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Mary Magdalene and Mary the Mother of James Brought Spices to Anoint the Body of Jesus

Matthew 28:1 and Mark 16:1

At dawn on Sunday the seventeenth of Nisan



A golden **dawn** was streaking across the sky **when Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body (Matthew 28:1b; Mark 16:1b).** All of the evidence that the Gospel writers have marshaled to substantiate their claim that **Yeshua is the Messiah, the Son of God**, falls short of being the Good News without the conclusive fact of the resurrection. So, the reports of the event through the eyes of three **women** who were also firsthand witnesses of **Yeshua's** crucifixion and burial were vital. Although **women** were not considered reliable witnesses, **their** corroboration could not be disclaimed.¹⁶⁴⁴ **This is a summary statement of the events that would shortly unfold.**

There was evidently no thought of resurrection in **Mary Magdalene's** mind. **She** had seen up close the devastating effects of the bitter blows **her Savior** had received on **His** way to the cross. **She** had witnessed firsthand as **His** life ebbed from **Him**. **She** had watched as **His** lifeless **body** was unceremoniously wrapped in linen and hastily prepared ointment, and left alone in **the tomb**. The one thought that filled **her** heart was a desire to do properly what **she** had seen done so hurriedly and haphazardly by Nicodemus and Joseph. **She**

thought **she** was coming to **the tomb** for one final expression of love to **her Master** - to whom **she** knew **she** owed everything.¹⁶⁴⁵

It wasn't hope that led **them** to **the Garden tomb**. It was duty. Naked devotion. **They** expected nothing in return. What could **Yeshua** give **them**? **He** was dead! These **three women** were not going to the tomb to receive, **they** were going to **the tomb** to give. Period.

There is no motivation more noble . . .

Service prompted by duty. This is the call to discipleship.¹⁶⁴⁶

The Sabbath was over (Hebrew: *Motza'ei-Shabbat*) and it was **the first day of the week** (**Matthew 28:1a; Mark 16:1a**). **Matthew** actually uses the plural word (Sabbaths), which points to the extended length of **the Sabbath** of Passover (Thursday sundown to Friday sundown) and then **the Sabbath** of Unleavened Bread and the weekly **Shabbat** together on the same day.¹⁶⁴⁷ These **women** were part of the team of talmidim and wanted to show **their** respect to **their** dead **Master**. This was impossible to do at night after the close of **the** high holy **Shabbat**. But **at dawn** on the third day of Passover, Sunday, **when the Sabbath was over**, those **women** took the earliest opportunity to visit **the tomb**.

If **Jesus** died in our day, we would hold a memorial service, leave flowers and tender notes by **His** grave, organize a candlelight vigil - anything to express our feelings and get a little closure. **Mary Magdalene** and the other **women** from Galilee had a similar impulse. Here was one last change to minister to **Yeshua**, though with heightened security around **His tomb** even that was risky. **They** planned to return to **His tomb** as early as possible after **the Sabbath** to enclose **His body** with **spices**. After **His** burial, **the women** had gone home and prepared the **spices** and perfumes. Then there was nothing to do but wait.