

## *Time Audit Chronicles: The Resurrection and Appearances*

(John 20)

### Prologue: The Empty Tomb

The Presswood family sat together, reading John 20, the chapter that recounts the powerful moment of Jesus' resurrection. The gentle light from the lamp filled the room with a warm glow, and Ariel's face was filled with reflection as she pondered the significance of the empty tomb and what it meant for the disciples—and for all believers. Alice, clutching Mr. Fluffernutter, was imagining herself at the tomb, feeling the cool morning air as she looked for Jesus, but finding only the empty grave clothes.

"Daddy," Ariel asked, her voice filled with wonder, "Why did Jesus have to rise from the dead? What does His resurrection really mean for us?"

Ryan paused, knowing this was one of the most important truths of the Christian faith. "The empty tomb is the ultimate evidence of Jesus' resurrection," he began. "It tells us that death couldn't hold Him, and His victory over death confirms everything He said about being the Son of God. By rising from the dead, Jesus not only proved His power over death but also opened the way for eternal life for all who believe in Him. It's a reminder that His sacrifice wasn't the end of the story—it was the beginning of new life for everyone who trusts in Him."

Ariel nodded, trying to grasp the magnitude of that truth. "So, the empty tomb isn't just about Jesus coming back to life—it's about Him defeating death completely so we don't have to fear it anymore?" she asked, her voice filled with awe. "It means His love and power give us hope for forever."

"Yes," Ryan said, a deep sense of awe in his voice. "Because Jesus rose from the dead, we know that death is not the end. His resurrection gives us the hope of eternal life—not just after we die, but starting right now. Through His resurrection, we are raised to new life in Him."

Ariel smiled softly. "So, Jesus' resurrection means that we can live with Him forever?"

"That's exactly right," Ryan said. "Let's use the Time Audit Machine to go back to the moment when Jesus rose from the dead and see how it all unfolded."

### The Journey Begins: The Empty Tomb (John 20:1-10)

The Time Audit Machine hummed to life, and in an instant, the family found themselves standing outside the tomb where Jesus had been laid. The stone tomb was characteristic of Jewish burial customs, which involved wrapping the body in linen and placing it in a cave-like tomb sealed with a large stone. The cool morning air brushed against their faces, and they could see the dew glistening on the grass as the first light of dawn broke over the horizon. The stone had been rolled away, and the tomb was empty.

Ryan pointed to the entrance. "This is the moment when Mary Magdalene and the other disciples discover that the tomb is empty. They don't yet understand what's happened, but they see that Jesus is no longer there."

Ariel watched as Mary Magdalene hurried to the disciples, breathlessly telling them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him." (John 20:2).

“That’s how it all started,” Ryan said. “Mary Magdalene’s initial thought was that someone had stolen Jesus’ body. But what she didn’t realize yet was that Jesus had risen—just as He said He would.”

The disciples rushed to the tomb, and as they looked inside, they saw only the grave clothes that had been left behind. The stone had been rolled away, but the body was gone. John and Peter stood there, trying to make sense of it all. John, the first to believe, saw the empty tomb and immediately understood that Jesus had risen. The folded grave clothes were significant because in Jewish burial customs, folded linens suggested intentionality and order, not the chaos of a stolen body.

Ariel was filled with excitement. “So, the disciples didn’t fully understand at first. But when John saw the empty tomb and the folded grave clothes, he realized that Jesus was alive!”

“Yes,” Ryan said, smiling. “The resurrection was a mystery at first, but John believed, and soon everyone would understand the incredible truth: Jesus is alive!”

#### The First Appearance to Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-18)

The scene shifted, and the family saw Mary Magdalene standing outside the tomb, weeping. Her shoulders were trembling, and her hands covered her face as she cried. She was overwhelmed with grief, not knowing what had happened to Jesus’ body. As she wept, she looked into the tomb again, but this time, she saw two angels sitting where Jesus’ body had been. They asked her, “Woman, why weepest thou?” (John 20:13).

