

Who Will Roll Away The Stone?

As Good Friday ended, it appeared that quite a bit more had come apart that day. Jesus was dead. The disciples were scattered. The Jewish leadership had triumphed. Pontius Pilate had bought a bit of breathing room.

While Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus hurriedly washed Jesus' body and gave a cursory preparation for the tomb, it was clear to all that many hopes had been dashed. All they could do was grieve and wait for Sunday morning to finish preparing the body, after the Sabbath.

Then as the women who had followed Jesus in life made their way to His body's resting place, they likely thought of many things. The stone in front of the tomb loomed large in the journey the women made to it that morning.

It was an example of their devotion. They were going to the tomb not knowing how they would move that gigantic block, yet they knew they must go, if they were really friends of Jesus

It showed their perseverance. The women were not going to allow a mere stone to get in the way of their task. If all else crumbled away, then they were still going to do their duty. Stone, soldiers, or opposition would not hinder them.

Their hopes had been destroyed. That stone was the final reminder that the life they knew of Jesus was over. No more miracles, not more teaching, no more fellowship. What a disaster it all had become. And the stone was the final reminder.

Still, they were committed to do one thing: to honor Jesus' body in death. If nothing else, they could prepare His body properly according to their custom. (This, by the way, is one reason that Christians have chosen to bury or entomb their bodies rather than burn them. Burial of the body shows our belief in the resurrection of the body to be reunited with the soul at the coming of Jesus.)

But then, ***the stone was rolled away!*** That moved stone brought *amazement and wonder*. What was going on? The moved stone brought *fear*. Who had moved it? What was their intent? Did they steal Jesus' body? Would there be continued opposition to anything and anyone that was associated with Jesus?

The moved stone brought *hope*. Jesus was no longer in the tomb. The moved stone revealed *power* beyond what anyone had known to that point in history. How does a dead man get up and walk around? The earthly answer is, "he doesn't." But

God's answer is, "Yes, he does, because what is impossible with men is possible with God."

The moved stone meant *salvation*. That Jesus was not in the tomb meant this: everything that He did and said were real. He indeed was the way, and the truth, and the life. Through Jesus, and Jesus alone, would God provide eternal life to all who believed in Him!

The moved stone changed *history and eternity!* The Resurrection is the event that made the difference in history. The Cross paid for our sins. The empty tomb put God's stamp of approval on the work of Jesus. Pastor Adrian Rogers said, "The resurrection is not merely important to the historic Christian faith; without it, there would be no Christianity. It is the singular doctrine that elevates Christianity above all other world religions."

God rolled away the stone. Not to allow Jesus to come forth, but that we might enter into that empty tomb, and see for ourselves that it could not hold the Son of God. He is Risen! He is Risen Indeed!

May the Lord bless you with Resurrection hope this Easter and always!