

## **The Resurrection of Jesus Christ**

### **Matthew 28:1-10**

#### I. The Resurrection: The Climax of Redemptive History

##### A. The History of Death

1. Death has walked with cruel and bloody boots through the pages of human history
  - a. Not a single nation has been exempt... for all over the world, every culture has lavish laments for the destruction of death
  - b. The Bible is filled with deep and bitter laments over death...
  - c. Think of the wailing of the mother
2. Wicked tyrant Joseph Stalin said “A single death is a tragedy; a million deaths is a statistic.” How false! Every death has been a tragedy... a tragic reminder of the origin of sin and death
3. Romans 5 makes that origin plain:

***Romans 5:12 sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned***

4. Adam violated God’s command at the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and received the penalty God had ordained for his sin
5. But more than that, Adam represented the entire human race at that tree, and in that moment, EVER SINGLE HUMAN BEING SINNED in Adam... and in Adam we all die
6. From the Garden of Eden until now, there has been an indissoluble link between sin and death

***Romans 6:23 the wages of sin is death***

***<sup>ESV</sup> Ezekiel 18:4 ... the soul who sins shall die.***

- 7. Only by the payment of the death penalty can we be forgiven
- B. Satan: The One Who Held the Power of Death... Now Defeated
  - 1. What is more, Adam sinned by yielding to Satan's temptation
  - 2. In that way, he gave to the Deceiver, Satan, the power of death
- C. Ancient History Looked Forward to This: The Defeat of Death Predicted Again and Again in the Old Testament
  - 1. God promised a Conqueror, a Savior, who would crush Satan and defeat death, and win for us our full salvation

***Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel***

- 2. God promised it again and again through the prophets... the end of death

***Isaiah 25:7-8 On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; <sup>8</sup> he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken.***

- D. Jesus Christ is the One Born of Woman, Who Came to Save Us from Sin and Death

***Galatians 4:4-5 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, <sup>5</sup> to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.***

***Matthew 20:28 the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.***

- E. All Church History Looks Back to This Event: The Centerpiece of the Gospel is the Resurrection

1. Since Christ rose from the dead, the centerpiece of the gospel has been the proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus Christ

***1 Corinthians 15:3-6 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup> and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. <sup>6</sup> After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time***

2. This is our hope:

***Romans 10:9-10 if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.***

## II. A Loving Errand and a Supernatural Interruption (vs. 1-3)

***Matthew 28:1 After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.***

***Mark 16:1-2 When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. <sup>2</sup> Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb***

***Luke 23:55 - 24:1 The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. <sup>56</sup> Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment. Luke 24:1 On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.***

### A. A Loving Errand... But Some Measure of Unbelief

1. The Sabbath is over; now the women can finish what they started to do... they want to express the deep love they had for Jesus in the only way they knew
2. The love that these women had for Jesus is clear
3. But we also see some measure of unbelief as well

4. Their love for Jesus was based on faith... they had a genuine faith in Jesus as the Son of God... but they are still murky on the details and totally confused about His shocking death
5. So their behavior shows that strange mingling of faith and love mixed with a dose of unbelief
6. The women are certainly not expecting a resurrection... not at all!
7. Even more strikingly, they have come to anoint a corpse with sweet-smelling substances to keep it from stinking as it decomposes
8. All of this despite the fact that Jesus had made it plain that He would rise again on the third day

***Matthew 12:40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.***

***Matthew 16:21 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.***

***Matthew 20:17-19 Now as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside and said to them, <sup>18</sup> "We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death <sup>19</sup> and will turn him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!"***

9. All of this despite the fact that Psalm 16 had made it plain that Jesus' body would not suffer decay at all

***Psalm 16:10 you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.***

B. Key Issue: They Did Not Understand the Scripture

***John 20:9 They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.***

***Luke 24:25-27 He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup> Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" <sup>27</sup> And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.***

C. Christ Does Not Despise The Women's Mixture of Faith/Love with a Measure of Unbelief

***Matthew 12:20 A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he leads justice to victory.***

***Mark 9:24 the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"***

As the women walked toward the tomb in the darkness of the early morning, one problem dominated their minds:

***Mark 16:2-4 Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb <sup>3</sup> and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" <sup>4</sup> But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away.***

D. Who Moved the Stone? GOD DID!! Through An Angel

1. A profound mystery... with a supernatural solution
2. Powerful question: who moved the stone??
  - a. English writer Frank Morison (pen name for Albert Henry Ross)

In 1930, Ross's attention was captured by the strangeness of the Resurrection story. Influenced by many skeptics, he set out to prove that story of Christ's resurrection was only a myth.

