

INTRODUCTION

1. Today is April fool's day.
2. And what I have to say is no joking matter.
3. Psalms 14:1 (NASB) says "The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; there is no one who does good."
4. This verse is repeated in Psalm 53:1.
5. We will see this verse illustrated this morning as we look at Matthew chapter 28.
6. Please take your Bibles and turn to Matthew 28.
7. This morning I want to look at verses 4, 11-15.
8. But for our understanding, I'd like to begin reading at verse 1.
9. Read Matthew 28:1-15.

10. To deny truth is the highest form of foolishness.
11. In fact it is dangerous especially when denying that truth will cost you your life.
12. But many choose this path.
13. Jesus said in Matthew 7:13-14 (NASB) Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. 14 For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.
14. The characters in our story were part of the many who have enter the broad way that leads to destruction.
15. They are those who have denied the truth about Jesus Christ.
16. There are some things in Scripture that are non-negotiable and this is one of them.
17. But they just didn't deny what happened, they denied the reality of what they had witness as if it didn't happen at all.
18. So much so that they willingly took money to hide it.

19. They played into the satanic lie of denying the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
20. And you're a fool to deny the supernatural.
21. You're even a bigger fool to believe someone else's lie when it goes against what you know is the truth.
22. Jesus died.
23. They didn't deny that.
24. But he arose the third day.
25. That they denied.
26. So the fool has said in his heart, "No God."
27. They aren't the first to do that.
28. People have been denying the supernatural since the beginning following the fall of Adam and Eve.
29. On Wednesday there was an article stating that the Pope believes there is no hell.¹

¹ <http://video.foxnews.com/v/5761041437001/?#sp=show-clips>

30. I guess the reality of his belief will soon change unless he repents.
31. In an article dated April 9, 2017 titled "Resurrection Did Not Happen Says Quarter of Christians," the BBC in Great Britain surveyed 2010 British adults by phone from February 2-12, 2017 and discovered "a quarter of people who describe themselves as Christians in Great Britain do not believe in the resurrection of Jesus...However, almost one in 10 people of no religion say they do believe the Easter story, but it has "some content that should not be taken literally". A fifth of non-religious people believe in life after death, the poll suggests.
32. The survey suggested 17% of all people believe the Bible version word-for-word
33. 31% of Christians believe word-for-word the Bible version, rising to 57% among "active" Christians (those who go to a religious service at least once a month)
34. Exactly half of all people surveyed did not believe in the resurrection at all
35. 46% of people say they believe in some form of life after death and 46% do not

36. 20% of non-religious people say they believe in some form of life after death

9% of non-religious people believe in the Resurrection, 1% of whom say they believe it literally.²

37. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:12-19 (NASB) Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; 14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. 15 Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; 17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.

38. Corbin Croy in an article dated April 30, 2018 called “5 Reasons I Do Not Believe in the Physical Resurrection of Christ,” wrote “One of the reasons most Christians find it hard to believe that I am a Christian myself is because I do

² <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-39153121>

not affirm the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ.”³

39. Can you be a Christian and deny the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ?
40. Romans 10:9 (NASB) that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.
41. What’s the answer? No.
42. You have to believe “in your heart that God raised Him from the dead.”
43. When you believe that, “you will be saved.”
44. It is through the resurrection of Jesus that we are saved.
45. Peter said in 1 Peter 1:3 (NASB) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”
46. Charles Spurgeon said, “The cross of Christ...is powerless to save without the empty tomb. The Savior’s triumph over

³ <https://spokanefav.com/5-reasons-i-do-not-believe-in-the-physical-resurrection-of-jesus-christ/>

death is the foundation on which the saving cross rests.”

47. Steve Lawson writing on Spurgeon said that “He asserted that the resurrection of Christ is ‘the cornerstone of Christian doctrine’ and ‘the keystone of the arch of Christianity.’ Without it, he said, ‘the whole fabric of the gospel would fall to the ground.’ For Spurgeon, the resurrection of Christ is essential to gospel proclamation. There is no gospel apart from the risen Christ.⁴

48. It is through the resurrection that Jesus was declared to be the Son of God.

49. Paul said in Romans 1:3-4 (NASB) concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, 4 who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord.

50. Again, it is the fool that says no to these things.

51. Paul said in Titus 3:3 that “we ourselves were also once foolish.”

52. You are a fool if you refuse to believe in the resurrection.

⁴ Ibid., Lawson.

