

# CAPITOL STUDIES

APRIL 5, 2023 • WEEK 13



## JOSEPH: THE CIVIL SERVANT FROM EGYPT

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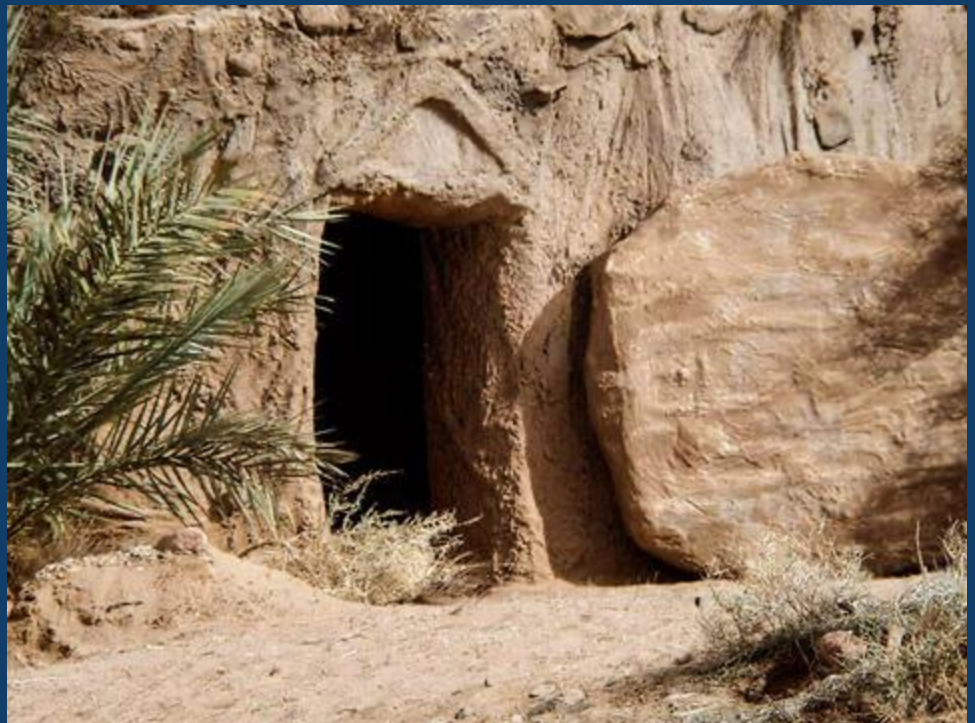


### *Verse of the Week*

Matthew 28:6

*He is not here, for  
He has risen, just as  
He said. Come, see  
the place where He  
was lying.*

## The Messengers of the Resurrection



**H**UMANITY WASN'T THE ONLY ONE who sent ambassadors to the tomb early that first Resurrection Sunday morning. Heaven sent an emissary to declare the good news that Jesus was alive, not dead. You will remember that an angel also brought “good news of great joy,” announcing the birth of Jesus (Luke 2: 10-11). “He is here. The promised Messiah is here. He has come to save you from your sin. Come and see.” The angel’s pronouncement today is different: “He is not here. Come and see. Jesus died and paid for your sin. But He is risen from the dead. He is alive forevermore. Go and tell” (Matthew 28:6).

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## INTRODUCTION

The apostle Paul often reminds the readers of his letters of the resurrection. In 2 Timothy 2:8, Paul reminds Timothy to never forget that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead. In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul tells them to hold fast to the Gospel. And what is the Gospel? “That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3b-4). Paul goes on to say, “If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied” (1 Corinthians 15:17-19).

Because “all have sinned” (Romans 3:23) and “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23), you and I are condemned to death. Sin must be punished. But God in His great mercy sent Jesus not “to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved” (John 3:17 KJV).

The cruel, excruciatingly painful death of Jesus was necessary to pay the penalty of your and my sins. “For the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). No one else could have done it. First of all, **Jesus was the only perfect being to walk on this earth.** He did not need to be punished for His own sin since He had none. He could, therefore, die in the place of every sinner. Since there are none on this earth who are righteous (Romans 3:10), that means Jesus died in the place of every human being that has ever been and ever will be born. “Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin” (Romans 6:6-7).

Jesus is the only One Who could die for our sins because He alone is perfect but also because **death had no power over Him.** “Knowing that Christ, having been raised from dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all” (Romans 6:9-10). We cannot defeat death in our human body. Our only hope of life after death is to be rescued by Jesus and clothed in His righteousness: “The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23b). “Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him” (Romans 6:8).

When I come to Jesus, repenting of my sin, and placing my faith solely in His death and resurrection, I receive His gift of eternal life along with His righteousness. “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me” (Galatians 2:20). It’s no longer me, but Christ in me, that gives me “the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27).

*Matthew 16:21*

*From that time Jesus began to show his disciples how he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.*



*Matthew 17:22-23*

*The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: <sup>23</sup>and they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again.*

*Matthew 20:18c-19*

*They shall condemn him to death, <sup>19</sup>and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again.*

*Matthew 26:32*

*“But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.”*

Jesus had tried to prepare His friends by speaking of His upcoming death on numerous occasions. Their hearts, ears, and eyes were not wanting to believe at that point. **After Jesus’ death, their hearts and faith were broken. They did not remember His promise** that He would rise again. **What does God have the angel do to facilitate their faith? He removes the obstacles.**

## I. HE ROLLS THE STONE AWAY

*Matthew 28:1-2*

*Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave. <sup>2</sup>And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it.*

Mark 16:1 tells us that while the women are on their way to the tomb to finish preparing the body for burial, one of their concerns is how to remove the stone. That stone represents the finality of death for them. It is an exclamation point at the end of the sentence of death, seemingly saying, “He is gone forever!” Praise God! He takes care of that stone. The angel did not come to release Jesus from the tomb, for no stone could restrain Him. The stone is rolled away so that His friends can look into the tomb and see that it is forever empty. One of the obstacles to faith, the stone, is rolled away.

