

# The Resurrection of Jesus: The Second Sign of Jonah

**Matthew 28:5-8; Mark 16:2-8; Luke 24:1-8; John 20:1**

Very early in the morning on Sunday the seventeenth of Nisan

**DIG:** What day did the women visit the tomb of Christ? What *time* of day did Mary visit Yeshua's tomb? Why do you think she chose that time? How did Mary react when she saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance of the tomb? Who did the women meet and what did they say? What was their reaction?

**REFLECT:** How would our lives be different if Messiah had never died and risen again? Why do you think it is so hard for some people to believe that Jesus rose from the dead? What does Christ's resurrection mean to you? What evidence helps you to believe that Yeshua rose from the dead? What keeps us from sharing the exciting news of the Lord's resurrection with those who don't believe? What objections do people have about Jesus' resurrection? How can we respond to them?

On the third day the Lord Jesus arose victorious. Messiah died for our sins, in accordance with what the TaNaKh says; and He was buried; and He was raised on the third day, in accordance with what the B'rit Chadashah says (First Corinthians 15:3 CJB). From the Talmud Tractate *thamid* we know exactly which Psalm would have been sung on which day of the week in connection with the daily burnt offering in the Temple. It is breathtaking how closely each of the Psalms coincides with the singing of these daily readings. The Levitical choir sang Psalm 24 on this day, as they had done a week before. Again, the Temple singers proclaimed the message of the open doors for Messiah the King. The entrance to the garden tomb had been shut with a heavy stone (Matthew 27:60), sealed and guarded by motivated Roman soldiers (Matthew 27:65-66). But all that was no obstacle to the Supreme Commander of Life and Death, who came out of the tomb victoriously as the Risen Savior. The Levitical choir, accompanied by the Levitical orchestra (see Nb2 - Levitical Musicians at the Nicanor Gate), sang:

The earth is ADONAI's, with all that is in it, the world and those who live there; for He set its foundation on the seas and established it on the rivers. Who may go up to the mountain of ADONAI? Who can stand in His holy place? Those with clean hands and pure hearts, who don't make vanities the purpose of their lives or swear oaths just to deceive. They will receive a blessing from ADONAI and justice from God, who saves them. Such is the character of those who seek Him, of Jacob, who seeks Your face. Lift up your heads, you gates! Lift them up, everlasting doors, so that the glorious King can enter! Who is He, this glorious King? ADONAI, strong and mighty, ADONAI, mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, you gates! Lift them up, everlasting doors, so that the

glorious King can enter! Who is He, this glorious King? ADONAI Tzva'ot, the Lord of heaven's armies - He is the glorious King (Psalm 24:1-10 CJB).<sup>1649</sup>

Very early on the first day of the week, very early in the morning while it was still dark, the women left Bethany, which was about two miles from Jerusalem. They had prepared spices in preparation for going to the tomb (Mark 16:2a; Luke 24:1a-b; John 20:1a-b). In every sense they were waiting for the Light.

Then, just after sunrise, the women took the spices they had prepared and arrived at the tomb. And they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb" (Mark 16:2b-3; Luke 24:1c)? The verb is imperfect, showing continuous action. *They kept on asking each other.* It was the chief topic of conversation. They had no way of anticipating the resurrection.

Mary Magdalene being a nimble young woman, eagerly ran ahead and came to the tomb first (John 20:1c). Sunday morning, while it was still dark, she rose herself (if she had slept at all), rummaged around to get herself ready, gathered up the spices and perfumes she had prepared and set out for the tomb. Her devotion was never more plain than in response to His death. When she arrived, however, she saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance and left before seeing the angels; she assumed that someone has removed the body of Messiah. Immediately, she ran back to inform Peter and John.

Behind her was the second group of women. After completing their two-mile walk from Bethany they arrived at the tomb. When they looked, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away from the entrance of the tomb. The verb is *anablepo*, meaning *to look up*. They approached the tomb with downcast eyes and bowed heads. But when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus (Mark 16:4; Luke 24:2-3; John 20:1c). There can be no doubt that the tomb was empty.

