



G R A C E

REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH

SOLI ◇ DEO ◇ GLORIA

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Sermon Notes

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

John 20:1-10

October 15, 2006

- I. **A New Day**
- II. **A New Discovery**
- III. **A New Faith**
- IV. **A New Profound Significance**

I. **A New Day**

- John states, 'Now on the *first day* of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already taken away from the tomb.'
- It is quite significant that John does NOT say, 'Now on the day after the Sabbath...'
 - The Resurrection of Jesus Christ marks a new day, a new era.
 - Jesus Christ is the Second Adam, the head of the Second Creation, and His resurrection marks the beginning of this new creation [in Christ].
 - The [Saturday] Sabbath was the sign of the Old Mosaic Covenant. It was a sign of the old creation.
 - However, now, as Jesus Christ was raised from the dead on the first day of the week, this day symbolizes the new creation.
 - Therefore, this is the primary reason that the Early Church began gathering on the first day of the week, the Lord's Day.

II. A New Discovery

- John includes several key facts concerning the discovery of the empty tomb:
 - John states that the first person to discover the empty tomb was Mary Magdalene – a woman!
 - John also states that when Mary came to Simon Peter and the other disciple whom Jesus loved [presumably John], she said to them, ‘They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and **we** do not know where they have laid Him.’
 - This quote indicates several things:
 - First, that Mary did not understand that Jesus was to rise from the dead; the idea of resurrection was not even in her mind, for she believed that His body had been stolen. [This was a rather common practice in the first century – so much so that Emperor Claudius (AD 41-54) ruled that grave robbing and/or the destruction of tombs was a capital offense.]
 - Secondly, there were likely other women with her, for she says ‘we.’ [This is consistent with the Synoptic accounts (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1; Luke 24:10)].
 - According to the Old Testament, the testimony of at least two is necessary to legally confirm the truthfulness of one’s testimony; however, a woman’s testimony was not admissible in court (e.g. Mishnah *Rosh ha-Shannah* 1:8).
 - The fact that women are the first to discover the empty tomb underscores the common axiom throughout Scripture that states that God chooses the foolish things of the world to shame the wise (1 Corinthians 1:27-29).
 - Immediately after Mary’s news to Peter and John, the two men take off running to the tomb, and find exactly what Mary [and the other women] describe – a stone that has been removed and a body-less tomb.
 - No doubt it is providential that the testimony of the two women is now confirmed by that of two men – evidence that **is** admissible in a Jewish court.

- John says that the two men ran to the tomb and John arrived first. However, he simply looked into the tomb.
- Yet, Peter, once he arrived [and consistent with his personality!], entered into the tomb, discovering ‘the linen wrappings lying there, and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself.’
 - This discovery certainly dismisses any thought of a ‘crime scene.’ Grave robbers would not have left behind the expensive linens and spices used to bury Christ.
 - Further, John’s account carefully illustrates that the tomb was left in a ‘neat’ manner – after all, the face-cloth was rolled up in a place by itself, as though there was no longer any need for it! This hardly indicates that someone had stolen the body – as if the grave robbers ‘tidied up’ after themselves.
 - Also, this scene stands in direct contrast to Lazarus’ resurrection. Lazarus came out of his tomb with his grave clothes still on. However, it appears as though Jesus simply passed through His grave clothes in the way in which He will [shortly] pass through walls. Some have even suggested that the cloths were still in the exact positions they were when Jesus’ body was wrapped.
 - Finally, Lazarus was raised by Jesus; but, Jesus could not have been raised by any other person, for He was alone in the tomb!

III. A New Faith

- Upon witnessing the empty tomb, John says that ‘the other disciple’ [presumably himself] ‘saw and believed.’
 - John does not elaborate as to what the nature of this belief is, but it appears that it is most likely the belief that Jesus had, indeed, risen from the dead.
 - This is not necessarily a ‘salvific’ faith; however, it appears more than just a mere acknowledgment that something important had just happened.

“The pre-eminence of the faith of the Beloved Disciple is the climax of the narrative. His faith was not derived from ancient prophetic texts; the fact of the empty tomb illuminated the sense of scripture.”

