

# He Is Risen!

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[0:00] Fake news. Who's heard of fake news? We've all heard of fake news. It's the intentional spinning or misinforming of people using news outlets and social media. It's really just kind of a propaganda deal.

In 2016, there was this whopper fake news headline. This is what it was. Obama signs executive order banning the pledge of allegiance in schools nationwide. According to BuzzFeed, there was about 2.2 million people on Facebook that shared it, commented, and reacted to it. But factcheck.org revealed that it was not true. That the site that sent it out was a satirical news site that was kind of pretending to be ABC News. Fake news. False news.

You know, we live in a time where skepticism is on the rise. There are headlines in your news feed that you see them on TV and one of the questions you first ask is, is that real? Is it true? Can I buy this?

Today, all across our nation and the world, there is a headline on church marquees, on web pages. It's even in your bulletin this morning. Here's the headline.

[1:40] He is risen. The question I want to ask this morning is, is that fake news or is that real news? He is risen. He is risen. If it's fake news, it's a bunch of hogwash and you reject it. But if it's real news, if it's true, it's good news. And not only should you accept it, you should commit yourself to it.

So this morning, we're going to ask the question, is the bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead? Is that spin? Is that fake news? Is that misinformation?

Or is that real, true, and accurate news? And depending on how you answer that, there will be some significant implications.

So this morning, I want to walk with you through a biblical account. I want to clarify the biblical account of the resurrection of Jesus so we all know what the news is.

And then I want to help you to consider the claim that that little passage is making. It is a phenomenal claim. And then let's chew on the implications together and then I'm going to call you to choose to make a commitment.

[3:10] He is risen. Fake news or real news? So in order to clarify the biblical account, I need you to open up your Bibles.

So if you would open up your Bibles to Matthew 28, here's how your Bible works. There are basically two sections of your Bible. There's the Old Testament, which describes God's gracious relationship with His people before Jesus.

And then there's the New Testament, which describes God's gracious relationship with His new people after Jesus, anticipating the second coming of Jesus. So there's two sections of your Bible. Your Bible's broken into books. There's 66 books. And one book is then broken into chapters.

Those chapters are further broken down to verses. And it's all helped you to find your way around the Bible.

And so if you would open up to your New Testament, it's the first book of your New Testament. It's the Gospel of Matthew. And I want you to turn to the last chapter of Matthew, Matthew chapter 28.

[4:10] And we're going to look at verses 1 through 10. Dave read them earlier. And what we're going to do is basically walk through the biblical account so we're all on the same page of what the Bible says.

But before we get to Matthew 28, let me just give you a little background. What happens in Matthew 28, 1 through 10, happens on a Sunday, the first day of the week.

But there's some really important things that happened that Thursday and Friday leading up to the first Easter. In Matthew 26 and 27, Jesus is arrested.

And he's brought to trial. And he goes before two groups of people. He goes before a bunch of Jews called the Sanhedrin. And they find him guilty of blasphemy. They send him to Pilate.

Pilate was the Roman authority who had the authority to put someone to death. And there was all sorts of pressure put on Pilate to crucify Jesus.

[5:10] He capitulates, washes his hands, hands him over to the guards and says, crucify him. The guards take him. They mock him. And eventually, they lead him to Golgotha, the place of the skull, which is known as Calvary, where they crucify him.

It's a brutal way to die. And while he's being crucified, he's being mocked. And after about 3 p.m. Good Friday afternoon, he breathes his last and yields up his spirit.

And there's amazing things happen. There's an earthquake, among other things. And then, Joseph of Arimathea requests from Pilate, hey, I'll take his body.

I'll bury him in my tomb. The new tomb that it meant for me. I'm going to put Jesus in it. Do you know who was there? Where Mary Magdalene and this other Mary, the two Marys, were there watching where the body of Jesus was placed.

You can see that in Matthew 27, 61. So that happened all on Friday. Saturday comes around, and the Jewish establishment goes to Pilate, and he says, hey, can you give us a Roman guard, please?

[6:22] We want to guard the tomb. Why? Why? They weren't afraid that, they didn't think that Jesus would be raised from the dead. They were thinking that the disciples would steal the body in order to do a little fake news spin of their own.

And so Pilate says, you've got your own guard from the temple. You can set that up. So there's a guard stationed on Saturday, and all of a sudden, here we are Sunday morning. And this is where we're going to pick up in Matthew 28, verse 1.

We read this. Early Sunday morning. Toward the dawn of the first day of the week. Now remember, the Jewish Sabbath was a Saturday, so the first day of the week was Sunday.

So Matthew's being very clear about when this is happening. The two Marys who witnessed where Jesus was buried, they're going back to the tomb.

They're going back to the tomb we learned from the other Gospels to prepare his body for burial. And as they're going, in verse 2, there's another earthquake.