53. And it is only fools who blaspheme God and mock sin.
54. Proverbs 1:7 says that “fools despise wisdom and instruction.”
55. Proverbs 18:2 (NASB) A fool does not delight in understanding, but only in revealing his own mind.
56. But Proverbs 10:21 says “fools die for lack of wisdom.”
57. Believers are not to walk in folly of fools.
58. They are, as Ephesians 5:15 (NASB) says to walk “carefully...not as unwise men but as wise.”
59. What can we learn about the guards in Matthew 28:4, 11-15?
60. First we learn they were fools dying in their foolish unbelief.
61. Second we learn they are liars and slanderers.
62. Proverbs 10:18 (NASB) He who conceals hatred has lying lips, and he who spreads slander is a fool.

63. All 4 gospels include the account of the resurrection of Jesus.

64. Matthew's account occurs in chapter 28

65. Mark's account occurs in chapter 16

66. Luke's account occurs in chapter 24

67. John's account occurs in chapter 20

Notice first...

LESSON

I. The Setting (v.1)

- A. It was after the Sabbath
- B. It was "as it began to dawn"
- C. It was "the first day of the week"

II. The Characters (vv.2-4)

- A. Mary Magdalene (v.1)
- B. Other Mary (v.1)

All 4 Gospels include one or more women at the tomb:

1. Matthew records that “Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb” (28:1).
2. Both Matthew and John tell us that the “other Mary” was “the mother of James and Joseph and the wife of Clopas (Mat.27:56; Jn.19:25).
3. Although Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell us “Salome, the mother of James and John and the wife of Zebedee (Mk.16:1; cf. Mat.27:56), and Joanna (Lk.24:10) were also there, Matthew focuses only on the two Marys”⁵
4. John’s account tells us only about Mary Magdalene and not the other women

C. An Angel of the Lord (vv.2-3)

1. All the Gospel writers write of the appearance of angels
2. Matthew and Mark state only one angel at the tomb (Mat.28:2; Mk.16:5), but Luke and John say

⁵ MacArthur, John. The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Matthew.

there were two (Lk.24:5; Jn.20:12).

3. All accounts record the same message from the angels, “He is not here, He has risen.”

D. The guards (v.4)

1. We’re not sure how many there were
2. The term guards (terountes) in verse 4 is plural indicating more than one
3. One guard made the tomb secure according to Matthew 27:65-66
4. Matthew 27:66 says that the tomb was “secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.”

A.T. Robertson says that the method of sealing the stone at Jesus’ tomb was “...probably by a cord stretched across the stone and sealed at each end as in Daniel 6:17. The sealing was done in the presence of the Roman authority and power. They did their best to prevent theft and the resurrection, but they overreached themselves and provided additional witness to the fact of the empty tomb and the resurrection of

Jesus.”⁶

Henry Sumner Maine, member of the Supreme Council of India; formerly Reader on Jurisprudence and the Civil Law at the Middle Temple, and Regius Professor of the Civil Law in the University of Cambridge, speaks of the legal authority attached to the Roman seal. He points out that it was actually “considered as a mode of Authentication.” In the area of jurisprudence, Maine continues, “We may observe, that the seals of Roman Wills and other documents of importance did not only serve as the index of the presence or assent of the signatory, but were also literally fastenings which had to be broken before the writing could be inspected.”

Josh McDowell says, “Considering in like manner the securing of Jesus’ tomb, the Roman seal affixed thereon was meant to prevent any attempted vandalizing of the sepulcher. Anyone trying to move the stone from the tomb’s entrance would have broken the seal and thus incurred the wrath of Roman law.”⁷

⁶ Robertson, A.T., Robertson’s Word Pictures of the New Testament.

⁷ McDowell, Josh. Evidence that Demands a Verdict, p.209.

Professor D. D. Whedon says, “The door could not be opened, therefore, without breaking the seal; which was a crime against the authority of the proprietor of the seal.”

