

An example of our sinful human capacity toward unbelief can be found in the fact that the people who should have been the first to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead proved to be the most skeptical. Certain women came to Jesus' tomb expecting to anoint His dead body with burial spices. The disciples who had spent so much time with Jesus quickly dismissed the reports of His resurrection. Yet, they all came to both believe and to proclaim the truth that He had indeed risen.

1 Now upon the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain *others* with them.

These are the women who had traveled with Jesus from Galilee (Luke 23:54-56). They had witnessed the crucifixion and had seen the tomb where Joseph of Arimathaea had prepared and placed Jesus' body (Luke 23:53). Since the task of preparing Jesus' body for burial was apparently rushed in order to have it in the tomb before the beginning of the sabbath at sundown, the woman had went home and made preparations to finish the job after the sabbath (Luke 23:56). Now they were bringing those spices to the tomb so that they could finish anointing Jesus' body.

2 And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. 3 And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

“And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre” – The other gospels supply additional details. The women had wondered how they were going to roll the stone away (Mark 16:3) and the soldiers who were guarding the tomb had apparently already fled away in fear when an angel rolled away the stone (Matt. 28:2-4).

“And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus” – The women apparently were not aware that it was an angel that had rolled the stone away. They simply entered the open tomb with the expectation of seeing the body of Jesus. They were surprised and bewildered to see that it was not there.

4 And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: 5 And as they were afraid, and bowed down *their* faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

“And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout” – The women were understandably confused by the situation, wondering what had happened to the body of Jesus.

“behold, two men stood by them in shining garments” – Two angels appeared in order to inform the women that Jesus had risen from the dead. Only Luke mentions that there were two angels; the other gospels focus only on the angel that spoke.

“And as they were afraid, and bowed down *their* faces to the earth” – The shining garments caused them to recognize that these were not ordinary men. They were witnessing something supernatural.

“they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?” – A tomb was where you expect to find dead bodies, so it was the wrong place to expect to find Jesus, Who was very much alive. In fact, not only was Jesus alive, He is the Source of life (**John 5:26** *“For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself”*); **John 11:25-26** *“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?”*).

6 He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, 7 Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

“He is not here, but is risen” – The angels explain why they are looking in the wrong place for Jesus. He had risen from the dead and no longer had a reason to remain among the dead.

“remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee” – The angel reminds them that Jesus had told them beforehand that these things must happen. They should not have been surprised.

“Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again” – Jesus had told them that the events of the past three days would indeed happen and everything He predicted happened exactly as He said.

8 And they remembered his words, 9 And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

“And they remembered his words” – They remembered the words that Jesus had said as they realized that everything He predicted had come true exactly as He said.

“And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest” – The women go and find the “eleven” (the twelve disciples minus Judas Iscariot) and the other believers and tell them what they have seen.

10 It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary *the mother* of James, and other *women that were* with them, which told these things unto the apostles.

Luke identifies certain noteworthy women that were in the group to show us that these were not just random women with no credibility. These women knew Jesus and would recognize His body if it were there. These women report what they have seen to the 11 apostles.

11 And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not. 12 Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

“And their words seemed to them as idle tales [nonsense], and they believed them not” – The apostles did not take these women seriously and dismissed their report as nonsense. Yes, Jesus had raised others from the dead, but could even He raise Himself from the dead? They obviously did not think this was possible.

“Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre” – Even though the group did not believe the women, apparently Peter decided it was worth going to the sepulcher to see if what they said was true. John 20:4 says that John also went, out running Peter and reaching the tomb first.

“and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves” – John 20:5-8 says that both Peter and John entered the tomb and saw that the body of Jesus was not there and the burial clothes had been left behind. If someone had simply stolen the body, why would they have removed the burial clothes?

“and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass” – John’s testimony was that he believed after seeing the empty tomb (John 20:8), but apparently Peter was still trying to decide if Jesus had indeed risen or if something else had happened to Jesus’ body.

Verses 13-43: Jesus appears to two disciples who were traveling to Emmaus, explaining the OT scriptures that predicted the sufferings and resurrection of Christ before He disappeared from their sight. These two disciples excitedly return to Jerusalem to report to the others that they had seen Jesus. After the two disciples reported what they had seen and hearing that Jesus had also appeared to Peter, Jesus suddenly appeared to the group. Jesus allows them to touch and handle His body so that they would see that He was not a ghost but had truly risen from the dead. He also ate a piece of fish and some honeycomb to further prove that He was physically alive.

44 And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me.

Jesus reminded them that He had told them that the OT scriptures concerning the Messiah had to be fulfilled in Him. The things He suffered were not a surprise or bad luck, but had been ordained and predicted to happen by the will of God.

45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, 46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

Jesus gave the disciples and apostles the ability to recognize and understand the OT scriptures that spoke of Him. He explained that it “behoved” (was necessary) for Christ to suffer, to die, and rise from the dead because of the prophecies written in the OT. He helped them to understand that these things were the plan of God to bring salvation to those who would believe.

47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And ye are witnesses of these things.

“And that repentance and remission [release from the bondage or penalty; forgiveness] of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” – Not only were the death, burial and resurrection of Christ predicted in the OT, but also the fact that the gospel would be preached throughout the world, advocating repentance and forgiveness of sin through the name of Jesus Christ.

“And ye are witnesses of these things” – The preaching of the gospel would begin with the apostles and the other disciples who were eyewitnesses of Christ’s death, burial and resurrection. This responsibility becomes what is known as the Great Commission (**Acts 1:8** “*But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth*”).

49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

The apostles would not be able to handle the responsibility given to them by Jesus in their own strength. Jesus knew that they would need supernatural power to be able to preach the gospel responsibly as well as face the opposition they will encounter. He instructs them to remain in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit came and filled them with this supernatural power (Acts 2).

50 And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. 51 And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

“And he led them out as far as to Bethany” – This is not the town of Bethany but a tract of land on the far side of the Mount of Olives that bore the same name. Jesus ascended from the Mount of Olives and will return to the same place (Acts 1:9-12; Zech. 14:3-4).

“and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them” – Jesus bestowed His favor upon the apostles before leaving.

“And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven” – Jesus ascended to heaven (Acts 1:9) in full view of the apostles (Acts 1:10-11). There He will remain until His return.