

# Jesus Is Alive, He Is Risen!

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[ 0 : 00 ] Now I know that you will know that the date or timing of Easter Sunday is that it is the first Sunday after the first full moon after the northern spring Exodus.

You would know that, I'm sure. An interesting fact that might interest some, no doubt. But our interest in our concern about our rejoicing over is of course what happened on and around the weekend of what we call Easter.

Incidentally, Easter seems to go back to the name of a pre-Christian goddess in England, Ustre, who was celebrated at the beginning of spring.

Interesting too, maybe. But this Easter Sunday evening, it's what happened then on that first Easter Sunday that we are thrilled about and rejoicing over.

A full moon, and it has been bright these past two or three nights, the full moon was on Thursday. And maybe we could say that we need the light, not of the moon, but the fullness of God's light in our hearts and minds by His Spirit to be grasped by and to be able to rejoice and thrill.

[ 1 : 37 ] Be praying for that this evening. We take in of course Friday with today, Sunday the weekend encompasses the Savior dying but rising again triumphant over the grave.

And when He did die and rise, a marker was state in the warp and woof of history. And from then on everything was different and became, could become new Adam and Eve's sin in the garden had brought sin and the awful consequences into the very warp and woof of people in the world's history.

But when Jesus died and rose again, sin was paid for, the evil one's power was ultimately defeated and a whole new beginning for all who will have it has come.

Beginning when that Sunday morning the Savior who died did rise again triumphant or the grave.

Now I expect you know the chorus, He lives, He lives and know that it goes on, Christ Jesus lives today.

[ 2 : 59 ] And then it asks the question, you ask me how I know He lives? Answer, He lives within my heart.

And absolutely and if indeed we don't know Him as a living person, one who lives in us faith, the Christian life, therefore is a dead and horizontal and trying hard and lifeless struggling business.

It's like trying to push water or a bus up the hill. So there's a question right at the beginning tonight.

Do you know Him as a living person with you and in you? If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, He does not belong to Him, says Paul Romans 8,9.

If anyone does not have the Holy Spirit in him, he or she may be religious, but they're not a Christian.

[ 4 : 08 ] But how do we know He lives? Is that the only way at the level of our experience? But what if we wake up one morning and don't feel He is?

What if the clouds of circumstances are down and we don't feel He is alive and with us and in us? What if we watch or listen to the news and we wondered if He can be alive and in charge of anything?

Is He not then? Is it then He doesn't live? He doesn't live. But just as we sing, Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.

So we also say, I know, 100% I know He is alive, for the Bible tells me so.

And so this evening we come to the Bible to confirm it. Now we know that the resurrection accounts are to be found in each of Matthew and Mark and Luke's last chapter, John uses his last two chapters to cover it.

[ 5 : 29 ] And what we want to do this evening is to focus on the four of them and notice four salient points, one from each that they bring out and we shall put them in this way.

And we'll not take too long in each. But in Matthew chapter 28 we see, heaven did it.

In Mark chapter 16 we see, it has happened. In Luke 24 we see, they were told.

And in John 20, his second last chapter, we see it all dawned later. So first Matthew, and we are looking at Matthew 28 verse 2.

Now of course we have to realize something. Heaven did it. Did what? Rolled back the stone.

[ 6 : 34 ] And yes, Matthew says that, chapter 28 verse 2, an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and going to the tomb, rolled back the stone.

But the angel wasn't just a messenger, though that's of course as we know what the word angel means, but not just a messenger from the Jerusalem Post Office or courier agency hired to see that the ladies got the message he's alive, messenger right enough, but not from Jerusalem, but from heaven.

Because an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and rolled back the stone.

And there is something very wonderful to see. Keep your minds back over the gospels and remember the significant role that angels had in the Lord's life and circumstances.

The angels of course announcing his birth in Luke 2. Angels ministering to him after his temptations, Matthew 4.

[ 7 : 51 ] An angel strengthening him in the agonies of Esemoni, Luke 23, though on the cross no angel attended him, he bore our sin and his body on the tree alone.

Was there ever loneliness like his? But here was an angel declaring it, signalling it, was involved in it, heaven did it, heaven was doing it, rolling back the stone.

Why is that important? Why is it wonderful? Well, let this old Bible teacher Matthew Henry tell us.

He says, our Lord Jesus could have rolled back the stone by himself by his own power, but he chose to have it done by an angel to signify that having undertaken to make satisfaction for our sin, he did not break prison but had a fair and legal discharge obtained from heaven.

He did not break prison, but an officer was sent on purpose to roll away the stone and so to open the prison door, which would never have been done, if he had not made a full satisfaction but being delivered for our offenses to complete, he was raised from the dead to demonstrate that divine justice was satisfied.

[ 9 : 46 ] He died to pay for sin. He was put in the prison of death for sin. He did not break prison, use his undoubted power to get out of prison, but waited until God came and set him free, declaring in effect, as far as I am concerned as judge of all, the guilt's been dealt with, the penalty's been paid, the deed is done.

