the third watch was from midnight to three hours; the fourth watch was from three o'clock until sunrise. 16 soldiers were used to form a square in battle.
- b) The guards became like dead men. (Matthew 28:4) **Why did the Roman guards become like dead men?** From the guard's perspective, it was still nighttime, close to the end of the final watch. They just witnessed a

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miraculous event. The noise and the earth-shaking, the stone rolling back, the light, and the unexpected appearance of an angel in white clothing was terrifying to them. They most likely fainted. This would satisfy the appearance “they were like dead men.”

- c) **Why did the elders give a large sum of money to the Roman soldiers?** (Matthew 28:12-15) It was a bribe so the Jews and the Romans soldiers would maintain the same story to convince everyone Jesus' body had been stolen by his disciples while they were sleeping and not resurrected.