

MONDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY

April 3, 2023 – Matthew 28:1-10

Immediate Context

Matthew 26:1-5	The Plot to Kill Jesus	Matthew 27:3-10	The Suicide of Judas
Matthew 26:6-13	The Anointing at Bethany	Matthew 27:11-14	Pilate Questions Jesus
Matthew 26:14-16	Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus	Matthew 27:15-23	Barabbas or Jesus?
Matthew 26:17-25	The Passover with the Disciples	Matthew 27:24-26	Pilate Hands Jesus Crucifixion
Matthew 26:26-30	Institution of the Lord's Supper	Matthew 27:27-31	The Soldiers Mock Jesus
Matthew 26:31-35	Peter's Denial Foretold	Matthew 27:32-44	The Crucifixion of Jesus
Matthew 26:36-46	Jesus Prays in Gethsemane	Matthew 27:45-55	The Death of Jesus
Matthew 26:47-56	Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus	Matthew 27:56-66	The Burial of Jesus
Matthew 26:57-68	Jesus Before the High Priest	Matthew 28:1-10	The Resurrection of Jesus
Matthew 26:69-75	Peter's Denial of Jesus	Matthew 28:11-15	The Report of the Guard
Matthew 27:1-2	Jesus Brought before Pilate	Matthew 28:16-20	Commissioning the Disciples

Helpful Scriptures

Job 19:23–29 (NRSV)

²³ "O that my words were written down! O that they were inscribed in a book! ²⁴ O that with an iron pen and with lead they were engraved on a rock forever! ²⁵ For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that at the last he will stand upon the earth; ²⁶ and after my skin has been thus destroyed, then in my flesh I shall see God, ²⁷ whom I shall see on my side, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me! ²⁸ If you say, 'How we will persecute him!' and, 'The root of the matter is found in him'; ²⁹ be afraid of the sword, for wrath brings the punishment of the sword, so that you may know there is a judgment."

Psalms 49:10–20 (NRSV)

¹⁰ When we look at the wise, they die; fool and dolt perish together and leave their wealth to others. ¹¹ Their graves are their homes forever, their dwelling places to all generations, though they named lands their own. ¹² Mortals cannot abide in their pomp; they are like the animals that perish. ¹³ Such is the fate of the foolhardy, the end of those who are pleased with their lot. *Selah* ¹⁴ Like sheep they are appointed for Sheol; Death shall be their shepherd; straight to the grave they descend, and their form shall waste away; Sheol shall be their home. ¹⁵ But God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me. *Selah* ¹⁶ Do not be afraid when some become rich, when the wealth of their houses increases. ¹⁷ For when they die they will carry nothing away; their wealth will not go down after them. ¹⁸ Though in their lifetime they count themselves happy—for you are praised when you do well for yourself— ¹⁹ they will go to the company of their ancestors, who will never again see the light. ²⁰ Mortals cannot abide in their pomp; they are like the animals that perish.

Isaiah 26:16–20 (NRSV)

¹⁶ O Lord, in distress they sought you, they poured out a prayer when your chastening was on them. ¹⁷ Like a woman with child, who writhes and cries out in her pangs when she is near her time, so were we because of you, O Lord; ¹⁸ we were with child, we writhed, but we gave birth only to wind. We have won no victories on earth, and no one is born to inhabit the world. ¹⁹ Your dead shall live, their corpses shall rise. O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a radiant dew, and the earth will give birth to those long dead. ²⁰ Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until the wrath is past.

Daniel 12:1–13 (NRSV)

¹ "At that time Michael, the great prince, the protector of your people, shall arise. There shall be a time of anguish, such as has never occurred since nations first came into existence. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book. ² Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth

shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. ³ Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. ⁴ But you, Daniel, keep the words secret and the book sealed until the time of the end. Many shall be running back and forth, and evil shall increase.” ⁵ Then I, Daniel, looked, and two others appeared, one standing on this bank of the stream and one on the other. ⁶ One of them said to the man clothed in linen, who was upstream, “How long shall it be until the end of these wonders?” ⁷ The man clothed in linen, who was upstream, raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven. And I heard him swear by the one who lives forever that it would be for a time, two times, and half a time, and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end, all these things would be accomplished. ⁸ I heard but could not understand; so I said, “My lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?” ⁹ He said, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are to remain secret and sealed until the time of the end. ¹⁰ Many shall be purified, cleansed, and refined, but the wicked shall continue to act wickedly. None of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand. ¹¹ From the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that desolates is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred ninety days. ¹² Happy are those who persevere and attain the thousand three hundred thirty-five days. ¹³ But you, go your way, and rest; you shall rise for your reward at the end of the days.”

