

## Lesson Overview

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<b>Biblical Passage</b>	Luke 24:1-12, 36-49
<b>Supporting Passages</b>	Mark 16:1-8; Luke 23:55-24:12; John 20:1-10
<b>Memory Verse</b>	Luke 24:5b-6a
<b>Table Talk Question</b>	How different would our story be if Jesus had been found dead in His tomb?
<b>Biblical Truth</b>	<p>Jesus completed His work through His death on the cross and resurrection from the tomb.</p>
<b>Biblical Context</b>	<p>Jesus came to earth to be with us, to minister to us, and to teach us about God. Without His sacrificial death on the cross, He would have been a great teacher who taught strongly held convictions of what it meant to be righteous. But He did choose to die on the cross to redeem us from our sins and bring us into the presence of God. Yet, death could not hold Him in the grave. After three days, God raised Him from the grave and resurrected Him from the dead. His death was real, and so was His resurrection. Having conquered sin and death for all eternity, He was raised victorious. Upon this truth lies the crux of Christianity—Jesus is who He said He was, and He did what He said He would do. Paul said that if the resurrection is false, Christians are to be pitied more than anyone (1 Cor. 15:19). The women who witnessed the resurrected Jesus and the empty tomb heard the angels witness to His resurrection: “Why do you seek the living among the dead. He is not here, but has risen.”</p>
<b>Learning Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will examine the evidence that Jesus was no longer in the tomb, but was alive.</li> <li>• Students will verbalize what the resurrection means to them.</li> </ul>
<b>Prayer Suggestions</b>	<p>As you prepare to teach this lesson, pray for your students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pray that students will explore Luke’s record of the reaction to the empty tomb with new eyes.</li> <li>• Pray that students will be willing to share their experience of witnessing the risen Lord.</li> <li>• Pray that students will experience the hope that the resurrection continues to bring to those who believe.</li> </ul>

## Biblical Commentary

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### Investigation

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The disciples had just witnessed the unthinkable. In spite of Jesus' predictions to them regarding His death, His followers were still shocked and surprised when Jesus was arrested and crucified. They witnessed Him being taken away by an angry mob and they saw Him crucified, killed in the most undignified manner possible. Now, they hid themselves away possibly out of fear that the religious leaders and authorities would come after them next.

### Importance

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Because **Jesus is God and Savior**, death could not hold Him. God raised Jesus from the dead affirming all that He did and taught. Jesus' resurrection makes it possible for believers to have forgiveness and redemption from sin as well as new life through the Holy Spirit.

### Interpretation

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**Luke 24:1** First-century Jewish culture measured time as beginning in the evening. This is illustrated in the Genesis account of creation: "There was evening and there was morning, the first day" (Gen. 1:5). Therefore, the first-century Jewish work week ran from Saturday evening at twilight to Friday at twilight. Since the women went to the tomb "at early dawn," Mary Magdalene, Joanna, James' mother Mary, and "other" women (see 24:10) went to the tomb early on Sunday morning. John's Gospel adds that the women came to the tomb "while it was still dark," suggesting that their arrival was very early on Sunday morning. The women carried **spices** with them to anoint the body. They were either unaware that Joseph and Nicodemus had prepared the body or felt that their preparations had been inadequate or incomplete (Utley, available online).

**Luke 24:2-3** The type of tomb in which Jesus was laid had a groove to the side of the entrance by which a large, round stone could be rolled to seal the entrance. The stone would have been so large that the women could not unseal the tomb on their own. Fortunately, they found the stone rolled away. Matthew 28:4 recounted that an earthquake, possibly caused by an angel, was responsible for the stone's movement. Seeing the stone rolled away, the women entered the tomb but did not find Jesus' body. It is important to note that the women expected to find a literal, physical body there. Jesus was not some ethereal spirit as later heresies would argue (Utley, available online).

**Luke 24:4** The men who suddenly stood before the women "in dazzling apparel" were angels. The term "dazzling" was also used by Luke to describe the transfiguration of Jesus and suggests overwhelming brightness (Utley, available online).

**Luke 24:5** The women were frightened at the appearance of the angels. This response is common throughout Scripture (Dan. 10:8; Lk. 2:1-12), though it is sometimes difficult to discern whether the situation in which a person finds himself or the angel itself is fearsome (Acts 27:23-24). In this instance, the women signaled their respect and awe by prostrating themselves on the ground.