III. The Discovery at the Tomb (vv.2-4)

A. A severe earthquake had occurred (v.2)

1. This is the second earthquake associated with Christ’s death
2. The first one occurred in Matthew 27:51 (NASB) And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split.
3. This one may have been confined to the immediate area around the grave, when “an angel” supernaturally “rolled back the stone from the door”—not to let Jesus out, for if He could rise from the dead, He would need no help escaping an earthly tomb, but to let the women and the apostles in (v. 6).⁸

⁸ MacArthur, John, Jr., ed. [The MacArthur Study Bible](#). electronic ed. Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997. Print.

B. An angel descended from heaven and rolled away the stone and sat on it (v.2)

The appearance of the angel was like “lightning, and his clothing as white as snow” (v.3)

This reminds us of the transfiguration of Jesus. The lightning is to picture the supernatural brilliance, and the snow the white purity of heaven.⁹

C. The Guards Passed Out (v.4)

1. “The guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men” (v.4)

2. “Shook” (eseisthesan, aor.pass.ind.). It has the same root word for earthquake.¹⁰

3. They were “paralyzed with fear, completely unconscious”

4. Matthew says they “became like dead men” -- They were totally traumatized by what they had seen

⁹ Lenski, R. C. H. [*The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel*](#). Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961. Print.

¹⁰ Ibid, MacArthur., The MacArthur Study Bible.

5. Lenski says, “God not only thwarted the effort of his enemies, he even turned their means for overcoming the truth into means for aiding the victory of the truth. Christ’s resurrection is just as terrible for his foes as it is comforting for his friends. The Jews guarded the tomb only against molestation on the part of the disciples and their stealing the body, they forgot to guard it against Jesus himself.”¹¹

IV. The Message from the Angels (vv.5-7)

- A. Jesus is not here, He has risen just as He said (vv.5-6)
- B. Come see the place where He was lying (v.6)
- C. Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead. He will meet them in Galilee (v.7)
- D. They left the tomb and ran to report it to His disciples (v.8)
- E. On the way Jesus met them and greet them and they worshiped Him (v.9)

¹¹ Ibid., Lenski.

- F. He told them to tell His disciples to leave for Galilee and they will see Him there (v.10)

Now verses 11-15 goes back to the guards...

V. The Lie that Proves the Resurrection (vv.11-15)

- A. They reported to the chief priests what had happened (v.11)
- B. The chief priests and elders came up with a story and bribed the soldiers (vv.12-14)
- C. The soldiers took the money and did as they had been instructed
- D. This is foolish unbelief
- E. The soldiers knew the truth but were paid to lie about it
- F. The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."
- G. He's discounted the angelic vision and counting on a lie that it never happened but it did

CONCLUSION

1. Jesus appeared to many people after His resurrection
2. To Mary Magdalene (John 20:14-18; Mark 16:9)
3. To Women Returning From the Tomb (Matthew 28:9-10)
4. To Peter Later in the Day (Lk.24:34)
5. To The Two Disciples Who Were Traveling to Emmaus (Lk.24:13-35)
6. To the Apostles without Thomas (John 20:19-25)
7. To the Apostles with Thomas Present (John 20:26-29)
8. To Seven of the Eleven Disciples by the Lake of Tiberias (John 21:1-23)
9. To Over 500 Brethren At Once (1 Cor.15:6)
10. To James (1 Cor.15:7)
11. To the Eleven at Once (Mat.28:16-20)
12. At His Ascension (Acts 1:3-12)

13. To Paul (Acts 9:3-6; 1 Cor.15:8)
14. To Stephen (Acts 7:55)
15. To John on the Island of Patmos (Rev.1:10-19)
16. James Warwick Montgomery comments: “Note that when the disciples of Jesus proclaimed the resurrection, they did so as eyewitnesses and they did so while people were still alive who had had contact with the events they spoke of. In 56 A.D. Paul wrote that over 500 people had seen the risen Jesus and that most of them were still alive (1 Cor.15:6ff.). It passes the bounds of credibility that the early Christians could have manufactured such a tale and then preached it among those who might easily have refuted it simply by producing the body of Jesus.”
17. The evidence is here.
18. Jesus did rise from the grave on the 3rd day as He said.
19. To say otherwise is a lie.
20. Don't be like the foolish guards who in their foolish unbelief refused the truth and believed the lie---all for money.

21. The only way to heaven is by what Romans 10:9-13 says, “Romans 10:9-13 (NASB) that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. 11 For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.” 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; 13 for “Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.”
22. You have to believe in the physical resurrection of Jesus to be saved.
23. Let’s pray.