Sir Edwyn Hoskyns

“The form of the verb [believed] indicates the breakthrough of a new beginning. Unlike Mary, who from the removal of the stone and the open tomb could only conclude that ‘people’ had taken Jesus away, in the beloved disciple, at the sight of all this, a sense arose that something else must have happened with Jesus’ body, that another hand, God’s hand, and been at work here. With this one sober statement the Evangelist leaves the matter. He does not define this faith. It was like a new certainty that took hold of this disciple while understanding was still lacking.”
Hermann Ridderbos

John had spent a great deal of time with Jesus as a disciple, listening to the words of His Lord. It is as though the empty tomb is the lens through which he now sees the words of Scripture.

The empty tomb **authenticates** the words of Jesus!

- ❖ However, despite John’s experience of observing the empty tomb, his understanding was still lacking.
- ❖ John 20:9 says, ‘For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.’
- ❖ Far too many Christians, if not most, find themselves in the same position as John – they believe in the essentials of the Christian faith, but they have no idea as to the significance of such beliefs. They do not know why what they believe is important.
- ❖ When one does not know why what they believe is significant, rarely, if ever is there true life-change. Rarely does their theology have any practical implications.
- ❖ And this was no different than with Peter and John who, according to this Gospel (verse 10), simply, “went away again to their own homes.”
- ❖ Yet, we are without excuse today, for, unlike John, we have the gift of the Holy Spirit and the full counsel of the Word of God.
- ❖ *It would not be until Pentecost that the disciples, and all believers, gained a more complete understanding of the significance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ:*

IV. A New Profound Significance

Since the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the grave is no longer something to fear!

1. The Resurrection confirms the Words of Christ and Scripture

o Words of Scripture prophesying the Resurrection:

- Leviticus 23:4-14 (The Feast of First Fruits)

The Seven Jewish Festivals of the Old Testament:

1) **Passover**

2) **Feast of Unleavened Bread**

3) **Day of Firstfruits**

4) Feast of Pentecost (seven weeks after Resurrection Sunday)

5) Day of Trumpets

6) Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*)

7) Feast of Tabernacles

The Feast of First Fruits always occurred on the day after Sabbath of Passover Week. The purpose of this festival was to dedicate and consecrate the firstfruits of the barley harvest.

The Prophetic significance of this festival is three-fold: (1) Firstfruits is a type of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ (see 1 Corinthians 15:20-23), (2) Firstfruits is a guarantee of the bodily resurrection of all believers (1 Corinthians 15:20-23; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18), and (3) Firstfruits is a type of the consecration of the church.

Psalm 16:8-10

I have set the LORD continually before me;
Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.
Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices;
My flesh also will dwell securely.
For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol;
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.

- **Psalm 30:3; 41:10; 118:17**
- **Isaiah 53:10-12**
- **Hosea 6:2**

o Words of Christ prophesying the Resurrection

Matthew 12:39-40: But He answered and said to them, 'An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; for

just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.’

John 2:19: Jesus answered them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’

John 12:23-25: And Jesus answered them, saying, ‘The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ‘He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal.’

John 10:17-18: ‘For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. 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.’

❖ **Therefore, Scripture is perfectly trustworthy!**

2. The Resurrection confirms the Deity of Christ

- **Scripture indicates that the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ was an act of ALL THREE PERSONS OF THE TRINITY!**

THE FATHER:

Acts 13:30-35: “But God [the Father] raised Him from the dead...”
[See Also: Acts 2:24; Romans 6:4; 1 Corinthians 6:14; Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 1:20]

THE SON:

John 10:17-18:“For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. 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.” [See Also: John 2:19]

- ❖ “...merely to be raised from the dead is not proof of the divinity of the one raised. Yet, for someone to raise himself by his own power, that is sufficient proof of divinity.” Puritan Samuel Willard, in a sermon delivered June 8, 1697

THE HOLY SPIRIT:

Romans 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,”

- ❖ Since the resurrection of Jesus Christ was not a resuscitation or revival of life; but, was rather the CREATION of life [similar to the miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead] it is a divine act reserved only for a divine being.

3. The Resurrection reveals the Father's acceptance of the Work of the Son – that the Father's wrath was fully exhausted and the Son is Vindicated!

