

For Us
Matthew 28:1-10
Dr. Paul Cannings

A. A Present Help (vs. 1-4):

1. First day of the week: Sunday began by Jewish time at sundown on Saturday. Spices could then be bought (Mk. 16:1), and they were ready to set out early the next day. When the women started out, it was dark (Jn. 20:1, and by the time they arrived at the tomb, it was still early dawn (Matt. 28:1; Mk. 16:2).
 - a. Sunday began by Jewish time at sundown on Saturday. Spices could then be bought (Mk. 16:1), and they were ready to set out early the next day. When the women started out, it was dark (Jn. 20:1, and by the time they arrived at the tomb, it was still early dawn (Matt. 28:1; Mk. 16:2).
 - b. We must assume that St. Matthew is thinking of the sabbath extending from evening to evening until the following morning. "So that it is not the accurate Jewish division of time, according to which the sabbath ended at six on Saturday evening, but the ordinary civil idea of a day, which extended from sunrise to sunrise (or at least adds the night to the preceding day)" (Lange). We have, then, now arrived at the commencement of the first Christian Easter Day. [1]

2. The other Mary: The wife of Clopas and sister of the mother of Jesus (27:56; Jn. 19:25).

a. Mary Magdalene once again takes a prominent role, but also accompanying her is "the other Mary," the mother of James the younger and Joses (cf. Mark 16:2). A comparison of the various Gospel accounts points to the following women who attended Jesus at the cross and those who visited the tomb: (1) Mary Magdalene, (2) the "other Mary" (the mother of James the younger and Joses), (3) Salome (the mother of James and John the sons of Zebedee), (4) Jesus' mother, Mary, (5) Joanna, wife of Chuza, (6) Susanna, and several other unnamed women.[2]

3. Mary Magdalene and Mary came – Mary Magdalene and Mary set their minds to go to the tomb no matter how early it was to take care of the body of Jesus.

a. Women chosen as the first witnesses are highly significant; the surrounding culture considers their witness worthless. It fits Jesus' counter-status ministry and indeed runs counter to what outsiders would have valued or anything the later church would have chosen to invent. [3]

4. Look; observing – These ladies scrutinized the grave of Jesus. They comprehensively comprehend what they see; an empty tomb.

a. A lack which they shared with the male disciples-let us notice their exceptional love and loyalty. They were at Calvary when Jesus died, in Joseph's garden when their Master was buried, and now very early in the morning, here they are once more to look at the tomb; that is, to see to it that everything is in good order, and to anoint the body.

5. Had occurred – Unexpectedly, a severe earthquake took place.

a. Earthquakes occurred at His crucifixion (Matt. 27:51), at His resurrection (Matt. 28:2), and will occur at His second coming (Matt. 24:7; Zech. 14:4). God was telling the world to stop and listen (Ex. 19:18).

6. Angel of the Lord – This angel is so powerful that at his appearance, the earth shook.

7. Descended from heaven – The angel of the Lord, once and for all, right before the eyes of these ladies, came down from heaven where the Lord God resides.

8. Came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it – His entire purpose for coming was to remove the tombstone. This was done after Christ rose from the dead. This was to let the ladies in to see the evidence that Christ rose from the grave, not let Christ out.

a. Why did the angel have to remove the stone? Not to enable Jesus to make His way out of the tomb - see John 20:19,26 - but to allow the women (Mark 16:5) and Peter and John (20:6-8) to enter it.

9. Sat – The fact that the angel was sitting upon the stone symbolizes Christ's triumph.

10. Came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it – Sitting upon it demonstrates that there was no need for Him to go in (Christ has already risen; John 10:17-18), and the angel of the Lord was not there to raise Christ from the dead.

a. Several women witnessed the tomb's sealing; they are among the first witnesses of the empty tomb and the resurrected Jesus. Both the angel and Jesus designate them to be the ones to carry their witness to the other disciples as the first to testify to the reality of the resurrection (28:10; Mark 16:7; John 20:17). [4]

b. In the case of Lazarus, the stone had to be removed to give exit to the resuscitated body—a natural body (John 9:39, 41); in the case of Jesus, such removal was not necessary, as He was a spiritual body, possessed of supernatural powers and qualities (John 20:19). [5]

11. Guards – The Jewish leaders placed soldiers in front of the tomb to ensure Jesus's followers did not steal His body and then claim Christ rose from the dead.

12. Guards – Because these valiant soldiers were there to preserve Christ's remains carefully and continuously in the tomb, it is incredible how afraid they became.

13. Shook for fear - These soldiers violently shook like someone having a convulsion. They had never seen anything like this, so their trepidation was overwhelming.

14. Became like dead men – After seeing the angel, the soldiers, who had no fear, became so overwhelmed by dreadful fear they could not move, like 'deer in headlights.' As a result, these soldiers are no threat just by the angel's appearance.

- a. The irony is not to be missed: the ones assigned to guard the dead appear dead while the dead one has been made alive. [6]

B. He Lives (vs. 5-7):

1. Answered – As if noting the question mark from the disposition of the women, the angel of the Lord addressed them.
2. The angel said – The angel recognized the unspoken question, and the quivering soldiers began to communicate with the ladies, not the soldiers verbally .

