

John 20:1 - 21 Easter 2021

1 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. 2 And so she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him." 3 Peter therefore went forth, and the other disciple, and they were going to the tomb. 4 And the two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter, and came to the tomb first; 5 and stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings lying there; but he did not go in. 6 Simon Peter therefore also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he beheld the linen wrappings lying there, 7 and the face-cloth, which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself. 8 So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb entered then also, and he saw and believed. 9 For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. 10 So the disciples went away again to their own homes.

11 But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping; and so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb; 12 and she beheld two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying. 13 And they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." 14 When she had said this, she turned around, and beheld Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, "Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away." 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (which means, Teacher). 17 Jesus said to her, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren, and say to them, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'" 18 Mary Magdalene came, announcing to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and that He had said these things to her.

19 When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first day of the week, and

when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you." 20 And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples therefore rejoiced when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus therefore said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

This morning very briefly we're going to leave our verse by verse expositional study of Luke and turn to John's gospel to simply bask for a few short minutes in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Bask is a good word. The Oxford dictionary says to bask is to; *lie exposed to warmth and light, typically from the sun, for relaxation and pleasure.*

I would add that beyond relaxation and pleasure is a restorative effect. The cold seems to come out incrementally and is replaced with a renewed strength.

As christians who will increasingly be under new pressures that we haven't experienced before, this source of restorative energy parallels the idea of basking in the sun as the cold is leached out of us and we are energized to continue. We come to the Word to bask in His light and the darkness is leached out of us as we do.

We christians can bask in the truth of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. He really died. He was really buried in a sealed tomb. And He really did rise up from the dead during the 3rd day.

God has been instrumental in the history of the jews of raising a few persons from the dead. We have 8 incidents in the old and new testament where people were raised from the dead;

1. Widow of Zarephath's son 1 Kings 17:17–24 (Raised by Elijah)
2. Shunamite's son 2 Kings 4:20–37 (Raised by Elisha)
3. Man tossed into Elisha's tomb 2 Kings 13:21 (Raised by God)
4. Widow of Nain's son Luke 7:11–17 (Raised by Jesus)
5. Jairus' daughter Mark 5:35–43 (Raised by Jesus)

6. Lazarus John 11:1–44 (Raised by Jesus)
7. Tabitha (also known as Dorcas) Acts 9:36–41 (Raised by Peter)
8. Eutychus Acts 20:7–12 (Raised by Paul)

Then we have an undisclosed number of people raised from the tombs at Jesus' crucifixion Matthew 27:51-53

All of those occurrences were well documented by reliable people. They are real. But we only have one occurrence where an occupant of a tomb, pronounced dead by Romans who were experts in death and whose occupations depended upon the veracity of their executions, a dead man raised himself up from the grave.

Only one. Jesus said to the pharisees in the John chapter 10 account of the good shepherd these astonishing words;

17 "For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life 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."

Make no mistake about who killed Jesus. Jesus here claims that He has authority about when His life would be extinguished, truly dead, and He claims to have the authority to raise Himself up from the dead. I have authority to lay it down and I have authority to take it up again.

That's an astonishing claim amid worldwide astonishing claims made by would be messiahs for all time in every place in every people group. So many messiahs. So many claims. Where are they now, to a man: In their graves. Every one. Except one. Jesus Christ claimed to have authority to take back His own life that He also had the authority to relinquish . . . and He did exactly what He claimed.

This Easter morning I don't want to do our usual verse by verse exposition of this rather long passage. But I want to consider just 2 things here that jumped

out at me as I considered what to say very briefly as we celebrate Jesus resurrection on the traditional day that the church has recognized for 2 millennia.

9 For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.

John comments that at this point, as they are running around in discovery trying to make sense of what has happened and they find the tomb empty, they didn't understand that; according to . . . *the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.*

The scripture. They didn't understand the scripture. Where do the scriptures that these men had at their disposal say that Messiah would die and be raised up again to life.

Let's consider this briefly. First of all is the words of Jesus himself. We read the account already of Him telling the pharisees that He possesses, from His Father, the authority to lay His own life down and raise it up again.

The disciples heard Him say that. But it didn't make a connection in their minds. Not at the time He said it. And not in these first moments as Mary reports that the tomb is empty. Jesus said it. That makes it scripture equivalent with all other inspired writings. But they didn't make that connection.

We also have recorded two times that Jesus plainly and clearly told His disciples that He must die. That may be the scriptures that John refers to. If Jesus said it, it's scripture. He had said to the jews, *Destroy this temple and I will raise it up again in 3 days.* That was scripture.

But let's look further at the question, where does the Old Testament scripture, that they did have available to them, say that Messiah would die and rise again. This is fascinating, so stick with me for just a few more minutes. We're just going to pick some of the low hanging fruit.

*Psalm 16:10 says; For Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol;
Neither wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay.*

Psalms 22:1 My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?

