

Matthew 28:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

Analysis

He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. These words constitute the greatest announcement in human history. 'He is not here' (οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε/*ouk estin hōde*)—the tomb designed to hold the dead cannot contain the Author of Life. Death's prison is broken; the grave is defeated.

'For he is risen' (ἡγέρθη γάρ/*ēgerthē gar*)—aorist passive indicates completed action: He has been raised. The passive voice suggests divine agency: God the Father raised Him (Romans 6:4, Galatians 1:1), though Jesus also claimed power to lay down and take up His life (John 10:18). The resurrection is the Father's vindication of the Son's perfect obedience and atoning death.

'As he said' (καθὼς εἶπεν/*kathōs eipen*) recalls Jesus's repeated predictions of His resurrection (Matthew 16:21, 17:23, 20:19, 26:32). Every word of Christ proves true; His promises never fail. If He prophesied His resurrection and it occurred, we can trust every other promise He made—forgiveness for believers, judgment for unbelievers, His return in glory, eternal life for His people.

'Come, see the place where the Lord lay' (δεῦτε ἴδετε τὸν τόπον ὅπου ἔκειτο/*deute idete ton topon hopou ekeito*)—the angel invites investigation. Christianity invites scrutiny; it does not ask for blind faith but presents evidence. The empty tomb, the grave clothes, the stone rolled away—all can be verified. The resurrection is not myth or symbol but historical fact occurring in space and time, in a specific identifiable tomb.

Note: the angel says 'the Lord' (ὁ Κύριος/ho Kyrios)—even in death's realm, Jesus is Lord. The tomb did not diminish His sovereignty. He lay there voluntarily, under no compulsion but His own decree and the Father's plan. And now He is risen as Lord over death, sin, Satan, and hell.

Historical Context

Empty tomb traditions are multiply attested in early Christian sources (all four Gospels, 1 Corinthians 15:3-5) and even acknowledged by Jesus's opponents, who had to invent alternative explanations (Matthew 28:13). No ancient source claims Jesus's body remained in the tomb—the dispute was over why it was empty.

If disciples had fabricated the resurrection, they would have described Jesus emerging from the tomb. Instead, all accounts show the tomb already empty when discovered, with Jesus appearing later. This restraint and lack of legendary embellishment marks authentic testimony, not fabrication.

The invitation to 'see the place' assumes verifiability. Early Christians could point to the specific tomb (whether correctly identified with today's Church of the Holy Sepulchre is debated, but early Christians identified a location). The resurrection proclamation emerged in Jerusalem where it could be investigated and refuted if false—yet it flourished despite official opposition.

Jewish expectation was resurrection at the end of the age (Daniel 12:2, Martha's confession in John 11:24), not mid-history resurrection of one person. Jesus's resurrection thus confounded categories—God did something unprecedented, beginning the eschatological resurrection in Christ as 'firstfruits' (1 Corinthians 15:20) while consummation awaited the future.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does the phrase 'as he said' strengthen our confidence in Christ's other promises that await fulfillment, including His return and our resurrection?
2. What is the significance of the angel inviting empirical investigation ('come, see') rather than demanding blind faith—how does this inform Christian apologetics?
3. How does Christ's lordship 'even in death' (the place where 'the Lord lay') encourage believers facing suffering, persecution, or death?

Interlinear Text

οὐκ	ἔστιν	ᾧδε	ἡγέρθη	γὰρ	καθὼς	εἶπεν·	δεῦτε	ἴδετε
not	He is	here	he is risen	for	as	he said	Come	see
G3756	G2076	G5602	G1453	G1063	G2531	G2036	G1205	G1492
τὸν	τόπον	ὅπου	ἔκειτο	ὁ	Κύριος			
G3588	the place	where	lay	G3588	the Lord			
	G5117	G3699	G2749		G2962			

Additional Cross-References

Mark 16:6 (Resurrection): And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

Matthew 12:40 (Parallel theme): For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Matthew 16:21 (Resurrection): From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

Luke 24:23 (Parallel theme): And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive.

Matthew 27:63 (Resurrection): Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.

Luke 24:44 (Parallel theme): And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

Mark 8:31 (Resurrection): And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

Matthew 20:19 (Resurrection): And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again.

Matthew 17:23 (Resurrection): And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry.

John 2:19 (Resurrection): Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.