

“The Impact of the Empty Tomb”

Matthew 28

Every year on Easter Sunday the Christian church celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, being reminded of the power of God as he carried out his plan of redemption for the human race. After Easter Sunday, I wonder how much thought is given to that great demonstration of God’s plan. Maybe it would help us if we took some time and think how the empty tomb affects and impacts people’s lives. Early that first Easter morning the women came to look at the tomb where Jesus had been laid and that look was to have an impact that was to change the course of history; for the tomb was empty. The fact of the empty tomb was so self-evident that excuses had to be manufactured to call it a fraud. It was to give such an impetus to a world movement that in time the emperor of the Roman Empire himself was to find it politically expedient to become a Christian whether he understood the full meaning of that idea or not. This movement was to call forth people of every tongue and tribe to give themselves in dedication, service and even martyrdom for this risen Jesus. This was no mere fad or rumor, but the empty tomb had a genuine and lasting impact on all who heard of it. Let’s look at some people the empty tomb impacted.

1. The Impact on the lives of the Women.
 - A. From fear to faith. (vss. 5 and 10). Jesus’ birth and resurrection were both announced by “Do not be afraid”. There was no longer any need to fear that evil had triumphed. Jesus was risen just as he had said, “Come and see.”
 - B. From defeat to victorious purpose. (vs. 7). There was a commissioning service for the women, “Go and tell.”
 - C. From sadness to joy. (vs. 8). The women ran with joy to tell the disciples what they had seen and heard.
 - D. From loneliness to fellowship, (worship). (vs. 9). The risen Jesus met them and spoke to them and there was a fellowship between them in that moment
 - E. Introspection to worship. (vs. 9). The women bowed and clasped Jesus feet in an act of worship and devotion.
2. The Impact on the lives of the Enemies of Jesus.
 - A. This was a cause of great fear. (vs. 4). When the angel came to roll away the stone from the tomb, the guards shook and became like dead men. We read in Hebrews 10:31, “It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God”
 - B. Sin increased. (vss. 11ff). Jesus’ enemies would go to any lengths to try to keep the truth of his resurrection silent. There were false accusations, lies, conspiracy, and bribery. There is no middle ground; you cannot serve both God and the world.
 - C. Hearts were hardened. The soldiers took the bribes and said what they were told and many people believed these false stories. “Whoever remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed without remedy.” (Proverbs 29:1).
3. The Impact on the lives of the Disciples. (vss. 16 - 17).
 - A. The disciples did as they were told and thereby obedience led to sight, “they saw him” and then sight would lead them to obedience.

- B. They worshiped him as their Lord, but some still doubted.
- C. There the disciples received a specific commission from Jesus:
 - It was authored by the Risen Lord, (vs. 18). By his authority he did this.
 - It was programmed by the Risen Lord, (vs. 19). He gave them their duties to fulfill.
 - It was empowered by the Risen Lord, (vs. 20). They would not go in their own power but in his presence with his power until the very end.

What has been the impact of the empty tomb of Jesus on your life? Along with the women, look into the tomb through the eyes of faith and see that it is empty, hear the Risen Lord speak to you through his word as you worship, trust and obey him.

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