Ezekiel 37:1–14 (NRSV)

¹ The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ² He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. ³ He said to me, “Mortal, can these bones live?” I answered, “O Lord God, you know.” ⁴ Then he said to me, “Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. ⁵ Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶ I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord.” ⁷ So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸ I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. ⁹ Then he said to me, “Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.” ¹⁰ I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude. ¹¹ Then he said to me, “Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.’ ¹² Therefore prophecy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³ And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴ I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act,” says the Lord.

Matthew 27:51–56 (NRSV)

⁵¹ At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. ⁵² The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. ⁵³ After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. ⁵⁴ Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, “Truly this man was God’s Son!” ⁵⁵ Many women were also there, looking on from a distance; they had followed Jesus from Galilee and had provided for him. ⁵⁶ Among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

1 Corinthians 15:3–8 (NRSV)

³ For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, ⁴ and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in

accordance with the scriptures,⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.⁶ Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died.⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.⁸ Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

Key Words/Phrases

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning. The resurrection takes place, not on the Sabbath (the seventh day of the week), but on a weekday (the first day). At creation, God sanctified the Sabbath—the last day of the week. At the resurrection, Jesus sanctifies the first day.

Mary Magdalene or “of Magdala,” is mentioned first in every listing of Jesus’s female disciples (Matt. 27:55–56, 61; 28:1; Mark 15:40–41, 47; 16:1; Luke 8:2–3; 24:10). She therefore seems to have been prominent among a group of women who “followed” and “served” Jesus constantly from the outset of his ministry in Galilee to his death and beyond. Matthew and Mark acknowledge these women only immediately after Jesus’s death, but Luke mentions their presence with the twelve during Jesus’s ministry in Galilee (8:1–3). Here Mary is included among the many women who provided for Jesus’s ministry “out of their own resources,” suggesting that these women were persons of some financial means who served as patrons for Jesus and his male disciples. Mary is also said to have been healed by Jesus of some unnamed infirmity; the healing involved an exorcism of seven demons (Luke 8:2). Mary is presented in all four Gospels as a witness to Jesus’s death (Matt. 27:55–56, 61; Mark 15:40–41, 47; Luke 23:49, 55–56; John 19:25) and to the empty tomb (Matt. 28:1, 6; Mark 16:1–6; Luke 24:1–3, 10; John 20:1–2). In the Synoptic Gospels, she receives a divine commission to tell the male disciples about the resurrection (Matt. 28:5–9; Mark 16:6–7; Luke 24:4–10). According to Luke, her testimony (and that of the other women) was not at first believed, but was later vindicated (24:11, 22–48). According to John 20:11–18 the risen Jesus appeared first to Mary and he talked with her about his coming ascension (20:17). Despite her prominence in the Gospel stories, Mary Magdalene is not mentioned elsewhere in the NT, although it is possible that she would be assumed to be among the “certain women” mentioned in Acts 1:14. She is conspicuous by absence in the list of witnesses to the resurrection provided by Paul in 1 Cor. 15:3–8. The nonhistorical tradition that Mary Magdalene had once been a prostitute derived from confusion of her with the unnamed woman in Luke 7:36–50.

The Other Mary – presumably the mother of James and Joseph. She is among the women disciples at the cross (Matt. 27:55–56; Mark 15:40), and she appears with Mary Magdalene at the burial of Jesus (Matt. 27:61; 28:1; Mark 15:47; 16:1). Later, she is present to behold the first appearance of the risen Christ (Matt. 28:9).

Tomb – According to the Gospel accounts, the tomb in which the crucified body of Jesus was placed belonged to Joseph of Arimathea, who is variously identified as a rich man (Matt. 27:57), a respected member of the council (Mark 15:43), and a secret disciple of Jesus (John 19:38). It was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid, and it was located in a garden in the same vicinity as the place where Jesus was crucified (19:41). The Gospel writers also mention a stone that needed to be rolled away from the opening before one could enter the tomb (Matt. 28:2; Mark 16:3; Luke 24:2; John 20:1). This scenario assumes that the tomb of Jesus was probably carved into a limestone hill with an opening that could be closed with a door that looked like a stone wheel. The wheel would have been placed into a groove or track to keep it in place. When the tomb was opened, the wheel could be rolled up a sloping track and held in place with some object. To close the door, it was necessary only to remove the block and let the wheel roll downhill in front of the opening of the tomb. The traditional location of Jesus’s tomb is the site on which the Church of the Holy Sepulchre now stands. The identification of this site was made under Constantine in 335 CE, but at that time appeared to be based on ancient tradition (e.g., of Christians worshiping at the spot prior to the war with Rome in 66 CE, and of Hadrian building a temple to Aphrodite on the spot, an indication that some group regarded it as sacred, in 135 CE). There is no way of authenticating the tradition.

