

**DAY 5**  
**READING:**  
MATTHEW 28: 9-10

*Suddenly Jesus met them and said, 'Peace be with you.' They came up to him, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. 'Do not be afraid', Jesus said to them. 'Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.'*

### **MORE THAN WORDS**

We'll never know what these two women might have told the disciples on the way so of an angel. Would they have said 'Jesus is alive' or would they have said, 'We saw an angel who told us Jesus is alive'? Before they could open their mouths Jesus met them. On the way to deliver the message they saw him and he spoke to them.

Actually Jesus adds nothing to the content of the angel's message – go to Galilee and you'll see me there. But the intensity, sense of commitment and level of realism would now be so different, because they have experienced the risen Jesus.

Not only have they met him; they have worshipped him themselves. This is what makes the difference in our lives as well as to the

impact of our story. The Christian faith is built on facts and evidence but it cannot be reduced to these features.

At any Easter service, one way or another, the facts will be recounted – the body has gone from the tomb, various people, mainly women, claim they encountered Jesus. That's important. Yet, unless and until we experience him and worship him, the best we can be is reporters. There is no substitute for personal involvement with this risen Lord.

So, did you worship him this Easter?

*Living Lord, we can't engineer our meeting with you, any more than those women did! But we ask that as we open ourselves to you in wonder and worship, you will meet us too. Amen*

### **What next?**

There are many excellent Bible reading notes available in the UK today to help you engage daily with the Word of God. To find out more visit

**[www.grow-with-the-bible.org.uk](http://www.grow-with-the-bible.org.uk)**

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Other leaflets in this series include Bible readings for Harvest, Bible Sunday and Christmas



WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP YOU EXPLORE THE BIBLE EVERY DAY

## **EASTER READINGS**

Easter is a great opportunity for us to get to know the Bible better. The readings and reflections in this leaflet explore the resurrection story – and how it might apply to us today.

We hope you will enjoy these readings, part of a series of leaflets produced by Grow with the Bible as we celebrate the Bible in the English language and mark the 400th anniversary of the King James Version Bible in 2011. If you want to know more visit **[www.grow-with-the-bible.org.uk](http://www.grow-with-the-bible.org.uk)**

### **Matthew 28: 1-10**

#### **KING JAMES VERSION**

<sup>1</sup>In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. <sup>2</sup>And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. <sup>3</sup>His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: <sup>4</sup>And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. <sup>5</sup>And the angel answered and said unto the women, 'Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. <sup>6</sup>He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. <sup>7</sup>And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.' <sup>8</sup>And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word. <sup>9</sup>And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, 'All hail.' And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. <sup>10</sup>Then said Jesus unto them, 'Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.'

#### **GOOD NEWS BIBLE**

##### **The Resurrection**

<sup>1</sup>After the Sabbath, as Sunday morning was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. <sup>2</sup>Suddenly there was a violent earthquake; an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled the stone away, and sat on it. <sup>3</sup>His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. <sup>4</sup>The guards were so afraid that they trembled and became like dead men. <sup>5</sup>The angel spoke to the women. 'You must not be afraid,' he said. 'I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. <sup>6</sup>He is not here; he has been raised, just as he said. Come here and see the place where he was lying. <sup>7</sup>Go quickly now, and tell his disciples, "He has been raised from death, and now he is going to Galilee ahead of you; there you will see him!" Remember what I have told you.' <sup>8</sup>So they left the tomb in a hurry, afraid and yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. <sup>9</sup>Suddenly Jesus met them and said, 'Peace be with you.' They came up to him, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. <sup>10</sup>'Do not be afraid,' Jesus said to them. 'Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.'

**DAY 1**  
**READING:**  
MATTHEW 28: 1

*After the Sabbath, as Sunday morning was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.*

**SLEEPLESS**

Many things can keep us awake at night – the baby crying, indigestion, intense anticipation, but two of the most frequent are grief and anxiety. The two Marys had adequate amounts of each to keep them from the relief that sleep might have provided.

So, as early as possible, they head for the burial site – ‘to look at the tomb’. Some skeptics have suggested that the reason no one found the body of Jesus is that they were looking in the wrong place. But the Marys did not need to look FOR the tomb; they wanted to look AT it.

