



April 8, 2022

Why is the Visible Appearing of Jesus Following His Crucifixion Important?

Warm hellos friends, brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God, from here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you all doing well, and that your week has been blessed.

Might we consider or ponder what made the Feast of Unleavened Bread special for the early church and the disciples? Why did the early disciples have such a strong faith and commitment to their calling and faith in their Savior?

One often overlooked very important factor was the visible appearing of Jesus following His crucifixion and being placed in the tomb.

What if all they saw was an empty tomb and never witnessed the resurrected Son of God?

Maybe they would have concluded, as the Jewish leaders feared, that someone stole the dead body of Jesus and hid it somewhere else.

Matthew 28 records that the guards assigned to watch the tomb saw the angel who rolled back the stone from the entrance of the tomb. (vv.2-4) They reported what they saw to the chief priests. (v.11) *Then the chief priests and elders instructed the soldiers, "Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.'" (v.13)*

John 20 records Mary Magdalene coming early to the tomb and seeing the stone rolled back from the entrance to the tomb. (v.1) She ran and told what she saw to Peter and John, *"They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him."* (v.2) Initially she thought the body had been removed to another location. After she returns with Peter and John and they look into the tomb and leave, Mary looks into the tomb again. *"And she saw two*

angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus." (John 20:12-14)

At first Mary doesn't recognize Jesus and still believes that someone has secretly removed the body of Jesus. *"Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher)." (John 20:15-16)* Finally Mary realizes who He is and understands and believes that Jesus has been resurrected from the dead! I can only imagine what emotion she must have felt when Christ said Mary!

Jesus appeared later to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary as they went to inform the disciples that an angel told them that Jesus was risen from the dead. (Matthew 28:1, 9) The other Mary was the wife of Cleopas, and mother of James and Joses (according to the opinion of Adam Clarke). Jesus instructed the women to tell the disciples to travel to Galilee where Jesus would appear to them. (v.10) Jesus appeared some time later to them at a mountain in Galilee that Jesus had specified to them. Even then, some doubted. (vv.16-17).

Later on Sunday, Jesus appeared to most of the disciples in a room with a closed and very possibly locked door. (John 20:19) The disciple Thomas was not there then and when he was told of Jesus' appearance he said, *"Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."* (v.25)

Eight days later Jesus again appeared to the disciples with Thomas present. He was ordered by Jesus to put his hand into Jesus' side. Thomas then believed. (vv.27-28) Jesus insured that there were eye witnesses to the fact that He was resurrected from the dead.

We'll continue these thoughts next time...

Arms up friends! Our prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Please do pray for us as well.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Hoefker', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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