

Matthew 28:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.

Analysis

And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. The risen Christ personally appears to the women—'Jesus met them' (Ἰησοῦς ὑπήντησεν αὐταῖς/Iēsous hypēntēsen autais). This is more than angels' testimony; they encounter the living Lord Himself. Jesus takes initiative, revealing Himself to those who seek Him. As He promised, 'Seek and ye shall find' (Matthew 7:7).

'All hail' (Χαίρετε/Chairete) is a common Greek greeting meaning 'Rejoice!' But on resurrection morning, this greeting carries profound significance—true joy is found only in the risen Christ. The imperative calls them to continue in the joy already filling their hearts (verse 8). Ironically, the same word was mockingly spoken by soldiers at His trial (Matthew 27:29); now the Risen King genuinely offers the joy those mockers could not comprehend.

'They came and held him by the feet' (ἐκράτησαν αὐτοῦ τοὺς πόδας/ekratēsan autou tous podas)—this physical contact proves Jesus's bodily resurrection. He is not a ghost or vision but possesses a real, tangible (though glorified) body. Thomas would later touch His wounds (John 20:27); Jesus ate food (Luke 24:42-43). Early heresies claiming Jesus only rose spiritually are refuted by such details. Christianity confesses bodily resurrection, not mere immortality of the soul.

'And worshipped him' (προσεκύνησαν αὐτῷ/prosekynēsan autō)—they rendered

worship (proskyneō) appropriate only for deity. Jesus accepted this worship, confirming His divine nature. A mere man or angel would refuse worship (Revelation 19:10, 22:9), but Jesus receives it as His due. The resurrection vindicated Jesus's divine claims; He is truly 'Emmanuel—God with us' (Matthew 1:23), now revealed in resurrection power.

Historical Context

Holding someone's feet was an ancient gesture of reverence, supplication, and homage (2 Kings 4:27). It expressed humility before superior authority while also confirming the person's reality—they could touch Him, proving He was not an apparition.

This appearance to the women is recorded in Matthew and John (who specifically mentions Mary Magdalene, John 20:14-18). Some suggest these are different appearances, but more likely they describe the same event from different perspectives, with John focusing particularly on Mary Magdalene's experience.

Critics have claimed the resurrection accounts contradict each other. However, differences in perspective and emphasis (which Gospel writers chose which details to include) do not constitute contradictions. Multiple witnesses to an event naturally recall different aspects while agreeing on central facts—in this case, the women encountered the risen Jesus who commissioned them to tell the disciples.

The physical nature of Jesus's resurrection body became crucial in early church debates against Gnostic heresies that denied matter's goodness and bodies' resurrection. The Apostles' Creed explicitly affirms 'resurrection of the body,' grounded in Christ's own bodily resurrection as firstfruits and pattern for believers' future resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20, 42-44).

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus's bodily, tangible resurrection (evidenced by the women holding His feet) assure us of our own future bodily resurrection rather than mere spiritual immortality?
2. What does Jesus accepting worship from the women teach us about His divine identity and the appropriateness of rendering Him full adoration and devotion?
3. How does Jesus personally meeting the women (going beyond what the angel had announced) demonstrate His personal care for individual believers and His desire for intimate relationship?

Interlinear Text

ὥς δὲ ἐπορεύοντο ἀπαγγεῖλαι τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτῷ καὶ
as And they went to tell ^{G5613 G1161 G4198 G518 G3588} **disciples him and** ^{G3101 G846 G2532}

ἰδοῦ, ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀπήντησεν αὐτῷ λέγων, Χαίρετε αἱ
behold ^{G2400 G3588} **Jesus met** ^{G2424 G528} **him** ^{G846} **saying** ^{G3004} **All hail** ^{G5463 G3588}

δὲ προσελθοῦσαι ἐκράτησαν αὐτῷ τοὺς πόδας καὶ
And ^{G1161} **they came** ^{G4334} **held** ^{G2902} **him** ^{G846} ^{G3588} **by the feet** ^{G4228} **and** ^{G2532}

προσεκύνησαν αὐτῷ
worshipped ^{G4352} **him** ^{G846}

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 28:17 (Worship): And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

Matthew 14:33 (Worship): Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

John 20:28 (Parallel theme): And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

Luke 24:52 (Worship): And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy:

John 12:3 (References Jesus): Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

Luke 7:38 (Parallel theme): And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

Revelation 3:9 (Worship): Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

John 20:19 (References Jesus): Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

2 Corinthians 13:11 (Parallel theme): Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

Luke 1:28 (Parallel theme): And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.