

Matthew

Chapter 28

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MATTHEW CHAPTER 28

The climatic chapter in Matthew—the victory of the Lord Jesus over death. Without this event in Christ’s life, His ministry would have been a failure. The resurrection demonstrates that He is indeed the Lord of life (1 Corinthians 15:12-20).

THE EMPTY TOMB (28:1-8)

The tomb is empty on Easter Sunday. The women that come to anoint the body of a dead man instead find an angel telling them that Jesus has risen, just as He said!

Matt. 28:1 After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

After the Sabbath, The word *Sabbath* refers to the Sabbath Day, or ‘Saturday,’ namely, the seventh day of the week (see also 12:2). The Greek word *Sabbath* is often found in the plural form. For example, of the 68 times the word is used in the New Testament, 24 times we find it in the plural. In the Septuagint the word Sabbath is found 107 times— 80 times it being in the plural form.

However, both in the singular and in the plural, it is invariably translated as a singular “the Sabbath” (see 12:10-12, Luke 4:16, Colossians 2:16). The word Sabbath can also occur as a true plural (Acts 17:2).

The names of other Jewish Holidays are often plural in form but singular in meaning (i.e. Matthew 26:17 the feast of unleavened bread—the word *unleavened* is plural in Greek).

as the first day The next day would be regarded as ‘the first day of the week,’ namely, Sunday. All four gospels agree that it was on early Sunday morning a group of women went to the tomb of Jesus. In present-day usage, Monday is often regarded as ‘the first day of the week.’

of the week The word translated *week* is also the Greek word *Sabbath*. The word is also used in Greek as a period of seven days or a week (Luke 18:12, John 20:1). The form of the word here is also plural as is the case of “After the Sabbath.” Again we want to stress, the form is plural but the meaning is singular “week.”

was dawning, There are some commentators who see this group of women coming on Saturday night at the end of the Sabbath (McNeile, Gundry).

Mary Magdalene The women whom Jesus cast out seven demons.

and the other Mary The other Mary was the mother of James and Joseph.

went to look at the tomb. The fact that only women are mentioned shows that the story was not invented.

Matt. 28:2 And behold, a great earthquake had occurred; for the angel of the Lord descended out of heaven and came and rolled away the stone and was sitting upon it.

And behold, a great earthquake had occurred; This is possible the same earthquake that is recorded

in 27:51,52. It is also possible that it is an aftershock of that earthquake. The fact that an earthquake occurred testifies to the divine significance of the event.

for the angel of the Lord descended out of heaven and came and rolled away the stone and was sitting upon it. Mark calls this individual a young men, Luke has two men, and John two angels. When the accounts are put together we find that there two angels at the tomb of Jesus whose appearance looked like that of young men.

Matt. 28:3 And his appearance was as lightning, and his clothing as white as snow.

Note on a variant reading: *Codex Sinaiticus* does not have the phrase *And his appearance*.

And his appearance was as lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. The appearance of the angels matches similar appearances of angels at Jesus' birth.

Matt. 28:4 From the fear of him the ones guarding were shaken, and they became as dead men.

From the fear of him the ones guarding were shaken, and they became as dead men. The guard is terrified by the appearance of this angel.

Matt. 28:5 And the angel said to the women, "You stop being afraid, for I know that you are seeking Jesus, who was crucified.

Note on a variant reading: *Codex Sinaiticus* does not have the phrase *to the women*.

And the angel said to the women, "You stop being afraid, *You* is emphatic. These are the same words the angel spoke to Joseph (1:20). The soldiers had shown fear but it was not necessary for Jesus' disciples to be afraid.

for I know that you are seeking Jesus the crucified one; They are looking for someone who has died.

Matt. 28:6 He is not here, for he has risen, just as he said. Come, see the place where he was laying.

Note on a variant reading: Some manuscripts read *come see the place where the Lord was laying* rather than *come see the place where He was laying*.

He is not here, You have come to the wrong place. The only people here are dead!

for he has risen The greatest news humanity has ever received! The resurrection itself is never described in Scripture. Seemingly no one saw Jesus leave the tomb.

just as he said, These refer to the predictions that Matthew records (12:40; 16:21; 17:9,23; 26:32). These predictions should have been known by the Lord's followers. Luke adds, "And they remembered His words" (Luke 24)

come They were standing at a distance because of the presence of the guard.

see the place where he was laying. They are at the correct tomb but Jesus is not there any longer!

Matt. 28:7 And go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He is risen from the dead, and behold He will go before you into the Galilee; there you shall see him.’ Behold I have told you.

Note on a variant reading: Some manuscripts do not have the words *from the dead*.

And go quickly and tell his disciples, This shows that His disciples had not left Jerusalem. The angel would not have asked them to do something impossible. Therefore we know that they had not yet left for Galilee at this time.

‘He is risen from the dead, Luke adds, “just as He said.

and behold Matthew’s favorite word used again to get our attention.

he will go before you into the Galilee; Jesus predicted this meeting in Galilee (26:32).

there you shall see him.’ Matthew emphasizes the Galilean appearances. From the other gospel writers we know that Jesus also appeared in Jerusalem. The fact that Jesus said He would rise upon the third day (Saturday night/Sunday) demands at least one appearance in Jerusalem. The disciples could not have traveled the sixty mile to Galilee by Sunday morning.

