

## **Easter – After the Resurrection – 1:-**

### **“Alleluia! Christ is Risen! - He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!”**

In looking at the ‘Resurrection Appearances’ over the next few weeks, we begin with the strange ending to the Gospel of Mark. (verses 9 and following are later additions to the original text). There have been a number of attempts to make sense of what seems to be an abrupt end of the narrative. To me it feels as though those last few verses were written before the evening of that first Easter Day! The words certainly carry the feeling of uncertainty and questioning which may be the intention of the writer. Read again Luke chapter 24, verses 13 – 24, especially verses 22 – 23.

### **We begin with the earliest reports -**

The stone was moved and the tomb was empty (recorded in all four Gospels). According to Matthew (chapter 28, verses 11 – 15) the authorities had already formulated a reason to explain the empty tomb so the basic facts were well known at the beginning of that first day. It would seem that there was no questioning of the empty tomb by anyone at the time.

There was “a vision of angels who said that he was alive” (Luke chapter 24, verse 23). Again this is recorded in all four gospels. I like the version in the Gospel of Matthew chapter 28, verses 1 – 7. The “*angel of the Lord . . . rolled back the stone and sat upon it*”. The “*great stone*” (chapter 27, verse 60) was used as a seat by the angel! The record of the message is consistent in all four gospels. “*He is not here; for he has risen as he said.*” (chapter 28, verse 6)

The women “did not find his body” (Luke chapter 24, verse 23). recorded in all four gospels! Traditionally it is the role of women to attend to the dead. The spices were bought / prepared either before the Sabbath Rest (Friday before sunset – Luke chapter 23, verse 56) or after it was ended (Saturday after sunset – Mark chapter 16, verse 1). Note that even in a time of grief and stress the Sabbath was kept by the women and the disciples.

These were the basic details available to the disciples on that first Easter Day. Yes, Mary Magdalene and other women had, it appears, met the Risen Lord – Matthew chapter 28, verses 5 – 10. However the body of disciples were reluctant to believe their story – Luke chapter 24 verse 22 – 23.

So what about the original ending of the Gospel of Mark? Did it finish with the story of the women fleeing from the tomb in fear? We do not know! However, if Mark’s Gospel was to be read to a group of folk wanting to know what happened, maybe it would be a good place to stop! Bringing listeners to a point of climax and then pausing for them to ask questions is a good teaching ploy! What happened next? If that is all, what is “The Good News”?

The full story of the Resurrection could then be told with all that follows - the Appearances, the Ascension, the coming of the Holy Spirit and the Worldwide Mission of the Church.

I have never had the opportunity to take this line with a group of ‘seekers’. However, I can see its value having been involved over the years in the secular teaching of others as well as Christian ministry.

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