

I. EVENTS AT THE TOMB OF JESUS

A. Jesus was dead and buried.

- 1. The death of Jesus had been slow and painful, and while He died He suffered for our sins.**
 - a. He had been nailed to the cross at about 9 a.m. and had died at about 3 p.m. For three of those hours it had been dark although it was in the middle of the day.
 - b. When He was finished His suffering He gave His life to His Father: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46). *At that point three things happened. What were they?*
 - c. After crucifixion criminals' bodies were usually thrown on the rubbish heap and the birds and dogs would eat them, but God had prepared a tomb for Jesus.
- 2. A man called Joseph of Arimathaea went to Pilate asking for permission to bury the body. Pilate was surprised that Jesus was already dead. The soldiers checked that Jesus was dead by thrusting a spear into Jesus' side. Then Pilate gave Joseph permission, and Nicodemus (remember him?) helped Joseph.**
 - a. They did not have much time because the Sabbath was approaching. They took Jesus' dead body down from the cross, washed it with water, wrapped it in spices and strips of cloth and placed it in the tomb.
 - b. Women, who loved Jesus, watched where Jesus was laid. They planned to come back to finish the job of anointing Jesus. Who had anointed Jesus even before He died? Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus!
 - c. But Jesus' enemies were worried. They remembered Jesus' words that He had spoken that He would rise again from the dead. They did not believe that He would, of course. But to make sure that the disciples could not come to steal the body and then invent a story about a resurrection they asked Pilate for soldiers to guard the tomb. *So, the dead body of Jesus lay in a solid rock cave. A stone was placed over the opening of the cave. In front of that stone, which was sealed, were heavily armed and well trained Roman soldiers whose job was to protect the body from anyone who would want to steal it.*
- 3. Nobody was expecting Jesus to rise from the dead.**
 - a. The disciples had run away in terror when Jesus had been arrested. They had forgotten His words about rising from the dead. They were hiding from the Jews.
 - b. The women who came early that morning were expecting to find a dead body. They wanted to anoint Jesus with spices. They hoped that someone would help them move the stone.

B. Early in the morning on the 1st day of the week, some women came to the tomb. We know that one of them was called Mary Magdalene, but there were other women called Mary also. Mary was a common name.

- 1. Mary Magdalene loved Jesus. Jesus had saved Mary from seven devils. She had been a demoniac.**
 - a. Now, Mary wanted to show her love one last time, by anointing Jesus' dead body with sweet spices.
 - b. As she and the other women approached the tomb they heard a loud noise and the earth shook. As they got closer they saw that the huge stone had been rolled away. Mary Magdalene thought the worst. She did not wait to find out what had happened. She ran away, running into Peter and John. "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid Him" (John 20:2). Peter and John ran toward the tomb with Mary, looked in the tomb and went home, *but Mary stood there weeping.*
 - c. Then Mary Magdalene saw two angels sitting in the tomb. "Why weepest thou?" they asked her. "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him" (John 20:13-14). When she turned around she saw a man. She thought He was the gardener. He asked her, "Woman, why weepest thou, whom seekest thou?" (v. 15). "Sir, if thou hast borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away" (v. 15). When Jesus said to her, "Mary," she knew Him and rejoiced! But Jesus told her to go tell the other disciples that He was alive.
- 2. While Mary Magdalene had been talking to Peter and John, the other women had arrived at the tomb. They had not run away as Mary Magdalene had done. When they came closer they saw an angel.**
 - a. The angel had come down from heaven at the moment of the earthquake. The soldiers guarding the tomb had felt the earthquake, seen the angel, and fallen to the ground with fear. Then they had run away.
 - b. When the women reached the tomb, the angel said to them: "Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here for He is risen, as He said. Come see the place where the Lord lay" (Matt. 28:7). The women then hurried away to tell the disciples.
 - c. But before they could get to the disciples, Jesus Himself met them, and they worshipped Him.
 - d. Meanwhile, the soldiers who had seen the angel ran to tell the chief priests. The Jewish leaders gave the soldiers a large sum of money to say that the disciples had stolen the body. *Why is that a wicked lie?*
 - e. The women who had seen Jesus came to the disciples and told them but they did not believe.

II. ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

- A. The same day two men, who were followers of Jesus, were walking home from Jerusalem. They had been in Jerusalem that past week for the Passover and they lived in a little town called Emmaus, seven miles away.**
- 1. As they walked home they were talking about everything that had happened in Jerusalem.**
 - a. They had believed in Jesus. But Jesus had been put to death. He was dead, and they had thought He was the Savior. How sad and disappointed they were!
 - b. And then there were strange rumors. The tomb was empty. The disciples had seen the empty tomb. And the women, some of them, were saying that they had seen Jesus alive!
 - c. None of this made sense, and they could not understand it. What did it all mean?
 - 2. As they discussed these things together, Jesus came close to them, and started walking with them, but they did not know that it was Jesus. To them, he was a stranger who had joined them out of nowhere.**
 - a. This man asked them, "What are you discussing, and why do you look so sad?"
 - b. They answered, "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem and hast not known these things which are come to pass there in these days?" (Luke 24:18). *Have you not heard about Jesus of Nazareth, about His miracles, about His teachings, about His death, and the rumors of His resurrection?!*
- B. Jesus (remember they did not know Him yet; He seemed to be a nice man they met on the way) said to them, "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" (Luke 24:26).**
- 1. And this man gave them a Bible study. He showed them in the OT all the things that the Bible says about the sufferings of Christ.**
 - a. Perhaps He began with Gen. 3:15, about the Seed of the woman, "thou shalt bruise His heel."
 - b. He would have shown them the OT sacrifices: all these point to Jesus' death on the cross.
 - c. He would have explained some of the Psalms, such as Psalm 22 or Psalm 69.
 - d. And He read the prophets. O, how many passages there! Think of Isaiah 53.
 - 2. The two men from Emmaus were amazed and invited the stranger to spend the night at their house.**
 - a. As they sat down to eat bread together, Jesus broke the bread and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew it was Jesus! How happy they were! But then Jesus disappeared.
 - b. So filled with joy were they that they got up and went back to Jerusalem, 7 miles, as fast as they could. This news was so important that it could not wait until the next day.

III. IN THE UPPER ROOM

- A. The disciples had been hiding behind locked doors since Jesus' arrest. They expected, now that Jesus was dead, that the Jewish leaders would look for His followers next.**
- 1. Imagine their surprise when there was a knock on the door and the two men from Emmaus came in.**
 - a. Brothers, they said, "The Lord is risen indeed!" (Luke 24:34). We saw Him, we ate with Him!
 - b. But this is what the women had been saying too. Could the women and these men both be right?
 - c. As the two men were explaining what had happened, Jesus Himself appeared in the room. Remember the door was locked. He just appeared, "Peace be unto you," He said (Luke 24:36).
 - 2. The disciples were so frightened that they thought they had seen a ghost. Was it really their Lord?**
 - a. Jesus encouraged them to touch Him, and He asked for some food, a piece of fish and honeycomb, and Jesus ate it in front of them to prove that He was alive. *They believed and they worshipped Jesus.*
 - b. But one of the disciples was missing when Jesus appeared. He was not with the others. He was Thomas.
- B. We do not know why Thomas was not there, but by not being there he missed seeing Jesus. The disciples went to him and said, "We have seen the Lord" (John 20:25).**
- 1. But Thomas would not believe that easily. He had not believed the women, and he was not going to believe the disciples.**
 - a. "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe," Thomas said (John 20:25).
 - b. So, for a week Thomas lived in unbelief. The other disciples were filled with joy, but Thomas did not believe. How miserable Thomas must have been.
 - 2. Eight days later, the disciples were in the Upper Room again; this time Thomas was there with them.**
 - a. The doors were still shut, and suddenly Jesus appeared in the middle of the room. Jesus turned to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger ..." (v. 27). *Touch me and believe!* But Thomas did not need to: "My Lord and my God" he said! (John 20:28).
 - b. Thomas believed but Jesus said that those are blessed who believe without seeing and hearing. He meant us and all those who believe today. We believe but we did not see Him rise from the dead. We did not see the Risen Lord Jesus. *We believe the Word of God by faith. And we are blessed, blessed with salvation.*