

Easter: He is Risen. Mark 16:1-6

16 When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might come and anoint Him.

As followers of Jesus, it's important for us to understand that the cross and resurrection are the fulfillment of God's promise to send a savior, cornerstone of our faith, it is the primary mission of Jesus' life, and is the foundation of the gospel. Mark 15:42 lets us know that the crucifixion had occurred on the day, before the Sabbath that evening, and that there had not been enough time to properly prepare Jesus' body. Joseph of Arimathea had wrapped Jesus' body in a linen cloth, putting about with 100 roman pounds (about 72 modern pounds) of myrrh and aloes, spices, between the cloth layers, before putting Jesus in his own tomb (John 19:39).

Both Mark and Luke testify to the fact that the women kept the Sabbath, which kept them away from the tomb until it was over.

Why are there all of these details regarding spices? Why did the women bring still more in addition to what Joseph had already brought? Because the anointing with spices was a mark of respect for the dead (See Mathew 26:12-13).

Now the spices and oils had another effect—they would stop decomposition for a few days. God had said of the Messiah in Psalm 16:10 **For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; You will not allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.** And just so that we don't miss it, there's all this detail about spices and oils mentioned in the gospels (see Acts 2:27, 30-32).

The spices He was given at His death included Myrrh, signifying death, which was one of the gifts He was given by the wise men to commemorate His birth. He was born to die for us.

God used these women and Joseph of Arimathea as His instruments and His witnesses. Joseph thought that he was only giving Jesus the tomb he had intended for his own burial out of respect, but was instead used by God to fulfill His word in preventing Jesus from seeing decay. The women thought that they were going to pay respects and anoint Jesus' body, but found out that their role was instead as the primary, first-hand witnesses to both the burial and the resurrection. So these women could verify both the location of Jesus' burial, and that by the morning of the 3rd day, the tomb was empty.

² And very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen.

The fact that this verse mentions that the sun had already risen lets us know that Mark picks up his account when there was enough light to see, unlike John, who lets us know that when they first got there, it was still dark, just before sunrise.

³ They were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone from the entrance of the tomb for us?"

Would a stone stand in the way of God's plan? No way. All the power of hell tried to keep Jesus in the grave. Acts 2:24 tells us that death was insufficient to hold Jesus: **But God raised Him from the dead, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.** Why? Because He is God. From a legal perspective, death had no claim on Jesus. As 1st Corinthians 15:56 reminds us **56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the Law;** Since Jesus never sinned and kept the Law fully, He was not under the power of sin and death. God had laid all the sins of humanity on Him, so that He could die in the first place, but He did not commit those sins, and so had to be released by death. God had already taken care of their "Big Problem" of the stone. Mathew 28:2-4 **2 And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it.** And as the sun rose, they were then able to see that. Verse 4 tells us

⁴ And looking up, they *noticed that the stone had been rolled away; for it was extremely large.

Depending on which type of stone was used, the stone covering the doorway of Jesus' tomb was likely between 1 and 2 tons.

⁵ And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe; and they were amazed.

From this verse, we don't understand why a young man wearing a white robe in the tomb would amaze them, but the more specific description of the angel in Mathew 28:3 brings this out a little more clearly: **And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow.**

⁶ But he *said to them, "Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified.

The angel knows exactly why they are there. The angel acknowledges that they have come to the right place, the tomb of Jesus. And that it's the same Jesus—Jesus of Nazareth, just like Mark introduced Him to us back in Mark 1:9. And the angel acknowledges that this is the same Jesus who was killed by crucifixion three days ago.

He has risen; He is not here; see, *here is the place where they laid Him.*

The angel tells them, **He is risen; He is not here.** Talk about exceeded expectations. This is exactly the opposite of what they expected to find in the tomb. With this one word, risen, the whole scenario changes. The tragedy of His crucifixion is revealed as a triumph over death and sin. The women who had probably spent the past 3 days crying were suddenly filled with joy! They get to hear, for the first time, the central belief, the most important belief in Christianity. Paul later makes this point in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 **3 For I handed down to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,**

This is the means by which God saves us. It is because Christ died, paying for all of our sins, was buried and was raised from the dead that we can be saved. The wages of sin is death—it should have been us sinners hanging on that tree, but (John 3:16) **6 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life.** God gave Jesus, so we wouldn't have to die for our sins. And God raised Jesus to show that the price had been paid. God has given you all the evidence you need, if you will choose to believe. And in our verses today, we see the angel providing the women the evidence that they needed saying:

see, *here is the place where they laid Him.*

These words let us know that they saw the place where Jesus had been laid empty, and that they could verify, as eye witnesses, that Jesus was no longer in his tomb on the morning of the third day. And these words are recorded for us so that we know that God did exactly what He said He would do—raise Jesus from the dead.