He was buried and He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures (First Corinthians 15:4). Some have said that Jesus rose spiritually, but His physical body stayed in the ground. But Sha'ul was a Jewish rabbi, and the Jews had no conception of a spiritual resurrection. In Judaism, the resurrection was the resurrection of the body (Ezekiel 37:1-14)! So when Rabbi Sha'ul says that He was raised, he means the body was not there.

Judaism had long held to a belief in the resurrection (see my commentary on [Revelation Fd - The Resurrection of the Righteous of the TaNaKh](#)). There has even been some debate among the rabbis about the possible resurrection of the Messiah Himself. Tractate Sukkah 52a tells us that some rabbis teach that the first Messiah, Meshiach ben Joseph, will be killed in the last battle, but he will be resurrected by the second

**Messiah, Meshiach ben David** (also see **Mv - The Jewish Concept of Two Messiah's**). A later commentary explains it this way, "When Messiah ben Joseph is killed, his body will remain cast out in the street for forty days, but no unclean thing will touch him until Messiah ben David comes and brings him back to life, as commanded by the LORD. And this is the beginning of the signs that he will perform, and this is the resurrection of the dead that will come to pass (*Hai Gaon, Responsum* as quoted in Patai, *The Messiah Texts*, page 169).<sup>1650</sup>

In addition, the Gospel could not have been preached in Jerusalem if **the tomb** had not been empty (**Acts 2:14-41, 3:11-26, 4:1-12, 7:1-53, 26:1-23**). There is no doubt that the Good News was being preached in the City. Josephus, the Jew who became a Roman historian, tells us that **James**, the brother of **Jesus**, was martyred in Yerushalayim. All the other **apostles**, save **John**, were also martyred (see **Cy - These are the Names of the Twelve Apostles**). People just don't die for that which they know to be untrue. Human nature tells us that **the tomb** had to be empty!

While the women were wondering about this, suddenly two angels, who appeared as men, stood beside them. They were dressed in long stately white robes that touched their feet and gleamed like lightning. Once again, the Gospel writers seemed to be at a loss for words as they tried to describe something incomprehensible - the Shechinah glory (see my commentary on **Isaiah - Ju - The Glory of the LORD Rises Upon You**). Quite naturally, the women were completely amazed. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground. The women's response was essentially the same as that of the guards who watched an angel of the LORD come and roll away the stone (**Matthew 28:2-4**). One of the angels said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified (**Matthew 28:5; Mark 16:5-6a; Luke 24:4-5a**).

But the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He isn't here! He has risen from the dead, just as He said would happen" (**Matthew 28:6a NLT; Luke 24:5b-6a**). This is the eternal fact about **Messiah** - He is not dead but alive! Many people think of **Jesus** as a great teacher who lived and died two thousand years ago: end of story! But the same documents that tell of His life - and not merely of a resuscitation only to die again later, but of a new creation by **ADONAI** (**Romans 5; First Corinthians 15; Hebrews 7**), therefore that He can never die but is our brother, savior, king and *cohen gadol* (Hebrew: high priest) forever. Faith in a dead **Messiah** is no faith at all. To trust in a risen **Christ** an intimate, continuing relationship with everyone in the congregations of **ADONAI** (see **Kx - The High Priestly Prayer**).<sup>1651</sup>

The use of the passive verb emphasizes the important truth that **Jesus** did not raise **Himself as the Messiah**, but it was **God the Father - the God** of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob - who performed the powerful miracle. The resurrection confirmed that **Christ** is indeed **His Son, the Meshiach** for Isra'el and all the Gentile nations. In the midst of **their shock, the women** were encouraged by one of **the angles to come and see the place where they laid Him**" (Matthew 28:6b; Mark 16:6b-c). So the stone had been rolled away so that the witnesses could enter **the tomb** to see for themselves.

Isra'el was to receive no more signs but **the sign of Jonah**, which was **the sign of resurrection** (see my commentary on **Jonah As - The Sign of Jonah**). This sign was to come to Isra'el **three different times**. The **first sign of Jonah** was the resurrection of Lazarus (**Ia**), which was rejected when the Sanhedrin plotted to kill **Jesus (Ib)**. The **second sign of Jonah** was the resurrection of **Christ (Mc)**, which was rejected when the Sanhedrin rejected the truth of the Gospel and stoned Stephen in **Acts 7:1-60**. The **third sign of Jonah** will be the resurrection of the Two Witnesses (see my commentary on **Revelation Dm - The Resurrection of the Two Witnesses**), which will be accepted and all of Isra'el will be saved (see my commentary on **Rev Ev - The Basis for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ**).

