

# Our **GUIDE**

## for little ones

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IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

Lesson 55

### The Resurrection

*Matthew 28:1-6*

Probably the greatest miracle that Jesus ever did was His raising of Lazarus. Do you remember that story? There they were — Jesus, Mary and Martha, and lots of mourners — all standing by the tomb of Lazarus. And Jesus said, “Take ye away the stone.” Martha *objected*. She said, “Lord, by this time he *stinketh*.” And she was right. After four days in the grave, the body of Lazarus was *decaying*. At the word of *Jesus*, Lazarus came *out of that grave*.

But can Jesus raise *Himself*?

Jesus had told His disciples that He *would*. In fact, He had even told them *when* He would rise — on the *third day*. But they had never understood that. They refused to believe that Jesus would actually be *killed*. So, when Jesus *did die*, and was *buried*, His disciples didn't

think at all about *resurrection*. They all expected that His body was going to *stay in the grave*.

Jesus had also told His *enemies* that He would rise from the dead. Jesus told them that the sign of the prophet Jonah would be fulfilled by *Him*. Jonah, Jesus said, came out of the whale's belly, alive, on the third day. *I will* come out of the *ground*, alive, on the third day. That will be *the sign* that I am the Son of God.



It is now the *third day*. Jesus was buried on *Friday*. He was in the grave all

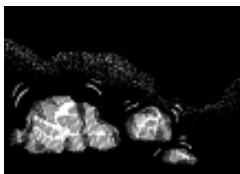
**Note to Parents:** These papers are intended for the younger Sunday School students — grade 3 and below. Vocabulary and concepts are such that children in this age group, even the 3rd graders, will profit most if the stories are read *to* them, not *by* them. Most lessons have two stories, for two sittings if that proves to be beneficial. Our hope is that parents will find these lessons to be useful tools in the teaching of Bible stories and Bible truths to their children in the “off” season.

of *Saturday*. And now it's *Sunday morning*. What happens on *this day* will prove, one way or the other, if Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. If He *stays in the grave*, He was not what He claimed to be. He was a fake. If He *comes out of the grave, alive*, He is the Son of God. That's the *sign of Jonah*.

Jesus did come out of the grave. On the third day. Just as He said.

But what about the armed guards who are just outside the tomb? Will they not stop Him, and bring Him to the chief priests? No, they didn't see Him come out. Why not? Because *Jesus'* resurrection was not like that of *Lazarus*. Jesus did not come *back to this life*. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, His body was *changed*. It was *glorified*. No longer was it earthly *flesh* and *blood*, but *spiritual*. To escape from the tomb, He didn't have to *pick the lock*, or *roll away the stone*. He didn't have to unwind the linen cloth that had been wrapped around His body. He just left it all behind — undisturbed. If you were in that tomb watching, you would have seen the grave clothes just ... *collapse*.

So the armed guards didn't see Jesus rise. But they were sure it happened. For, on this third day, early in the morning, when it was still dark all around them, there was a great earthquake. That, by itself, was terrifying.



But then they saw an *angel* come down from the sky. His clothes were pure

white like new-fallen snow. And his face shone like the brightness of lightning. Without a word the angel simply threw aside the great stone that stood before the tomb of Jesus ... and sat on it.

The guards were strong men. And they were *armed*. But what good were their puny swords against an angel of *God*? Trembling with fear, they fall to the ground like dead men. But they didn't stay there. As soon as they recovered enough strength, they got back up on their feet in order to ... *run*. Did they forget that they had been ordered to guard that tomb? No, they didn't forget. But after what they had just seen, they were sure that that grave was *empty*. They had only one thought in their minds, and that was to escape with their lives. So they turned and *ran*.



All was quiet therefore in the garden of Joseph of Arimathea at the rising of the sun. The guards were gone. The stone lay flat on the ground. And the grave was empty.



The women didn't know that. They didn't know that the grave was empty. Their plan, you will remember, was to come and anoint the body of Jesus early on Sunday morning. And early on that morning they came. The sun was barely peeking up and they were already on their way.

