

“He Is Risen!”

Matthew 27:51-28:7a

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Teaching Aim: To explore the circumstances surrounding the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. To realize, even the most powerful army in the world could not keep Jesus in the grave. To reflect on the role Jesus plays in our salvation and to understand the radical transformation that must take place in our bodies if we are to spend eternity in heaven with Him. To realize we will go to heaven only if we are *“in Christ.”*

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: The burial of Jesus and the extraordinary security in place (Matt. 27:62-66)

1. According to **verse 51**, what occurred at the moment Jesus died? How large was this veil? (Hint: Search online) What made the tearing of this veil such a powerful statement from God? According to **Heb. 10:19-22**, what did this tearing signify? What two-fold message did God send to the world through this act?

2. What supernatural events occurred at the giving of God’s Law on Mount Sinai to the Israelites? (See **Exod. 19:18**) What similar supernatural event took place the moment Jesus died on the cross, thus fulfilling this very same law (**vs. 51**)? (See **Matt. 5:17-18**)

3. **Verses 52 & 53** are two of the most difficult verses in the Bible to understand. What two supernatural events took place in **verse 52**? This event is only recorded in Matthew’s gospel and nowhere else historically. According to Matthew’s account, which individuals were raised from the dead? Why do you think the New Testament so often refers to believers who have died as *“those who have fallen asleep?”* (See **1 Corinthians 15:18; 1 Thess. 4:13-18**) How does each human being act out the future resurrection of the body every night and day?

4. The earthquake in **verse 51** that opened the graves in **verse 52** occurred at the moment Jesus died. According to **verse 53**, when did the saints come out of their graves? What makes this story so strange?

5. According to **verse 53**, what did the resurrected saints do after they were raised from the dead? How many people saw them walking around Jerusalem? Do you think these individuals died again like Lazarus did, or were they the firstfruits to receive their glorified bodies and to ascend into heaven to be with Jesus forever? (See **Dan. 12:1b-3; Eph. 4:8-10**) When will we finally know the answer to this question for sure?
6. How many soldiers was a Roman centurion in charge of? What was the role of the centurion mentioned in this story (**vs. 54**)? What do we know about Roman centurions from Scripture? ***** If this centurion oversaw the men in charge of crucifying Jesus, what horrible acts had his soldiers previously committed against Jesus? (See **Matt. 27:26-31**)
7. Is it possible that the change of heart we see in **verse 54** came as a result of overhearing the prayer of Jesus in **Luke 23:33-34**? At a time when the religious leaders had betrayed Jesus and all His disciples had fled except John (See **John 19:26-27**), who humbly acknowledged that Jesus was the Son of God? Are there more Gentile believers today than Jewish believers? Are you of Jewish or Gentile descent? According to **verses 55 & 56**, what group of believers did not abandon Jesus as He was dying on the cross? Which ladies remained at the scene of the cross? (See **John 19:25**) Why do you think women make up the vast majority of Christians in the Church today?
8. In **verses 57-61**, we examined the events surrounding the burial of Jesus Christ. Joseph of Arimathea likely used his status as a prominent member of the Sanhedrin to approach Pontius Pilate and request the body of Jesus, most normal people would not be allowed to. Had Joseph not done so, the body of Jesus would most likely have been thrown into the Valley of Hinnom (south of Jerusalem) to be burned or eaten by animals. Why would it have taken an extreme amount of courage for Joseph to go to Pontius Pilate and request the body of Jesus? (See **vv. 57-58; Mark 15:42-43; Luke 23:50-53**) Are you a closet Christian, or have you boldly come out?
9. Who else assisted Joseph of Arimathea in the burial of Jesus? (See **John 19:39-42; 3:1-16**) Joseph and Nicodemus hurried to prepare the body of Jesus and place it in Joseph's new tomb before sunset. Why? (See **Luke 23:53-56**) Who was watching as Joseph and Nicodemus were hurrying to get Jesus buried before the Sabbath (**vs. 61**)? What were the women planning to do? (See **Mark 16:1-3**) Did they expect to find Jesus alive or dead? Where were the other disciples of Jesus at this time?

10. What was “*the Day of Preparation?*” When did it fall (**vs. 62**)? (See Commentaries) Instead of worshiping God on the Sabbath Day, what were the Jewish religious leaders doing? What was their request (**vs. 63**)? Did the Jewish religious leaders really believe Jesus would rise from the dead, or did they believe that His body would be stolen (**vs. 64**)? What two “so-called” deceptions were the Jewish religious leaders worried about?
11. Who should have been the first to believe that Jesus Christ would rise from the dead? Why? (See **Matt. 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:18-19**) Why do you think the Jewish religious leaders were more concerned about this prophecy than Jesus’ own disciples (**vs. 63**)? Have you run into unbelievers today who know the Word of God better than you do but don’t believe it or live by it? What is the prerequisite to believing in Jesus and living for Him? (See **Ezek. 36:25-27; John 3:3,5; Rom. 8:6-8**)
12. Why do some people claim to be Christians but have no desire to follow Christ? Can someone who is truly a Christian permanently live their lives this way? (See **John 14:15, 23-24; 2 Cor. 13:5**)
13. Which Roman official granted the Jews a guard for the tomb (**vs. 65**)? How many soldiers comprised a Roman guard? According to **verse 66**, what steps did the Roman soldiers take to secure the tomb? How did they seal the stone covering the door? (See Commentaries) What would happen if a person broke through the wax seal and entered the tomb? Note: Apparently the women had left Friday evening not knowing the Romans would seal the tomb or that a team of soldiers would be ordered to guard the tomb. How does this picture relate to another “*seal*” found in **Eph. 2:13-14**? What makes the seal of **Eph. 2:13-14** so important to us today?