A Great Earthquake, Angel – The earthquake, the angel with dazzling clothing, and the rolling away of the stone are eschatological symbols, telling us that God is ushering in a new age. They remind us of Israel’s encounter with God at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:18). An earthquake also announced Jesus’ death (27:51). The angel’s appearance is reminiscent of the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7:9 and 10:6 as well as Moses’ shining face after his encounter with God at Sinai (Exodus 34:29) and Jesus’ shining face and dazzling white clothes at the Transfiguration (17:2). It also both reflects God’s glory and authenticates the angel’s heavenly origins. Earlier in this Gospel, an angel appeared to Joseph to tell him to take Mary as his wife (1:20), to tell him to flee to Egypt (2:13), and to return to Israel (2:19-20).

Rolled Away the Stone – In Matthew’s gospel, the tomb is still closed when the women arrive. The angel rolls the stone away and shows that Jesus is no longer there.

Guards – Why guards? See Matthew 27:62-67 (request of the Chief Priests and Pharisees). Jewish guards (temple guards) not Roman guards (however, see footnote on verse 65). The guards quake just like the earth (both words have the Greek root from which we get our word seismology).

Do not be afraid – same thing said to Joseph in Matthew 1:20. Also appears out of the mouth of Jesus at 10:31, 14:27; 17:7.

Raised – ἡγήθη from ἐγείρω meaning “to raise up, rise, or get up.”

Come, See, Go, Tell – four imperatives given by the angel to the women. The angel commissions the women to tell the disciples, making them the first to proclaim the Good News of the resurrection. If Matthew were trying to concoct a believable story, Jesus would appear first to Peter or one of the other men. But just as Jesus breaks the mold by choosing women to be the first witnesses, he again breaks the mold by choosing them to be the first preachers.

Galilee – Prior to the crucifixion, Jesus told the disciples that he will “go ahead of you to Galilee” (26:32). Galilee is for Matthew not mere geography, but theology, ‘Galilee of the Gentiles’ (cf. 4:12-17), the appropriate setting for the Great Commission to all nations (28:16-20). It is also Jesus’ home and the place where he has done most of his work.

Jesus met them, saying “Greetings!” – It’s interesting that the NRSV translates what Jesus says as “Greetings!” because the word in Greek is Χαίρετε which comes from the root, χαίρω, meaning “Rejoice!” or “Be glad!” Jesus would have spoken Aramaic, but Matthew is writing in Greek. And this is a common greeting, and means “Rejoice!” Joy and rejoicing are common themes throughout both Old and New Testaments. We first encounter this word χαίρω in the response of the Magi to seeing the star stop above the house where Mary was taking care of the baby Jesus. They “rejoiced with exceedingly great joy”—a literal translation would be “they were overjoyed (χαίρω) beyond measure” (Matthew 2:10). So from the beginning of Jesus’ life to his resurrection appearances, rejoicing was an important part of this Gospel (see also 5:12; 13:20, 44; 18:13; 25:21, 23).

Took hold of his feet, and worshipped him – The women immediately recognize Jesus, unlike the accounts in Luke 24:16 and John 20:14, and come to him. They take hold of Jesus’ feet, their act bearing witness to Jesus’ bodily resurrection. They worshipped him, Greek προσεκύνησαν from προς, meaning “to, toward” and κυνέω, meaning “to kiss, adore.” Literally, to kiss toward someone, to throw a kiss in token of respect or homage. The ancient oriental (especially Persian) mode of salutation between persons of equal ranks was to kiss each other on the lips; when the difference of rank was slight, they kissed each other on the cheek; when one was much inferior, he fell upon his knees and touched his forehead to the ground or prostrated himself, throwing kisses at the same time toward the superior. It is this latter mode of salutation that Gr. writers express by proskunéō. In the New Testament, generally, to do reverence or homage to someone, usually by kneeling or prostrating oneself before him.