



## Easter Sunday – Looking For Proof?

April 11, 2004

By Rev. David Koch

### Introduction:

What a day of celebration and victory we share as Christians. The foundation of our faith rests on the truth of Christ's resurrection. We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and that He will come again to judge the quick and the dead.

Those truths expressed in the Nicene Creed and the Apostle's Creed have been believed and recited by millions of people since the time of Jesus' resurrection. Our faith is based on the record of God's word which tells us clearly that Jesus was victorious over death and the grave.

There are many places in Scripture where it specifically mentions Jesus appeared *after* His resurrection from the grave. Let's look at several of those accounts this morning.

### I. PROOFS

He appeared on that morning:

- (1.) To Mary Magdalene at the sepulcher alone. This is recorded at length only by John. (John 20:11-18)

Can you imagine how she must have felt? She was coming to the tomb to complete embalming Jesus' body for burial. She finds the stone rolled away and the tomb empty except the grave clothes. The question that the angels asked her was, "Why are you crying?"

When we face the death of a loved one, tears flow for a variety of reasons. Mary was crying because she thought robbers had come and stolen Jesus' body and she had no idea where they had taken him.

I find it interesting that she finds the empty tomb, the soldiers gone, and it doesn't occur to her that Jesus has been resurrected.

It is true. *We often see what we expect to see and not what truly is.* Mary was expecting to see the tomb sealed, soldiers guarding the tomb, and somehow she was hoping to convince the soldiers that she needed to complete the embalming of Jesus body. What she was not expecting to see was an empty tomb. She was not expecting to see Jesus alive, and so her mind immediately began to think that something bad had happened rather than something good.

- (2.) To certain women, "the other Mary," Salome, Joanna, and others, as they returned from the sepulcher." (Matthew 28:1-10)

These women also came to the tomb expecting to find things just as they left them when Jesus was buried after He died. I suppose they were pretty startled when they came and found the tomb empty and the angel of the Lord speaking to them.

The angel here had to let these women know what had happened to Jesus. "He is not here; He is risen as He said He would." They were instructed to go and spread the news of Christ's resurrection.

(3.) To Simon Peter on the day of the resurrection.  
(Luke 24:34)

Peter went to check out the story of Mary, Salome, Joanna and others, because he and other disciples did not believe the story that the tomb was empty. Somehow they did not connect what they had been told with what had happened. Even though Jesus had told them over and over that He would suffer, be rejected, arrested, tried, crucified and three days later rise from death, they couldn't seem to believe it was true.

It is obvious that Peter's expectation was not based on what He had been told by the Lord prior to Jesus' death, but the expectation he had was based on what he had seen. He had witnessed the fact that Jesus had died and was buried.

To often in life, we base our reactions to things that we see, rather than what God's word says is true.  
*What is your expectation?*

When you pray, what do you expect? When you read God's word, what do you expect? When you see the activities around you in the world, when you look for answers, what do you expect? Are your expectations based on the truth of God's word, or on the things you see?

(4.) To the two followers on the way to Emmaus on the day of the resurrection. (Luke 24:13-35)

Here are two disciples seeing Jesus, talking to Jesus, walking with Jesus for more than an hour, and still failing to recognize Him. How could that happen? It could happen because they were not expecting to see Him. I have had the interesting experience of seeing one of our men here at church grow a beard and have it on for several months. One Sunday I came to church and was talking to him and said, "Hey you shaved off your beard." I had seen him at church for a couple of weeks, and had talked to him, but hadn't realized he had shaved it off. It was no longer growing on his face, but since I hadn't expected to see him without a beard, I thought he still had it.

(5.) To the ten disciples (Thomas being absent) and others with them at Jerusalem on the evening of the resurrection day. One of the evangelists, John, gives an account of this appearance. (John 20:19-24)

That first resurrection day, as evening approached, the disciples had gathered in a locked room. It was real tight security. Suddenly there in the middle of them, Jesus appears. No doubt they were startled. Most likely they had gathered to try and figure out what to do now. They had received reports from Peter, two Mary's, and the two disciples on the road to Emmaus that Jesus was alive, so it seems that they needed to gather to compare the sighting and discuss what they should do. Thomas was not there.

When the Lord appeared, He gave them proof that He was truly alive. They were overjoyed. He did three things in that initial meeting with them.

1. He sent them even in the same way He had been sent.
2. He breathed on them so they would be filled with His Spirit.
3. He gave them a renewed understanding of forgiveness and sin.

He was directing them to spread the gospel.

(6.) To the disciples (Thomas being present) at Jerusalem. (John 20:26-28)

One week later, 11 of them were meeting in a closed and locked room. This time Thomas was with them, and Jesus appeared. It is interesting what Jesus said to Thomas.

## II. Our Blessing

You did not believe because you did not see. What were you expecting? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. We are among that group of blessed individuals who have not seen Christ in the flesh, or His resurrected body, but we have believed.  
*What proof are you looking for?*

Other appearances include the disciples fishing at the Sea of Galilee, the 11 and about 500 brothers at once in Galilee, and to James, and the apostles immediately before Jesus ascended to Heaven from Olivet. He also appeared to Paul at Damascus on the road.

His resurrection is a proof that he made a full atonement for our sins, that his sacrifice was accepted as a satisfaction to divine justice and his blood a ransom for sinners. It is also a pledge and a picture of the resurrection of all believers. As he lives, they shall live also.

There was a report which circulated concerning Christ's resurrection. (Matthew 28:12-14) That report said that Roman soldiers were bribed to say "Jesus disciples came by night and stole him away while we slept."

Matthew Henry in his "Commentary on John 20:1-10, remarks, "*The grave-clothes in which Christ had been buried were found in very good order, which serves for an evidence that his body was not stolen*

*away while men slept. Robbers of tombs have been known to take away the clothes and leave the body; but none ever took away the body and left the clothes, especially when they were 'fine linen' and new (Mark 15:46). Any one would rather choose to carry a dead body in its clothes than naked. Or if they that were supposed to have stolen it would have left the grave-clothes behind, yet it cannot be supposed they would find leisure to 'fold up the linen.'*"

**Conclusion:**

I choose to stake my faith on the validity and truth of God's word. I have not seen but I still believe. We are blessed as Christ's followers today because we have not seen and yet we have believed. **LOOKING FOR PROOF?** What do you expect to see?