1. The "angel of the Lord" spoke to the women but not to the soldiers.
2. Angels, especially visibly fiery ones (ancient Judaism typically believed angels were made of fire), generally terrified people (e.g., Judg 6:22–23; 13:19–20; cf. 4 Ezra 10:25–27; 3 Enoch 22:4–9). [7]

3. Do not be afraid – The angel told them not to shrink back or run away because they were terrified continuously. Their terror was also mixed with reverence and awe at the angel's appearance.

4. For I know who you are looking for – Angel told them he completely understands who they had continuously put a lot of effort into finding.

5. Who has been crucified – The angel completely understood where the ladies had come from, the kind of effort they had put into getting there, and how Jesus was brutally nailed to the cross.

a. Christ's resurrection was the work of the Triune God. The Father raised Him from the dead (Rom. 6:4; Gal. 1:1; 1 Peter 1:3). So did the Spirit (Rom. 8:11; 1 Tim. 3:16). And the Son took back the life which He had laid down (John 10:18; 2:19,21; 11:25). For the comfort of believers, these three are and always will be One.

6. He has risen – Jesus has once and for all gotten up after being brutalized and in the grave for three days and three nights.

1. Jesus Messiah is found missing from His grave on the third day after His crucifixion! Various explanations have been set forth, but Matthew tells convincingly that the only explanation for the empty tomb is that Jesus has been raised, just as He predicted. The angels announce the resurrection, His women followers are the first to witness the empty tomb and the risen Jesus, and all of His followers now have the commission to proclaim the invitation to enter into a relationship with the risen Jesus as His disciples. [8]

7. Just as He said – Jesus always spoke the truth, and now they can witness firsthand what He said.

8. Come see – The angel commanded the ladies to follow Him into the tomb so that they could fully understand, based on what they observed, that Jesus was no longer there.

9. Where He was lying – The angel took the ladies, not the soldiers, to the place Jesus once laid to provide vivid evidence that He is forever no longer there.

10. Where He was lying – After the tombstone had to be removed, the soldiers guarding the tomb did not open it because they were protecting it; obviously, they did not have the ability to stop it from being removed, so there was no way Jesus came out and passed them, Jesus not lying in the tomb means that He was physically yet spiritually not there, this has to be a supernatural resurrection as promised.

11. Go tell - Now that they have the physical evidence of Christ's resurrection, they need to, this one time, go to wherever they know the disciples to be hiding and verbally communicate what they have witnessed.

12. He has risen – They must tell the disciples that Jesus had physically gotten up from the grave, despite the soldiers guarding the tomb and the tombstone still being in place.

a. Matthew adds at this point, 'He has been raised from the dead.' In Matthew's telling, this becomes the sole immediate content of the message that the women are to carry to the (male) disciples (see below). This is precisely what the chief priests and Pharisees in 27:64 feared the disciples, having emptied the tomb of its body, might claim. [9]

13. Dead – Jesus getting up from the grave is evidence that death possessed no power over Him. There is no way death has power, especially when He laid in the grave for three days and three nights. He lives, so no matter how He was brutalized, killed, and placed in a tomb for three days and nights, His resurrection proves death has no power over Him.

14. Behold He is going ahead of you – Even though they need to deliver this message, they must make a mental note that Jesus was continuously ahead of them, just like in the case of the resurrection.

15. There you will see Him; Appeared – The ladies had seen the evidence that Jesus was no longer laid in the tomb, but when they got to the disciples, they would visibly and physically see Him alive.

16. Behold, I have told you – They must make a mental note of everything said to them before they leave and as they encounter Christ when they see Him.

C. So Hopeless Becomes Joy (vs. 8-10):

1. They left the tomb – With the evidence vividly clear, that despite the soldiers guarding the tomb and the tombstone being in place, Jesus rose, and now it is time to tell others who loved Him.

2. They left the tomb – Without any questions for the angel and a clear understanding of what was expected of them, the ladies departed to deliver the message that was provided to them.

- a. A natural cave enlarged and adapted by excavation, or an artificial imitation of one, was the standard type of sepulcher - The caves, or rock-hewn sepulchers, consisted of an antechamber in which the bier was deposited and an inner or relatively lower cave in which the bodies were deposited, in a recumbent position,

in niches. There were niches for eight bodies—three on each side of the entrance and two opposite. Larger sepulchers held thirteen bodies. According to the Talmud, these abodes of the dead were usually six feet long, nine feet wide, and ten feet high.

3. With fear – They left the tomb possessing a genuine reverence and awe of the Lord. He was now fully exposed to be the promised Messiah who could take on all the evil that man could deliver, including death and life.

4. Great joy; gladness – They also left the tomb ecstatic, leaping, skipping, and dancing because the Lord is alive. They came to care for a dead man and will now share life with the alive Messiah. Their joy was intense.