Morison: "I wanted to take this last phase of the life of Jesus, with all its quick and pulsating drama, its sharp, clear-cut background of antiquity, and its tremendous psychological and human interest--to strip it of its overgrowth of primitive beliefs and dogmatic suppositions, and to see this supremely great Person as He really was."

Instead, the more he probed the more certain he became that Christ really had risen from the dead! He related his conclusions in 1930 in a classic entitled *Who Moved the Stone?*

- b. Matthew's account answers the question plainly: AN ANGEL FROM HEAVEN moved the stone!!

***Matthew 28:2-3 There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. <sup>3</sup> His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow.***

- c. The Gospel accounts were clear on the location of the stone: it was completely removed from the entrance to the tomb... not just rolled back

***<sup>ESV</sup> John 20:1 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.***

The Greek word used for "taken away" is usually translated "lifted up" ... it was also used for Joseph of Arimathea taking away the body of Jesus in John 19:38. So we should picture the angel literally lifting the stone up and carrying it to some place removed from the entrance and setting it down... God didn't want that stone in front of the physical evidence for the greatest event in human history

To some degree, the removal of the stone is like the opening of the curtain on a dramatic play that will rock the world

How appropriate that there was an EARTHQUAKE when the stony curtain was pulled back!! More about that in a moment!

In moving the stone, the

3. What was the significance of the moving of the stone?
  - a. First, the stone was NOT MOVED to let Jesus OUT? NO WAY!!!

- i) Jesus was the resurrected Son of God. Fully glorified, awesome in power, the Ancient of Days, and there is nothing that He cannot do
- ii) He could have moved the stone Himself, but an even more amazing fact stares us in the face: He didn't need to move it!!
- iii) Jesus' resurrection body was made of a supernatural "stuff" that defies comprehension
- iv) The first matter in this present universe that will also be in the New Heaven and the New Earth... Jesus' resurrection body
- v) Called the "firstfruit" from the dead, nothing else in the history of the universe is like it
- vi) Some indication of the strangeness of this "material" is found in Paul's description of 1 Corinthians 15:

***1 Corinthians 15:42-50 The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; <sup>43</sup> it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; <sup>44</sup> it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. <sup>45</sup> So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. <sup>46</sup> The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. <sup>47</sup> The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. <sup>48</sup> As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. <sup>49</sup> And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven. <sup>50</sup> I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.***

- vii) A SPIRITUAL BODY... **What's that?????**
- viii) You can touch it, as Thomas did when he put his fingers in the nail marks... it can eat, as Jesus did with a piece of broiled fish... it is not a ghost, for it has "flesh and bones"

***Luke 24:39-40 Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.***  
<sup>40</sup> ***When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet.***

Amazing: Jesus says “I’m not a spirit” (pneuma)

BUT Paul calls Him a “life-giving spirit”

ix) Paul emphasizes its essentially otherworldly, spiritual nature

(i) Imperishable, glorious, powerful, spiritual

(ii) Jesus is called a “life-giving spirit”

(iii) He is called the second Adam, the Heavenly man

(iv) Adam gave us his earthy nature, Christ will give us His Heavenly nature in the resurrection body

(v) WHAT DOES ALL THIS POINT TO? A higher level of “physical existence” than we’ve known before

x) Jesus’ resurrection body was utterly beyond our ability fully to comprehend, and it did strange things

(i) It appeared totally normal, like any other guy walking along the road as He conversed with the two disciples on the Road to Emmaus

