



The Tomb Door

NOTE: These are basic Bible studies intended to help our teachers personally grasp the “big picture” of our VBS theme. Feel free to use anything here in connecting with your students. If you have any follow-up questions, please don’t hesitate to reach out to Jason.

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to **the entrance** of the tomb and went away. (Matt 27:57-60)

When Jesus died on the cross for our sins, Joseph wanted to honor and bury Jesus’ body. Tombs are places where people are buried after they’ve died, but back then, tombs were very different. They were usually caves or places that people actually carved out of the rock. When it was time to bury someone, a giant circular stone would be rolled in front of the “door” of the tomb (John 11:38-39). That’s what happened with the tomb where Jesus was buried. Roman soldiers were even put outside of Jesus’ tomb to stand guard (Matt 27:62-66). But Jesus didn’t stay buried in that tomb. Three days later, on a Sunday—the first day of the week—Mary Magdalene and another Mary went to see the tomb.

And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples...” (28:2-7)

In fact, the risen Jesus appeared to them while they were on their way (28:8-10), and not just to them. On multiple occasions over the next several weeks he appeared to the apostles, and even 500 people at one time (1 Cor 15:4-7). Jesus died, but Jesus is alive!

The “trust and obey” connection:

- These truths—Jesus died for our sins, Jesus was buried, and Jesus was raised on the third day—are “of first importance,” the heart of the gospel (1 Cor 15:1-4; Acts 2:22-24).
- The devil may have thought he had beaten Jesus, but the devil lost; Jesus is “the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25)—the One who will raise everyone (John 5:25-29).
- Everyone needs to hear the news that Jesus came out of the tomb door (Mark 16:14-16).