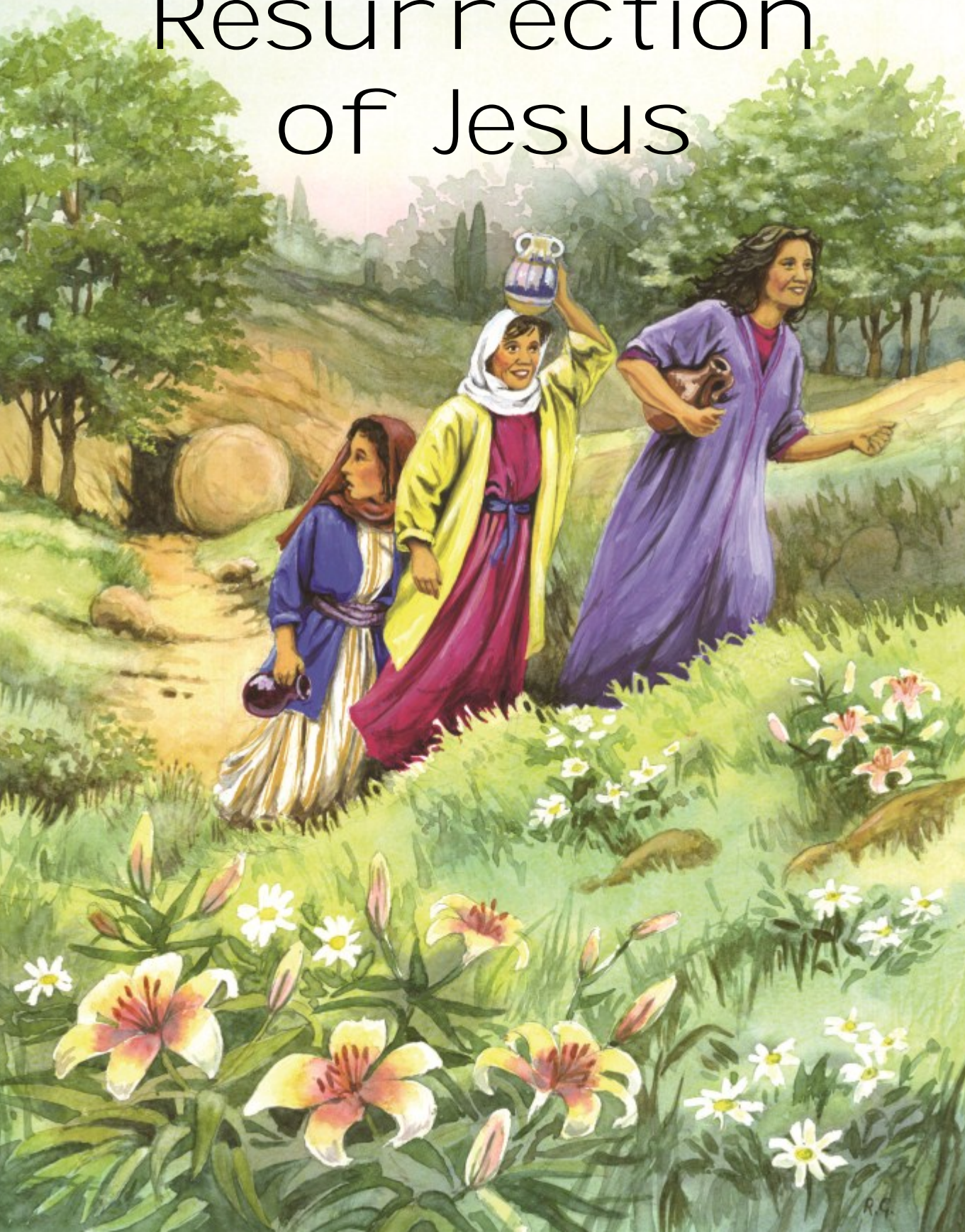


The Resurrection of Jesus



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Important Note

Comparing the accounts in the four Gospels, it is extremely difficult to be certain of the *exact* order of events, especially on the morning of the resurrection. One thing is clear. There must have been much coming and going of the godly women and the disciples, backwards and forwards, between the city of Jerusalem and the Lord's grave, and one house and another.

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“Jesus is Alive”

It is very early in the morning and it is still dark. A few women are walking sadly through the streets of Jerusalem. Two of them are called Mary, another one Salome, and there are a few others with them as well.

Why are they looking so sad? Terrible things had been happening. They had seen the Lord Jesus crucified. He had been nailed to the cross. They had loved Him dearly – but now He was gone.

Now they were on their way to His grave. It was something like a cave, and a huge stone had been rolled in front of it. But they are worried. How can they move that great stone? They wanted to go inside to put sweet spices on the body of the Lord Jesus.

At last the women reached the garden where Jesus’ grave was. But imagine their surprise! The stone was rolled away. Reverently they went inside – but there was no body there. What had happened? It seemed that someone must have stolen the body of Jesus, and taken it away.

They did not know that Jesus had come back to life. That was why His body was not there. During the night wonderful things had happened. A glorious angel had come down from heaven and rolled away the stone.

The soldiers, guarding the grave, had been terrified and ran away. The Lord Jesus, now alive, had left the grave.