## II. HE REMOVES THE SOLDIERS

*Matthew 28:3-4*

*And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. <sup>4</sup>The guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men.*

In Matthew 27:62-67, we read that the chief priests and the Pharisees worry that the prophecies of Jesus may be fulfilled, leading them to request a guard for the tomb. Surprisingly, unbelievers appear to have greater faith in Jesus’ words than those who profess to know Jesus. With Pilate’s seal, the tomb is secured. Soldiers stationed at the door are another obstacle between Jesus’ friends and the tomb. Nevertheless, God’s angel is quick to disperse the soldiers. The fearless soldiers cannot





stand in the angel's presence and faint at his feet. Another impediment to faith, the guard at the tomb, is rolled away!

### III. HE REMINDS THE SAINTS

*Matthew 28:5-8*

*The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. <sup>6</sup>He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying. <sup>7</sup>Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you." <sup>8</sup>And they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy and ran to report it to His disciples.*

As the angel begins to speak to the women that morning, the greatest obstacle of all is removed—**unbelief!** His message convinces them that their Lord Jesus has risen from the dead! They are no longer faithless but believing! Notice what the angel reminds them.

#### A. Of the Past

"Jesus did die. He was placed in this tomb." The death of Jesus on the cross is a crucial event in Christian theology. Jesus sacrificed Himself as a substitute for our sins, allowing us to be forgiven and reconciled with God. This Gospel is the theme of the entire Bible.

*Isaiah 53:5-6*

*But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him and by His scourging we are healed. <sup>6</sup>All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.*

*Hebrews 9:22*

*All things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.*

*1 John 1:7b*

*The blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.*

#### B. Of the Present

"You are here at this tomb, but Jesus isn't! He is risen!" This is the greatest proclamation ever to fall upon human ears! A dead Savior can save no one! A living Savior can offer salvation to all who come to Him by faith.

*Hebrews 7:25*

*Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.*



Jesus' death is the perfect, eternal payment for sin, but His resurrection is God's receipt for the full amount! When Jesus died on the cross, He said, "It is finished!" When He rose from the dead, God the Father said, "I am satisfied!"

**His victory over death is sure.** "I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades" (Revelation 1:18). You can look to Him by faith and be confident of His power to save.

### C. Of the Promise

"He said He would rise again, and He did! His resurrection should not take you by surprise!" **Jesus is Who He claimed to be from the beginning.**

*John 11:25-26*

*Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies,<sup>26</sup> and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?"*

*Matthew 12:40*

*For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*

Again, it seems like the Jewish leaders had more faith in the promises of Jesus than did His own disciples! Jesus' friends should have been there, ready to meet Him when He came out of the tomb. Would we have been?

### D. Of the Proof

"Come inside and look!" The angel invites them to look into the tomb and see for themselves that Jesus is gone! When Peter and John arrive later, John notes that the linen cloths wrapped around Christ's body are lying like an empty cocoon, while the napkin that was about His face is folded in a place by itself. Seeing this causes John to believe that Jesus is alive (John 20:2-7)!

There are two reasons why the appearance and arrangement of the grave clothes are of such importance. First, there was no sign of human intervention. If someone had taken the body, they could not have removed it through the grave clothes. It is likely they would have taken the body still wrapped in the cloths that bound it. They would not have taken time to fold the napkin. It, too, would have been taken with the body, or at least discarded in a haphazard manner. But the empty tomb was a scene of perfect order. A resurrection had taken place!

Second was the ancient oriental custom of the napkin. A man with servants would often use his napkin to signal them during the course of a meal. If he left the table and wadded his napkin up, it meant that he was finished and would not be back. If, however, he neatly folded the napkin, it told his servants that he was stepping away for a moment, but he would be back! Jesus was telling His disciples, "I may be out of your sight right now, but I'll be back!"





When Peter and John arrive at the tomb, they fear the worst. Perhaps they think robbers have come or that the Jews have taken His body away. Even Mary misses the napkin and supposes the gardener has moved the body of the Lord (John 20:15). John, who had been raised with servants (Mark 1:20), probably knows this custom and quickly grasps the meaning (John 20:6-8).

### E. Of the Plan

“Go tell Jesus’ disciples that He is risen, and He will meet them in Galilee.” The women are to go and share the good news that Jesus is alive! Those disciples, probably cowering in fear that the next cross might be their own, will receive the glorious news that Jesus has conquered death and is alive forevermore!

## CONCLUSION

What a glorious message those women were given that day! It was a message of hope. A message of life. A message of victory. It was a message that everyone needed to hear.

It still is! May we never forget that the message of that tomb is as fresh today as it was then! Jesus is still alive, and men trapped in the bondage of fear and sin still need to hear it. May we do as these women did and **share the message** with swift feet and joyful hearts to a world that desperately needs to hear about the risen, rescuing Lord! May we also **believe** that the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is available to His children every day. “I can do all things through Him Who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13).

**His promises will never fail.**

*Hebrews 13:5b*

*I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.*

*John 14:1-3*

*Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. <sup>2</sup>In my Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup>If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.*

*Psalms 16:11*

*You will make known to me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; in Your right hand there are pleasures forever.*

Pastor Arin Hess

## FOOTNOTES

All Scripture quotations, unless noted, are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, 1995 Update.