5. Report to His disciples – The angel of the Lord's directive was for these ladies to deliver this message only to those committed to learning from Christ with a heart to follow Christ and His teachings.

6. Behold Jesus met them – Suddenly, after the women had committed to deliver the message, Jesus appeared in their presence.

7. Behold Jesus met them – It seems that Jesus' appearance was purposeful after they had demonstrated that they believed everything they saw and were told to do.

8. Greeted them; All hail; rejoice – Greet means to be joyous, like a lamp skipping in a field—the joy radiating through the whole person in an excitable manner. The ladies were not the only persons excited to see Jesus; Jesus was also excited to see them.

9. Came up – This is an exciting meeting. The women turned from the angel of the Lord and immediately became engaged with the Lord.

10. To hold fast – The ladies held Christ's feet so tight it was as if they were not planning to let Him go.

- a. To take hold of the feet is, at the same time, intimate and profoundly self-subordinating. It may be compared to the anointing of Jesus' feet in Lk. 7:38 and Jn. 11:2; 12:3. The nearest parallels all involve entreaty, which is not evident here. [10]

11. Worship –worth-ship - The women bowed before Christ in reverent devotion and awe, giving Him honor for how He is worthy to be worshiped as their Lord God.

- a. The first worship service – all women. I believe that, especially in the Jewish culture, women were disregarded because they were blamed for picking the fruit that the Lord allowed them to worship Him at His feet and to be the first to bring word to the disciples that He rose from the dead.

12. Then Jesus said, speak – Jesus spoke to them with the women prostrated at His feet.

13. Afraid – There was absolutely no reason for them to continuously come before Him timid and terrified because He was excited to be with them. He commanded them not to consider drawing back from Him in dreadful fear.

14. I go away and take word - Christ commanded them to do what the angel of the Lord instructed them continuously.

14. I go away and take word - After having an opportunity to experience the message, they committed to telling it to His disciples.

16. My brethren – Jesus called the disciples His brethren, meaning those with the same heavenly Father. Jesus is the firstborn of a new creation (Colossians 1:15-18), so those who experience this new life have the same heavenly Father and are His brethren.

- a. Jesus calls the disciples brother because they are committed to doing the will of the Father (despite Peter denying Christ; Mt. 12:50; 25:40; Jn. 20:17; Romans 8:29; Hebr. 2:11-13,17).
- b. They are now brothers and sisters of one family of faith. Galilee was the location of his boyhood, but even more important, the central location of Jesus' earthly ministry (cf. 4:12ff.). Now Galilee continues as a central place of His earthly ministry, which will last forty days until His ascension (Acts 1:3). [11]

17. Leave for Galilee – Because they were clinging to Him, worshipping Him, Jesus had to tell them to leave and go to the disciples. They were very excited to see Him and to know He was alive.

- a. Jesus meeting the disciples in Galilee: He told them this before He died (Mt. 26:32) and met them there after He rose from the dead (Mt. 28:10,16).
- b. We know that before His resurrection, His half-brothers did not believe in Him. But after His resurrection, He appeared to them, and they believed (1 Cor. 15:7; Acts 1:14).

18. They will see me – Christ will make Himself visible to the disciples so they can see He is physically raised from the dead.

a. Though it is Jesus who meets with them, it is they who come (προσέρχασθαι) to Jesus, as is regularly the pattern through the Gospel; in v. 16, it will be Jesus who comes to the disciples (which is almost as distinctive as Jesus meeting with the women—see at v. 16). [12]

19. They will see me – Even though Peter and John came and left, and Thomas would doubt that He is alive, Jesus will still appear to them and if they believe (Mark 16:14-18; 1 Corinthians 15:3-11), send them into the world (Matthew 28:19-20).

[1] Spence-Jones, H. D. M., ed. (1909). *St. Matthew* (Vol. 2, p. 639). Funk & Wagnalls Company.

[2] Arnold, C. E. (2002). *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke* (Vol. 1, p. 185). Zondervan.

[3] Keener, C. S. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament* (Mt 28:1–10). InterVarsity Press.

[4] Arnold, C. E. (2002). *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke* (Vol. 1, pp. 185–187). Zondervan.

[5] Spence-Jones, H. D. M., ed. (1909). *St. Matthew* (Vol. 2, pp. 639–640). Funk & Wagnalls Company.

[6] Hagner, D. A. (1995). *Matthew 14–28* (Vol. 33B, p. 869). Word, Incorporated.

[7] Keener, C. S. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament* (Mt 28:2–4). InterVarsity Press.

[8] Arnold, C. E. (2002). *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke* (Vol. 1, pp. 184–185). Zondervan.

[9] Nolland, J. (2005). *The Gospel of Matthew: a commentary on the Greek text* (p. 1250). W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.

[10] Nolland, J. (2005). *The Gospel of Matthew: a commentary on the Greek text* (pp. 1252–1253). W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.

[11] Arnold, C. E. (2002). *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke* (Vol. 1, p. 187). Zondervan.

[12] Nolland, J. (2005). *The Gospel of Matthew: a commentary on the Greek text* (p. 1252). W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.