

THE SABBATH SCOOP

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Have You Been Badly Treated?

Have we ever been badly treated by people, especially dear friends and family? How should we respond?

By Gregory Dullum

Have we ever been falsely accused of something we didn't do? Have we been mistreated by someone we considered to be a close friend or a dear family member?

Someone once said, "No good deed ever goes unpunished." Have we ever tried to help someone only to get our head chewed off? Welcome to "the club!" We're not the first to suffer from this situation and we'll not be the last.

What do we do when this happens to us? It's human to want revenge. Desire for revenge inspired the saying, "Don't get mad. Get even." The plots of many novels and movies are based upon a hero seeking revenge for a wrongdoing.

Revenge is NOT the answer. Vengeance is God's prerogative, not ours (Rom. 12:19). Even King Arthur in the play, *Camelot*, realized revenge is "that most worthless of causes."

How should we react? We have been shown the way by three Bible men whose names all start with the letter "J."

Joseph

Joseph was one of 12 sons of Jacob. How well liked was he?

"Now Israel [Jacob] loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of many colors. But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him" (Gen. 37:3-4).

God gave Joseph a prophetic dream, which he told to his brothers. In the dream, wheat sheaves representing the brothers bowed before a wheat sheaf representing Joseph. What was their reaction? "Now Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more" (Gen. 37:5).

Then he had another dream, which he



NAPS photo

No one likes to be accused of things they didn't do. What is the proper reaction? Seek revenge? Forgive but not forget? The proper response was given by three men whose names start with the letter "J."

told to his father and brothers. The sun, moon and stars bowed before Joseph. Their reaction? "...[A]nd his father rebuked him and said to him, 'What is this dream you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?' And his brothers envied him..." (vv. 9-11).

Joseph spoke the TRUTH. Yet he was *hated* for it. His brothers wanted to *kill* him (v. 19-20). Instead, at Judah's suggestion, they sold Joseph into slavery (v. 28).

Joseph became an Egyptian slave in Potipher's house. He lived according to God's laws and was blessed (Gen. 39:1-4). But Potipher's wife lusted after Joseph (vv. 7, 11-14). She *accused* Joseph of things he *never* did! As a result, her husband put Joseph in prison (v. 20).

Later, Joseph was given a position of great power, second only to Pharaoh (Gen. 41:40). When he had the opportunity, did he *ever* exact vengeance on Potipher's wife? No. Instead, he adminis-

tered the seven years of abundance so ALL OF EGYPT and the surrounding nations survived seven years of famine.

How did he react when he saw his brothers again? Did he want to get back at them for selling him into Egypt? Did he harbor hatred? Did he hold a grudge? Did he exact vengeance?

"And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed down before him to the earth. Then he asked them about their well-being, and said, 'Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he alive?' And they answered, 'Your servant our father is in good health; he is still alive.' And they bowed their heads down and prostrated themselves. Then he lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, 'Is this your younger brother of whom you spoke to me?' And he said, 'May God be gracious to you, my son.' Now his heart yearned for his brother; so Joseph made haste and sought somewhere to weep. And he went into his chamber and wept there..." (Gen. 43:26-30).

A little later the brothers stood before Joseph again.

"Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him and he cried out, 'Make everyone go out from me!' So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it. Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am Joseph; does my father still live?' But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence.

"And Joseph said to his brothers, 'Please come near to me.' And they came near. And he said, 'I am Joseph

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Been Mistreated?

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your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. But now do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.' ...

"Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. Moreover he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that his brothers talked with him" (Ch. 45:1-7, 14-15).

Joseph forgave his brothers for their rotten deeds. And because of Joseph, his WHOLE FAMILY was saved from the famine.

Job

The second man was righteous Job. "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil" (Job 1:1).

Job was afflicted by Satan *for no cause* (Ch. 2:3). Everything was taken from Job—his wealth, his children and his health. Job's three friends visited him. How did they treat Job? Did they show him love and compassion? Or did they accuse him of causing his own suffering by committing wicked sins?