**Remember how He told you**. Although **Yeshua's** teaching on His death and resurrection were primarily directed to **the apostles**, it is assumed that **the women** knew this teaching also. It is possible that **they** were present when **Christ** said these things or that **they** heard it from **the talmidim**. **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 the women remembered His words (Luke 24:6b-8). But while the women remembered **Messiah's** words, they did not understand the significance of **them** or the meaning of **the empty tomb**.

Therefore, one of **the angels** said: **Go quickly and tell the other apostles and Peter, "He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. This was the second time word comes to the talmidim that they were to go to Galilee. There you will see Him, just as He told you"** (Mark 16:7; Matthew 28:7).

It is astonishing that the first witnesses to the resurrection were **women**. Although Jewish **women** had many civil rights and protections under the Torah, it was a commonly held cultural belief that **a woman** was not a credible witness in legal matters. This was deduced from a passage in the Torah: **Then both the men who have the dispute shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who will be in office in those days (Deuteronomy 19:17 NASB)**. **Hence, the rabbis taught that witnesses needed to be men, not women or minors (Tractate Yoma 43b)**. This was not so much a judgment against **women** in that first-century patriarchal society, but the roles were very rigid and testifying

in court was viewed as a man's responsibility. The Jewish culture in general held that **women** were exempted from the positive commandments because of **their** difficult responsibility of being a homemaker (**Tractate Kiddushin 1:7**). This gives credence to the Gospel account, for anyone trying to fabricate a resurrection story would have *never* used **women** as witnesses, they would have used **the apostles**. The Gospel writers, on the other hand, were only concerned with recording the actual events as they happened.<sup>1652</sup>

**Trembling and bewildered, yet filled with joy, the women went out and ran together to tell the Eleven and all the others.** Since Judas was no longer alive and a replacement had not yet been found. **Their** combination of **trembling** and **joy** was a natural, and to-be-expected reaction. **All the others** probably included the **one hundred and twenty** of **Acts 1:15**. They must have also included the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Only **Mark** tells us: **They said nothing to anyone else at first because they were afraid.** But after they had collected **their wits, they** did a lot of talking (**Matthew 28:8; Mark 16:8; Luke 24:9**).

There is a theological significance of the resurrection to **Christ**, to believers and to all mankind. The resurrection proved that **Messiah is the Son of God (Romans 1:4)**, and it confirmed the truth of all that **He** had said (**Matthew 28:6**). For believers, it proves our justification (**Romans 4:24-25**), empowers us for service (**Ephesians 1:17-20**), guarantees our resurrection (**Second Corinthians 4:14**), designates the **Lord** as **head of the Church (Ephesians 1:20-22)**, insures us that **Jesus** has the power over death (**Hebrews 2:9-18**), and **He** is our sympathetic high priest in heaven (**Hebrews 4:14-16**). For mankind, the resurrection guarantees all will be **raised** again (**First Corinthians 15:20-22**), and judged with justice (**Acts 17:30-31**).<sup>1653</sup>

It has been said that facts are stubborn things! And it is a fact that **Jesus was raised to life** and is **seated at the right hand of God interceding for us (Romans 8:34)**. In fact, this is true whether you believe it or not. For example, say you don't believe in gravity and someone throws you out of a plane at 10,000 feet. All the way down you could keep repeating to yourself . . . I don't believe in gravity . . . I don't believe in gravity . . . I don't believe in gravity. But in the final analysis, it doesn't really matter what you think. At some point you will have a serious encounter with the earth. It is also a fact that Buddha is lies in his grave, Muhammad is still in his tomb, and Confucius is in his burial place, but **the Messiah** had risen. **He** has risen indeed. The same is true of **the Great Rabbi**. You can say to yourself . . . I don't believe **Yeshua is the Messiah** . . . I don't believe **Yeshua is the Messiah** . . . I don't believe **Yeshua is the Messiah**. But at some point, either in this world or the next, you will have a serious encounter with **the Truth (John 14:6)**.