The angels' question to the women is phrased differently in the Greek. Instead of "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" the Greek adds an article to "the living," making the angels' question, "Why do you seek The Living One among the dead?" This phrase, "The Living One," is unique to Luke's Gospel and denotes Jesus' status as the risen Savior who was once dead but is now alive forevermore (Utley, available online).

**Luke 24:6-7** The angels affirmed the fact of the resurrection. Jesus' resurrection is the central tenant of the entire Christian faith. The resurrection demonstrated God's approval of Jesus' life and His substitutionary death to redeem mankind. Without the resurrection, Paul argued that the believer's faith would be in vain and believers would still be in their sin (1 Cor. 15:12-19).

The angels reminded the women of the fact that Jesus had predicted His death and resurrection (Lk. 9:21-22; 17:25). Their words called to mind the title "**Son of Man**" that Jesus often used self-referentially. In this context, it perfectly meshed both Jesus' divine and human natures. As a human, Jesus died. As God, death did not hold final power over Him.

**Luke 24:8-9** After being reminded of Jesus' predictions, the women recalled that He had, in fact, predicted all that had happened to Himself beforehand. Leaving the tomb, the women returned to the eleven remaining disciples, as well as an unnumbered gathering of others who had apparently been witness to the events of Jesus' death.

**Luke 24:10-11** Despite what must have been the women's excitement, the remainder of the group had difficulty believing their account and dismissed it as "an idle tale," a medical term for fever induced hysteria or hallucinations. The grammar of the text suggests that the women told the gathered group their account several times, but the group remained staunch in their disbelief of the story (Utley, available online).

**Luke 24:12** Peter, who was notoriously impetuous, was the only member of the group who took the women's account seriously enough to investigate it for himself. Seeing the stone rolled away was not enough. Peter entered the tomb, saw the burial cloths, found no body, then left and "marveled."

**Luke 24:36-37** Jesus miraculously appeared in the midst of His disciples after two of their number finished telling the rest of the group of an encounter they had just had with the risen Lord. Understandably, the group was frightened by Jesus' sudden appearance and assumed that they were seeing a ghost.

**Luke 24:38-40** Jesus asked the disciples two rhetorical questions: "Why are you troubled?" and "Why do doubts arise in your heart?" Taken together, the questions serve as a mild reprimand. Jesus had told His disciples all that would happen to Him before it happened. Now, they persisted in disbelief, not only after hearing that He had risen, but seemingly even as they saw Him, some doubt remained. To assuage their disbelief, Jesus encouraged the disciples to inspect His hands, His feet, and His side. He even encouraged them to touch Him to verify that He was actually present physically and not just a spirit that had appeared to them. The phrase, "It is I myself," is used emphatically in the Greek and suggests that, upon their inspection, there should be no more doubt that Jesus had physically risen from the dead and was standing before them (Utley, available online).

**Luke 24:41-43** Somehow, at least some of those gathered still disbelieved, in spite of now being able to personally, physically, verify Jesus' resurrection. As a further proof that He was not simply a spirit, Jesus asked for something to eat. Receiving a piece of fish, Jesus ate it demonstrating once again that He was actually,

physically alive and not simply a spirit.

**Luke 24:44** This verse appears to be a summary statement of everything Jesus taught the disciples during His forty days of post-resurrection encounters. Jesus referenced “everything written about me” in the three major divisions of Hebrew Scripture: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings (including Psalms and Proverbs). By Jesus’ own teaching, at least parts of the Old Testament pointed to His life, death, and resurrection.

**Luke 24:45** Just as the disciples struggled to understand the teachings of the Old Testament about Jesus on their own, all of humanity cannot comprehend the truth of Scripture apart from God’s aid. This ministry of illumination is generally reserved for the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:16; 16:8-15) but is sometimes performed by Jesus (Acts 16:14) (Utley, available online).

**Luke 24:46-47** “Thus it is written” was a Hebrew idiom to convey the idea of Scripture’s divine inspiration, here used to underscore the Scriptural support for Jesus’ identity as “**The Christ.**” Jesus understood and taught the disciples that the Old Testament had predicted His death and resurrection on the third day. As a result, repentance and forgiveness of sins could now be proclaimed throughout all the earth because of the substitutionary nature of Jesus’ death and resurrection. It is important to note that this repentance and forgiveness is to be proclaimed “in His name.” It is only through Jesus that a right standing with God is possible because only Jesus paid the price for sin and defeated death (Utley, available online).

