

He Is Risen – So What ?

Text : **Mark 15: 42 – 16: 16**

INTRODUCTION :

A. Start with obligatory disclaimer : This day called Easter is the day set aside by much of the so called “Christian” world to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus.

1. The N.T. nowhere commands the celebration of any special days aside from Sunday.
2. True, the word “*Easter*” appears in the old KJV translation of the bible, but the word doesn’t appear in the original text.
 - a. **Acts 12: 4 – And when he (Herod) had apprehended him (Peter), he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.**
 - b. “Easter” was added at the insistence of King James who was paying the translators.
 - c. “Easter” translates the Greek word “*pascha*” which is used 29 times in the N.T. and in all of the other 28 occurrences it is accurately translated as “**Passover.**”

B. Easter actually predates Christianity by hundreds of years.

1. Excerpt from article found on the web (Aristotle.net) about the origin of Easter.
Goddess of Fertility
Easter got its name from Ostara, the Anglo-Saxon goddess of fertility and re-birth. European tribes celebrated the beginning of spring at the vernal equinox, when day and night are equal in length, by blessing seeds for growth and placing colored eggs on an altar. They believed that this ceremony would bring them fertility for the upcoming year.
*Christian missionaries noticed that this pagan celebration took place around the time of the resurrection of Christ, so they adopted Easter as a Christian holiday to increase conversions to Christianity. (**The practice of syncretism**)*
2. Many scholars trace Easter’s origin back to a religion believed to have been started by Nimrod’s widow; which eventually became the foundation of Baal worship.
3. As early as 190 A.D. Easter is mentioned in correspondence by church elders (Polycarp of Smyrna –vs– Anicetus of Rome) debating the proper date for its observance as a Christian feast. (***This debate continued 100 yrs until Nicene council.***)

C. We understand that the scriptures give Christians the liberty to establish celebrations to the glory of God so long as they do not violate scripture.

1. **Rom. 14: 5-6** One person regards one day above another, another regards every day *alike*. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind. **6** He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God. (*cf- Vs 23*)

2. Easter is celebrated by Christians to commemorate that which is remembered each time they partake of the Lord's Supper, the resurrection of Jesus the Christ.
3. Eggs, rabbits and chicks may once have been symbols of fertility, but they are now no more than fun for the children. (*God knows every heart.*)

In this era Christians celebrate Easter solely as a commemoration of the most cardinal doctrine of the Christian religion .. the resurrection of Jesus.

I. Without the resurrection of Jesus, Christianity would not exist.

A. If the prophecy does not come true, the prophet is a false prophet.

Deut. 18: 20-22 'But the prophet who speaks a word in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.' ²¹ You may say in your heart, 'How will we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?' ²² When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

B. Jesus prophesied that He would die and be raised again on the third day.

1. **John 2: 18-21** The Jews then said to Him, "What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?" ¹⁹ Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." ²⁰ The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" ²¹ But He was speaking of the temple of His body.
2. **John 10: 17-18** For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. ¹⁸ No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.

C. Thus, the entire credibility of Jesus rested upon His having the power to raise himself up from the grave after having been killed.

1. He was certified dead by expert executioners. (**Mark 15: 44, John 19: 31-37**)
2. The fact that he was alive after His death is attested by many witnesses.
I Cor. 15: 3-8 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶ After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; ⁷ then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; ⁸ and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

II. The resurrection of Jesus proved that Jesus is God.

- A. Joseph was told that Jesus was the Son of God and to be named
 “Immanuel which translated means God with us.” (Matt. 1: 18-25)
- B. The Gospel According To John proclaims the deity of Jesus who is Christ.
 John 1: 1 – In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,
 and the Word was God. (cf – Vs. 14)
- C. Jesus claimed to be God. (*If He was not he was a wicked liar.*)
 1. John 8: 58 – Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you,
 before Abraham was born, I am.” (Ex. 3: 14 – I Am that I Am)
 2. John 10: 30 – “I and the Father are one.”
 3. John 14: 9 – He who has seen Me has seen the Father;
- D. The resurrection of Jesus proved that these claims are true .. Jesus is God.
 1. Rom. 1: 4 – who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from
 the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,
 2. Historically men have become expert at robbing graves.
 - a. John Scott Harrison was the son of one president and the father of another.
“He died at home at the age of seventy three. Following the funeral, the family accompanied the body to the Congress Green Cemetery, where the Harrison family plot overlooked the Ohio River. Prior to burial, they discovered a nearby body was missing from an uprooted gravesite. A decision was made to hide the body of John Scott Harrison. Benjamin supervised the lowering of his father in a secret grave, an eight foot excavation was made secure by placement of concrete slabs around the remains and two watchmen were hired. Ben was determined his father's body would be safe and returned to Indianapolis. The oldest son, John Harrison Jr. set about solving the mystery of the missing body. Grave robbing and selling the remains to a research facility was commonplace. A tip led him to the Ohio Medical School in Cincinnati where instead of finding the missing corpse, located his father who it was thought safely buried just 24 hours before. ...
 - b. The Egyptians built the most elaborate tombs in history, but men broke into them.
 - c. However, in all of history only one man has ever broken out of his grave, Jesus.
 3. Because this is true, all mankind should react in the same way that Thomas reacted :
John 20:27-29 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!’ Then Jesus told him, ‘Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.’”
- E. Only God has the power to give life where there is none. Thus, Jesus IS God.

