

John 20:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

Analysis

The first day of the week (τῇ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων, *tē mia tōn sabbatōn*)—Sunday, the day that would become the Lord's Day for Christian worship, commemorating resurrection rather than Sabbath rest. Mary Magdalene came **early, when it was yet dark** (πρωΐ σκοτίας ἔτι οὔσης)—her devotion outpacing the dawn, driven by love not duty.

The stone taken away (τὸν λίθον ῥημένον, *ton lithon ērmenon*)—the perfect passive participle indicates the stone had been removed by divine agency before her arrival. This detail refutes the stolen-body theory: tomb robbers don't roll away sealed stones. The empty tomb doesn't prove resurrection (Mary assumes theft), but it establishes the bodily nature of Christ's rising—no corpse remained.

Historical Context

John's Gospel was written AD 85-95, after the other Gospels. His account emphasizes eyewitness detail (he was likely 'the other disciple'). Roman tombs used rolling stones weighing 1-2 tons, often sealed with imperial authority. Mary Magdalene, from whom Jesus cast seven demons (Luke 8:2), became the first resurrection witness—a radical choice in a culture where women's testimony was legally inadmissible.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. Why would God choose a woman—whose testimony carried no legal weight—as the first witness to history's most important event?
2. What drives you to seek Jesus 'while it is yet dark'—duty, devotion, or desperation?
3. How does the physical removal of the stone demonstrate that resurrection is not merely spiritual but bodily and historical?

Interlinear Text

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|-----------------|----------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------|-------|------------------------|
| Τῇ | δὲ | μὴ | τῶν | σαββάτων | Μαρία | ἡ | Μαγδαληνὴ |
| G3588 | G1161 | G1520 | G3588 | day of the week G4521 | Mary G3137 | G3588 | Magdalene G3094 |
| ἔρχεται | πρῶτῃ | σκοτίας | ἔτι | οὔσης | εἰς | τὸ | μνημεῖον |
| cometh G2064 | early G4404 | dark G4653 | yet G2089 | when it was G5607 | unto G1519 | G3588 | the sepulchre G3419 |
| καὶ | βλέπει | τὸν | λίθον | ἡρμένον | ἐκ | τοῦ | μνημεῖου |
| and G2532 | seeth G991 | G3588 | the stone G3037 | taken away G142 | from G1537 | G3588 | the sepulchre G3419 |

Additional Cross-References

Mark 16:9 (Parallel theme): Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

Matthew 27:60 (Parallel theme): And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.

Mark 15:46 (Parallel theme): And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre.

John 20:26 (Parallel theme): And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.

John 19:25 (Parallel theme): Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

Revelation 1:10 (Parallel theme): I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

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