

Luke: 24:1–12

From Catena Aurea:

1. Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.
2. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.
3. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.
4. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:
5. And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?
6. He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,
7. Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.
8. And they remembered his words,
9. And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.
10. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles.
11. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.
12. Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

AMBROSE. Now this place has caused great perplexity to many, because while St. Luke says, Very early in the morning, Matthew says that it was in the evening of the sabbath that the women came to the sepulchre. But you may suppose that the Evangelists spoke of different occasions, so as to understand

both different parties of women, and different appearances. Because however it was written, that in the evening of the sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, (Matt. 28:1.) our Lord rose, we must so take it, as that neither on the morning of the Lord's day, which is the first after the sabbath, nor on the sabbath, the resurrection should be thought to have taken place. For how are the three days fulfilled? Not then as the day grew towards evening, but in the evening of the night He rose. Lastly, in the Greek it is "late;" (ὀψι̅) but late signifies both the hour at the end of the day, and the slowness of any thing; as we say, "I have been lately told." Late then is also the dead of the night. And thus also the women had the opportunity of coming to the sepulchre when the guards were asleep. And that you may know it was in the night time, some of the women are ignorant of it. They know who watch night and day, they know not who have gone back. According to John, one Mary Magdalene knows not, for the same person could not first know and then afterwards be ignorant. Therefore if there are several Maries, perhaps also there are several Mary Magdalenes, since the former is the name of a person, the second is derived from a place.

AUGUSTINE. (de Con. Ev. lib. iii. c. 24.) Or Matthew by the first part of the night, which is the evening, wished to represent the night itself, at the end of which night they came to the sepulchre, and for this reason, because they had been now preparing since the evening, and it was lawful to bring spices because the sabbath was over.

THEOPHYLACT. An angel had rolled it away, as Matthew declares.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. 90. in Matt.) But the stone was rolled away after the resurrection, on account of the women, that they might believe that the Lord had risen again, seeing indeed the grave without the body. Hence it follows, And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA. When then they found not the body of Christ which was risen, they were distracted by various thoughts, and for their love of Christ and the tender care they had shewn Him, were thought worthy of the vision of angels. For it follows, And it came to pass as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments.

AMBROSE. But how is it that Mark has mentioned one young man sitting in white garments, and Matthew one, but John and Luke relate that there were seen two angels sitting in white garments.

AUGUSTINE. (de Con. Ev. ut sup.) We may understand that one Angel was seen by the women, as both Mark and Matthew say, so as supposing them to have entered into the sepulchre, that is, into a certain

space which was fenced off by a kind of wall in front of the stone sepulchre; and that there they saw an Angel sitting on the right hand, which Mark says, but that afterwards when they looked into the place where our Lord was lying, they saw within two other Angels standing, (as Luke says,) who spoke to encourage their minds, and build up their faith. Hence it follows, And as they were afraid.

ATHANASIUS. (Lib. de Inc. Fil. Dei.) He might indeed at once have raised His body from the dead. But some one would have said that He was never dead, or that death plainly had never existed in Him. And perhaps if the resurrection of our Lord had been delayed beyond the third day, the glory of incorruption had been concealed. In order therefore to shew His body to be dead, He suffered the interval of one day, and on the third day manifested His body to be without corruption.

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA. Now the women, when they had received the sayings of the Angels, hastened to tell them to the disciples; as it follows, And they remembered his words, and returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest. For woman who was once the minister of death, is now the first to receive and tell the awful mystery of the resurrection. The female race has obtained therefore both deliverance from reproach, and the withdrawal of the curse.

AMBROSE. It is not allowed to women to teach in the church, but they shall ask their husbands at home. (1 Tim. 2:12, 1 Cor. 14:35.) To those then who are at home is the woman sent. But who these women were he explains, adding, It was Mary Magdalene,

THEOPHYLACT. Now the miracle of the resurrection is naturally incredible to mankind. Hence it follows, And their words seemed to them as idle tales.

THEOPHYLACT. Peter, as soon as he heard this, delays not, but runs to the sepulchre; for fire when applied to matter knows no delay; as it follows, Then arose Peter, and ran to the sepulchre.

THEOPHYLACT. But now when he was at the tomb, he first of all obtained that he should marvel at those things which had before been derided by himself or the others; as it is said, And departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass; that is, wondering in himself at the way in which it had happened, how the linen clothes had been left behind, since the body was anointed with myrrh; or what opportunity the thief had obtained, that putting away the clothes wrapped up by themselves, he should take away the body with the soldiers standing round.

AUGUSTINE. Luke is supposed to have mentioned this concerning Peter, recapitulating. For Peter ran to the sepulchre at the same time that John also went, as soon as it had been told to them alone by the

women, (especially Mary Magdalene,) that the body was taken away. But the vision of Angels took place afterwards. Luke therefore mentioned Peter only, because to him Mary first told it. It may also strike one, that Luke says that Peter, not entering but stooping down, saw the linen clothes by themselves, and departed wondering, whereas John says, that he himself saw the linen clothes in the same position, and that he entered after Peter. We must understand then that Peter first saw them stooping down, which Luke mentions, John omits, but that he afterwards entered before John came in.

From Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture:

24:1–8 The Angels' Announcement to the Women

Sunday, the Day of Resurrection, the First and Eighth Day.

Augustine: The Lord's day is called the first of the sabbath. But the first day itself falls away when the second follows it. That day, which both the eighth and the first, represents eternity. It is that day which we abandoned at the beginning by sinning in our first parents and so came down into this mortal state, and also the last and, as it were, the eighth day, to which we again look ahead after the resurrection, once our last enemy death has been destroyed. Only then will this perishable thing put on imperishability and this mortal thing put on immortality. The returning son [prodigal] will receive the first robe, which is to be given back to him on the last and, so to say, eighth day, after the labors of his distant exile and his feeding of pigs, and the other miseries of mortal life, and the sevenfold circulation of the wheel of time.

So it was perfectly reasonable that it should have been on the first, which is also the eighth day—Sunday—that our Lord chose to give us an example in his own flesh of bodily resurrection. "Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him." To this exalted state of his we must go with humility. Sermon 260c.5.

Angels Appear at His Birth and Resurrection.

Cyril of Alexandria: Angels also brought the joyful tidings of the nativity to the shepherds in Bethlehem. Now they tell of his resurrection. Heaven yields its service to proclaim him, and the hosts of the spirits which are above attend the Son as God, even though he is in the flesh. Commentary on Luke, Chapter 24.

Jesus is Not in the Tomb Because He is Life.

Cyril of Alexandria: The women came to the sepulcher, and when they could not find the body of Christ—for he had risen—they were quite perplexed. And what followed? For the sake of their love and zeal for Christ, they were counted worthy of seeing holy angels who then told them the joyful news as the heralds of the resurrection, saying, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen!” The Word of God ever lives and by his own nature is life. Yet, when he humbled and emptied himself, submitting to be made like us, he tasted death. But this proved to be the death of death, for he rose from the dead to be the way by which not so much he himself but rather we could return to incorruption. Let no one seek among the dead him who ever lives. But if he is not here, with mortality and in the tomb, where then is he? Obviously, in heaven and in godlike glory. Commentary on Luke, Chapter 24.

Predictions of Christ’s Passion and Resurrection Were Not Understood.

Chrysostom: Do you see that they clearly understood nothing about the resurrection? The Evangelist pointed out this very thing when he said, “As yet they did not know the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead.” In addition to their failure to understand this, they were in much deeper ignorance about other things, such as the kingdom of heaven, that we are chosen as the first fruits, and his ascension into heaven. They were still confined to the ground and not yet able to fly.

Such was the understanding they had. They expected that the kingdom would come to him immediately in Jerusalem because they had no better grasp of what the kingdom of heaven really is. Another Evangelist hinted at this when he said that they thought of it as a human kingdom. They were expecting him to enter into it but not to go to the cross and death. Even though they had heard it ten thousand times, they could not clearly understand. Against the Anomoeans 8.29–30.

24:9–11 The Women’s Report to the Apostles

Humanity’s Fall Through a Woman Now Restored Through Women.

Augustine: The women came to the tomb, but they didn’t find the body in the tomb. Instead, they were told by angels that Christ had risen. The women reported this to men. And what’s written? What did you hear? These things seemed in their eyes like an idle tale. How very unhappy is the human condition! When Eve related what the serpent had said, she was listened to straightaway. A lying woman was believed, and

so we all died. But [the disciples] didn't believe women telling the truth so that we might live. If women are not to be trusted, why did Adam trust Eve? If women are to be trusted, why did the disciples not trust the holy women?

So in this fact we have to reflect on the goodness of the Lord's arrangements, because this, of course, was the doing of the Lord Jesus Christ that it should be the female sex which would be the first to report that he had risen again. Humanity fell through the female sex; humankind was restored through the female sex. A virgin gave birth to Christ; a woman proclaimed that he had risen again. Through a woman death, through a woman life. But the disciples didn't believe what the women had said. They thought they were raving, when in fact they were reporting the truth. Sermon 232.2.

Resurrection News Seems Like Nonsense.

Augustine: This hope, this gift, this promise, this tremendous grace—when Christ died his disciples lost it from their spirits, and on his death they fell away from hope. Here we see them receiving the news of his resurrection, and the words of the messengers seemed to them like an idle tale. Truth became like an idle tale. If ever the resurrection is proclaimed nowadays, and someone thinks it's an idle tale, doesn't everybody say he's all twisted up? Doesn't everybody loathe and detest what he says, turn away, close their ears and refuse to listen? That's what the disciples were when Christ died. What we abhor is what they were. The leading rams had the disease which the lambs shudder at. Sermon 236.2.

24:12 Peter Marvels at the Empty Tomb

Jesus Leaves His Clothes Behind.

Ephrem the Syrian: If he left his clothes behind in the tomb, it was so that Adam could enter into paradise without clothing, just as he had been before he had sinned. In place of having to leave paradise clothed, he now had to strip himself before entering there [again]. Or [alternatively], he abandoned them to symbolize the mystery of the resurrection of the dead, for just as [the Lord] rose into glory without clothes, so we also [will rise] with our works and not with our clothes. Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 21.23.