Eliphaz accusingly asked Job, "Remember now, whoever perished being innocent? Or where were the upright ever cut off?" (Ch. 4:7).

Bildad told Job, "If you would earnestly seek God and make your supplication to the Almighty, if you were pure and upright, surely now He would awake for you, and prosper your rightful habitation.... Behold, God will not cast away the blameless, nor will He uphold the evildoers" (Ch. 8:5-6, 20).

Zophar's accusation was more biting and to the point. "For you have said, 'My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in your eyes.' But oh, that God would speak, and open His lips against you, that He would show you the secrets of wisdom! For they would double your prudence. Know therefore that God exacts from you less than your iniquity deserves" (Ch. 11:4-6).

Over and over these men wrongly accused Job of sin. Notice what God told Eliphaz: "My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has" (Ch. 42:7).

Notice what God instructed next: "Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, go to My servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and My servant Job shall pray for you. For I will accept him, lest I deal with you according to your folly; because you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has" (v. 8).

Over and over these men treated Job wrongfully. But in the end, *Job had to pray for them!* He could have refused. He could have held a grudge. But he didn't. He forgave them. *His prayers saved them.* They did him wrong but he saved them.

Jesus

Jesus Christ was wrongfully accused many times in his life.

When he cast out a demon, he was accused by the Pharisees of having done it by the power of Satan (Mat. 12:22-24).

Jesus was falsely accused of breaking the Sabbath (Mark 2:23-24).

Jesus was crucified on false accusations of perverting the nation, forbidding to pay taxes, and claiming to be king instead of Caesar (Luke 23:2).

Did Jesus seek revenge? Did He call down fire from heaven to destroy his accusers? No. While hanging on the stake, He prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34).

Jesus didn't hold a grudge. He forgave those who accused him. Through his suffering and death, He offered salvation for his accusers! He was wronged but He "turned the other cheek," and offered eternal life to those who wronged Him (John 3:15-17).

What About Us Today?

The story does not end with these three men. They were examples for us TODAY.

What did Jesus tell us, his followers who are living in these last days? "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and *kill* you, and you will be *hated* by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be *offended*, will *betray* one another, and will *hate* one another" (Mat. 24:9-10, emphasis added).

Like Joseph, we will be *hated*—even by our own family members (Mat. 10:34-37). In the world, we'll have tribulation (John 16:33). The time will come when those who kill us will think they are doing God a service (John 16:2)!

We will be wronged. We will be slandered and persecuted. How should we handle it? Hold a grudge? Get angry? Get even? No. We should follow the examples set by Joseph, Job and Jesus.

Jesus tells us, "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you,

do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you" (Mat. 5:44). We must pray for them, just as Job and Jesus did.

Not only must we love, bless, pray for and do good for our enemies, we also must FORGIVE them, as did Joseph, Job and Jesus. If we don't, our heavenly Father will NOT forgive us (Mat. 6:14-15).

And consider this:

Although Joseph was persecuted and hated by his brothers, he forgave them, and through him his brothers were saved from the famine.

Although Job was persecuted and wrongly accused by his friends, Job forgave them and prayed for them, and God accepted their sacrifices and forgave them. They were saved through Job.

Although Jesus was persecuted and wrongfully accused and put to death, He forgave his persecutors; and through Him ALL will have access to eternal life.

Although we will be persecuted and wrongfully accused and some of us may be martyred, it is for our sakes that Satan's time will be cut short and some of *our accusers* may LIVE. Human life will be saved because of us! We are the elect mentioned in Mat. 24:21-22: "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved [alive]; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened."

This is a recurring theme throughout the Bible. A righteous person is wrongfully accused. The righteous person forgives his accusers. The righteous person is instrumental in *saving his accusers*.

We need to strive to be like Joseph, Job and Jesus: righteous in deed and forgiving in attitude.

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JOHN THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED

John watches as Jesus dies on the stake and is one of the first to see his empty tomb.