- Alexander MacClaren states, “The resurrection interprets the death of Christ.”
- Read Philippians 2:8-11
- *Christ's exaltation includes His resurrection and subsequent ascension to the right hand of God the Father.*
- Read Romans 4:24; 6:9-10; 8:3, 10-11
- Read Galatians 3:13
- “When Christ was raised from the dead, it was God's declaration of approval of Christ's work of redemption...By raising Christ from the dead, God the Father was in effect saying that he approved of Christ's work of suffering and dying for our sins, that his work was completed, and that Christ no longer had any need to remain dead. There was no penalty left to pay for sin, no more wrath of God to bear, no more guilt or liability to punishment – all had been completely paid for, and no guilt remained. In the resurrection, God was saying to Christ, ‘I approve of what you have done, and you find favor in my sight.’” Wayne Grudem
- “As Christ by dying was made virtually, so by rising he becomes actually the object of our justifying faith...Christ could not rise until justice acquitted him. His bond was submitted for our cause, and it must be accepted by the Judge, and that only by a full payment of the bond. When he arose, this bond was returned to him, and cancelled. Our debt is paid, our bond is returned.” Samuel Willard

4. Therefore, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ ensures our forgiveness and justification – all that was accomplished in Christ's obedience in life and unto death.

- Read Romans 4:25
- Read 1 Corinthians 15:17

5. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ becomes the basis of our regeneration and future bodily resurrection.

- Ephesians 2:5-6 states, “But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,”

- Colossians 3:1 states, “Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.”
- 1 Peter 1:3 states, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,”
- Read also Galatians 2:20.

6. In His resurrection from the Dead, Jesus Christ destroyed the Power of Death and gives every Believer the hope of Eternal Life.

- Read John 11:25-26
- Read Romans 6
- Read Ephesians 1:18-2:10
- Read Colossians 2:9-15; 3:1-4

1 Corinthians 15:54-57: 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. "O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

“The atoning work of Christ, if it was to be effective at all, had to terminate, not in death, but in life.”
Louis Berkhof

7. Because of the Resurrection, we have Unspeakable Power to Live

- It is true that Christ conquered all on his cross: there the battle was fought and there the victory was gained. But that victory was made into a triumph in his resurrection. Now his enemies fled, quitting the field. Psa. 68:1, "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered; let those also who hate him flee before him." He made a conquest of death itself, and it lay dead at his feet. Christ would never be known as a conqueror, except for this. If death had held him as her captive, where would his victory be?
Samuel Willard
- Read Ephesians 1:18-20
- The power that raised Christ from the dead is available to believers today!
- This power was evident in the Apostles.

- John Stott states, “Perhaps the transformation of the disciples of Jesus is the greatest evidence of all for the resurrection...”
- In his book, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, Josh McDowell quotes Harvard attorney Dr. Simon Greenleaf, “It was therefore impossible that they could have persisted in affirming the truths they have narrated, had not Jesus actually risen from the dead, and had they not known this fact as certainly as they knew any other fact.”
- Read the testimonies of some of the Apostles (taken from *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs*):
 - **Philip** was born at Bethsaida and lived a humble life. After the resurrection, he “labored diligently in Upper Asia, and suffered martyrdom in A.D. 54. He was scourged, thrown into prison, and crucified.
 - **Matthew**, before becoming a follower of Jesus Christ, was a tax-collector. “The scene of his labors was Parthia, and Ethiopia.” In Ethiopia “he suffered martyrdom, being slain with an halberd (an axe-like weapon) in the city of Nadabah, A.D. 60.”
 - **James the Less**, the brother of Jesus, was once a skeptic, refusing to believe that Jesus was the Messiah. However, after the resurrection, James was the author of the epistle ascribed to his name. At the age of ninety-four he was beat and stoned [to death] by the Jews.
 - **Andrew** was the brother of Peter and preached the gospel to many Asiatic nations; but on his arrival at Edessa he was taken and crucified on a cross in the shape of an X.
 - **Peter**, who once fiercely denied any association with Jesus Christ, suffered a martyr’s death as well. According to tradition [Jerome], he was crucified, his head being down and his feet upward, himself so requiring, because he was (he said) unworthy to be crucified after the same form and manner his Lord was.
- Each one of these saints had one thing in common – they were personally convinced that Jesus had risen from the dead.
- Because of this conviction, each one of them were willing to do anything, go anywhere, and die any way for their Risen Savior.
- Because of their commitment to Christ, God used them to “turn the world upside-down” – They knew the power that raised Christ from the dead.