It was on their way to the garden, that they remembered the stone that Joseph and Nicodemus had rolled in front

of the entrance to the tomb. This, they think, could be a problem for them. Stones are *heavy*. And the one in front of Joseph's tomb was large. Who, they wonder, will roll it away? Then, to their surprise, they see that the stone is *already rolled away*. It's lying, in fact, flat on the ground — as if it had been *thrown down*. Who could have *done this*? Certainly no *friend* would disturb Jesus' final resting place. It must have been the *enemy*. His enemies must have come to *mess up His grave* and, most likely, to *steal His body*.

Mary Magdalene didn't wait around. She headed, by herself, straight for the city, to tell the *disciples* what they had just learned — that Jesus' body had been *stolen*.

The other women, meanwhile, have come into the garden ... and entered the tomb. As they expected, the body of Jesus was gone. What they did *not* expect was to see the *grave clothes*. But there they are — the grave clothes have been *left behind*. Before they had time to consider it, they were startled to see, right next to them in the tomb, two *angels* in shining garments. The women were *scared* — just like the armed guards who had earlier fled from the garden. But to the women the angel said, "Fear not *ye*." Yes, the guards *should be afraid*. So should the chief priests, and all of Jesus' enemies. For by His resurrection Jesus is *proved to be the*

*Son of God*. But fear not *ye*, for I know that *ye* seek Jesus. True, they were coming to anoint a *dead body* — when they *should have known better*. But they were coming because they *loved Him*. The spices in their hands proved that.

So ... fear not *ye*. He is not here. He is risen. *As He said*. Come, the angel said, see the place where the Lord lay. See, in other words, not simply an *empty tomb* — for the women had already discovered that the body was gone.

But see those *grave clothes*. Ponder *that!*



### How Well Did You Listen?

1. How did Jesus show His power over death when He was still alive?
2. What Old Testament prophet was a picture of Jesus rising from the dead?
3. Why would Jesus not have to roll away the stone in order to come out of the grave?
4. What was it that terrified the guards early Sunday morning?
5. When the women saw that the stone was rolled away, why did Mary Magdalene head straight for the city?
6. What did the angel tell the women who went to the tomb?

## The Wonder of the Grave Clothes

*Mark 16:8, 9; John 20:2-10*

Can you imagine, just a little bit, how the women at the tomb must have felt on that great resurrection Sunday? They had come to the grave with spices

in their hands — because they thought Jesus was still in the grave. But He wasn't. He had *risen*. The angel said so. And in the tomb they could see for themselves that it was *true*. What unspeakable joy must have filled their hearts!

Joy ... and *amazement*. Yes, the Bible tells us that they also “trembled and were amazed.” No wonder! For they had just learned that their Lord had power to ... *rise from the dead*. Who could ever *believe* that?

But the *women did*. They believed. The resurrection of Jesus was, to them, great good news — news that they must tell others. “Go quickly,” the angel said, “and tell His disciples, and Peter, that He is risen from the dead.”

The angel didn't have to tell them *that* twice. They hurried away. Their hearts were fairly bursting with the good news, and they couldn't wait to share it with Jesus' disciples ... and Peter.



So excited were the women, that they hardly noticed that the angel had singled out *Peter*. Peter, however, *will notice*. For he will know *why*. Peter had openly, before men, *denied* his Lord. He had said that he wanted nothing to do with Jesus of Nazareth. And Peter knew that *Jesus knew*. Has Jesus, therefore, cut Peter off as a disciple — as Peter deserved? Or, when He awakens from death, will He *remember* Peter, in *love*?

Peter didn't know. But he *will* know when he hears this message of the women. Jesus had *remembered* him.

“Tell *Peter*.” Tell Peter that I have *risen*. Tell Peter that the resurrection shouts aloud the victory of the *cross*. It's the *cross* that swallows up all of the black sins of all of God's people. Tell Peter that his sin is *forgiven*. What a comfort that will be for Peter. And what a comfort ... for *us*.

Yes, for *us*. Do we sometimes, maybe, *forget that*? When we hear the story of Jesus' resurrection do we think of it as just a Bible story that we believe — and miss the great comfort of Peter and the exuberant joy of the women? We shouldn't.

