

Bi123 The Gospels 2

Lesson Bi123-25 Visiting the Tomb

When people hear news that seems unbelievable, they want it confirmed by more than one witness. All the gospel writers witness to the truth in this lesson, one of the key points of our faith. Jesus prophesied not just that he would die, but that he would return from the grave never to die again. He conquered death not just for himself, but for all those who put their faith in him. We see in this lesson how believers and unbelievers responded to the news of the resurrection.

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ‘The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’” Then they remembered his words, though they had not understood nor accepted them earlier.

When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb (Luke 24:1-12)

Then John started for the tomb also. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus’ head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead). Then the disciples went back to where they were staying (John 20:3-10).

John goes into great detail to explain about the cloths that covered Jesus’ body. These were the work of Joseph and Nicodemus. Do you remember when Lazarus was raised from the dead? He needed to be unwrapped from the grave cloths. Jesus however, rose through his grave clothes, not moving them, but passing right through them. This confirmed to John that he was alive!

Mary returned and stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus’ body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?”

“They have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I don’t know where they have put him.” At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

He asked her, “Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?”

Thinking he was the gardener, because the tomb was in a garden, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.”

Jesus said to her, “Mary.”

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means “My Teacher”).

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

Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them that he had said these things to her (John 20:11-18).

Of all the disciples, Mary, a formerly sinful woman became the first to meet the risen Lord. She recognized him not by his physical appearance, but by his voice calling her name. She was the first to be commissioned by Christ himself to carry the message of the resurrected Lord. Jesus is still calling women today to carry his message. She was also the first one he told the next part of God’s plan. Soon he would ascend to be with the Father.

At the same time some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, telling them, “You are to say, ‘His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.’ If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.” So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day (Matt 28:11-15).

Another opportunity to believe in Jesus had presented itself to the leaders. The frightened guards told all that had happened. They still refused to believe in the Messiah, even when they knew he had returned from the dead!

This story is **important** because it tells that after his resurrection, Jesus’ first appearance was to a woman disciple, Mary Magdalene. He then sent her to the eleven disciples with the message of the Resurrection.

The **main truth** of this story is that the disciples realized Jesus had risen from the dead when they saw the evidence. Only then did they remember his words and understand what he had said.

Let's **review** this lesson—

1. What did the disciples of Jesus discover on the Sunday after Jesus was crucified?
A. [Pause] If you said, “They discovered that Jesus had risen from the dead,” you are correct.
2. Who were the first disciples to make the discovery that Jesus had risen?
A. [Pause] If you said that the first to discover that Jesus was risen from the dead were the women disciples, you answered correctly.
3. What were the guards told to say to explain the fact that Jesus’ body was gone?
A. [Pause] If you answered that the guards were told to say, “His disciples came during the night and stole his body while we were asleep,” you are right.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to learn the story so you can tell it from memory. After telling it to someone, ask them this question, “What does it mean for believers today, that Jesus rose from the dead over 2,000 years ago?” Discuss your answers together.