

MARY MAGDALENE'S VISION

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Lesson: Mark 16:1-10

After the Lord had been crucified and had appeared to die, some of the disciples reverently took His body from the cross, and anointed it with oil and placed it in a new sepulcher. Now this sepulcher was like a man-made cave, cut out of a rock cliff, and after the body had been laid there, the disciples blocked up the entrance way with a huge stone so that no animal or grave robber could disturb the Lord's body.

Now, this had taken place on Friday afternoon, the day before the Sabbath, too late for the women and others to observe all the burial customs of the Jews. All the disciples, and those who loved the Lord, had to go to their homes to make ready for the Sabbath. And, during the Sabbath itself, which is Saturday, they had to stay in their homes, so it wasn't until the third day after the Lord had been crucified that those who loved Him could see to it that the Lord was properly buried. And so we read in the Word that very early on the first day of the week, women came to the sepulcher with spices to anoint Him; and as they went, they wondered how they could get in, since the big stone stood in the way. But, as you know, when they came to the sepulcher, they found that a miracle had taken place. The stone had been rolled away, and the entrance-way into the sepulcher was open. And, when they looked in, they saw that the Lord was no longer there, they saw angels who told them not to fear, but that the Lord had risen, as He had said He would.

And the angel also told the women to go and tell the disciples this wonderful news. They did so, and some of the disciples, too, came to see for themselves the sepulcher; and afterwards, the Lord appeared to the women, and also to the disciples, several times, before His ascension or going up into heaven.

As you may know, there are four gospels in the New Testament, and in all four gospels, this story is told. There are some differences in each, but all four gospels really tell the same story.

And one thing all the gospels mention is, that Mary Magdalene was one of the women who went to the sepulcher; and from the lesson we read from the Word, it was Mary Magdalene who went first to tell the disciples, Peter and John, what the angels had told her. And, also, it was Mary Magdalene who first saw the risen Lord in the garden.

Now, it is not by chance that women first went to the sepulcher and first saw the Lord, nor is it by chance that Mary Magdalene was the one specifically mentioned in all four gospels. For women, we are taught, are especially forms of love; and the women mentioned in the Word, particularly those who followed the Lord, represent the love of what is true and good—a love that goes forth to find what is good and true, and to take care of it, and to minister to it. Since women are moved by such love, it is not surprising that it should be women who went forth as soon as they could, early in the morning, to find the Lord and to minister to His needs.

Now, Mary Magdalene is especially mentioned because she had been one from whom the Lord had cast out devils. And so she represented a love that had been purified of all selfish and evil things. And, because she represents such a pure love of what is good and true, she, above all others, was eager to go to find the Lord, and she was the one who was first able to have her spiritual eyes open to see the Lord Himself.

And so it is with each of us, whether we are boys or girls, men or women: it is the love for what is good and true, for the teachings of the Lord, that causes us to search the Word, and to look to the Lord for leading and for worship. And, if our love for what is good and true is like Mary Magdalene, purified of selfish and evil thoughts, then that love will enable us to see the Lord Himself, not as just a man, but as the risen Lord, our God and our Savior.

This is the wonderful thing about the Easter story, if we understand it well. It tells us that if we really love what is good and true, and we let that love be purified, we will be able to see the Lord Himself. *Amen.*