

Luke 24:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:

Analysis

And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. The women's perplexity (Greek *diaporeō*, διαπορέω) means to be thoroughly puzzled, at a complete loss—they expected a corpse but found an empty tomb. The phrase "it came to pass" (*egeneto*, ἐγένετο) introduces divine intervention into their confusion. The sudden appearance (*idou*, ἰδοὺ, "behold") of **two men in shining garments** (*andres dyo en esthēti astraptousē*, ἄνδρες δύο ἐν ἐσθῇτι ἀστραπτούσῃ) signals heavenly messengers—angels appearing in human form, their radiant clothing reflecting God's glory.

The number two establishes legal testimony (Deuteronomy 19:15)—resurrection truth comes with double witness. Luke's restraint in calling them "men" rather than immediately identifying them as angels reflects the women's initial perception, though verse 23 clarifies they were angels. Their **shining garments** (*astraptousē*, ἀστραπτούσῃ, "flashing like lightning") echo the Transfiguration (Luke 9:29) and anticipate Christ's return (Luke 17:24), connecting resurrection to divine glory.

This angelic appearance transforms confusion into revelation. The empty tomb alone might perplex, but divine messengers will explain it (verses 5-7). God graciously meets seeking hearts with understanding, never leaving His people in bewilderment about saving truth.

Historical Context

In first-century Jewish thought, angels served as God's messengers and frequently appeared at pivotal salvation-history moments—announcing Isaac's birth (Genesis 18), delivering the Law (Acts 7:53, Galatians 3:19), announcing Jesus' birth (Luke 1:26-38, 2:9-14). Their appearance at the empty tomb places resurrection among history's most significant divine interventions.

The women came expecting to complete burial rites, bringing spices prepared before Sabbath (Luke 23:56). Finding the stone rolled away and tomb empty would have been shocking and confusing. Ancient tombs often had antechambers where mourners might linger; the angels apparently stood in this space. The women's perplexity was natural—resurrection wasn't expected despite Jesus' predictions. Jewish resurrection theology anticipated general resurrection at history's end, not an individual rising on the third day.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does God meet our confusion about spiritual realities with divine revelation rather than leaving us perplexed?
2. What significance does the presence of two angelic witnesses hold for establishing resurrection truth?
3. How do the shining garments connect resurrection to other moments of divine glory in Scripture?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἐγένετο	ἐν	τῷ	διαπορεῖσθαι	αὐταῖς	περὶ
And	it came to pass	as	G3588	they were much perplexed	them	thereabout
G2532	G1096	G1722		G1280	G846	G4012
τούτου	καὶ	ἰδού,	δύο	ἄνδρες	ἐπέστησαν	αὐταῖς
G5127	And	G2400	two	men	stood by	them
	G2532		G1417	G435	G2186	G846
						G1722
ἐσθήσεσιν	ἄστραπτούσαις					
garments	shining					
G2067	G797					

Additional Cross-References

Acts 1:10 (Parallel theme): And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

Mark 16:5 (Parallel theme): And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.