

BIBLE READING DAY 48, FRIDAY: APRIL 15

Jesus Rises From the Dead

Matthew 28:2–4, 8; Mark 16:1–7; Luke 24:1–11; John 20:2

And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat down on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his garments were white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became as dead men.

Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might go and anoint Jesus. And on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. And as they went, they said, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?” (for it was very large). But when they came within sight of the tomb, they saw that the stone had been rolled back and that the tomb was empty.

Then Mary Magdalene ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.”

But the other women stayed at the tomb and entered in. They did not find the body of the Lord Jesus, but rather they did see two men in shining garments, one being a young man dressed in a white robe, sitting over on the righthand side.

The women were amazed and alarmed and bowed their faces to the earth. One of the men said, “Do not be afraid. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here but is risen! See, here is the place where they laid him. Remember how he spoke to you when he was still in Galilee, saying, ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.’” And they remembered His words.

The men said, “Go and tell his disciples, and Peter, that he will go ahead of you into Galilee, and as he told you, you will see him there. Behold, I have told you.” So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy.

The Empty Tomb

Matthew 28:9–10; Mark 16:11; Luke 24:12; John 20: John 20:3–18

Meanwhile, after hearing from Mary Magdalene, Peter and the other disciple set out for the tomb, hurrying along together. But the other disciple outran Peter and, arriving first at the tomb, peered inside and saw the linen winding cloths lying there, but did not go in. Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside the tomb and saw the cloths lying there, and the napkin which had been around his head—not lying with the cloths but wrapped round and round and lying in a separate place. Then the other disciple, who had arrived at the tomb first, went inside and saw these things and believed (for as yet they had not understood the scripture, how that it was necessary for Jesus to rise from the dead). Then the disciples returned to their companions.

But Mary stood before the tomb and wept. And as she wept, she peered inside the tomb and saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain—one at the head, and one at the feet.

“Woman,” they said, “why are you weeping?”

“Because they have taken away my Lord,” said Mary, “and I don’t know where they have laid him.”

Then she turned around and saw Jesus standing there but was not aware that it was Jesus.

“Woman,” said Jesus, “why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?”

“Sir,” said Mary (supposing him to be the gardener), “if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.”

“Mary!” said Jesus.

Mary turned to Jesus and cried, “Rabboni!” (that is to say in Hebrew, “Master!”).

“Do not hold me,” said Jesus, “for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brethren and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.’”

The other women, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women, were on their way to tell the disciples, saying nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

And as they went, behold, Jesus met them, saying, “Rejoice!” So they came and held him by the feet and worshiped Him.

“Do not be afraid,” Jesus said to them, “Go and tell my brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.” And so they returned and told all these things to the eleven and to all the others.

He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven demons. She too came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things to her. But their words seemed to them as an idle tale, and they did not believe them.

But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw only the linen cloths; and he departed, wondering to himself at what had happened.

The Report of the Guards

Matthew 28:11–15

Some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests what had taken place. And when the priests had assembled with the elders and had taken counsel, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers and said, “Tell people, ‘His disciples came at night and stole him away while we were asleep.’ And if the governor hears of it, we will satisfy him so that you will have nothing to worry about.”

And they took the money and did as they were instructed, and this report has been circulated among the Jews to this day.

Approximate Timeline of Jesus’s Public Ministry														
EARLY LIFE	EARLY MINISTRY	FIRST PASS-OVER	SUMMER	FIRST BOOTHS	WINTER	SECOND PASS-OVER	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER	FINAL PASS-OVER

DEVOTIONAL DAY 48 (FRIDAY APRIL 15)

Take the Red Pill of Jesus's Resurrection

Based on Matthew 28:2–15; Mark 16:1–8 (9-18); Luke 24:1–12; John 20:2-18

Over the past Christmas holiday, Hollywood released a movie called *Matrix Resurrections*, a reboot of a movie trilogy which began in 1999. Somehow, both main characters who were killed off at the end of the trilogy are brought back to life (not because it makes sense but because the producers undoubtedly thought it would make more money from the franchise).

By no means is this movie series a Christian saga, but it is interesting to think about the movie's plot: that this world is an illusion and that there is a greater reality beyond this world. But in an infinitely greater spiritual sense, there is indeed a greater reality than this present age and world (1 Timothy 6:17, 2 Timothy 4:10).

If you have been reading this as designed, then today is Good Friday, a day dark in church history in despair, marking the day in which Jesus Christ died. Today's reading, however, reminds us that when things seem utterly dark, a resurrection is on the horizon. Or as one person said, "It may seem like Friday night, but Sunday's on the way."

Some of the darkest funerals we have experienced over the last couple of years have been those who were young and in the prime of life. All deaths are hard, but burying a child or grandchild is especially tough.

Today's reading merges the four very different accounts of the resurrection together. You would think that the gospel writers would have collaborated a little more to make the resurrection story a little more coherent and a little more believable.

But the differences in the four gospels make them *more* believable. The heroes of the story (the disciples) are all doubters is not very flattering to their faith. Jesus appearing to Mary Magdalene and then to the other women the morning of the Resurrection before going to His disciples also appears curious if it wasn't true. Surely, the authors of these resurrection gospels could have made it a little more "believable" to a male-dominated, patriarchal society like first century Judaism.

John's account is tender, but different than the other gospels. The open-endedness of Mark's gospel of "the women leaving the tomb, saying nothing because they were afraid," certainly begs for a better closure than this! It's bleak and sudden ending probably prompted some to add more verses to make Mark more in harmony with the other gospels. Matthew and Luke are a little more similar, but even these have some glaring differences in the resurrection accounts, most notably that Matthew states the Jesus appears to all the women who went to the tomb, but Luke does not. But the truth from the events flows without contradiction.

There is even something more mysterious than these things: For something as important as the resurrection of Jesus, why does God not make it more...I want to find a better word than "believable" but I can't. We are talking about eternal life, not just for Jesus, but also for ourselves. Heaven and hell are literally on the line, and we are having to trust the Almighty on this with less than stellar evidence?

I suppose we will have to wait until we get to Heaven to let the Almighty know how we may "disagree" with how He handled the "story line" of this world's "reality". It is indeed *His Story* to tell! Unlike the movie *Matrix*, however, God's reason for His Son's resurrection was not to make a buck, but to give us an eternity to spend with Him, if for no other reason, just to learn more about *His* reality.

Our Father in Heaven, we recognize that You are the Author and Perfector of our faith. As this world's history unfolds, we see more and more that this is indeed Your story to tell, and You indeed are the Masterful Story Teller. Thank You for plot twists and surprises that keep us ever dependent upon You.

--By Tim McKeown

WRITE DOWN YOUR THOUGHTS IN RESPONSE TO WHAT YOU HAVE READ:

WHAT DID GOD SAY TO ME?

PRAYER: WHAT DID I SAY TO GOD?

ACTS OF PRAYER: ADORATION, CONFESSION, THANKSGIVING, SUPPLICATION (How God Can Supply Needs

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