[7:33] There's the first earthquake when Jesus died, which would have gotten your attention. And then there's this earthquake, another earthquake. All of creation is making a statement about what has happened.

And lo and behold, at the same time of this earthquake, an angel of the Lord descends. This isn't the first appearance of angels in the book of Matthew. There are angels all over the place in chapters 1 and 2, announcing Jesus' birth.

And then angels appear again in Matthew 4, after Jesus is tempted. After he does that, nobody else could do. And that is, sustain the temptations of the devil himself.

And he was ministered to by angels. Well, here is this angel who rolls away the huge stone blocking the tomb. And my imagination runs wild. There is this angel sitting on the stone in front of the empty tomb.

And my question is, what pose is he in? Is he in like the classic senior picture pose? You know, kind of like this? Is he on the stone with his legs crossed?

[8:42] Kind of like arms back waiting? We don't know. But his hands aren't ringing. He's not saying, where did Jesus go?

He's there to declare. He's there to announce. He's there to make known something. In 28.3, Matthew is very clear about the appearance of this angel.

He was bright as lightning. White, bright and white. Mary and Mary would be like, you're not from around here, are you? Everybody would have known that this guy's not from around here.

Well, in verse 4, we see what happens to the guard. It's like angel taser beam. This angel shows up in bright and white, sitting on the stone, and the Roman guard assigned by Pilate.

They drop like dead men. They've been immobilized by angelic glory. But not the Marys.

[9:59] The angel says to them, don't be afraid, in verse 5. Don't be afraid, for I know you seek Jesus who was crucified. Even the angel recognized that Jesus was dead on the cross.

In 28.6, the angel says, He's not here. He's not in the tomb. Which makes us ask the question, Well, where is He?

And then the angel says, For He is risen. The first to announce the resurrection of Jesus is an angel.

From heaven. He's not here, for He is risen. And then we read, He says, as He said.

Jesus said, He was going to be crucified, and three days later, be raised. He says it three times leading up to coming into Jerusalem, all throughout the Gospel of Matthew.

[11:08] That's why the Pharisees had a guard set around the tomb. They knew it too. He's not here, for He is risen, as He said.

You see, Jesus fulfills His word. He is unstoppable. Not only could this Roman guard not stop Him, death could not stop Him.

And so, the angel says to the Mary, See for yourselves, the tomb is empty, meaning there's no body.

28.7, the angel tells the Marys to go and tell the disciples that Jesus is risen from the dead, and that the risen Christ would meet them up in Galilee.

That's where Jesus did most of His ministry. Capernaum, which is in Galilee, would have been 80 miles due north of Jerusalem, as the crow flies. So, this angel said, the risen Christ is going to meet the disciples up there.

[12:15] In 28.8, we read that the Marys quickly leave the tomb, it's empty, and that they kind of basically run out of there with a mixture of fear and joy.

Do you see that? In verse 8, we read, so they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy. We have a word for that mix of fear and joy.

It's the word awe. Being in awe of something. Amazement. It's the sense of, could it be something bigger than yourself that at the one point you're feeling, this is huge, and it's really exciting.

And so, there is mounting excitement in the two Marys. And as they're going in verse 9, we read about an appearance.

Surprise! The risen Jesus meets them on the way. We read this, and behold, Jesus met them and said, greetings. And that word greetings, it's more than just, hey, what's up ladies?

[13:27] It is this, it is good to see you. What a joy to see you. Joy to you. That's the greeting. And the two Marys came up, and they took hold of his feet and worshiped him.

Did you read that? Took hold of his feet? Did you hear that? Do you know what that means? Do you know what it means to take hold of someone's feet? Do you know where you need to be in order to take hold of someone's feet?

You need to be on the ground. Prostrate. They dropped in front of him. They recognized him, and they dropped in front of him. Do you know the last time Matthew records someone bowing at Jesus?

It's the Praetorian guards, the Roman guards, in Matthew 27, when they're mocking him.

They bow down before him, and they say, Hail King of the Jews! Ooh! And here, we have the Marys paying homage to the risen King.

[14:39] the real King. And they worship him. That's a word reserved for God.

They're worshiping their God. The risen Christ. 28:10, Jesus, the risen Christ, says to the Marys, don't be afraid.

Wonderful words from the risen King. Go and tell your brothers, my brothers, he says. Now, that's an interesting way to describe the disciples. It should kind of call you back to Matthew 12 when Jesus says, Hey, your family's here.

And he turns to his disciples and says, Here's my family, those who do the will of my Father.

They're my brothers and sisters. And so, he's saying, Hey, I'm going to my brothers, the ones who are doing my Father's will.

They will see me. So, here's the summary of the Bible's account of the resurrection of Jesus. He died on Good Friday. He was crucified. He was placed in Joseph's tomb immediately after.