**Luke 24:48-49** Because the disciples personally witnessed Jesus’ life, ministry, death, and resurrection, they were now charged with the task of proclaiming repentance and forgiveness in Jesus’ name throughout the world. The words, “the promise of my Father,” refers to the Holy Spirit, who would come upon the disciples and empower them to accomplish their evangelistic task. Jesus’ instruction to remain in the city until this event occurred was somewhat counter-intuitive. Most of His disciples were from rural Galilee. Jerusalem was where Jesus’ opposition was located. Yet God’s plan for the spread of the Gospel upon the Spirit’s arrival at Pentecost required their continued presence in Jerusalem.

## Implications

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The women who went to take care of Jesus’ body were the first to discover the empty tomb and its life-changing message: Jesus has risen from the dead! Although they initially feared that Jesus’ body had been stolen, both the abandoned grave cloths and the angels’ message assured them that God had demonstrated His great power by raising Jesus to life. And when Jesus appeared to the disciples in the flesh, and explained that He would soon ascend to His Father, they were all convinced that His resurrection indeed proved that **Jesus is God and Savior.**

Today, we must rely upon the recorded accounts of these (and other) eyewitnesses, who solemnly testified they talked with, walked with, and dined with the resurrected Christ before He ascended into heaven. No other faith can make that claim of its principle figure. As you teach this lesson, encourage students to examine the evidence of these witnesses as they consider what Jesus’ death and resurrection means to them. On this Easter Sunday, lead students to celebrate that Jesus is the Son of God, who was offered as the atoning sacrifice for our sins and then raised to eternal life, so we can experience the blessings of salvation and eternal life.

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## Teaching Plan

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### Connect

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#### Review Questions

*(5–8 minutes, easy set-up)*

*Students will answer five review questions from the previous lesson.*

*Print one copy of the “Review Questions” activity sheet for your use.*

After greeting students, use the review questions to test what they can recall from the previous lesson as well as to provide context for today’s lesson.

#### Master Teacher Option: Easter Facts

*(10 minutes, easy setup)*

*Students will be quizzed about their knowledge of Easter.*

*Provide paper and pens for students and Easter candy for rewards. Create a presentation slide with the following numbers: 180 million; 43 million; 700 million; 90 million; 16 billion. All facts used in this activity were found at*

*<http://www.history.com/topics/holidays/history-of-easter/infographics/easter-by-the-numbers>. Additional facts can be found there as well.*

Provide a piece of paper and a pen for each student. Explain that students will be asked a series of questions about Easter and that whomever guesses the correct answer will receive a piece of Easter candy. (If no one answers correctly, give candy to the person whose answer was the closest.) Display the power point slide you’ve created or list these amounts on the dry erase board: *180 million; 43 million; 700 million; 90 million; 16 billion*). Say: **Did you know that 80% of all Americans celebrate Easter, but that doesn’t mean they celebrate it for religious reasons. These amounts can help us see how they celebrate.** Explain that students will chose the number on the board they think is most accurate to explain the statements below. Share the following statements, pausing as students consider their choices (*correct answers are provided in italics*):

- **The number of jellybeans Americans eat each Easter (*16 Billion*)**
- **The number of chocolate Easter bunnies made each year (*90 million*)**
- **The number of eggs Americans decorate and dye each year (*180 million*)**
- **The number of Peeps Americans eat each Easter (*more than 700 million*)**
- **The number of cards Americans send at Easter each year (*up to 43 million*)**

After students have responded to each statement, review responses, and state that it can be easy to get caught up in the traditions of Easter and maybe forget the true reason to celebrate. Conclude that today

students will examine accounts of the first Easter and how it continues to impact our lives today.

## Explore

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### Master Teacher Key Study: He Is Not Here

*(15-20 minutes, easy set-up)*

*Students will study Luke 24:1-12, 36-49 to examine the evidence that Jesus was no longer in the tomb, but was alive.*

*Print one copy of the Master Teacher Key Study for your use. Provide a copy of the Student Worksheet and a pen for each student.*

**Learning Goal:** Students will examine the evidence that Jesus was no longer in the tomb, but was alive.

Pass out pens and copies of the Master Teacher Student Worksheet. Then, use the Master Teacher Key Study to teach Luke 24:1-12, 36-49.

