

Christ Is Risen

Sometime between Friday night and early Sunday morning, the greatest and happiest miracle took place - Christ rose from the dead. This miracle changed the lives of all the people in the world.

While it was still dark Sunday morning, the women who were friends of Jesus hurried to His tomb. They were carrying precious scented oil and spices to rub on the body of Jesus Christ. This was the custom in those days. As they were hurrying they spoke to each other: "Who will roll away the heavy stone that closes the entrance to the cave?" It was a big, heavy stone, and they knew they were not strong enough to roll it away themselves.

As the women approached the tomb, they saw that the entrance to it was already opened and the stone was rolled away. An angel was sitting on the stone. His face was shining like lightning, and his dress was white as snow. The soldiers who were guarding the tomb were so frightened when they saw the angel that they fell to the ground. But the angel said to the women: "Do not be afraid. I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here. He is alive again, risen from the dead. Remember what He said to you when He was still with you: that He would be taken by evil men and crucified, and that on the third day He would rise again. Go, tell His disciples that Jesus Christ is risen and will meet them in Galilee."

One of the women, called Mary Magdalen, did not stay at the tomb long enough to hear the message of the angel. As soon as she saw the stone rolled away, she hurried to tell the news to the disciples. She found Peter and John and said to them: "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid Him." Then Peter and John hurried to the tomb as fast as they could. John was younger than Peter, and so he ran faster and was the first to arrive. He did not enter the cave. He waited for Peter, and they entered the

tomb. Together they looked at the folded linen cloth and the napkin that had covered the Lord's head. They could not understand what had happened and returned home to tell the news to the other disciples.

Mary stood crying outside the cave. As she cried, she bent down and looked into the tomb. Suddenly she saw two angels sitting where Jesus' body had been lying. The angels said: "Mary, why are you crying?" And Mary answered: "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." As she said this, she turned back. Suddenly she saw Jesus standing near her in the garden. But Mary did not recognize Him. Jesus said: "Why are you crying? For whom are you looking?" Mary, thinking it was one of the gardeners, said: "Sir, if you have taken Him away, tell me where you have laid Him." Then Jesus said: "Mary." And suddenly Mary recognized Jesus. "Master!" she cried and threw herself at His feet. Jesus said: "Go and tell the disciples that I am going to My Father."

The greatest, the most wonderful miracle happened that first Easter morning: Christ, who suffered and died for us on the cross, arose from the dead. He was stronger than death, He opened the doors to heaven for everyone. There is no greater holiday than Easter, no gladder or happier day in the year.