Ariel watched closely, her heart aching with the sorrow Mary must have felt. “Mary was so sad because she thought Jesus’ body had been taken. But she couldn’t see that Jesus was right there with her.” Ryan nodded, his voice gentle. “That’s right. When Jesus called Mary by name, it was His way of showing that He knows each of us personally and meets us in our moments of grief. He didn’t just rise for the world—He rose for individuals like Mary, and like us.” Ariel’s eyes filled with wonder. “What would it feel like to hear Jesus call my name?” she whispered. “It must be so comforting to know that He sees me and loves me just as I am.”

“Yes,” Ryan said, his voice full of tenderness. “Jesus came to Mary first, showing her that His resurrection was not just for the world, but also deeply personal. He knows each of us by name, and He meets us in our moments of sorrow to bring us joy and hope.”

#### The Disciples’ First Appearance of Jesus (John 20:19-23)

Later that evening, the disciples were gathered in a locked room, filled with fear and uncertainty. Suddenly, Jesus appeared among them, saying, ‘Peace be unto you.’ (John 20:19). Ryan paused, his voice steady. ‘These words were exactly what the disciples needed in that moment. They were scared and unsure of what would happen next. By offering them peace, Jesus reminded them that He was in control and that His resurrection meant they no longer needed to fear. His peace wasn’t just for that moment—it was a lasting gift for every believer.’ Ariel nodded thoughtfully, imagining moments when she felt scared or unsure. ‘Sometimes, I feel nervous about things, like a test or trying something new. But knowing Jesus offers peace makes me feel like I don’t have to do it all on my own,’ she said. His resurrection was a victory over death, and it would bring peace to their hearts.”

Ariel watched intently as Jesus showed His disciples His hands and side, proving that He was truly alive. "He wanted them to be sure it was really Him—He even showed them the wounds in His hands and side to prove it." Ryan nodded, his voice steady. "The wounds were powerful evidence of both His sacrifice and His victory. They showed the disciples that the same Jesus who suffered and died for them was now risen and victorious over death. This gave them confidence in their faith and their mission." Ariel's eyes lit up as she reflected on the scene. "It makes me think about how much Jesus' resurrection means for my faith. Knowing He's alive helps me feel strong, even when I have doubts or face challenges.""

#### Jesus Commissions His Disciples (John 20:21-23)

Jesus then gave His disciples a mission: "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." (John 20:21). He breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost:" (John 20:22).

Ariel's eyes lit up. "So, Jesus didn't just come to show them that He was alive—He also gave them a mission, just like God had sent Him."

"Yes," Ryan said. "Jesus was sending His disciples into the world to continue the work He started, preaching the good news of salvation to all people. And He gave them the Holy Spirit to empower them for the mission. The Holy Spirit would be their constant companion, guiding and empowering them to share the message of Jesus with courage and wisdom. The Holy Spirit would help them, give them strength, and provide wisdom to carry out this incredible mission."

#### The Doubt of Thomas (John 20:24-29)

One of the disciples, Thomas, wasn't there when Jesus first appeared to the group. When the others told him about Jesus' resurrection, Thomas doubted. He said, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." (John 20:25).

Ariel was intrigued by this. "Thomas didn't believe at first, but when he saw Jesus, He believed. And Jesus didn't get mad—He showed him His wounds and said, 'Be not faithless, but believing.'" (John 20:27).

"That's right," Ryan said. "Thomas doubted, but Jesus was merciful, understanding his need for tangible proof. "Thomas' doubt is significant because it mirrors the struggles that many people face today," Ryan explained. "Jesus' response shows us that faith often means trusting in what we cannot see. He blessed those who believe without seeing, reminding us that our faith is anchored in His truth, not just visible evidence." Ariel nodded thoughtfully. "Even though I haven't seen Jesus in person, I can believe in Him because of everything He's done and how real His love feels in my life," she reflected. "It helps me trust Him more, even when I have questions or can't see everything clearly."

#### Takeaway: The Power of the Resurrection

The resurrection of Jesus also fulfilled the Jewish expectation of the Messiah, though in an unexpected way. Many Jews anticipated a Messiah who would be an earthly king, overthrowing their oppressors. Instead, Jesus conquered a far greater enemy—sin and death—proving Himself to be the Savior of all humanity.