(ii) YET Jesus didn’t look like His normal self, because people who knew Him well before He died didn’t recognize Him... they were “kept” from recognizing Him... so perhaps the issue was not so much how Jesus looked but how they perceived Him

(iii) Jesus could eat bread and fish, but He also suddenly disappeared after breaking the bread with the two disciples from the Road to Emmaus

(iv) And it seems that twice He passed through the walls in the upper room where the disciples were hiding out, scared of the Jews... twice it says,

***John 20:19 On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."***

***John 20:26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"***

(v) Wayne Grudem goes to lengths in his otherwise excellent Systematic Theology to rebut efforts at saying that the Jesus' resurrected body passed through walls... he rightly wants to avoid dualism... the idea that spirit is good and flesh is bad... and any sense that Jesus wasn't truly resurrection, physically alive, able to be touched and felt and sensed as a normal physical body would

(vi) FINE... but we have to come to grips with the power of Paul's discussion in 1 Corinthians 15: it is sown a

***1 Corinthians 15:44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.***

xi) Bottom line: if Jesus' resurrection body couldn't "pass through walls", then how did He get out of the tomb? Then we would have to imagine the angel was sent to let Him out! I find that preposterous... Jesus waiting for the angel to open the door! NOPE

- b. Second, the moving of the stone shows the limitation of human government and its authority... remember, the Roman soldiers SEALED THE TOMB so that if anyone broke the seal, the wrath of the Roman government would come down on them... the angel broke the seal without any hesitation!! God rules over all human laws
- c. Third, the moving of the stone points to the importance of the physical evidence for the resurrection: God wanted the disciples (and perhaps others) to see the evidence for the resurrection: the moved stone, the grave clothes, the head cloth, the missing body

***John 20:8-9 Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. <sup>9</sup> (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)***

- i) The physical evidence was a valid ground for faith in the resurrection, though it was only temporary
- ii) WHY temporary? Because soon it would all be gone...
- iii) Almost certainly, the Jewish authorities would have collected the grave clothes and changed the empty tomb so that its evidence could not scream RESURRECTION
- iv) That's why John added the statement about "understanding from Scripture" that Jesus had to rise from the dead
- v) Eventually, their eyewitness accounts would themselves become part of the Scripture's testimony to the resurrection

***John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.***

***1 John 1:1-3 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched-- this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. <sup>2</sup> The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. <sup>3</sup> We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.***

***Luke 1:1-4 Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, <sup>2</sup> just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. <sup>3</sup> Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, <sup>4</sup> so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.***

***Acts 1:21-22 Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among***

*us, <sup>22</sup> beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection."*

- d. The moving of the stone also points to the importance of HISTORY to Christianity... it matters A TON whether or not Christ has actually been raised from the dead

***1 Corinthians 15:14 if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.***

#### E. The Earthquake and the Angel

***Matthew 28:2-3 [And behold] There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. <sup>3</sup> His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow.***

##### 1. The earthquake

- a. As usual, the NIV omits the “behold”, but it gives a sense of the suddenness and shock of the earthquake
- b. The Greek intensifies it... a GREAT earthquake... not a mere tremor
- c. The ground beneath their feet shook; a symbol of the way that the entire world was about to change
- d. The second earthquake connected with all these events... the first was at the time of Jesus’ death

***Matthew 27:50-51 And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. <sup>51</sup> At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split.***

- e. We use the expression: “earth-shattering experience”; it shows that everything is about to change forever
- f. Now that death has been conquered, the very earth beneath our feet must move... for even the earth is temporary, but Jesus’ life is eternal and death is forever conquered

- g. So there will also be a massive earthquake when the old universe is removed, and the New Heaven and New Earth are established

***Hebrews 1:10-12 "In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. <sup>11</sup> They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. <sup>12</sup> You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end."***

***Hebrews 12:26-29 At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." <sup>27</sup> The words "once more" indicate the removing of what can be shaken-- that is, created things-- so that what cannot be shaken may remain. <sup>28</sup> Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, <sup>29</sup> for our "God is a consuming fire."***