But the women did not know this. All they could see was an empty grave. Poor Mary Magdalene was so distressed. Immediately she ran as fast as she could to tell the news to Peter and John. She knew they would be amazed to hear that the body of Jesus had disappeared. But while the other women wonder what to do, they see an angel in shining robes. He tells them something wonderful. Jesus is alive. They need not be frightened. They must go quickly and tell the disciples that He is risen from the dead. No wonder they ran as fast as they could with the good news.

But now Mary Magdalene has found Jesus' disciples, Peter and John. "They have taken the Lord away," she cries, "and we do not know where they have laid Him." She cannot think that Jesus is now alive – the wonderful truth: "THE LORD IS RISEN INDEED."

Of course, Peter and John are amazed. They hurry to the grave as quickly as they can – Mary following them.

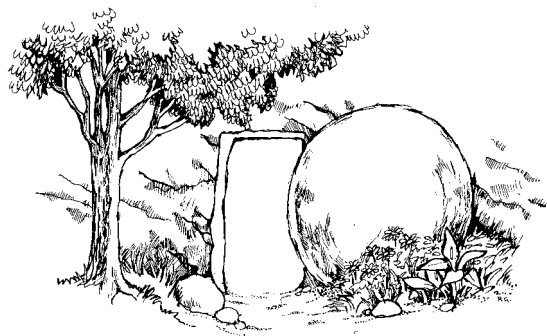
John was the faster runner and got there first. He looked into the grave. How strange! No body – but the grave clothes neatly folded. When Peter arrived,

he went straight in. And when John followed, it dawned on him immediately – Jesus is alive; that is why the grave is empty! What remarkable things the two of them had to talk about as they went back into the city!

How wonderful that Jesus is alive, never to die again!

You can read this story in Matthew chapter 28, verses 1 to 8, Mark chapter 16, verses 3 to 7, and John chapter 20, verses 1 to 10.

The first Christians used to greet each other on the Lord's day morning with "THE LORD IS RISEN INDEED."





Mary Magdalene

See this sorrowful woman standing by the grave of Jesus. She is crying bitterly. Yes, it is Mary Magdalene. She has come back to the grave after Peter and John have gone. She cannot keep away.

Mary had been a very wicked woman. But Jesus had forgiven all her sins. She very dearly loved the Lord Jesus for all that He had done for her. She could not bear to think of the cruel death He died on the cross. Now even His body was gone. She was not there when the angel told the other women that He was risen.

She was sad because she had lost her dearest friend. But other things made her sad. Had not Jesus said He was the Son of God? But now He is dead.... What of her sins?

However, she thought she would have another look inside the grave. And two angels were there! One was sitting where Jesus' head had been, and the other where Jesus' feet had been. They asked her why she was crying. It seemed a foolish question to Mary. Surely everyone knew why she was crying. "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him."

She turned sadly away from the grave. Someone was standing there in the garden – a Stranger. And the

Stranger asked her just the same question as the angels: why was she crying?

You know who this Stranger was, don't you? It was Jesus, just risen from the dead. But Mary Magdalene did not know. She thought He was only the gardener. So she asked Him if He was the one who had taken the body away. Perhaps she did not really look, or her eyes were filled with tears.

Then she heard the sweetest sound she had ever heard in her life. It was the voice of Jesus. He was speaking her name. He was saying, "Mary." It was only one word, but it meant everything to Mary Magdalene. Her Lord and Master was alive. He *was* the Son of God. He did still love her. "Fear not, I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine."

Quickly Mary replied, "Rabboni!" – my dearest Lord and Master. She worshipped Him.

Then Jesus said a strange thing to her: "Do not touch Me." (Later He *told* the disciples to touch Him.) It seems that Mary thought everything was going to go on just as before. She wanted to cling to Him. But Jesus told her that He was not going to stay on earth for long. He was going back to heaven to His Father – "your Father," he told Mary. And she was to go and tell the disciples all that had happened.

What a meeting it must have been when Mary

came to the disciples and told them all the wonderful things that had happened! She had seen the Lord, no longer dead but alive again, and He had talked with her.

You can read about this in John chapter 20, verses 11 to 18.

We keep Sunday as the Sabbath, the Lord's day, because Jesus rose from the dead "early on the first day of the week."





Jesus' Second Appearance

Now what had happened to the other women? Can you remember, they had seen an angel? He had told them Jesus was alive. Now they were hurrying to tell the good news to the disciples. They ran as quickly as they could. What strange feelings they had – so happy, because of what they had heard; still afraid, because of what they had seen!

Suddenly, as they hurry along the road into Jerusalem, someone is coming to meet them. Can it be true? Yes, it is Jesus Himself. Lovingly He greets them. He says, “All hail!”

We do not read they spoke a single word. But together they all fell down at His feet. Tenderly they held those feet that on the Friday before had been pierced by the cruel nails. They worshipped Him. Their hearts were full of love and joy and thankfulness. Their Lord and Master was with them once again.

Jesus spoke very kindly to them. He told them not to be frightened; there was nothing to be frightened of, though they had been shaking with fear. They must take a message to the disciples – He kindly calls them, “My brethren.” The disciples must go back to Galilee, and they will see Him there.

This was the *second* time Jesus appeared. He was

to stay on earth for forty days, and then go back to heaven to His Father. But *all* His disciples would see Him, and some more of His friends. So many would be able to say, “We have seen the Lord” – though at first some could hardly believe it was true.

You can read about this in Matthew chapter 28, verses 9 and 10.

We must only worship God. But have you noticed, when people worshipped the Lord Jesus, He did not forbid them?

