

Monday, April 10, 2023
Season of Easter
Day 2

Matthew 28:11–15

¹¹ While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. ¹² When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, ¹³ telling them, “You are to say, ‘His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.’ ¹⁴ If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.” ¹⁵ So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day.

Reflection

The reaction of the guards is an interesting contrast to the reaction of the women from verses 1–10. The guards along with the women see an angel of the Lord descend, roll back the stone, and sit. The guards fall down as dead, while the women remain upright and receive instructions. As the women go with their commission to tell the apostles of the resurrection of the Lord, they meet the risen Jesus. The guards meanwhile wake up, rise up and report to the chief priests about the angel.

This leads to bribes to provide false testimony. As a result there persists a vein of plausible deniability to the witness of the disciples of Jesus. This is significant as the next section is the great commission.

It always seems amazing to believers when people cannot or will not see the truth. However, we need to be careful that we don’t villainize the chief priests or the guards. This doesn’t mean that their behaviour isn’t reproachable or even sinful—it is! Rather, we must remember that their actions demonstrate their ongoing enslavement to the powers of sin. This doesn’t diminish their responsibility, but it should lead us to think “but for the grace of God go I!”

We too easily at times speak and act as if we are somehow morally superior to those who do not believe that Jesus is Lord and that God has raised him from the dead. Even if those who we witness to with the truth of Christ’s resurrection willfully do not believe preferring to remain as they are, we must not become their judges—that is not our job. Instead, we ought to go on praying for God to do for them what he has so graciously done for us. Open the eyes of the blind and give them the strength to abandon all and follow Jesus. Only in this way can the resurrection of Jesus be good news for all.

Prayer

Lord, forgive us for the times when we grow impatient with those around us who have not accepted the good news of your gospel. Help us to relinquish the seat of judgment to you, the truly righteous one and hear our prayers for their deliverance from the powers of sin and death. Amen.