## Transform

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### Deeper Discussion

*(5-10 minutes, easy set-up)*

*Students will discuss what the resurrection means to them.*

**Learning Goal:** Students will evaluate what Jesus' resurrection means to them.

Lead students to discuss the impact that Jesus' resurrection from the dead has on the Christian faith in general, before leading them to discuss how their faith has been influenced by His resurrection.

- **What feelings would the women have approached the tomb with?**
- **How did the disciples' reaction to the news of the empty tomb show disbelief?**
- **How did Jesus' appearance to His disciples demonstrate both His divinity and His humanity?**
- **What would your life be like today without Jesus' death and resurrection?**

Divide students into twos or threes and encourage them to discuss ways that Jesus' resurrection is the defining event that makes Christianity different from all other religions. After students discuss the evidence the first-century disciples witnessed at Jesus' appearance after His crucifixion and resurrection, encourage students to discuss what evidence led them to accept Jesus as their risen Lord. Encourage

students to close by praying for each other to live out their faith in Christ by telling others about their Lord.

## Master Teacher Option: Seeing is Believing

*(10 minutes, easy set-up)*

*Students will evaluate what Jesus' resurrection means to them.*

*Create a presentation slide with the five questions provided in the bulleted list below.*

**Learning Goal:** Students will evaluate what Jesus' resurrection means to them.

Remind students Jesus appeared before His disciples in the flesh to prove that He was alive and not lying dead in the tomb. Ask: **What are some ways that people today can personally experience Jesus' presence in their lives?** (*Students may describe times when they experienced Jesus' presence during a retreat or youth conference setting, or they may share times when they felt Jesus' presence during a personal time of prayer.*) Ask: **How can these types of experiences help us accept Jesus as God's Son, the Messiah who suffered death on the cross only to be raised to life again?**

Point out that believing in Jesus as the risen Lord and Savior is a personal decision that each of us must make for ourselves. Display the presentation slide you created with the questions provided below and invite students to privately respond to these questions:

- **What part of Jesus' sacrifice is hardest for you to understand—His death or His resurrection?**
- **Why is Jesus' resurrection the proof of His ability to pay the penalty for your sin?**
- **How has Jesus revealed Himself to you?**
- **How have you responded to the truth that Jesus is the Messiah who came to redeem all people?**
- **How have you responded to Jesus as your Redeemer?**

After a couple of minutes for students to reflect, encourage them to talk with you or another adult after class if they have unanswered questions about the role that Jesus' resurrection plays in any decisions they may have about their faith. Lead your students in prayer that they will come to know Jesus as their Savior and Lord, if they have not already, and that they will boldly share their faith with others.

## Take Home Activity

### Family Devotion

*(10-15 minutes at home, easy set-up)*

*Distribute copies of the Family Devotion to students and encourage them to share the devotion with their family.*

A copy of the Family Devotion will be included in your lesson PDF download.

### REVIEW QUESTIONS

(5-8 minutes, easy set-up)

Use these questions to review the content from Lesson 36: "The Promise of the Future"  
The correct answer for each question is printed in bold, italic font.

1. Jesus hung on the cross between two \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. **thieves**
  - b. Zealots
  - c. Jewish law-breakers
  - d. Roman enemies
  
2. One of the criminals on a cross \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus, while the other \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. expressed faith in; did not believe
  - b. insulted; died
  - c. talked with; groaned
  - d. **insulted; expressed faith**
  
3. Jesus assured the criminal who expressed faith that he \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. would be forgiven
  - b. would not die
  - c. **would join Jesus in paradise**
  - d. would not suffer as much as the other criminal
  
4. As Jesus died, darkness came upon the earth and lasted \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. 1 week
  - b. 24 hours
  - c. **3 hours**
  - d. 12 hours
  
5. A centurion witnessed Jesus' death and \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. began to question the disciples about Jesus
  - b. **expressed faith in Jesus as the Son of God**
  - c. walked away in disbelief
  - d. hurled insults at Jesus

## HE IS NOT HERE

(15-20 minutes, easy set-up)

*Use this outline and any of the corresponding activities to share the Biblical Truth with students.*

**Introduction:** Imagine that you have been a follower of Jesus for a while. You followed Him to Jerusalem, you were there when He was found guilty, and you watched Him carrying the bar for the cross through the city and to the place where He was crucified. After Jesus died, you would have experienced sadness, anger, frustration, humiliation, hopelessness. Those who had loved Jesus had watched Him face an excruciatingly painful and humiliating death. His followers watched and cried, but could do nothing. The women who had been with Jesus in Galilee even followed along as His body was carried to a burial chamber and placed inside. And, because of the lateness of the hour and the approaching Sabbath, they again could do nothing. At sunrise, when the Sabbath had ended, the women rushed to the tomb to do the one thing they knew how to do for Him . . . to prepare His body in death.