By Gregory Dullum
Part 16

Jesus Speaks to the Thief

John stood beside his aunt, Mary, and watched the reaction of passers-by as they came to see who was the latest “criminal” to suffer Roman crucifixion.

“And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, ‘You who destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.’

“Likewise the chief priests, also mocking with the scribes and elders, said, ‘If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God, Let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, “I am the Son of God” ’ ” (Mat. 27:39-43).

“Then one of the criminals who was hanged blasphemed Him, saying, ‘If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.’ But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, ‘Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but the Man has done nothing wrong.’ Then He said to Jesus, ‘Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise’ (Luke 23:39-43).

Translators put the punctuation in the wrong place when they translated the Gospel of Luke into English. Jesus did NOT tell the thief he would be in Paradise *that day*. The dead do NOT go to heaven (John 3:13). Their bodies go into the ground and their inanimate spirit returns to God (Eccles. 12:7). They will not be conscious again until Christ returns to this earth and provides new bodies in which their spirits will dwell (1 Cor. 15:35, 40, 42-44). Jesus Himself would not be in paradise *that day!* It would be three days and three nights before He would rise from his grave (Mat. 12:40).

Jesus’ statement should have been punctuated thus: “Assuredly, I say to you today, you will be with Me in Paradise.” Jesus spoke a promise *that day*, but the fulfillment of that promise will NOT come until Christ returns to earth in glory and brings his kingdom with Him!

Jesus Speaks to Mary & John

Jesus turned his attention from the thief beside Him to examine the faces in the crowd below. He was thankful to see the familiar faces of his mother and some of his followers, including John. He was moved to speak directly to them.

“Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother’s sister [John’s mother], Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, ‘Woman, behold your son!’ Then He said to the disciple, ‘Behold your mother!’ And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home” (John 19:25-27).

Jesus assigned John the task of caring for Mary, and assigned Mary the task of caring for John. Why did Jesus pair up his mother with John instead of Peter, who would be the leader of the apostles? He probably did it because they were related—aunt and nephew—and because John was the disciple He loved; the one He TRUSTED most to care for his mother.

Darkness Comes Noon-3 p.m.

Darkness appeared over the land from noon until 3 p.m.: “Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land” (Mat. 27:45).

This was a *supernatural* darkness, caused by God the Father, NOT merely an eclipse of the sun. “No ordinary eclipse of the sun could have occurred at this time, it being then full moon, and this obscuration lasted about twelve times the length of an ordinary eclipse” (*A Commentary, Critical, Experimental and Practical on the Old and New Testaments* by Robert Jamieson, A.R. Fausset and David Brown, Vol. V, 1967, p. 473).

WHY was there supernatural darkness? An early church writer, Melito, gave us a poetical reason in *Melito on Pascha*, A.D. 178:

“He who hung the earth is hanging;
he who fixed the heavens has been fixed;
he who fastened the universe has been fastened to a tree;
the Sovereign has been insulted;
the God has been murdered;
the King of Israel has been put to death by an Israelite right hand.

O unprecedented murder! Unprecedented-

ed crime!

The Sovereign has been made unrecognizable by his naked body, and is not even allowed a garment to keep him from view.

That is why the luminaries turned away, and the day was darkened so that he might hide the one stripped bare upon the tree, darkening not the body of the Lord but the eyes of men” (*Martyrs & Miracles* by Gregory Dullum, 2000, p. 189).

There is another reason as well. Passover was instituted in Egypt on the night that God struck dead the FIRSTBORN of all the Egyptians (Ex. 12:11-13). That original Passover was *preceded* by a plague of DARKNESS (Ex. 10:21-23). In the mammoth struggle between good and evil, it is poetic justice that just as supernatural darkness preceded the death of Egypt’s firstborn, it also *preceded* the death of the FIRSTBORN *Son of God!* This darkness emphasized the fact that Jesus’ death was the fulfillment of the Passover sacrifice! This darkness lasted until 3 p.m.—the time of the evening sacrifice!

A third reason may be that Jesus was the LIGHT of the world (John 1:1-9), and He was about to be EXTINGUISHED.