Behold I have told you. The angel emphasizes the message they are to give.

Matt. 28:8 And the women hurried away quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and they ran to tell to his disciples.

And the women hurried away quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, One could only imagine the emotions they were experiencing.

and they ran to tell to his disciples. The women obey the angelic command.

THE RISEN CHRIST (28:9,10)

Jesus meets the women returning from the tomb.

Matt. 28:9 And behold, Jesus met them, saying, “Greetings.” And they came, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him.

Note on a variant reading: After *behold* many manuscripts read *and as they were going away to announce to His disciples behold*.

And behold, Jesus met them, saying, “Greetings.” Jesus meets and greets them along the way.

And they came, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. They do the proper thing and worship Him.

Matt. 28:10 Then Jesus said to them, “Stop being afraid, go tell my brothers to go to the Galilee, and there they will see me.”

Note on a variant reading: *Codex Sinaiticus* does not have the word *My*.

Then Jesus said to them, “Stop being afraid, Though there is no explanation of their emotions they obviously were afraid when they saw Him.

go tell my brothers This is the only place in Matthew where Jesus call His disciples My brothers.

to go to the Galilee, This does not rule out the appearances in Jerusalem.
and there they will see me.” Jesus basically repeats the words of the angels

THE REPORT OF THE GUARDS (28:11-15)

The guards tell the religious leader what happened.

Matt. 28:11 And while they were proceeding away, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all these things that had happened.

And while they were proceeding away, We now pick up the narrative of the guards.

some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all these things that had happened. They first tell the priests what happened.

Matt. 28:12 And after they gathered together with the elders, they took a large sum of money and agreed to give it to the soldiers.

And after they gathered together with the elders, they took a large sum of money and agreed to give it to the soldiers. First, they paid Judas to betray Him, now they pay the guards to lie about His resurrection.

Matt. 28:13 saying, “You must say, ‘His disciples came at night and stole his body while we were sleeping.’”

saying, “You must say, ‘His disciples came at night and stole his body while we were sleeping.’
A ridiculous assertion. How do you know that the body was stolen if you were sleeping? Why not a resurrection?

Matt. 28:14 And if this thing gets to the governor’s ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.”

And if this thing gets to the governor’s ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.”
They offer to defend them in front of the governor. Admitting they have fallen asleep on duty could have cost them their lives.

Matt. 28:15 And they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story was widely spread among the Jews, and is to this day.

And they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story was widely spread among the Jews, and is to this day. At the time Matthew wrote this gospel, this story was still the party line.

THE GREAT COMMISSION (28:16-20)

Jesus gives His disciples their final commission.

Matt. 28:16 And the eleven disciples went into the Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus directed them.

And the eleven disciples went into the Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus directed them. We now move several weeks from the resurrection. The eleven disciples obey and go to Galilee to meet Jesus. The significance of Galilee is that the gospel will go out to the Gentiles as well as the Jews.

Matt. 28:17 And when they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted.

And when they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. The word translated *doubted* has more the idea of hesitation. Exactly who doubted is open to question. It is possible that there were others present apart from the eleven.

Matt. 28:18 And Jesus came and spoke to them saying, “All authority in heaven and upon the earth has been given to me.

Note on a variant reading: *Codex Sinaiticus* does not have the words *to them*.

And Jesus came and spoke to them saying, “All authority in heaven and upon the earth has been given to me. Jesus can make the claim to all authority.

Matt. 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and into the name of the Son, and into the name of the Holy Spirit,

Note on a variant reading: Many manuscripts do not have *therefore*.

Go therefore This is a command in the original Greek. It is not the great suggestion, “if you go,” but rather the great commission!

and make disciples of all the nations, This the responsibility of the church.

baptizing them into the name of the Father, and into the name of the Son, and into the name of the Holy Spirit, These are three distinct persons. The Greek text makes it clear.

Matt. 28:20 teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you. And behold, I myself am with you always, even until the conclusion of the age.”

Note on a variant reading: At the end of the book some manuscripts have the word *amen*.

teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you. And behold, I myself am with you always, even until the conclusion of the age.” While the disciples go out and evangelize the world, Jesus has promised to be with them always (Hebrews 13:5).

SUMMARY TO CHAPTER 28

On Easter Sunday morning the women come to the tomb to finish the anointing of Jesus’ body only to find the stone removed, the guard fainted, and the seal broken. In addition, Jesus’ body is gone. An angel at the

tomb informs them that He has risen from the dead—just as He said.

They are then instructed to tell His disciples that He will meet them in Galilee. On their way they meet the risen Christ who repeats the same message.

Meanwhile the guards come to the religious leaders and tell them what occurred. They are told to say they were asleep and that the disciples stole His body. Matthew tells us that this story was still around at the time of the writing of His gospel.

Some time later the meeting in Galilee occurs where Jesus delivers the Great Commission, they are to go into all the world and make disciples. The gospel ends with the promise of Jesus to be with them always.