*15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd,
And my tongue cleaves to my jaws;
And Thou dost lay me in the dust of death.*

*22 I will tell of Thy name to my brethren;
In the midst of the assembly I will praise Thee.*

*Isaiah 25:8 He will swallow up death for all time,
And the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces,
And He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth;
For the LORD has spoken.*

Isaiah 53:

*4 Surely our griefs He Himself bore,
And our sorrows He carried;
Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten of God, and afflicted.*

*5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions,
He was crushed for our iniquities;
The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him,
And by His scourging we are healed.*

*6 All of us like sheep have gone astray,
Each of us has turned to his own way;
But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all
To fall on Him.*

*7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted,
Yet He did not open His mouth;
Like a lamb that is led to slaughter,
And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers,*

So He did not open His mouth.

*8 By oppression and judgment He was taken away;
And as for His generation, who considered
That He was cut off out of the land of the living,
For the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due?*

*9 His grave was assigned with wicked men,
Yet He was with a rich man in His death,
Because He had done no violence,
Nor was there any deceit in His mouth.*

*10 But the LORD was pleased
To crush Him, putting Him to grief;
If He would render Himself as a guilt offering,
He will see His offspring,
He will prolong His days,
And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand.*

*11 As a result of the anguish of His soul,
He will see it and be satisfied;
By His knowledge the Righteous One,
My Servant, will justify the many,
As He will bear their iniquities.*

*12 Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great,
And He will divide the booty with the strong;
Because He poured out Himself to death,
And was numbered with the transgressors;
Yet He Himself bore the sin of many,
And interceded for the transgressors.*

It just doesn't get any clearer than Isaiah 53. Jesus purchases us by His death and then lives again to enjoy the glory with all of those whom He has saved.

Those are the main scriptures about the Messiah who dies and lives again. And I would add one other, and you're already familiar with it because we looked at it last week. It seems like I can't shut up about Daniel 9.

Daniel 9:

24 "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place. 25 "So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. 26 "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.

Messiah will bring in an end of transgression, and end of sin, atonement for iniquity, everlasting righteousness, He will seal up vision and prophecy because it will all be completed in Him and He will anoint the most Holy Place.

That happens by the Messiah at the end of the 70th week. But the angel Gabriel clearly tells Daniel Messiah will be murdered at the end of the 69th week.

How can both of those prophecies be true?? Murdered in the 483rd year. Brings in everlasting righteousness in the 490th year. There's only one way to make that math add up. Right? Something has to give. He can't do both. Be dead and bring in everlasting righteousness at the end of the 7th year of God's people after His death.

As they say in the south and probably at the Merlino's house; That dog won't hunt. Only one way both things can be true. Messiah must die and live again.

Beloved, we have hundreds and hundreds of reliable witnesses that attest to

seeing Jesus, alive, after the crucifixion. He arose from the dead. He raised Himself from the dead.

In future days as it gets more and more difficult to be a christian, as pressure is applied on us to conform to our culture, we will need to bask again and again in the sunshine of the truth that the Word of God, the authority behind the words of this book, all of the words of this book, came to live among men, was crucified though sinless, gives anyone who asks Him His righteousness and takes upon Himself their guilt, that person allowed wicked men to murder Him, and then raised Himself up from the grave on the 3rd day.

The scriptures attest that His death and resurrection was necessary and prophecied of. It was spoken of 700 years before He lived and it came to pass, just as the scriptures said.

There was one other thing that I highlighted in John's account of the resurrection.

19 When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you." 20 And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples therefore rejoiced when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus therefore said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

The disciples had closed the doors, locked the doors for fear of the jews. John tells us that for a couple of reasons. It's normal to have concerns about conflict with other people who have political and religious hatred of you.

For as long as this fallen world has been around there has been conflict and stress between people who are in control and people who are in minority. Oppression is real.

These men are aligned with a religious and political movement that was heated enough that the leader of the movement was murdered. John just flat

out tells us they were afraid of the same people who murdered Jesus. They are aware of a plot to also murder Lazarus who was raised from the dead by Jesus after 4 days. They are right to figure they'll be next. That's the climate where they're at. Fear.

Many of us believe days are coming quickly when the stress of oppression and hatred against Christians who live under the authority of the words of this book is going to get very costly and real. Fear is natural. These men were afraid. We may experience that in our land in our time.

The other reason John tells us the door was shut, is because Jesus was suddenly in their midst, and He didn't use the door. He just showed up. He was suddenly just in their midst. No doors needed. And He tells these frightened men, Relax.

That's what Peace be with you means in our vernacular. Relax. At ease. It's what happens when safety and security replaces stress and fear. Relax. It's OK. He shows them His victory scars. His hands have holes where the nails were, and his side has a gash where the spear went into Him, but He's alive. He's victorious. And He tells His own, relax.

Then the risen Christ tells them something remarkable. *as the Father has sent Me, I also send you.*

The Father sent His Son as pure light into a dark hostile world that loves its darkness. As a lamb among wolves.

How foolish we would be to think that world, ruled by Satan, should love us. But likewise how marvelous is it that no matter what this world brings to us, we are victorious in the Risen Lord, and we will be with Him, victorious, risen from the dead, like Him, as He returns to this world to bring in everlasting righteousness.

“But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.”

“For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead.”

(1 Corinthians 15:20, 21 LSB)

Happy Easter