Jesus’ Last Words

“About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?’ that is, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’ ” (Mat. 27:46). The sins of the world had been placed upon Jesus, and those sins had cut Him off from the Father (Heb. 9:28, Isa. 59:1-2).

John heard the crowd around him question what Jesus meant. Some thought he was calling out for Elijah (Mat. 27:47).

Jesus realized his time was short. He had sensed the departure of God’s presence and now He felt physical strength leaving his body. His mouth was dry. He said, “I thirst.” Someone dipped a sponge in vinegar, placed it upon hyssop, and brought it to his lips (John 19:28-29).

“So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished!’ ” (v. 30).

Sunset was fast approaching, and with it came the beginning of a holy day—a high

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day—the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The Jews told the Romans that they didn't want the three crucified men to remain on their stakes on the holy day. The two thieves crucified beside Christ had not been weakened by scourging and still had a lot of life in them. They would live long into the next day. Jesus, on the other hand, was moments away from death. To hurry up the dying process, soldiers broke the legs of the two thieves. They could no longer push themselves up with their feet, and breathing became more difficult, speeding up their death (John 19:31-32).

When the soldiers came to Jesus, they considered Him to be dead already, so they did not bother to break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers took a spear and pierced his side. Out rushed water and blood. This fulfilled the prophecy that not one of his bones would be broken (vv. 33-37).

When the spear pierced his side, Jesus cried out with a loud voice (Mat. 27:50). Through gritted teeth Jesus managed to utter just eight more words before He sank into unconsciousness and death. To his Father, He quietly uttered, "Father, into your hands I commit My spirit." Having said this, He breathed his last (Luke 23:46).

Suddenly the earth beneath John's feet shook. The earthquake was so strong that solid rock split in two. John wrapped his arms around his own mother and Mary, the mother of Jesus, to help keep their balance as the ground beneath their feet trembled. What he didn't know at the time was that the temple veil split in two and dead people came back to life and walked out of their graves (Mat. 27:51-53).

"So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that happened, they feared greatly saying, 'Truly this was the Son of God!' " (v. 54).

Most of the onlookers left the crucifixion site but John and the women remained: "And the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned. But all His acquaintances, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things" (Luke 23:48).

The sun dropped ever closer to the horizon, signaling the end of this preparation day (the daylight portion of Passover—Abib 14). The first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Abib 15) was about to begin. It was an annual Sabbath—a high day—which lasted from sunset Wednes-

day until sunset Thursday A.D. 31.

As John and the women stood at a distance, a man approached the stake upon which Jesus was crucified and began to take down the body for burial. This man was Joseph of Arimathea, a rich, just man who was a member of the Sanhedrin, but he had NOT CONSENTED to their decision to kill Jesus. He had gone to Pilate and had asked for the body.

As John and the women watched, Joseph and his assistants lifted the stake from its hole and laid it gently on the ground. They pulled the nails from Jesus' hands and feet. There was not time to fully prepare the body for burial because the sun was nearly down. Joseph quickly wrapped the body in fine linen and laid it in a brand new tomb hewn out of rock (Luke 23:50-55).

The sun set and the annual Sabbath marking the first Day of Unleavened Bread began (v. 54).

Observing the Holy Day

Jesus was dead and buried, and a Holy Day was just beginning. John walked with the women and other "acquaintances" of Jesus from the burial site back into Jerusalem.

Jews and most true followers of God observe the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread with a special meal. It is a reminder of how God had rescued the ancient Israelites from Egyptian slavery on that very night. The Jews eat a "seder" meal. Members of the Church of God gather on this night to eat a meal and celebrate God rescuing them from sin, of which Egypt was a type. They call this night, "the night to be much observed" (Ex. 12:42) or "night to be remembered" (Ex. 13:3).

It is likely that the apostles, the women who supported Jesus, and other close disciples gathered together for a meal after sunset on Wednesday to observe this holy day. Usually this is a joyous time, celebrating freedom from bondage. On this particular night, it is hard to imagine that the mood was anything but somber.