[15:46] The Marys saw it. A guard was assigned on Saturday. Sunday, the Marys go back to the tomb in order to prepare the body. There's this earthquake and an angel sitting on the stone moved away saying, He's risen from the dead.

The Marys go into the tomb. They see everything. They go out to tell the disciples and on their way, they see and experience the risen Jesus Himself.

They not just see Him, they feel Him. They grabbed His feet. They not just felt Him, they heard Him talking to them. They were in His presence. If they were close enough, they would have smelled His resurrection breath.

And so what Matthew is helping us to see here is that these two women are eyewitnesses to the risen Jesus.

It's an account of eyewitnesses who experienced Christ Himself after the death. Is this account that we read in Matthew 28, 1-10, is this fake news or is this real news?

[16:55] Is this spin or is this true? We've clarified the account. Let's now consider the actual claim being made here.

This account, verses 1-10 and the other Gospel accounts, it's claiming that Jesus not only really died, but that He was really raised bodily from the dead.

that He's alive now. Now you may object and you may say, you know what? This resurrection business, this is not natural.

Things like that don't happen. People dying and three days later are coming back to life. That doesn't happen. It's not normal experience. This doesn't conform to the laws of science.

And I've got to say, I totally, wholeheartedly agree with you. This is not normal. This is not natural per se that someone dies and is raised from the dead.

[18:03] That this is beyond scientific explanation because what we're reading here, if it's true, is supernatural. Science is great.

It makes wonderful discoveries. I'm an advocate of it. It's a discovery of God's creation. But I'll tell you what, there's some things that science just becomes like a sport coat that's just too small to wear.

You just can't get it over something. And when we come to the resurrection, it's a supernatural miracle of God. It just doesn't fit over it well. It doesn't explain everything well.

It can't. Science explains natural causes and effects. Not supernatural. Supernatural. Well, you may also object.

Well, this is a false account. They made it up. Ten of the twelve disciples went to their death proclaiming not only Jesus died, but He was raised.

[19:02] Including the guy that wrote this Gospel, Matthew, also known as Levi. Apparently, church history says He was in Ethiopia when He got hacked to death with an axe proclaiming that Jesus is alive.

Would you die for life? Another common objection, and this is among even Christians, is that this resurrection is not a real resurrection.

It is symbolism of rising hope. The disciples really wanting to believe it really bad. There are churches in this town that proclaim that.

And you know what? It does not accord with what the actual Bible says. The historical accounts of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Sounds like fake news to me.

The Gospels point to an actual bodily resurrection from the dead. Remember, the Marys took hold of the feet of Jesus here in Matthew. And Luke, Jesus actually eats broiled fish with His stunned disciples.

[20:12] Can you imagine that? In John 20, Jesus is talking to Thomas. This is the guy that says, you know what? I will not believe until I put my finger in His hands and in His side.

And then Jesus shows up and says, oh, Thomas, here, put your finger here and put your finger here. You know what Thomas does? My Lord and my God! This account makes a claim that Jesus was crucified, dead, and buried, and on the third day He was raised bodily from the dead.

Is it false news or is it real news? Let's look, chew on the implications. If this headline, He is risen, if that's fake news that's been spinning for 2,000 years, if that's fake news, then Christianity as a whole is a bunch of hogwash.

I'm not sure what hogwash is. I just know that you don't want it. I'm guessing if you get a bucket of hogwash, you're just going to throw it out.

And if Christianity is built on fake news of a fake resurrection, it's hogwash. Get rid of it. If you knowingly embrace something that you don't believe to be true, you are lying to yourself.

[21:37] And that's why in 1 Corinthians 15, the Apostle Paul, talking about the resurrection, talking about the resurrection of Jesus, and says, hey, if this didn't happen, Christians are to be pitied above all people because they're giving their lives today for a lie.

But chew on this. If Jesus was actually risen, if this is actually real news that it actually happened, let's chew on those implications.

There are implications to other things he said because remember, if Jesus said he was going to be crucified and three days later raised from the dead, if he was right on that, what else did he say?

Let me tell you some things he said. He said that the greatest problem every human being faces is not outside of us, but inside of us. And it's not mutated genes inside of us.

But this deep, rebellious streak in each of us against God. It's this rebellious streak that goes like this.

[22:54] God, I don't give a rip. I'm going to do what I want to do, the way I want to do it, when I want to do it, how I want to do it. The Bible calls that sin.

And each of us has got that rebellious streak in us. According to Jesus. And there are horrific consequences to that. According to Jesus.

Jesus reserves some of his most stark language for the eternal punishment against that kind of rebellion. He talks about it as being cast out into outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

High consequences to rebellion against the living God. So he said that. But he also said this. He said that he actually came for rebels.