## 2. The Angel

***Matthew 28:2-3 There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. <sup>3</sup> His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow.***

- a. His origin: he descended from heaven
- b. His allegiance: he was called "an angel of the Lord"... he serves King Jesus
- c. His touchdown: His feet landed somewhere, such that he had to walk to the tomb
- d. His power: He caused the earthquake... it says "There was a great earthquake FOR an angel of the Lord came down...".. AND look at what the angel could do... seemingly effortlessly, he picked up the stone and moved it away from the entrance to the tomb

- e. His demeanor: I love how comfortable and casual he is, as he sits on the stone after moving it! Completely unconcerned about the soldiers or any power
- f. His appearance: BLINDING LIGHT! BRILLIANT WHITE!! “like lightning”, clothes “white as snow”... God gave some of His glory to this angel, and he is blinding to look at! A picture of purity and holiness and supernatural existence
- g. Appropriate for angels to be there
  - i) Angels celebrated the BIRTH of our Savior... as an angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds and the glory of the Lord shone around him... they were given the message to announce to the shepherds:

***Luke 2:11-12 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."***

So also at that time, a great company of angels appeared and praised God, celebrating the birth of Jesus into the world

- ii) Angels also appeared in Gethsemane, to strengthen Jesus for His final push to the cross
- iii) Angels will accompany Jesus at His second coming:

***Matthew 25:31 When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory.***

- iv) How appropriate for angels to surround His resurrection!!
- h. Various aspects of the angelic involvement
  - i) Here, there is just one
  - ii) In Luke’s Gospel, more than one, appearing like described here

***Luke 24:4-5 While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. <sup>5</sup> In their***

*fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead?"*

iii) In John's Gospel

*John 20:11-13 Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb <sup>12</sup> and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. <sup>13</sup> They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him."*

III. Terror and Assurance (vs. 4-6)

*Matthew 28:4-6 The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. <sup>5</sup> The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. <sup>6</sup> He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.*

A. The Reaction of the Guards

1. The guards were Roman soldiers who were among the toughest men on the face of the earth
2. Fearless in battle; filled with pride at having conquered an empire in the name of Caesar
3. But they were utterly terrified at the sight of this angel and the earthquake he caused
4. The word for "shook" is the same as that used for the earthquake
5. They ended up like dead men, paralyzed from fear
6. Similar reaction in the book of Daniel:

*Daniel 10:5-8 I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of the finest gold around his waist. <sup>6</sup> His body was like chrysolite, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude. <sup>7</sup> I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; the men with me did not see it, but such terror*

*overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves. <sup>8</sup> So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision; I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale and I was helpless.*

*Daniel 10:16-17 I said to the one standing before me, "I am overcome with anguish because of the vision, my lord, and I am helpless. <sup>17</sup> How can I, your servant, talk with you, my lord? My strength is gone and I can hardly breathe."*

#### B. The Reassurance of the Women

1. The angel spoke to the women, reassuring them and calming their hearts
2. The message linked their freedom from fear to their heart attitude toward Jesus

*Matthew 28:5-6 The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, FOR I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. <sup>6</sup> He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.*

3. In Luke, there seems to be a gentle rebuke

*Luke 24:5-8 In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? <sup>6</sup> He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: <sup>7</sup> 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" <sup>8</sup> Then they remembered his words.*

In other words, THEY SHOULD HAVE KNOWN that He would be risen... they didn't even have to read the prophets and remember the many prophecies of Christ's resurrection... Jesus' own words should have been enough!

4. Same thing in John toward Mary Magdalene

*John 20:13 They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him."*

5. The time has come for them to turn away from their mild case of faithlessness and their mournful love and REJOICE BY FAITH!!!