Conversation probably centered upon the events of the past 24 hours. Those who had witnessed the events shared their descriptions, thoughts and feelings with the others.

They had arrived in Jerusalem the previous Sabbath expecting to overthrow the Roman government and establish God's kingdom on earth! How events had turned! Now, the King—their leader and source of inspiration—lay dead in the grave, and no one knew what to do next.

The women decided upon their next

move. They considered it a shame that the body of Jesus was not given a proper burial. Normally spices were beaten and blended and added to the burial cloths. The women decided that as soon as the holy day was over, they would purchase the best spices they could find and would give Jesus the burial He deserved. The apostles agreed that this was a good idea.

The next day, Thursday, during the daylight portion of the holy day, Abib 15, the group of Jesus' followers may have attended services in the Temple with their fellow Jews. They rested from their day-to-day activities and refrained from making purchases because this was a holy day (Lev. 23:6-7).

Friday, Abib 16

When the markets opened on Friday, Abib 16, the day after the holy day, the women purchased the spices they needed to properly bury Jesus' body (Mark 16:1).

It took all day to find just the right spices and ointments, and to prepare them.

Sabbath, Abib 17

As the sun set on Friday, the weekly Sabbath (Abib 17) began. The women rested on the Sabbath, according to the fourth commandment (Luke 23:56, Ex. 20:8-11).

John and the other followers of Jesus probably attended Sabbath services in the temple with their fellow Jews. As Jesus' followers fellowshipped together, they probably talked about the women's plans to anoint Jesus' body as soon as it was light enough to see in the tomb Sunday morning.

Jesus Christ rose from the dead exactly three days and three nights after He was buried (Mat. 12:40). He was buried just before sunset on Wednesday. He rose from the dead just before sunset on the Sabbath. His resurrection was accompanied by a "great earthquake" (Mat. 28:2).

Early Morning, Sunday, Abib 18

Very early Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb alone (John 20:1). Matthew's Gospel states, "In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week..." (Mat. 28:1 *King James Version*). John's account says Mary went to the tomb "the first day of the week... early, while it was still dark" (John 20:1).

Meanwhile, John and Peter were visiting together at this wee hour of the morning. Suddenly the door burst open and Mary Magdalene entered into the room, breathless from running. Her eyes were

wild with amazement and sweat trickled down her face.

“What is it, Mary?” asked Peter.

“They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him” (John 20:2).

Peter charged out the door and ran to the tomb to see for himself. John raced after him. The last time they had seen the tomb, a stone had been rolled in front of the door, a seal had been placed upon it, and Roman guards had been posted (Mat. 27:60, 65-66). Perhaps Saturday’s earthquake had jarred open the door and someone had stolen the body!

John was the faster runner (probably because he was younger). He passed Peter and arrived first at the tomb. The stone had been rolled away, leaving the dark entrance open. The Roman guards were nowhere to be seen. John stopped at the entrance and stooped down to peer inside. He could make out linen cloths lying inside the dark tomb but he saw no body.

When Peter finally arrived, he didn’t stop outside with John. He went into the tomb. Looking around the dark man-made cave, he saw the linen cloths lying in one place and the handkerchief that had been around Jesus’ head neatly folded in another place. The body was gone!

John joined Peter inside the tomb and confirmed what he had seen from outside. The empty tomb may have made a bigger impression upon John than it did upon any of the others. Only of John does the Bible say, “and he saw and believed” (John 20:8). John *does not explain* WHAT he believed. We may assume he believed Christ was resurrected (Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, p. 478). Or perhaps, he now believed Mary, that the body was stolen. Or, he may have believed *the body was missing* but had no clue as to what had happened to it. No matter what John believed, apparently all of the others thought the body was stolen, “For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead” (John 20:9).

Mary Magdalene had followed John and Peter back to the empty tomb. When John and Peter returned to their own homes, they left her at the tomb, weeping (John 20:3-11).