He came and became one of us in order to rescue rebels. In order to go after the rebels who are out in the outer darkness and bring them into the light of a banquet feast with the living God.

[24:02] He said we've got a problem but he said I've got a solution and he goes on to say let me tell you what that solution is going to be.

He said I came not to be served but to serve and give my life as a ransom for many. His death on the cross that first good Friday it was a ransom payment.

It was a ransom payment for rebels in order to bring them from darkness into light. He gave his life to pay the eternal punishment for all those rebels willing to believe in him.

Now if he was right about his own resurrection could he be right about your sinful condition that you've got a rebellion streak in you against the living God?

If he was right about his own resurrection could he also be right of why he came? He came on a mission to rescue rebels. Could he also be right if he's right about the resurrection could he also be right about what his death accomplished?

[25:12] that at 3 p.m. that first good Friday that when he gave up his life it was a ransom for many. So there's implications if he was right about his resurrection what else did he say?

Is he right about those two? And now what are the implications about who he is? The Bible talks about this one this Jesus who's been raised from the dead purportedly that he's Emmanuel God with us Merry Christmas!

God came and walked among us as a rescue mission to become a ransom payment. He claimed Jesus claimed to be the one who would usher in a new kingdom of God a kingdom not of political force not of military might but a kingdom made up of rescues of rebels rescued by his ransom it's a kingdom of grace he claimed to have been to give all authority on heaven and earth and so to come into his kingdom means you come under his reign because he has all authority to become a Christian is to live for Christ and so that's the big claim of the resurrection that this one who has died and was raised he is the Christ the Messiah the King of kings and Lord of lords who has come

to establish a kingdom of rebels turned worshippers and he speaks today he's alive the risen Christ just wasn't risen in the Bible the risen Christ is alive today if he was truly raised from the dead he's living he's reigning he knows you in and out and he's inviting you to come into his kingdom we've chewed on the implications if he was raised from the dead there are some serious far reaching implications for all of us one of which is to choose choose to whom you're going to commit you see you need to choose and you actually need to choose twice here's what I mean by that the first choice you need to make the first decision you need to make is this is this he has risen business is that fake news or is that real news that's where you need to start if you think that it's fake news it's hogwash get rid of it move on with your day enjoy the peeps you know what I'm talking about but if it's real news then that means it's true it means it happened it means he's alive which means you have a second choice now to make the first choice is that

Christianity is true Jesus is alive and now you're realizing I'm a sinner and I need a ransom but let's just clarify something because I think people get stuck here simply agreeing that the resurrection account is true does not mean you are a Christian it doesn't mean you are a follower of Jesus hey I agree with the Chicago Bears choosing to let loose Jay Coulter whatever his name is but that doesn't mean I'm a Bears fan you smell it when I'm cooking I agree but I'm not a fan you may agree with what Matthew 28 1-10 says but that doesn't make you a follower of the risen king so the second choice you need to make is this it's the moving from intellectual agreement to active faith let me try to illustrate it

I'm sure you notice this stool to my left it's sturdy or so it seems it's made of wood a solid wood let me ask you this question do you think that this stool to my left this particular stool do you think that can hold your way nod if you think it can hold your way you can nod shake your head if you don't think it you can it's like it's not a spoof it's not a trick here's the point I'm trying to make just because you can believe it hold its way doesn't mean you're actively trusting in it right now does it you may intellectually agree oh yes this is a solid stool but it's not until you sit down on it that you exercise faith that you put your trust in this stool there's a lot of people who think that they can just agree with the

[30:59] Bible and everything is okay when in fact they are not actively trusting in the risen Christ so this is what it looks like it goes from saying yes I believe that Jesus was raised from the dead he is risen he is risen indeed amen yes to oh risen Christ you came for me and gave your life as a ransom and now I'm going to live my life for you joyfully under your reign see the difference where are you do you agree are you actively trusting in the risen Christ have you cried out to him have you moved from a simple confession to a believing in your heart that God raised Christ from the dead this morning we've asked the question hey is the resurrection fake news or real news and the

Bible says it is real news I've sought to kind of clarify the account to help you understand the claim to chew on the implications and now I've urged you to choose to commit yourself to the risen Christ what are you going to do choose him cry out to him if this news is real news it's not just true it changes everything and that's why it's not just real news but good news this is the news of salvation for sinners for rebels he is risen he is risen indeed he who has ears hear the word of the kingdom let's pray risen

Christ thank you so much that you are a God that is alive and you are reigning we pray that you would take this news and plant it into hearts and that you would bring about a yield of faith and fruitfulness to the glory of your name Lord Jesus we gladly confess to you you are our risen king and it's to you to whom we live and commit our lives it's in your name we pray and all of God's people said Amen