In John 20, Jesus' resurrection brings peace, hope, and commission to His disciples. His resurrection from the dead proves that He is the Son of God, and through His victory over sin and death, He offers eternal life to all who believe. Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene, the disciples, and even to Thomas, offering peace and confirming the reality of His resurrection. He then commissioned His disciples to go out into the world, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to spread the good news of salvation. Jesus' resurrection means that death is not the end, and it offers believers the hope of new life—both now and forever. Through His resurrection, Jesus has conquered death and made a way for us to be reconciled with God.

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### ***1. Interactive Reflections: The Resurrection and Appearances***

- **What does the empty tomb mean to you?**  
Think about how Jesus' resurrection gives us hope in the face of life's challenges.
  - **Why do you think Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene?**  
Consider how personal and loving Jesus is in meeting each of us in our unique needs.
  - **How can you share the good news of Jesus' resurrection with others?**  
Reflect on ways to live out the mission Jesus gave His disciples in your everyday life.
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### **2. Song for Children: "He Lives Forevermore!"**

*(To the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star")*

#### **Verse 1**

Early morning, stone rolled wide,  
Jesus rose, no more to hide.  
From the tomb, new life He gave,  
Power to conquer death and grave.  
He lives! He lives! Forevermore,  
Jesus opened Heaven's door.

#### **Verse 2**

Mary wept, then heard His name,  
"Rabboni!" She cried in fame.  
To the disciples, peace He brought,  
Victory through His love He taught.

He lives! He lives! Forevermore,  
Jesus opened Heaven's door.

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### **3. Mr. Fluffernutter's Perspective: "Hopping into the Empty Tomb!"**

*Hello, bouncy buddies!*

Mr. Fluffernutter here, reporting live from the most exciting tomb in history! Did you hear the part where Mary thought Jesus' body was missing? If I'd been there, I might have hopped right into the tomb to investigate. Can you imagine finding the grave clothes neatly folded and no Jesus? I'd probably think, "Hmm, who tidied up here?"

But guess what? Jesus didn't need the tomb anymore because He's ALIVE! Isn't that the best news ever? What would you do if Jesus called you by name, like He did with Mary? Hop on over to the comments and share your thoughts with me and Alice!

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### **4. Ariel's Journal: Modern Connections to the Resurrection**

*Dear Journal,*

Today, we read about Jesus rising from the dead. The empty tomb wasn't just a cool moment—it changed everything! Jesus' resurrection means that death isn't the end.

It reminded me of the time our goldfish, Sunny, died last year. I remember feeling so sad and thinking about how everything seemed final. But because of Jesus, I know that death isn't permanent for those who believe in Him. The empty tomb is a promise that one day, we'll have eternal life with Jesus—and it's a promise I can share with others, too.

Jesus' resurrection isn't just about what happens after we die; it's about living with hope, courage, and peace now. It makes me want to live differently, knowing that nothing is too big for Him—not even death.

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### **5. Alice's Reflection with Mr. Fluffernutter: "Finding Jesus"**

Alice was lying on the couch, holding Mr. Fluffernutter close to her chest. "Fluffy," she whispered, "if I were Mary and found the empty tomb, I think I would've been scared."

Mr. Fluffernutter "nodded" sagely in agreement. Alice giggled. "But when Jesus said, 'Mary,' I think my heart would've done a happy flip! It's so amazing that He knows everyone by name—even you, Fluffy!"

She held her bunny up and added, "Do you think Jesus would call you by your full name, 'Mr. Fluffernutter'? Or just 'Fluffy'?"

The bunny “replied” in a whispery voice, “Fluffy’s fine, but if He called me by my full name, I’d probably hop right into His arms!”

Alice laughed. “Me too. Jesus knows us so well, and He’s always close, even when we don’t realize it. I’m glad He calls us to follow Him.”

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## 6. Key Scriptures (KJV)

- **John 20:1** – “The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.”
- **John 20:16** – “Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.”
- **John 20:29** – “Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”