III. So what ? It happened a long time ago, why is His resurrection important to us ?

A. It means that our Lord Jesus is ruler over all things in Heaven and on earth.

1. **Psa. 103: 19** – The Lord has established His throne in the heavens,
And His sovereignty rules over all.
 - a. There is no security if the God who rules has already turned to dust.
 - b. We don't make pilgrimages to a tomb to worship. (*As do some other religions*)
2. We are losing the security that we once felt in our government's ability to protect us.
 - a. America's ship of state appears to be on a dangerous course away from God.
 - b. A nation is built upon the character of its people and ours is eroding away.
3. We must never forget that God alone has the ability to sustain us as a great power.
 - a. **Dan. 4: 17**– This sentence is by the decree of the angelic watchers And the decision is a command of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, And bestows it on whom He wishes And sets over it the lowliest of men.
 - b. Therefore, we need to be warning everyone who will listen to bow before Jesus.
** Even the most glorious of angels were cast out of Heaven for rebelling.*
Ez. 28: 11-19 , Isa. 14: 12-15
 - c. Jesus is the one who has the ability to bless us as individuals and as a nation.
And Christians have unlimited access to His throne room. Family relationship !

B. It means Jesus has the power to fulfill all of His promises.

1. We live in a world where promises mean less and less.
 - a. Every political season we hear multitudes of promises, but they are all forgotten.
 - b. Marriage vows are ignored. Divorce is as common as marriage.
2. Our text contains two of His promises :
 - a. **Vs. 16** – He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved;
 - b. **Vs. 16 b** – but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.
3. Jesus promised to prepare an eternal home for us in Heaven :
John 14: 1-3 Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.
2 "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. **3** "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.
4. He promised to provide for us if we serve Him above all others, including self.
Matt. 6: 33 – But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness,
and all these things will be added to you.

C. It means that we do not have to fear our own death.

1. **I Cor. 15: 50-57** Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. **51** Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but **we will all be changed**, **52** in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and **the dead will be raised** imperishable, and we will be changed. **53** For this perishable must **put on the imperishable**, and this mortal must put on immortality. **54** But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal **will have put on immortality**, then will come about the saying that is written, “DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY. **55** “O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?” **56** The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; **57** but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Compare ... **I Thess. 4: 13-18** But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. **14** **For if we believe** that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will **bring with Him** those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. **15** For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. **16** For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and **the dead in Christ will rise first**. (cf- **Jn 5: 25-32**) **17** Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. **18** Therefore comfort one another with these words.
 - a. Notice the body is in the ground.
 - b. The soul is with God and returns to be joined with the new body.
 - c. The soul w/o the body is said to be “**naked**”, but it still functions. (**II Cor. 5: 1-10**)
3. **Imagine ..** the worst thing Satan can do to us is give us an early entrance to Heaven.
 - a. The instant a Christian dies his soul goes to be with God.
 - b. Remember the story of the rich man and Lazarus. (**Luke 16:19-31**)
Each immediately went to his eternal destiny.

D. It means that I should live my life wholly devoted to Jesus and to His goals.

1. **Prov. 23:7** – **For as he thinks within himself, so he is. ...** (*We live by our convictions.*)
2. One who truly believes that Jesus lives and reigns will live his life accordingly.
3. One who truly believes that he will live again after this life will prepare for it.

- a. He will live in such a way as to anticipate hearing Jesus say to Him :
Matt. 25: 34 – ... **“Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”**
- b. He will be careful not to break His relationship with Jesus or do anything that would put him in danger of hearing those heart wrenching words :
Matt. 25: 41 – ... **“Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;”**

CONCLUSION :

- A. We believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God because the tomb was empty.
 1. Jesus proved Himself to be God by raising Himself from the dead.
 2. When Jesus came forth from the grave He proved Himself to be the sovereign ruler of both the physical universe and spiritual realms as well.
 3. His resurrection proved Him to be capable of fulfilling every promise He ever made.
- B. Those three words **“He is Risen!”** changed the entire course of human history.
 1. They changed my life and my destiny.
 2. What affect are they having on your life ?
 3. Those three words will not change your destiny until you have placed them at the very core of your belief system.
- C. Jesus rose from the grave because He first died as a sacrifice for your sins.
 1. **John 1: 29** – The next day he (John) saw Jesus coming to him and said,
“Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!
 2. **I Cor. 5: 7** – Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump,
just as you are in fact unleavened. (*Reform your life.*)
For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.
 3. **Eph. 5: 1-2** Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; **2** and walk in love,
just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us,
an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.
- D. How have you responded to the death, the burial and the resurrection of Christ.

INVITATION :

Romans 6

Lesson Text :**Mark 15: 42 - 16: 16**

42 When evening had already come, because it was the preparation day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, **43** Joseph of Arimathea came, a prominent member of the Council, who himself was waiting for the kingdom of God; and he gathered up courage and went in before Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. **44** Pilate wondered if He was dead by this time, and summoning the centurion, he questioned him as to whether He was already dead. **45** And ascertaining this from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. **46** Joseph bought a linen cloth, took Him down, wrapped Him in the linen cloth and laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. **47** Mary Magdalene and Mary the *mother* of *Joses* were looking on to see where He was laid.

16: 1 When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the *mother* of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that they might come and anoint Him. **2** Very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. **3** They were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" **4** Looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away, although it was extremely large. **5** Entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe; and they were amazed. **6** And he said to them, "Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here; behold, *here is* the place where they laid Him. **7** But go, tell His disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He told you.'"**8** They went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had gripped them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

9 [Now after He had risen early on the first day of the week, He first appeared to Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons. **10** She went and reported to those who had been with Him, while they were mourning and weeping. **11** When they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they refused to believe it.

12 After that, He appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking along on their way to the country. **13** They went away and reported it to the others, but they did not believe them either.

14 Afterward He appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining *at the table*; and He reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him after He had risen. **15** And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. **16** "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.