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### 1. Because Jesus was alive, His tomb was empty (Luke 24:1-12).

**Biblical Background:** The women came to the tomb with burial spices, but found the entrance open and Jesus' body missing, and two angels who asked why they were looking for Jesus' dead body (vv. 1-5). Instead, they were greeted by two angels who proclaimed that Jesus had been risen from the dead, just as He had promised them. The angels' words supported the fact that **Jesus Is God and Savior** (vv. 6-8). The women left the tomb and went back into Jerusalem to find the disciples. When the disciples heard what the women had found, they did not believe them, so Peter ran to the tomb to make sure and then left the empty tomb marveling about what had happened (vv. 11-12).

**Illustration:** Daniel Bennett wrote, "The women who loved Jesus were eager to express that love through caring for His body. But they found that their eagerness was outmatched by that of their Lord; arriving at the tomb 'at early dawn' was simply too late" (available online). Jesus had already left the tomb . . . alive!

**Application:** Although the women had been heartbroken by what they had witnessed at Jesus' crucifixion, they returned to complete the burial rituals for one reason . . . because they loved Him. Can you imagine what it felt like for them to realize that Jesus was no longer dead, but had risen from the tomb? We all have the opportunity to accept and celebrate that death could not hold Jesus!

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### 2. Because Jesus was not in the tomb, He appeared before His disciples (Luke 24:36-43).

**Biblical Background:** Even though they had heard the news that Jesus was alive, His appearance still surprised and even frightened them (vv. 36-37). When Jesus encouraged them to touch His physical body, proving that their doubts were unnecessary, the disciples responded with joy and wonder (vv. 38-41a). Jesus further demonstrated He was physically alive by asking for food and eating (vv. 41b-43).

**Illustration:** Jesus had told the disciples what would happen to Him. And, even after they heard the news of Jesus' resurrection, they were still surprised when they met Him face-to-face. And, they even doubted what they saw.

**Application:** Larson and Ogilvie wrote, “We are not asked to believe the doctrine of the Resurrection. We are asked to meet this person raised from the dead” (p. 349). Have you met the risen Lord?

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**3. Because Jesus was about to ascend into heaven, He explained what was to come (Luke 24:44-49).**

**Biblical Background:** Jesus reminded His disciples that everything He had taught before His crucifixion fulfilled the Law and the Prophets (vv. 44-45). Jesus explained that His death and resurrection had brought the forgiveness of sins in His name (vv. 45-46). Jesus proclaimed that the disciples were witnesses of all this and would receive power from God to be able to share what they had witnessed (vv. 48-49).

**Illustration:** Last words are important. Sometimes they're words shared in a Last Will and Testament, or the commencement speech given at graduation. These words are well-thought out and are meant to convey care, to take care of details, and to inspire hearers to go forth and succeed.

**Application:** Jesus used this time with His disciples for last words . . . to remind them of what He had done for them and to inspire them to go forth and share all they had witnessed.

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**Conclusion:** In his sermon *The Foundation of Faith*, Steven Cole asked, “If Jesus Christ is not risen from the dead, then He Himself was a liar, since He predicted His own death and resurrection on numerous occasions. Why believe in and follow a liar? If Christ is not risen from the dead, then His death on the cross did not secure the forgiveness of our sins. Jesus’ resurrection was God’s seal of approval on the sacrifice that Christ offered for all people so that Paul could rightly say, ‘If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless, you are still in your sins’ (1 Cor. 15:17). Celebrate today the risen Lord!

A LENTEN STUDY OF JESUS' LAST WEEK  
**IN JERUSALEM**

## HE IS NOT HERE

*Biblical Passages:* Luke 24:1-12, 36-49

*Memory Verse:* Luke 24:5b-6a

“Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.”

1. Because Jesus was alive, His tomb was \_\_\_\_\_ (Luke 24:1-12).
2. Because Jesus was not in the tomb, He \_\_\_\_\_ before His disciples (Luke 24:36-43).
3. Because Jesus was about to \_\_\_\_\_ into heaven, He explained what was to come (Luke 24:44-49).

### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What feelings would the women have approached the tomb with?
- How did the disciples' reaction to the news of the empty tomb show disbelief?
- How did Jesus' appearance to His disciples demonstrate both His divinity and His humanity?
- What would your life be like today without Jesus' death and resurrection?

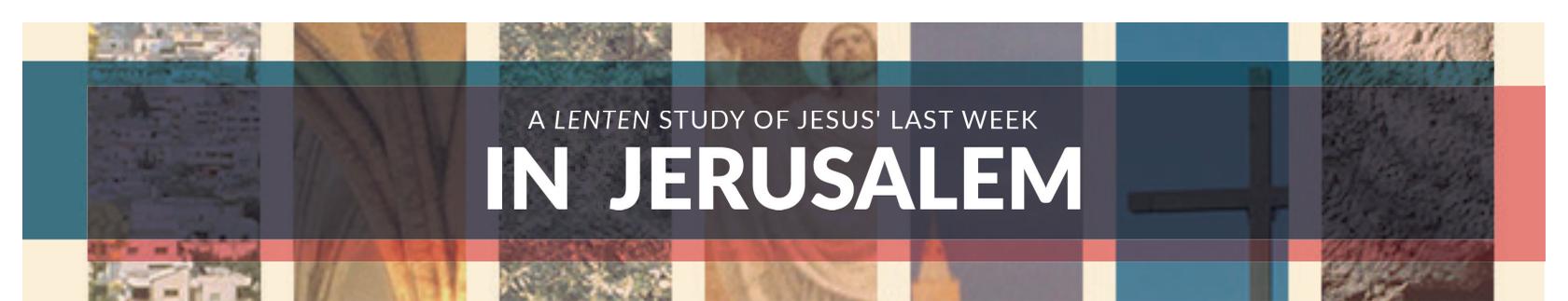
### WHAT DID THEY SEE . . .

What did the women see at the tomb?

What did the disciples see when Jesus appeared to them?

### “FOR FREE” THOUGHT

“Our old history ends with the cross; our new history begins with the resurrection.”—*Watchman Nee*



A LENTEN STUDY OF JESUS' LAST WEEK  
**IN JERUSALEM**

## **HE IS NOT HERE**

*Biblical Passages: Luke 24:1-12,36-49*

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Whenever unbelievable events happen in our world, the major news networks compete to provide the best coverage possible. Fox News Alerts and CNN Headline News, as well as others, send journalists and videographers to the location to document events as they occur and to interview eyewitnesses. Discuss: Why are these efforts to document unbelievable events important? When the news is catastrophic, such as the collapse of the Twin Towers in New York City, many people will remember exactly what they were doing when the networks broke the news to the world. People in the first century also recorded the unbelievable events of their time. The miracle of Jesus' resurrection is so important to the Christian faith that eyewitness coverage of the event is recorded in each of the four gospels.

Read Luke 24:1-12, 36-49. Early on Sunday morning, the women who had been with Jesus in Galilee returned to Jesus' tomb to complete the burial customs of their day. But when they arrived at the tomb, they discovered the stone rolled away and Jesus' body was gone. Two angels appeared and questioned them about why they were looking for Jesus in a place for the dead. The women raced to tell the disciples that someone had stolen Jesus' body, and Peter ran to the tomb. When Peter realized Jesus had risen from the dead, he went home, marveling over what had happened . . . Jesus was no longer there!

Just as multiple eyewitnesses to an unbelievable event today will offer varying details of the event, the gospel writers recorded varying details surrounding the moment when Jesus' followers realized He had risen from the dead. As we compile their testimonies, the most important thing to remember is that the prophets of the Old Testament had predicted the Messiah would rise from the dead, and that Jesus had repeatedly told His disciples that He would suffer death and then be raised to life. Those who witnessed the empty tomb and subsequently met with Jesus after His resurrection were forever changed. They never ceased to tell others that they served a risen Lord. And when we are convinced that Jesus is who He claims to be—the Messiah who came to pay the penalty for our sin so that we might live forever with Him—then we will also boldly share with others that our Savior lives.

### **CONNECTION QUESTIONS**

1. How does Jesus' resurrection prove that He is the Messiah who conquered sin and death?
2. Why does this miraculous event form the foundation of the Christian faith?
3. What would it take for each of us to believe that Jesus arose from the dead to offer salvation and eternal life to all who believe in Him?
4. How does the empowerment of the Holy Spirit enable us to give testimony to what we've witnessed?
5. Why should we boldly tell others what we know to be true about Jesus?