C. The Basis of their Joy: The Empty Tomb

***Matthew 28:6 He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.***

1. Simply in Matthew's Gospel: He is NOT HERE!! The BODY IS GONE!!
2. But deeper in John's Gospel... the position of the angels

***John 20:11-12 Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb <sup>12</sup> and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.***

3. Why so carefully describing the POSITION of the angels?
4. Just like the Mercy Seat on the Ark of the Covenant
  - a. Two cherubim (angels) on either side
  - b. There God appeared and spoke

***Exodus 25:22 There, above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the Testimony, I will meet with you and give you all my commands for the Israelites.***

***Leviticus 16:2 I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat.***

- c. There the blood of the sacrifice was poured

***Leviticus 16:14 And he shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger on the front of the mercy seat on the east side, and in front of the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times.***

- d. There the God of All the Earth sits enthroned

***Psalm 99:1 The LORD reigns, let the nations tremble; he sits enthroned between the cherubim, let the earth shake.***

5. This is the new place where sins are forgiven, the new place where God will meet with the people of God!!!

#### IV. The Joyful Mission Begins (vs. 7-8)

***Matthew 28:7-8 Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you." <sup>8</sup> So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.***

- A. This is the Beginning of the Spread of the News!! CHRIST IS RISEN!!
- B. The Fact That It Was Entrusted to these Women Shows the Honor The Lord Held Them In
  1. Their loyalty and their love was rewarded with the privilege of telling this news to the disciples (here meaning the Apostles)
  2. The message: Christ is risen! He will be going ahead of them into Galilee
  3. And concerning entrusting this message to women, it shows how truly God's ways are not our ways
    - a. In their era, the testimony of women was not admissible in court
    - b. The attitude against their testimony is made plain in how the disciples reacted to the report from the women

***Luke 24:9-11 When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. <sup>10</sup> It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. <sup>11</sup> But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.***

- c. BUT GOD choose the weak things of the world to shame the strong
- d. This is one of the strongest evidences that the early Christians did not merely invent these stories about the resurrection... there is absolutely NO WAY that they would have invented the

idea that the news of the resurrection should be first entrusted to women, and especially to a woman like Mary Magdalene

- e. And He made it plain that He wanted women testifying to the resurrection of Jesus throughout church history

C. BUT... This Does Not Make the Women Apostles, or Set Them in Authority Over the Twelve

1. Some feminist commentators have made much of the fact that the women were the first ones to be entrusted with this news of Christ's resurrection

N.T. Wright: "It is Mary: not Peter, not John, not James the brother of the Lord, but Mary, who becomes the apostle to the apostles, the primary Christian witness, the first Christian evangelist."

2. Given the fact that "being a witness of the resurrection" was the requirement for being an Apostle in Acts 1, some have gone so far as to say this commission from the angel makes these women Apostles

Wright: "[We have] established that apostolic vocation – the call to be a witness to the resurrection of Jesus – not only includes women, but began with them..."

3. Not so! Any more than the fact that God entrusted to the angels the news of the resurrection means that the message of reconciliation has been entrusted to angels and not to people
4. Being an apostle meant MORE than simply testifying that they had seen the resurrected Christ... 1 Corinthians 15 says there were 500 eyewitnesses to the resurrection, and clearly implied that they were testifying to what they had seen... but that didn't make them APOSTLES
5. Apostles were in authority over the early church, with power to make key decisions and to lead the church
6. The fact that the Lord entrusted this message to Mary should not go beyond simply that... she was a messenger... she is never mentioned again after this incident

D. The Reaction: Overwhelming Joy Mingled with Fear... and Obedience to the Task from the Angel

***Matthew 28:8 So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.***

1. They RUN... the news is too good to wait!!!
2. Their hearts were swimming in emotion... fear from the earthquake and the angelic appearance; but more than that, JOY at the news of His resurrection
3. Perhaps like the Samaritan woman at the well who left her water jug there by the well and went to tell the village about Jesus, Mary and the other women left their spices there and ran to tell the disciples... the spices were for a corpse, to keep it from smelling to badly in the hours after its entombment... ABSOLUTELY NOT NEEDED!!

V. The Highest Evidence: A Personal Encounter with the Risen Lord (vs. 9-10)

***Matthew 28:9-10 Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."***

A. At This Point: All They Had Was the Angel's Word and the Empty Tomb

B. The Highest Evidence: Personal Encounter with the Risen Lord

1. Suddenly = AND BEHOLD!!!! Out of nowhere, Jesus just pops up... He does that a lot in these post-resurrection appearances
2. Jesus' greeting is almost nonchalant... almost like "Hi!"

