

THE UNEXPECTEDLY EMPTY TOMB

Jacob Hudgins

After resting on the Sabbath after Jesus' death, the women return to the tomb to anoint His body (Luke 24:1-12). But there is no body! Confused (4), they are frightened by men (angels) who explain that Jesus told them all this. "Remember how He told you" (6)—and as they remember, they rush back to tell the others, who also don't believe. Peter goes to check it out himself and leaves marveling (12).

It is notable that every disciple here is caught off-guard. They are "perplexed" (4), "frightened" (5), "did not believe" (11), and are left "marveling" (12). The empty tomb is not expected. There is no vigil, no sea of witnesses, no "told-you-so"s. They must be reminded of what Jesus said—and **even then** they struggle to believe.

There is comfort in this. It puts to rest the idea that they made this story up. Even the Jewish leaders have a better handle on it than the apostles (Matthew 27:63-66). It is a reminder that **Jesus' words don't rely on our understanding to be true**. Real is real—whether we see it or not.

The empty tomb is something we would not dare to hope for after such an awful death. Yet it is the ultimate statement that the ugliness of this world will not last forever—that there is a happy ending still in store after death.

DISRUPTIONS

Bryan Matthew Dockens

For a few days now, internet and cellular services have been disrupted in Socorro, Valencia, and other counties. The word going around is that a motor vehicle collision took out a cell tower between Belén and Los Lunas, a fiber optic cable was severed somewhere, and power lines were down in Socorro. Whatever the causes, non-satellite based internet connection has been unavailable and mobile phone connectivity has been sketchy since Friday night or earlier. For those who might have been at ease the past couple years, since the Covid panic began, worshiping remotely from home, doing church virtually, this ought to be a reminder, as Aretha might sing, "Ain't nothing like the real thing." It's past time to "come together as a church"—the way the Lord always intended (1st Corinthians 11:33).

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- Walking in love (Romans 14:15; Ephesians 5:2),
- Walking in good works (Ephesians 2:10),
- Walking worthy (Ephesians 4:1; Colossians 1:10; 1st Thessalonians 2:12),
- Walking in light (Ephesians 5:8; 1st John 1:7),
- Walking circumspectly (Ephesians 5:15),
- Walking in the Lord (Colossians 2:6),
- Walking in wisdom (Colossians 4:5),
- Walking properly (1st Thessalonians 4:12),
- Walking as Jesus walked (1st John 2:6),
- Walking in truth (2nd John 4; 3rd John 4), and
- Walking according to Christ's commandments (2nd John 6; 3rd John 3)

Christ's pilgrims are on a journey of spiritual proportions, having nothing to do with distances traveled over land, sea, or air.

The patriarchs "confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them" (Hebrews 11:13-16). Thus, true pilgrimage is about perceiving heaven as home (Philippians 3:20), and life on earth as a temporary sojourn (2nd Corinthians 4:18).

Peter told his readers, "Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul" (1st Peter 2:11). Because Christians don't, ultimately, belong here on earth, most of this present existence should be perceived as foreign. Desires of the flesh ought to be regarded as strange behaviors not to be embraced.

That's what pilgrimage truly is—not hiking up a hill, not bowing down in some shrine, not visiting the places in Israel where Jesus might have been born or might have died, but living like Jesus wherever the Christian happens to be.

**"WHAT MUST I DO
TO BE SAVED?"**

ACTS 16:30

LEARN THE GOSPEL

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

BELIEVE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

CONFESS CHRIST

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 3:19; 17:30

BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"THE ASSEMBLING OF
OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

HEBREWS 10:24-25

SUNDAY

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard
Belén, New Mexico

Seekers Welcome.
Members Expected.

**"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN
ANY TRESPASS...
RESTORE SUCH A ONE"**

GALATIANS 6:1

CONFESS TRESPASSES

James 5:16; 1st John 1:9

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 8:22

PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS

Acts 8:22

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN IS
LIKE APPLES OF GOLD IN
SETTINGS OF SILVER"**

PROVERBS 25:11

"Some people get all their
exercise by jumping to
conclusions."

"WHOLE COUNSEL"

ACTS 20:27

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"PILGRIMS ON THE EARTH"

Bryan Matthew Dockens

By definition, a "pilgrim" is "one who journeys in foreign lands," and, usually, the word applies to "one who travels to a shrine or holy place as a devotee" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Muslims journey to Mecca, passengers on the Mayflower went to Plymouth, Catholics of the medieval era visited shrines throughout Europe and all the way to Jerusalem, and many modern Catholics still take treks up various hills and such designated as holy by their priests. One may appropriately wonder whether Scripture enjoins pilgrimage upon Christians in the present Covenant.

Peter addressed his first epistle *"To the pilgrims"* (1st Peter 1:1), so the concept is plainly implied by inspiration.

For Christians obeying the simple, old gospel, pilgrimage has nothing at all to do with a two-week trip to the so-called "Holy Land," visiting places the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and Jesus Himself certainly went and other places they might have been. Rather, legitimate pilgrimage has everything to do with:

- Walking in faith (Romans 4:12; 2nd Corinthians 5:7),
- Walking in newness of life (Romans 6:4),
- Walking in the Spirit (Romans 8:4; Galatians 5:16, 25),
- Walking properly (Romans 13:13),

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