

Exegetical Notes, Luke 24:1-12
“On the First Day of the Week”

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Luke 24:1-12

Verse 1

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.

- The first day of the week on the Hebrew calendar is Sunday. The reason that most Christians observe Sunday as the Sabbath is that Christ rose from the dead on Sunday.
- The other Gospels explain that early in the morning was at dawn. They could not have anointed the body of Jesus prior to Sunday because their Sabbath had begun at sunset on Friday. Anointing would have been considered work and all work was forbidden on the Sabbath. They came early in the morning to avoid the heat of the day. Jesus' body would have been decomposing for over a day, and it was the earliest opportunity that they had to anoint his body.
- They would remove the linen strips of cloth in which Jesus' body had been wrapped, wash Jesus' body, rewrap it in strips of linen cloth, and put spices in the folds of the cloth to fight against the stench of death. Their actions showed that they knew Jesus had died and that they had no expectation that he would rise from the dead.

Verse 2-3

They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

- A large stone had been rolled in front of the door of the tomb to close it. The stone was very heavy and would have been difficult for the women to move. In fact, the other Gospels tell us that they discussed how they would move the stone as they walked to it. When they arrived at the tomb, they discovered that the stone was already moved and the tomb was open.

- When they entered the tomb they discovered that Jesus' body was gone.

Verse 4

While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them.

- The women did not know what had happened and were considering the meaning of what they had discovered when two angels appeared to them. Though the scripture calls the visitors "men," their clothing and their description in verse 23 clearly reveal to us that they were angels.

Verse 5-8

In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee; 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" Then they remembered his words.

- The women were badly frightened by the sudden appearance of the angels.
- The angels asked the women why they thought Jesus would be dead when he had told them that he would rise from the dead on the third day after his crucifixion. See Luke 18:31-34.
- The women did not remember Jesus' teaching about these things until it was brought to their attention by the angels.

Verse 9

When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others.

- The women did not keep the news to themselves. They shared the news with the Apostles and the other followers of Jesus.

Verse 10

It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles.

- These women were well known among the followers of Jesus.

Verse 11

But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.

- Even though these women were well known to the apostles, their story was so fantastic that the apostles did not believe them.

Verse 12

Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

- Peter went to the tomb to check out the story the women had brought to the apostles. He found it to be as they had said. The tomb was open and the body of Jesus was gone.
- What confused Peter most was that the grave clothes, the strips of linen in which the body had been wrapped had been removed from the body and left in the tomb. The phrase, “lying by themselves,” means that the grave clothes were where they had been when the body was in them. It was as if the body of Jesus had evaporated without disturbing the grave clothes in which it was wrapped. Peter could not figure out how someone could remove the body of Jesus from the tomb without disturbing the grave clothes or why they would take the body but leave the grave clothes behind.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *On the First Day of the Week*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by Dr. Jensen and *Cornerstone Fellowship*.)