

Jesus Has Risen

April 15, 2017

Before Jesus arrived in Jerusalem the last time, He told His followers that He would be delivered over to the chief priests and teachers of the law. That they would condemn Him to death and hand Him over to the Gentiles, who would mock Him and spit on Him, flog Him and kill Him. And three days later He will rise (Mk 10:33-34). That last prediction is most unusual...and it is the reason we are here today.

The day after Jesus was killed on a Roman cross, wrapped in cloth and spices and laid in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, His enemies recalled this unusual prediction, “after three days I will rise again” (Matt 27:63).

So, what did the Sanhedrin do? They went to the Roman governor Pilate, to help him see how important it was to secure the tomb in case his disciples came to steal the body. All they had to do was make sure the body stayed past the third day to prove Jesus false. No more God-man.

Incredibly, movie makers still seem to run out of Roman soldier outfits when it comes to the scene about guarding the tomb. There were 11 close disciples out there somewhere who could have sought help...perhaps among the zealot resistance. These are the thoughts going through a military mind. To fulfill the mission.

The last thing that the Sanhedrin and the Romans wanted was hope for a military Messiah to start another rebellion. They did not understand Jesus’ purpose at all.

Today we’re simply going to listen to the reports about Jesus’ mysterious prediction...from the Gospel records of Matthew, Luke and John (possibly April 9, AD 30). And we will find that God has made us to live a risen life through the risen Lord Jesus.

Pray

Shock & Terror

We begin with shock and terror for it explains why none of the mourners or truth seekers found Roman guards on duty.

Matt 28:2-4

There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

Grief and Duty to Panic and Wonder

Several women came in grief and respect to finish preparing the body of their crucified teacher and friend. But instead they find the stone rolled away and the tomb empty.

Matt 28:1/ John 20:1-2/ Luke 24:1-4a

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. (The other Mary is the mother of James).

John focuses on Mary Magdalene, whom Jesus freed from demons. *Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"*

Luke reports the rest of the women had a different reaction: wonder *On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this...*

God Delivers a Message

Those who waited on the Lord were rewarded with an appearance from God's messenger.

Luke 24:4b-8/Matt28:5-8

suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground,

but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' Then they remembered his words.

Matthew's report is very similar *The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you." So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.*

*we know from Mark 16:8 that the women hesitated to tell out of fear (this would allow time for Peter and John to arrive separate from the other women)

Unbelief

Do you think the disciples in hiding were waiting for Jesus to rise again?

Luke 24:9-11

When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.

Be patient with people who don't believe the first time.

(Historical attitude – women not considered reliable witnesses)

Emergency

Not all the disciples were frozen in fear and doubt...some went into emergency mode and took the risk to see for themselves. Peter and John ran to see what had become of their master's body.

Luke 24:12/John 20:3-10

Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

John gives us the insider information *So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus*

had to rise from the dead.) Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

The First to Hear, See and Touch

Mary returns to the tomb, overcome by grief. God has mercy on her and she becomes the first person to be in the presence of the risen Christ. Why? Jesus is everything to her.

John 20:11-18

Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

"They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking He was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get Him."

Jesus said to her, "Mary."

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher").

Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father.

Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

Jesus spends His last days caring for His spiritual family instead of important people in the world's eyes.

The Women Worship

There are other women in grief...distracted over the empty tomb. Jesus appears to them and they respond in worship. Worthy is Jesus to receive our worship.

Matt 28:9-10

Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

Reports and Lies

After recovering from the terror of God's power, some of the soldiers went back to those who arranged their assignment. What happened to the others? Perhaps some lived to tell the truth. The truth costs but lies cost even more.

Matt 28:11-15

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. When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, telling them, "You are to say, 'His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.' If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." 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.

The Sanhedrin and the guards must live with their conscience and God's judgement, ultimately. The immediate cost for the guards is their reputation and likely their careers (failing to stay awake on guard is grounds for execution). The Sanhedrin have to pay a fortune to make up for it. But how much is a soul worth?

Outside Jerusalem

Two disciples crushed and confused by the events leave Jerusalem and Jesus helps them understand.

Luke 24:13-35

Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them;

but they were kept from recognizing him.

He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?"

They stood still, their faces downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?"

"What things?" he asked.

"About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus."

He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" And

beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them.

When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." (1 Cor 15:5) Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

Proof and Commission

Jesus finally appears to the disciples in hiding. He proves He's not a ghost and commissions them as His sent ones.

And believers continue to witness that God is good and share the Gospel to this day.

Luke 24:36-43/John 20:19-25

Luke reports that...

While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."

When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence.

John records...

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am

sending you." Disciples are empowering to do God's will.

Skeptic

Some won't believe until they see Him for themselves.

John 20:24-25

Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

Are skeptics condemned?