I will not be including **Mark 16:9-20** in the remainder of this commentary. There are many reasons for doubting it was an original part of the *Greek* text. It is very interesting to note that Muslims teach that since these verses are omitted, the resurrection is not true. The resurrection, however, is recorded in all four gospels, and the questionable part of **Mark 16:9-20** is not about the resurrection. There are seven reasons for omitting these verses.

1. The *Greek* text does not appear in the oldest and most reliable manuscripts of the Gospel (It does appear, however, in some early manuscripts).

2. Many of the *Greek* words in this section are different from the vocabulary **Mark** uses throughout the rest of his Gospel account.

3. The *Greek* style is *much* different from that used elsewhere in the Gospel of **Mark**.

4. The transition between **Mark 16:8** and **9** is very awkward. The subject of **verse 8** is the women, but **verse 9** assumes that the subject is **Yeshua** (the word **Jesus** in **verse 9** does not appear in the *Greek*, which reads: **having risen on the first day of the week**).

5. **Mary Magdalene** is identified in **verse 9** as the one **out of when He cast seven demons**, as though the reader does not know who **she** is. However, she was just mentioned in **Mark 15:40** and **47**.

6. **Mark 16:9-20** looks like a compilation of resurrection appearances from the other Gospels. **Verses 12** and **13**, for example, summarize **Luke's** account of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (**Luke 24:13-25**).

7. There is a third, shorter ending given in some manuscripts, suggesting that different copyists knew of the missing text and tried to add an appropriate ending.<sup>1654</sup>

Doctor Frank Morison wasn't the kind of person you'd find in church on Sunday morning, but he won the respect of everyone - a well-educated Brit, an attorney by profession, a supremely moral man, but a skeptic in matters of faith. By his own account, he was a man moved only by irresistible logic and verifiable fact. He preferred the theology of German critics, Dr. Matthew Arnold of Oxford, Charles Darwin, and Sir Thomas Huxley. Therefore, he rejected the possibility of miracles and the supernatural, and he suppose that all of Christian tradition should be stripped of its "overgrowth of primitive beliefs and dogmatic suppositions" to find the *real Jesus*, whom he considered "an almost legendary figure of purity and noble manhood." Naturally, this meant he believed in the historical reality of a man named **Jesus** who died at the hands of Rome; but he denied the historical belief in the resurrection of **Jesus Christ**.

Determined to discover a **Jesus** stripped-bare of religion, Morison set out to study **His** last days and uncover the truth of the subsequent week. He chose to pursue the study from a purely intellectual point of view, using the documents of Scripture, history, and archaeology, committed to allow the facts speak for themselves. And with the dogged curiosity and relentless logic of Sherlock Holmes, he unraveled the mystery of **Christ**. The results of his findings and personal transformation are published in his book entitled: *Who Moved the Stone?* (London: Faber & Faber, 1958). In the preface, Morison writes,

"[This book is] the inner story of a man who originally set out to write one kind of book but found himself compelled by the sheer force of circumstances to write quite another.

It is not that the facts themselves altered, for they are recorded imperishably in the monuments of human history. But the interpretation to be put upon the facts underwent a change. Somehow my perspective shifted - not suddenly, as in a flash of insight or inspiration, but slowly, almost imperceptibly, by the very stubbornness of the facts themselves. The book that was originally planned was left high-and-dry."

Obviously, there can be no resurrection without first having a corpse. The miracle of the empty tomb depends on the certainty of **Jesus'** death. The need to substantiate this fact is made necessary by critics who declare **He** never died. Entire books have been written claiming that **Jesus** lapsed into a coma and lay unconscious in **the tomb**. Then, inside the damp cool of **the tomb**, **He** revived, pushed aside the stone, slipped past the guards, and then escaped into the night, claiming to have been raised from the dead.

**John** described and defended the resurrection of **Jesus** against other kinds of denial, but **his** words - inspired and preserved by **the Holy Spirit** - remain useful for us today. Not only for the sake of correct theology, but **so that you also may believe (John 19:35)**.<sup>1655</sup>