Just think of what the resurrection of Jesus was. It was an *astounding miracle*. One minute there was in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea a dead body wrapped in grave clothes, and the next minute the body was *gone* ... not only *alive*, but *glorified*. And then remember *this*, that what happened to *Jesus' body* is going to happen also to *ours*.

Can you imagine *that*? Adam, the first man, was buried more than 5,000 years ago. Even if we knew exactly where he was buried, we could never find his body. It's nothing but *dust*. But in the great resurrection day to come, Jesus will “find” that body — and Abraham's, and David's, and Daniel's, and Peter's, and yours and mine. No matter that your body will be decayed, decomposed, turned to dust — He will *find* it. He will *raise* it. And He will make it to be like unto His own glorious body.

Is the resurrection of Jesus, then,

just a story that you believe? No, it's *wonderful*, it's *amazing*, it's *exciting*, it fills us with *joy*.

But our story is not yet finished. The women have not yet reached the city. But Mary Magdalene has. She finds Peter and John and tells them her tale of woe: "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid him." That was her message. She delivered it, and then turned sadly away and headed back toward the tomb.



Peter and John were quickly far ahead of her, for as soon as they heard her story, they took off on a run. And John was soon ahead of Peter, because he was a faster runner. So John got there first. He saw the great stone lying flat on the ground. It looked to him as if Mary was *right*. He peered into the tomb and saw that, sure enough, the body of Jesus was *gone*. It would seem, again, as if Mary was *right* — except for *this*, that John saw the *grave clothes still in the tomb*. Why would anyone *unwrap a dead body* before stealing it? That wouldn't make sense. John now begins to doubt Mary's story.

Then Peter arrived. He went right into the tomb. And John followed. Together they stared at the linen clothes that Joseph and Nicodemus had wrapped around the body of Jesus. They could see at once that the body of Jesus had *not* been *unwrapped*. No one could



possibly have unwound those strips of linen cloth, removed the body, and then wound the strips back into the exact shape they had when they were wrapped around the body. There was only one possible explanation, and that was that His body had *passed right through* the grave clothes.

Peter and John were greatly *perplexed*, greatly *confused*. Was this a resurrection like that of *Lazarus*? No, something very different, very strange, happened here in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. What it was, they didn't know. Did God, maybe, by a miracle, take Jesus' body out of the grave and bring it to heaven? Or was Jesus alive somewhere on earth? And if so, why did He *die*? And what, now, about Jesus' *kingdom*? All of these things were like pieces of a hard puzzle. And, try as they might, they couldn't figure out how to fit them together.



John says about himself that he *believed*. That is, he saw the grave clothes, remembered Jesus' words, and believed that He truly was risen from the dead. But he couldn't make *sense* of it all. Why not? Because, John said, they "knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead." John was right. The answers were there — in their Bibles. But they didn't know it. Someone had to *show* them. Oh, how they needed ... *Jesus*.



Did Peter and John leave the tomb with the beginning of joy in their

hearts? Surely they did. They *wanted* to believe — because they loved Jesus. But they didn't know *what* to believe. For now, therefore, they leave the empty tomb ... *wondering*.

### How Well Did You Listen?

1. The angel told the women to go and tell some others that Jesus had risen. To whom did the angel send them?
2. To what disciples did Mary Magdalene bring her story? What did those disciples right away do?
3. When Peter and John entered the tomb, they were sure that Mary Magdalene was mistaken. How did they know that?
4. Who would help the disciples understand the resurrection?

### How Well Do You Understand?

1. How was the prophet Jonah a picture of Christ? How was Jesus' resurrection the sign that He really is the Son of God?
2. How was Jesus' resurrection different from that of Lazarus?
3. Why didn't the guards check out the tomb before they left their guard duty?

4. The angel told the women to tell Jesus' disciples and Peter that He had risen from the dead. Why would that be a great comfort to Peter?

5. What did the grave clothes reveal to Peter and John about the resurrection of Jesus?

### Memory Verse

Matthew 28:61 "He is not here: for he is risen, as he said."

Color the picture of a sunrise.

