

Easter 2017

The Day That Changed Everything

Luke 24:1-12

Main Idea: Jesus Christ was crucified for our sins and on the third day rose again defeating sin and death.



Vv. 1-2 – The Gospels all record the resurrection of Jesus to have occurred on “the first day of the week.” That is striking since Jesus had always predicted his resurrection to take place on the third day, not on the first day, as we will be reminded in v. 7. Perhaps we are being told something here about the role that Sunday would play from that point forward in the life of the Christian church.

Vs. 3 – The women fully expected to find the dead body of Jesus. Like the 11 disciples they had no anticipation that Jesus would rise from the dead as he had told them. So, they went to Jesus’ tomb to complete the embalming process. Finding the stone moved and the door to the tomb open, they went in. Only then did they find that the body was missing.

Vs. 4 – In Matthew it is made explicit that these were angels and we will learn later, in v. 23, that this is what the women realized themselves. Luke’s reference to their dazzling appearance and the women’s response of reverence is enough to establish that these two individuals are angels.

Vs. 7 – Jesus had instructed his followers concerning his resurrection again and again over the last year of his ministry, but the idea was so alien to his disciples that no one paid attention, just as they didn’t take him seriously when he told them he would be crucified. Perhaps they thought he was speaking metaphorically. No one in the Judaism of that day was expecting the Messiah to die and rise again.

Vs. 9 – Being instructed, the women now remembered what the Lord had said, and began to reckon with the possibility that Jesus was in fact alive again.

Vs. 11 – In their depressed and fearful state of mind, it is perhaps no wonder that they were not impressed by the women’s report. They probably entertained some of the same bias against the intelligence of women that was current in their culture. Women were not at that time, for example, allowed to give testimony in a Jewish court. It was easier than it should have been for them to dismiss the tale the women were telling. What is clear is that these were not men poised on the brink of belief in the resurrection. They were positively skeptical. [Morris, 354] And since this skepticism hardly reflects well on them, this is another feature of the historicity of the account.

Vs. 12 – Peter went home not yet convinced, but perhaps realizing that something was afoot. The point of the grave clothes is both that they prove Jesus had been there and that, had his body been removed, the grave clothes would have been removed with the body.

1. The fact of the resurrection of Jesus

Vv. 1-3; 10-11

- Luke’s account, like that of the other Gospels bears all the hallmarks of an historical account. It is the report of ordinary people encountering extraordinary circumstances. The first witnesses were women which would certainly not have been the case in a fictional account of cultists trying to prove their claims. The testimony of women was not to be trusted at that time. Also, the disciples are not heroes in the account. In fact, they look quite pathetic in their failure to believe what Jesus had taught them about his dying and rising. It seems implausible at best that these first century men would have willingly portrayed themselves in such poor light unless they were reporting on actual events. And of course only the actual resurrection of

Jesus can account for the disciple's transformation from frightened unbelievers to bold witnesses.

- When the women arrived at Jesus' tomb they were shocked to find it empty. In each gospel account there is no expectation on the part of Jesus' followers that he would rise from the dead. The women go to the tomb to complete the process of burial by embalming, as it were, the body of Jesus by wrapping it with various spices.
- It makes perfect sense for angels to be present at the resurrection of Jesus. The supernatural is part of the world that God created. Angels are worshipping beings. Both Old and New Testaments give reports of angelic beings circling the throne of God with shouts of praise and declarations of the holiness of God. Angels are also messengers (*angelos* means "messenger"). Here they announce the fact of the resurrection.

2. The meaning of the resurrection of Jesus

Vv. 4-7

- The angels present at the empty tomb are there to preach. They are present to proclaim the risen Christ. Clarity concerning the resurrection of Jesus is essential. There is a particular significance to the resurrection which must be heard and believed.
- The message from angels is simply a recapitulation of the gospel that Jesus had proclaimed. "It was necessary" for Jesus to be handed over to wicked men who would execute him. Following his harrowing death Jesus would rise again. These are historical facts. The significance of those facts is that Jesus dying and rising accomplished the redemption of all God's people throughout time. His resurrection was the guarantee that all those who believe will themselves be raised up. The corruptible will take on incorruptibility. The mortal will take on immortality (1 Corinthians 15).

3. The urgent appeal of the resurrection of Jesus

Vv. 8-9; 12

- The fact of Jesus' resurrection presses upon humanity a response of faith. If Jesus has been raised, if his tomb is empty then what he claimed about himself is true. And if what Jesus claimed about himself is true then much more than considering him a kind or interesting fellow is required of us. If Jesus is raised then he is the Savior and Lord.
- We are told a tale of two failures in Luke's account of Jesus' resurrection. First there is the mention in verse 9 of "the eleven." This is a reference to the eleven disciples who remained after Judas committed suicide. His is a truly tragic story. After following Jesus, hearing his words and witnessing his marvelous deeds Judas nevertheless betrayed Jesus to the Romans for a sack of silver. Unwilling to repent and unable to cope with his own sin Judas hanged himself. So the reference to "the eleven" is a sobering reminder that not all who witnessed Jesus believed. Not even some of those who walked closely with him were willing to part with their sin.
- The second failure we are reminded of is in the reference to Peter in verse 12. Peter was present when Jesus was arrested. Later Peter was given numerous opportunities to publicly identify himself as a follower of Jesus but instead he denied the Lord explicitly three times. Realizing what he had done, Peter grieved deeply over his failure. But unlike Judas, Peter reckoned with his sin; he acknowledged his failure and rather than running further away from Jesus he ran to him. What a beautiful portrait of repentance and hope is seen in Luke's portrayal of Peter's eager run to the empty tomb.