C. Their Reaction: Pure Worship... Falling at His Feet!!

1. This is the point of everything
2. John Piper: "Missions exists because worship doesn't. Missions is temporary, worship is eternal!!"

3. Psalm 16: “In his presence is the fullness of JOY!!”

***Philippians 2:10-11*** *hat at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

***Philippians 3:3*** *we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh*

D. Just Like in John’s Gospel... Jesus’ Message is Exactly the Same as that of the Angels

1. In John’s Gospel, the Angels ask Mary, “Why are you weeping?” Then Jesus confronts her with the exact same question: “Why are you weeping?”
2. Here, Jesus reiterates the angel’s task: but with slightly different words
3. Jesus says GO TELL MY BROTHERS!!
4. Not slaves, not merely friends... but BROTHERS

***John 15:15*** *I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.*

5. Atoned for, adopted into the family of God, in some sense in the same relation to the Father as Jesus

***John 20:17*** *Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"*

Now that SIN and DEATH have been defeated, we are adopted into the family... and we need never fear again!!

***Hebrews 2:11-15*** *Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. <sup>12</sup> He says, "I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises." <sup>13</sup> And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again he says, "Here am I,*

*and the children God has given me." <sup>14</sup> ¶ Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death-- that is, the devil-- <sup>15</sup> and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.*

## VI. Applications

### A. What Does the Resurrection of Jesus Christ Prove?

1. The Word of God is perfectly true and reliable... since the centerpiece of Scripture is the defeat of death predicted many times in the Old Testament
2. Jesus of Nazareth is truly the Son of God and Savior of the world, and He has absolute power over death
3. Salvation from sin is complete, and God the Father is completely satisfied in the blood of Jesus as atonement for our sins
4. Jesus Christ has conquered all our enemies: sin, Satan, death, hell; because He lives, all who believe in Him can live forever without fear
5. The church of Jesus Christ is established, since the gates of Hades have been rendered powerless and death cannot stop the church's living advance
6. Eternal life in heaven is guaranteed for all who believe in Jesus!

### B. Come to Christ!!

### C. Christians: Know the Certainty of What You Believe

### D. Be Encouraged Even in the Face of Death

### E. Risk More for Jesus

### F. Use Apologetics for Evangelism

1. Matt Perman on Desiring God website), and comment on it:

"A method commonly used today to determine the historicity of an event is "inference to the best explanation." William Lane Craig describes this as an approach where we "begin with the evidence available to us and then infer

what would, if true, provide the best explanation of that evidence." In other words, we ought to accept an event as historical if it gives the best explanation for the evidence surrounding it. When we look at the evidence, the truth of the resurrection emerges very clearly as the best explanation. There is no other theory that even come close to accounting for the evidence. Therefore, there is solid historical grounds for the truth that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. It is worth pointing out that in establishing the historicity of the resurrection, we do not need to assume that the New Testament is inspired by God or even trustworthy. While I do believe these things, we are going to focus here on three truths that even critical scholars admit. In other words, these three truths are so strong that they are accepted by serious historians of all stripes. Therefore, any theory must be able to adequately account for these data.

The three truths are:

- 1. The tomb in which Jesus was buried was discovered empty by a group of women on the Sunday following the crucifixion.**
- 2. Jesus' disciples had real experiences with one whom they believed was the risen Christ.**
- 3. As a result of the preaching of these disciples, which had the resurrection at its center, the Christian church was established and grew.**

Virtually all scholars who deal with the resurrection, whatever their school of thought, assent to these three truths. We will see that the resurrection of Christ is the best explanation for each of them individually. But then we will see, even more significantly, that when these facts are taken together we have an even more powerful case for the resurrection--because the skeptic will not have to explain away just one historical fact, but three. These three truths create a strongly woven, three chord rope that cannot be broken."

## G. The Lord's Supper