John 20:26-29

A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" That is the appropriate response to Jesus as a believer. Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Was Thomas excluded from being saved? No, the Lord came to Him with

the evidence that Thomas demanded. And Thomas believed. God does not give up on the stubborn. But look at all the joy and fellowship Thomas missed that week. What misery. Are there skeptics today...demanding special evidence, answers from God? God is not afraid of our questions. Investigate away. But like any good investigator; begin with primary sources and first-hand experiences. John concludes his Gospel with the reason for writing it.

John 20:30-31

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

The Gospels are written to know the real Jesus and gain eternal life.

Who is Jesus?

God so loved the world that He sent His Son: fully God while fully human. He sent Jesus not to condemn and conquer His enemies but as the Messiah – God’s Savior to seek and save lost souls (Lk 19:10).

Jesus grew up in humble circumstances, even a refugee early on, the son of a Jewish carpenter (handyman) who settled in a very small town under the radar from

authorities. But as Jesus’ family made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem each year, the rabbis there came to know a wondrous child endowed with God’s wisdom and understanding of the Scriptures.

At thirty, He was called by God to leave His hometown and begin the journey to become Savior (Messiah/Christ). He obeyed the heavenly Father’s every instruction. It began southeast with John the Baptist and trials of temptation in the wilderness. Then He set up His ministry base up north, on the shores of the sea of Galilee. Many followed Him and He chose 12 to be with Him. 12 is also the number of tribes of Israel...Jesus was sending the message that God was beginning a new way of relating to His people. And this new way exists today...not limited by any language or people group: the church of Christ.

Jesus went out to towns and remote areas preaching ‘the kingdom of God is near, repent and believe the Good News’. God was near because of Jesus. He taught like no other man could teach (even the golden rule is from Jesus) and He did works no other man could do: healing all manner of diseases, ailments and disabilities; casting out demons, saving souls and demonstrating power over creation (feeding thousands, stilling wind and

waves). The people came to him in droves to hear Him and be healed. But the world is also filled with God's enemies. Ironically, Jesus' worst enemies were the ones who were supposed to care for the spiritual well-being of the people. But they were corrupted by fear, human traditions, power, hypocrisy and jealousy. Little did they know, their plot to kill Jesus, was part of God's plan all along.

Jesus came to:

1. Correct wrong ways of thinking about God
2. Train the first leaders of the church
3. Pay the ransom to save sinners.

Why does the world need saving?

God did not bring sin and death into the world...humans did. The very first people questioned God's righteousness and love. They rebelled and so gave Satan some dominion in this world. God punished the rebellion – the world is cursed to this day. Yet God always provided the way for those who seek Him...to be back in loving relationship with Him. Only Jesus –son of God and perfect son of man could limit Satan and offer to pay the ransom price to save us from death in hell. Jesus is not just another martyr on a Roman cross. He is the one and only worthy Savior.

Believing Jesus existed is not enough.

The demons believe Jesus is the Son of

God and they are condemned to hell. Jesus said repent and believe. We have a fatal heart condition. We are spiritually dead without coming to terms with Jesus, God's Son. God's requirement is to confess our sin and our need of Jesus as Savior. And turn from our old ways to the way of Jesus. And God sends His help.

1. The Holy Spirit enters at the moment of belief (one with the Father and Son). From within we have help to understand and obey God's will. This is not a life without trouble...but a way through trouble with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Gal 5:22-23)
2. The Bible is food and drink for the soul. We grow in faith and wisdom by reading it and living it out. It is God's living word as His Spirit uses it to comfort and correct us. It transforms our mind...to know God's will.
3. God's people together on earth are called the church. It's the working body of Christ, who is the head. Jesus is the head of this church. When we serve and love one another like Jesus, the church is God in action...loving oneness that bursts through all evil strongholds like prejudice, greed, selfishness

and hatred: hell cannot hold back
the church of Jesus.

Why does Jesus say that those who
believe the testimony of His witnesses
are more blessed than the skeptic who
has to see all the evidence...like
Thomas?

Believers are blessed because Jesus Lives!

Active believers respond to God's
opportunities. They make this life
count. God's will is far more important
than the typical things that occupy a
person...status, stuff and selfish
pleasures. Believers exercise faith.
Faith is a currency that matters to
God. Faith opens the floodgates for
God's love to be received and shared.

Read Romans 8:33-35,37-39

Believe the Jesus of the Bible. Believe
He died to pay for your sin. Believe
that God raised Him from the
dead...and that He has ascended to
heaven where He rules today

(interceding for the believers).

You will find new life...redeemed and
in favor with God as His child. And you
will not be separated from God at
death but live forever in heaven with
Him.

Jesus has risen! He's risen indeed!
He is the Messiah/Christ, the Son of
God...that all who believe may have
eternal life in His name. AMEN