Later That Morning

Later that morning, John and the other apostles gathered together to discuss what had happened to Jesus’ body. They were at a loss of what to do next. They “mourned and wept” (Mark 16:10).

Mary Magdalene and the other women arrived with exciting news. Mary Magda-

lene reported that she had followed John and Peter back to the grave, but had stayed behind weeping after they had gone home (John 20:11). She then peered into the tomb and was amazed to see two angels sitting where Christ’s body had been. They asked her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She told them, “Because they have taken away my Lord and I do not know where they have laid Him.”

She felt a presence behind her, and turned around to see a Man standing there. She didn’t recognize the Man, who asked her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?”

Thinking He was the gardener, Mary said to Him, “Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away.”

Then the Stranger said to her, “Mary!” There was something familiar about the way the Man spoke her name. She looked into his eyes and realized the Man standing in front of her was Jesus Christ—alive and well! She uttered the word, “Rabboni!” which means “Teacher” (vv. 11-16).

The fact that Mary didn’t recognize Jesus indicates that once we are resurrected as spirit beings, we will be able to CHANGE *how we appear*, and *any imperfections* our physical bodies had will be HEALED. Jesus will NOT go through eternity looking like He did when He died—his body ripped open by scourging, nail holes forever in his hands and feet, a gaping spear hole forever in his side. Had he appeared *this way* to Mary, she *would have recognized Him*, for she had witnessed his crucifixion and burial. He appeared to Mary as a normal man, although with features DIFFERENT from his physical appearance when He walked the earth. That’s why she assumed He was a gardener.

Jesus then told Mary, “Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.’”

Mary dutifully reported these words to the apostles (vv. 17-18). Did they believe Mary? “And when they had heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe” (Mark 16:11).

The other women added to Mary’s story. After Mary’s encounter with Jesus, she had returned to the women’s quarters. She tried to persuade the women that they no longer needed to anoint Jesus’ body as they had planned because He was risen from the dead, but they did not believe

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Fun Fact



Drawing and Fun Fact are courtesy of NAPS

The tradition of New Years resolutions dates as far back as ancient Babylon.

Witerature

Wit and wisdom to complement the truths of the Holy Bible can be found in secular writings.

You, Inc. by Harry and Christine Beckwith, Warner Business Books, 2007, pp. 166-167.

Master the Small

“A very successful management supervisor in a prominent consulting firm, after years of observation, had discovered what he believed to be the five keys to a consultant’s success. As surprising as this may seem, the first two were ‘Show up on time’ and ‘Make sure you have everything you need for your meeting.’

“He was asked, ‘How can those two things possibly make a difference?’ He answered, ‘Because other consultants fail at these tasks every day.’...

“Do the big stuff, but *master* the small. People look at the small as telling evidence of your ability to do the big—and anything else....”

“Dot the i’s. Not everyone does.”

Mat. 25:21, 23, Luke 12:43-44

Quotable Quotes

“It is one of the most beautiful compensations of this life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself.”

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Memory Scripture

“So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

—Gen. 1:27

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her! They had spent a lot of money on the spices, they had spent a lot of time preparing them, and they were determined to anoint his body. Perhaps they thought Mary's story was just a dream.

When the women arrived at the tomb, they were surprised to find the stone rolled back, just as Mary had described it to them. They entered the tomb, fully prepared to anoint Jesus' body. Instead of his body, they saw an angel sitting in the tomb.

The angel said to them, "I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed, He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you."

Filled with fear and joy, the women ran from the tomb to tell the apostles what the angel had said. On the way, they met the risen Jesus, who said to them, "Rejoice!" They came to Him, held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. Jesus told them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me" (Mat. 28:1, 5-10).

The apostles did not believe Mary. Did they believe these women's story?

"It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the apostles. And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them" (Luke 24:10).

Some of the men in the room went to the tomb after their meeting to see for themselves. They found the tomb exactly as the women had described it. But they did not see Christ nor an angel. They assumed the body had been stolen and did not believe Christ had risen from the dead (v. 24).

