

Luke 24:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

Analysis

The angels ask: 'Why seek ye the living among the dead?' (τί ζητεῖτε τὸν ζῶντα μετὰ τῶν νεκρῶν;). This rhetorical question rebukes the women's expectation to find Jesus' corpse and announces the resurrection. The present participle 'zōnta' (ζῶντα, the living one) contrasts with 'nekrōn' (νεκρῶν, the dead)—Jesus is not merely resurrected but is Life itself. The question implies the resurrection should not surprise those who heard Jesus' predictions (vv.6-7). The empty tomb and angelic announcement become the first gospel proclamation: He is risen. This transforms Christianity from philosophy or ethics into historical, bodily resurrection.

Historical Context

Women came to the tomb at dawn on the first day of the week (Sunday, v.1) to complete burial rites interrupted by Sabbath. Jewish burial involved washing the body and applying spices and ointments. Finding the stone rolled away and the tomb empty, they encountered 'two men in shining garments' (v.4)—angels in human form (cf. Luke 1:26, Acts 1:10). The resurrection on the third day fulfilled Jesus' predictions (Luke 9:22, 18:33) and established Sunday as the Christian day of worship. Early Christian preaching centered on the resurrection (Acts 2:24, 4:33, 17:31).

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does the question about seeking the living among the dead challenge wrong expectations about where to find Jesus today?
2. What difference does the bodily resurrection make to Christian faith, hope, and ethics?

Interlinear Text

ἐμφόβων δὲ γενομένων αὐτάς καὶ κλινουσῶν τὸ¹
afraid And as them and bowed down G3588
G1719 G1161 G1096 G846 G2532 G2827

πρόσωπον εἰς τὴν γῆν εἰπον πρὸς αὐτάς Τί²
their faces to the earth they said unto them Why
G4383 G1519 G3588 G1093 G2036 G4314 G846 G5101

ζητεῖτε τὸν ζῶντα μετὰ τῶν νεκρῶν.
seek ye the living among the dead
G2212 G3588 G2198 G3326 G3588 G3498

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 1:18 (Parallel theme): I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

Revelation 2:8 (Parallel theme): And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

Daniel 10:16 (Parallel theme): And, behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that

stood before me, O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength.

Hebrews 7:8 (Parallel theme): And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.

Daniel 10:19 (Parallel theme): And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me.

Luke 1:29 (Parallel theme): And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org