Part II: The resurrection of Jesus Christ and His appearance to the women at the tomb (Matt. 28:1-5)

1. What day falls on the first day of the week (**vs. 1**)? At what time of the day did the women arrive at the tomb? Which woman came? (See Commentaries) What seismic activity took place at the tomb on the morning of the resurrection? (**vs. 2**)? Was this event confined to the area around the tomb, or did it spread to an area much larger? Do you think this supernatural event took place during the night or as the women arrived at the tomb in the morning? What other earthquake had recently struck Jerusalem? (See **Matt. 27:51**) How was each earthquake tied to Christ?

2. According to **verse 3**, what did the angel look like? Today almost all angels in our society are portrayed as women. How many women angels are there in the Bible? Why do you think so many people readily accept this distortion today? How did the hardened Roman soldiers respond to the circumstances surrounding the resurrection of Jesus Christ (**vs. 4**)? Does **verse 4** imply that they were so frightened that they passed out in fear, or were they froze to the ground in fear?

3. **Verse 5** says, "*the angel answered,*" which seems to indicate he was first asked a question. What do you think the two Mary's may have asked him? How does the angel respond? Why do you think the two Mary's didn't pass out like the Roman soldiers did? In **verse 6** we find the greatest announcement ever proclaimed; what is it? What makes this announcement so special? How does the resurrection of Jesus Christ put Christians in a win/win situation today?

Part III: The angel sends the women on a mission (Matt. 28:6-8; 1 Cor. 15:50-58)

1. What two commandments did the angel give to the women in **verses 6 & 7**? Why do you think the angel instructed the disciples to go to Galilee? (See Commentaries) How did the women respond to the angel's command (**vs. 8**)? What do we know about the emotional state of the women as they left the scene of the empty tomb? Where did the women run to?

2. Why is it that "*flesh and blood*" cannot enter the kingdom of God (**See 1 Cor. 15:50**)? (See **Exod. 33:20**) What must happen to the human body before a person can enter the eternal state (**vs. 51**)?

3. What does the word "*mystery*" mean (**See 1 Cor. 15:51**)? (See Dictionary) The mystery of **verse 51** was something that hadn't been communicated to the saints in the Old Testament. What did Paul mean when he said, "*We shall not all sleep?*" (See **John 11:11-14; 1 Cor. 11:27-31**) How is the word "*sleep*" used as a euphemism in the New Testament? What kind of "*change*" will take place in the physical body of believers (both dead and alive) at the sounding of the last trumpet (**51 & 52**)?

4. When do you think the trumpet will sound and the dead in Christ will be caught up to be with the Lord in the air (See **1 Cor. 15:52**)? (Also see **1 Thess. 4:16-18**) What promise is given in **verses 51 & 52** to every born-again believer in Christ who is alive at the time of the rapture? How quickly will this catching up and radical transformation take place? What is the most rapidly moving visible part of the human body? How does this picture the rapture?

5. What radical transformation takes place in **1 Cor. 15:53**? How will this transformation change the relationship between our human bodies and the perpetual enemy of death (**vs. 54**)? Does the thought of your impending death scare you? If so, why? Should death scare the born-again Christian (**54-57**)? Why or why not? What are Christians often afraid of?

6. According to **1 Cor. 15:54**, "*death is swallowed up in victory.*" When will this victory ultimately take place? (See **Isa. 25:8-9**) Bees have a vicious sting but die shortly after sticking their stinger into a victim. Why is Paul's analogy of a bee's sting such a good picture of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and His victory over sin, death and Satan? (**vv. 55**)? (See **Gen. 3:15 NIV**)

7. What is the sting of death according to **1 Cor. 15:56**? What does God use to reveal our sin? (See **Rom. 3:19-20**) Who does Paul thank for the victory we have through our Lord Jesus Christ (**vs. 57**)? How should this victory in Christ affect the way we live our lives today (**vs. 58**)?

MINER'S CORNER – *Manna to live by!*

- The resurrection of Jesus Christ gives every born-again believer a hope that cannot be taken away, from the moment of new birth, the Christian is in a win/win situation.
- The resurrection of Jesus Christ is God's stamp of approval upon the redemptive work of Jesus Christ; our debt has been paid in full and our sin is forgiven.
- After "*coming and seeing*," we should "*go quickly and tell*" others about the Good News of Jesus Christ and His resurrection. (See **John 3:16; 14:6**)
- The dead "*in Christ*" will rise at the moment of the rapture and receive their new glorified body prepared for eternity. (See **1 Thess. 4:16**)
- "*A double resurrection*" will occur in the future when the bodies of believers and unbelievers alike are raised physically from the dead to receive their due; "*some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.*" (See **Dan. 12:1-2**)
- Victory over sin and death come only by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.