Later that day, Jesus appeared to Simon Peter alone. We have no details about what transpired between the Savior and the one who denied Him three times. We have only two brief statements in the Bible that the meeting took place (Luke 24:36, 1 Cor. 15:5). It is significant that the first apostle to see the risen Jesus was Peter.

After seeing Jesus, the women believed but could not persuade the men. After Peter saw Christ risen, he probably believed but had no better luck at persuading the other disciples. It seems that the only ones who believed Jesus was risen were those who saw Him with their own eyes!

(To be continued!)



Nuclear Agreement Not Reached With Iran

"Marathon talks between major powers and Iran failed Sunday [Nov. 10] to produce a deal to freeze its nuclear program, puncturing days of feverish anticipation and underscoring how hard it will be to forge a lasting solution to Iran's nuclear ambitions" ("Talks With Iran Fail to Produce a Nuclear Agreement" by Mark Landler and Michael R. Gordon, *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com, Nov. 9, 2013, p. 1).

Bible prophecy speaks of a "king of the South" attacking or pushing at a "king of the North" (Dan. 11:40-45). The king of the North will most likely be a European union of 10 "kings" (Dan. 2:42-44; Rev. 17:12-14). The king of the South will likely be a Muslim union stretching from Iran to North Africa. A nuclear-armed Iran would give this union the power to threaten Europe, forcing Europe to react as prophesied.

Europe Moves to Right

"As right-wing populists surge across Europe, rattling established political parties with their hostility toward immigration, austerity and the European Union, Mikkel Dencker of the Danish People's Party has found yet another cause to stir public anger: pork meatballs missing from kindergartens...."

"Mr. Dencker is furious that some day care centers have removed meatballs, a staple of traditional Danish cuisine, from their cafeterias in deference to Islamic dietary rules.... The missing meatballs, he said, are an example of how 'Denmark is losing its identity' under pressure from outsiders...."

"It is also Europe's new reality. All over, established political forces are losing ground to politicians whom they scorn as fear-mongering populists. In France, according to a recent opinion poll, the far-right National Front has become the country's most popular party. In other countries—Austria, Britain, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Finland and the Netherlands—disruptive upstart groups are on a roll...." ("Right Wing's Surge in Europe Has the Establishment

Rattled" by Andrew Higgins, *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com, Nov. 8, 2013, p. 1).

Adolph Hitler used a bad economy and fear of foreigners to bring his Nazi party to power prior to World War II. Europe is ripe for a new leader called "the beast" to arise and unify 10 nations into an end-time power bloc (Rev. 17:11-14).

Quakes Shake Oklahoma

"Oklahoma has never been known as earthquake country, with a yearly average of about 50 tremors, almost all of them minor. But in the past three years, the state has had thousands of quakes. This year has been the most active, with more than 2,600 so far, including 87 last week.

"While most have been too slight to be felt, some, like the quake on Saturday [Dec. 7] and a smaller one in November that cracked the wall in Ms. [Mary] Sexton's house, have been sensed over a wide area and caused damage. In 2011, a magnitude 5.6 quake—the biggest ever recorded in the state—injured two people and severely damaged more than a dozen homes, some beyond repair" ("Experts Eye Oil and Gas Industry as Quakes Shake Oklahoma" by Henry Fountain, *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com, Dec. 12, 2013, p. 1).

Jesus Christ prophesied that earthquakes in various places would mark the "beginning of sorrows" leading up to the time of the end and his return (Mat. 24:3, 7-8).

Japan Seeks More Muscle

"Taking Japan a step further from its postwar pacifism, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe approved a new five-year defense plan on Tuesday [Dec. 17] that calls for the acquisition of drones and amphibious assault vehicles to strengthen the nation's military forces..." ("Amid Chinese Rivalry, Japan Seeks More Muscle" by Martin Fackler, *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com, Dec. 17, 2013, p. 1).

At the time of the end, "kings from the east" will attack the king of the North—Europe (Dan. 11:44, Rev. 16:12-16). A rearmed Japan may be part of the "kings from the east."