And that the angel raised him from the dead. He took him the stone away, no more than Lazarus.

An angel was commissioned to roll back the stone, not that the angel raised him from the dead, any more than those who took away the stone from Lazarus's grave raised him, but that the angel did it, intimated the consent of heaven to his release and the joy of heaven in it.

Heaven did it. And incidentally, the angel rolled back the stone, also don't forget, not to let Jesus out, but to let the disciples in so that they would know he was out.

He lives, he lives, this I know, because the Bible tells me so, and that heaven did it.

[ 11 : 38 ] Matthew. Mark, in his last chapter 16, we see it happened. Now that strikes us from verse 6, where the angel tells a woman clearly and with no doubt about it, he has risen, he is not here.

And I'll pass on to you what the late Reverend James Philip, formerly of Holy Rood Church in Edinburgh, and whose long ministry was focused on opening up the Bible.

He says, the truth of the resurrection is of quite cardinal importance. It is not something that the Gospel writers or the apostles, for that matter, set out to prove as such.

They state the facts, yes, but their concern is not to prove that it happened. What they do is to bear witness to it.

And one suspects that if we had the apostles here with us, and we spoke about proving the resurrection, they would politely say, quite so, but you're missing the whole point.

[ 12 : 55 ] It is not the fact of the resurrection, that was assumed, but its significance that was so important.

The early church did not try to prove the resurrection, they proclaimed it. Moreover, in a context which makes it plain that the real problem for them would have been not that Jesus should have risen from the dead, but rather, given who he was, rather if he had not risen.

But praise God, Mark confirms that it has happened. And also this too, a teacher at college used to say to us, if we do not believe in the bodily resurrection of Jesus, all we have is a ghost for a Saviour.

And see the contrast between, as we've talked already with the young folk, between the first part of verse 6, Mark 16 and the second.

You are looking for Jesus who was crucified, he has risen, he's not here. As Bible believers familiar with the resurrection, isn't it all too easy to lose the miracle of it?

[ 14 : 31 ] Death was death, death is death, but people don't come back to life here. That's why bereavement is so painful.

But Jesus did. Jesus rose from being dead. Miracle, miracle, never lose the reality of that.

I'm glad, aren't you, that our faith is built on the rock-solid ground of what has happened.

Isn't it true how firm a foundation is laid for your faith in His excellent Word? Wouldn't it be awful, awful to have a ghost as a Saviour?

Yes, we know He lives. Because He lives within every believer's heart, and we know what a difference it resulted in, in fearful disciples, the Scottish disciples becoming men who took on the world with Christ given boldness, and what that gospel has done in the world over 21 centuries.

[ 15 : 44 ] But we know He lives, and we can be sure of it. Why? Because it has happened, it happened, Mark.

Luke, we see in focus in Luke on the fact, in his last chapter, that they were told.

Now, in Luke 24, we have, we could put it this way, the morning, noon and night of Easter day.

The morning, the empty tomb, the afternoon, the two on the road, and the evening, their discovery, and return to Jerusalem.

And certainly, the two on the road had been told. Their Old Testament Bible had told them.

[ 16 : 43 ] Remember in the afternoon how the stranger who met and walked with them on the road, and had a Bible study with them like no other.

Luke 24 and 25, beginning with Moses 27 really, Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the scriptures concerning himself.

And of course, it all fell into place when they got home and asked them to stay the night. And he was recognized by them at supper when he broke the bread.

But they were told. The pair of you, you know your Old Testament Bibles, don't you? And you certainly have got to know it more this past hour or two on the road.

They were told. And they were told. You think of the women in the morning, the ladies came to the tomb early to anoint Jesus body with the despises they'd bought as a sign, of course, that even though he had died, their love for him was undying.

[ 17 : 52 ] But I wonder if you have ever asked yourself, should have they been there? And when we think on it, really, they shouldn't have because they had been told.

See verse 5, 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 into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise again.

Then they remembered his words. Can we hear them saying to themselves, oh yes, so he did tell us.

In Matthew, angel to the women, we find he is not here. He has risen just as he said.

[ 19 : 00 ] In Mark, Jesus to the disciples just before Gethsemane, after I have risen, I will go ahead of you to Galilee.

And earlier in Luke 9, 21 and 2, he is going to die, be crucified and on the third day be raised to life. They had been told.

Now, we don't criticize. Would we not be traumatized and overwhelmed by the sight of a crucifixion and the awful loss that it was to them?

How do the lights of Leicester set and Jeremy Bowen and Clive Myrie process in their minds the horror that they have seen in Ukraine, in Turkey, in Syria, Afghanistan?

After the Friday, the woman would hardly have been in a right frame of mind to remember anything that they had been told before then. We are not criticizing, but as a fact, if they had remembered, suffer, die, and on the third day rise, they wouldn't have been coming to accommodate death, made of obviously and likely not to a cemetery, been celebrating life.

[ 20 : 24 ] And I think that we have to listen to this observation. However sincere the devotion of these women, they should not in fact have made their journey to the grave.

