



THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD

EASTER

Study Notes for the Christian Layperson

by: Rev. Roberto E. Rojas, Jr.

Collect of the Day:

Almighty God the Father, through Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, You have overcome death and opened the gate of everlasting life to us. Grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of our Lord's resurrection, may be raised from the death of sin by Your life-giving Spirit; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Introit:

Psalm 8:1, 5-6, 9; antiphon: Luke 24:5b-6b
— *He is risen, Alleluia!*

Psalm:

Psalm 118:15-29 (antiphon: v. 1)
— *The right hand of the LORD*

Old Testament Reading:

Job 19:23-27 — *I know that my Redeemer lives*

Gradual:

Psalm 118:24, 1 — *This is the day that the LORD has made*

Epistle:

1 Corinthians 5:6-8 — *Cleanse out the old leaven*

Verse:

1 Corinthians 5:7b-8a, c — *Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed*

Mark 16:1-8 ESV

Author and Date:

The Holy Spirit caused the words of this Gospel to be written by John Mark around AD 50-60. This text is the historical account of the bodily resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified.

¹ **When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. ² And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb.**

- “Sabbath was past” — This means sundown on Saturday since the days were counted from evening to morning (see Genesis 1:5). They went on first day of the week which is Sunday, which is also called the eighth day. This day is significant for believers. See Leviticus 12:2-3, 22:27; Numbers 6:9-10; Ezekiel 43:26-27; Matthew 28:1; Acts 20:7.
- Mary Magdalene (from the village of Magdala), Mary the mother of James, and Salome all watched the crucifixion from a distance (Matthew 27:55-56; Mark 15:40). Their intention was to anoint Jesus' dead body by wrapping around these ointments in strips of cloth before his entombment.

³ **And they were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?” ⁴ And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large.**

- “[...]just as Christ came to His disciples *clausa ianua* (through closed doors), so He also arose *clauso sepulchro* (through closed tomb). The only purpose of rolling the stone from the door of the sepulcher was, according to Scripture, to exhibit the empty tomb to the women and to convince them by this very fact that Christ had truly risen. Quenstedt writes of this:....‘This we prove as follows: If Christ rose before the coming of the angel, He rose while the sepulcher was still closed and the stone was sealed. The angel, however,

rolled the stone from the door of the sepulcher only after his coming, Matt. 28:2. Since the first is true (Matt. 28:6), also the latter must be true.” (Franz Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics: Volume II*, 322).

⁵ And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed.

- Angels typically appear in the form of young adult males wearing white robes (see Matthew 28:3).
- The appearance of an angel causes terror and alarm in mortal sinners (e.g., Luke 2:9).

⁶ And he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him.

- Jesus laid down His life, and took it up again (see John 10:17-18). This convincingly proves the deity of Jesus (John 5:17-19; Colossians 2:9). See also Romans 4:24.
- He was resurrected physically in His body, not simply spiritually as some false teachers would claim. If His resurrection was simply spiritual, then the meaning of his death and “resurrection” is subjective for one’s personal spirituality. However, His resurrection was physical; it is an objective truth. Jesus’ physical death proves that, “We were reconciled to God by the death of His Son” (Romans 5:10). Jesus’ physical resurrection proves that “[He] was raised again for our justification” (Romans 4:25). Reconciliation with God is an accomplished fact. His resurrection is the actual absolution for the whole world of sinners. This is referred to as Objective Justification.
- It is on the truth of Objective Justification that Subjective Justification rests. In other words, the object of justifying and saving faith is that Christ was raised from the dead (Romans 4:24; Romans 10:9); it is what faith believes.
- See 1 Corinthians 15:17. “If Christ is arisen, then we are not in our sins. Consequently, he again states in Rom. 8:33—Who can accuse God’s chosen ones? Here is Christ, who did die, yes much more, who is also awakened, as if he wanted to say: The true believers cannot be damned on account of their debt of sin—it has been adequately demonstrated by the resurrection of Christ that God the lord has been paid a complete settlement [of debt].” (Johann Gerhard, *Postilla: Volume 1*, 310)

⁷ But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.”

- “His disciples *and* Peter”—Peter was indeed a disciple of Jesus. Many pericopes in Mark give Peter special attention. The reason could be that Mark is writing for Peter (see 2 Peter 1:15). This means it could be referring to Peter’s position of prominence amongst the disciples, as is testified by the book of Acts. And, even more, it could be that Peter receives special attention because he denied Jesus. The angel’s special emphasis on Peter could be that Jesus wanted to see him in particular to forgive him for his sin (*The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XXI (IX): The Invocation of Saints*, paragraph 36).
- Galilee — This is the home of Jesus’ and His disciples. The disciples are reminded of Jesus’ promise in 14:28, and it will be fulfilled. Furthermore, this was said right before Jesus predicted Peter’s denial.
- An empty tomb could simply mean the body was stolen. Eyewitness accounts of Jesus could simply mean delusion, or hysteria. However, together, the eyewitness accounts of the empty tomb from believers and unbelievers *along with* the multiple eyewitness accounts of personal encounters with Jesus testify to the historical accuracy of Jesus’ resurrection. Furthermore, virtually all the apostles and early Christian leaders died because they testified to Jesus’ physical resurrection. It is hard to believe that torture, suffering, and self-sacrifice were endured if this were a hoax.

⁸ And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

- It is remarkable that the Gospel states that the first eyewitnesses to the resurrection were women. Their social status meant that their testimony was inadmissible in court. If this account was merely a fabrication, it would be more likely that Mark would have had the first eyewitnesses be men. There was no possible advantage to recount that the first eye witnesses were women. This is a strong argument for the historicity of this account.