They knew only too well where it was – the location was seared into their minds. They had logged it with the greatest care because they knew they had to return. They wanted to look at

it, as the widow looks at her husband’s grave stone – the solid reminder of the reality of the deceased person, maybe reassuring them that although the body is decaying the person who mattered so much to them was part of their life. The love-filled memories are real and not a dream.

This was the most the two Marys had to cling too. They could no longer see their Lord, they couldn’t listen to his life-affirming words but they could strengthen their sense that it was real – by looking at the tomb. They thought ‘we can at least be sure that is where his body is!’

*Living Lord, for all who are on a journey of grief and loss we pray that you will give them companions and courage, until the good news of your new life can reach them. Amen*

**DAY 2**  
**READING:**  
MATTHEW 28: 2-3

*An angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled the stone away, and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow.*

**AN ANGEL IS WAITING!**

Normally, if someone told us that an angel is waiting for us we would either think they were crazy, or maybe that they meant a kind person was going to act in a pleasant way towards us. But this was no mistake, nor a human act of benevolence! It was the real thing! A being direct from heaven, dressed in dazzling appearance – still radiant with the divine energy of heaven itself, and he had just performed a miracle – the angel had moved the large stone which sealed the tomb.

Now the angel waits.

The women must have seen the angel as soon as the tomb came into sight. The tomb was what they had come to see. There was

no way they could stare at the tomb without noticing the angel!

But the most important feature of this angel was not his origins, nor his appearance, not even his miraculous activity. The most important feature is that he was ‘an angel of the Lord’. An angel is a being with a message from God to deliver. So he waits for these women and for the whole world.

We will never have the opportunity to see what they saw, but the amazing thing is we can hear what they heard!

*Living Lord, thank you for all the freshness and fun of Easter time. Help us not to miss the message of your resurrection among all the chocolate eggs and excitement. Amen*

**DAY 3**  
**READING:**  
MATTHEW 28: 5-6

*‘I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has been raised, just as he said. ... Come and see.’*

**EMPTY**

Spare a thought for these two women. They were experiencing psychological shock. Their world would not stand still. The death of Jesus had overturned their lives and dumped them upside down. They must have thought ‘At least there is the tomb – that can’t change; it’s carved out of the hill side; something permanent to cling to’.

Now, even that security is taken from them. ‘He is not here.’ They had made their journey to the tomb for a time of mournful contemplation, hoping that the quietness of the garden and the solidity of the tomb would help to stabilize them. Now they learn the body has gone!

Their world will not stay still long enough for them to gain composure. But is that all? ‘The

body has gone!’ Is that the message of Easter? Even if we allow ourselves to become involved in this amazing story that is where many of us also stop. Perhaps it’s all we can take in to start with. But there is much more.

Did the angel see that words were not enough? Is that why he invited them to ‘Come and see?’ The problem is that no matter how long you stare into the tomb, or try to explain things, the most you can see is that the body’s gone!

*Living Lord, thank you for taking us one step at a time towards the wonder of your loving presence with us. Help us and all who need you to be drawn through all our senses into your new life. Amen*

**DAY 4**  
**READING:**  
MATTHEW 28: 7

*‘Go quickly now, and tell his disciples, “He has been raised from death, and now he is going to Galilee ahead of you; there you will see him!” Remember what I have told you.’*

**THE CHALLENGE**

‘Jump’ – it’s a very simple word but could you do it if you were in a plane and supposed to leap out with a parachute strapped to your back? Any failure to comply would not be a lack of understanding but of capability. Many people would freeze at the hatch and would have to be pushed!

Each of those words, ‘go’, ‘quickly’, ‘now’ would have presented similar challenges for these two women. ‘Go’ – well, they had only just got there and in their minds and hearts they planned to and needed to stay around for quite a while. ‘Quickly’ – they were exhausted by bereavement, physically as well as emotionally; they had to drag themselves there. ‘Now’ – they couldn’t respond instantly to anything –

they were bewildered, mesmerized by events; it took them a long while to process anything, let alone commands like this.

Yet none of these words provided the challenge to come – ‘tell his disciples’. They knew the kind of response they would get from these disappointed and depressed men. Even at the best of times, their words would be treated lightly and now, with such an extraordinary message, they could only expect scorn and disbelief. Sometimes relaying the truth, especially core Christian truth, is a costly business.

*Living Lord, please help us realize the enormity of the truth of Easter. You are alive again and your have conquered hate, violence and death. Help us to share this good news with any who need to know. Amen*