For it was a confirmation of the fact that they still believe that Jesus was dead. Obviously for you visit cemeteries to visit the dead, they had been told.

You don't criticize because we can be overwhelmed and stricken by events in our lives too. But we need to ask ourselves just the same as we might have been tempted to ask them too, ask them, where's your memory of when the Bible tells us that Jesus is King, Sam II, on Palm Sunday, blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord, here on the road on this resurrection day.

And especially when we remember he says, Matthew the last verse says, all authority in heaven and earth is given to me.

We've been told, but where's our memory? We see troubles, but we forget to take and apply what the Almighty says into the things that happen or are happening in the world, in our country, in our lives.

[ 22 : 14 ] I have said my King on high. So in practice, what do we do?

Hear this, hide, store up God's word in our hearts, Sam 119:11, so that we might not sin against you, and so that, note this, so that at the critical moment the Holy Spirit may fly to the divine library and bring to us with delay so slight that it's not measurable the very word we need.

And of course, hiding God's word in our hearts or filling the shells of that, the library means reading the Bible as a Christian, do you read the Bible as Joshua encourages us to do day and night continuously.

Spurgeon said of John Bunyan, prick him anywhere and you will find that his blood is beblind. The very essence of the Bible flows from him.

He cannot speak without quoting a text for his soul is full of the word of God. The Holy Spirit will prick us and out the truth, the promise will come.

[ 23 : 53 ] He'll pull out the right truth from the library shelf and will have it to follow. They had been told they should have remembered on the third day he would rise.

We have been told the Bible tells us so and how firm a foundation is laid therefore in his excellent word.

Matthew, Mark, Luke and finally John in his second last chapter we see will put it like this, it all dawned later.

They had been told but they hadn't yet come together. You remember Mary comes to the tomb and finds the stone had been rolled back.

Now it's possible that John assumes his readers knew of the other ladies coming too as the other gospel tell us but focuses on Mary Magdalene. We remember her coming and we read finding the stone rolled back, hurrying to tell the disciples Peter and John coming running back to the tomb and finding the grave clothes in the empty tomb.

[ 25 : 12 ] John gets there first and looks in then Peter comes and goes in and then so does John. And we read John 20 verse 8 he John saw and believed.

But then this verse 9 they still did not understand from the scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.

There they were. What they saw in front of their eyes in that empty tomb confirmed it. What a morning. What a discovery. But verse 9 they still did not understand from the scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.

That it was in other words a triumphant and integral part of God's salvation plan. That all dawned later as a Christian to begin with.

And that might be for some this evening a while ago, for someone else recently, for another it's maybe still to come. But we've heard of the Christmas story and say thank you God for that.

[ 26 : 25 ] Then the same with the account of the cross and Jesus crucifixion and realizing it so central to the gospel we say thank you Lord for that that Jesus died and I know it was for sin and indeed to pay for my sin.

And the same again with the resurrection and we thrill and believe that he rose again and is alive. But as we have gone on and will do and as the Bible has been opened up to you, we've put the dots together as we might say.

We've seen how they connect. We see that they are all of a wonderful peace. We go even further back into the Old Testament before Christmas.

Micah verse 5 verse 2, you bet them ifrathah though you are small among the clans of Judah out of you will come from me one who will be ruler over Israel whose origins are from of old from ancient times.

And we see Zechariah speaking about Zechariah 9,9 speaking about the king coming on the donkey and Isaiah 53 pointing to Christ's suffering and the cross and Psalm 16 about God not letting his holy one see the king.

[ 27 : 58 ] We begin to see God's salvation's plan through all the pages of the Bible. And so when we come to read and believe the resurrection account, we see it was part of that plan.

The resurrection of our Lord ever had to be. As we've gone on as believers, we can say it has all dawned later.

And all God has done for us in his love is still dawning and will do and will keep doing until that glorious day dawns.

And we'll know and have reached the goal fully of that great salvation's plan.

We know in our hearts, but we see more and more from the Bible as we read it and digest it and get it that it had to be.

[ 29 : 06 ] It was in God's plan to be. The Bible in declaring to us that plan tells us so. He lives within my heart.

Our experience, our testimony. This I know. Do we? And certainly no because heaven surely did it, Matthew.

It happened, Mark. They were told, Luke, and we are two. And the glory of all that it means, the treasure of it that we are delving into in his word day and night and the confidence we have because of it dawning, John.

And is so more and more is dawning every passing prayerful Bible reading day.

So a prayer and a question. Someone prays, Lord, the sepulcher calls forth my adoring wonder for it is empty and your reason.

[ 30 : 29 ] The four gospels attest it. The living witnesses prove it. The lives of Christians, we know such, don't we?

And my heart experience knows it. And question if we know it. What will we not do?

We'll not keep it here in church and to ourselves. What will we do? We'll live resurrection lies out and always be prepared to give to those who ask the reason for the hope that is in us.

Let us pray.