



Reflections

He Lives!

4-4-10



Reflections

Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb.

² And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. ³ His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. ⁴ And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. ⁵ But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ "He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. ⁷ "And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you." ⁸ So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word. (Matthew 28:1-8 NKJ)

Matthew records the events as the women went to the tomb where Jesus had been placed only to find that He was not there. "He is risen as He said," was the declaration of the angel who rolled back the stone so all could see that it was as he said.

Here we have, in a short narrative, the heart of the celebration that we call Easter. It seems that as this celebration of the resurrection of Jesus comes each year men publish all sorts of anti-Jesus books, articles, documentary films, and supposedly scholarly studies. Each one trying to discredit the reality of Jesus, His crucifixion, and, most especially, His resurrection. While they continue with their vain efforts all year, it reaches a fever pitch during the Easter season because the whole world is reminded of Jesus during this time of the year.

Paul, the Apostle, speaks to the essential importance of this event to our faith when he explains to the Corinthian Church...

And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. ¹⁵ Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up-- if in fact the dead do not rise. ¹⁶ For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. ¹⁷ And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!

(1Corinthians 15:14-17 NKJ) When we assess the importance of His resurrection to the faith of Christians we can better understand the enemy's all out assault on the Easter season and the awareness it brings to the world. Paul then reassures the Corinthians... *But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.* (1Corinthians 15:20 NKJ) He

provides further proof by pointing out that Jesus appeared to many people after He rose from the dead. *For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶ After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷ After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. ⁸ Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.* (1Corinthians 15:3-8 NKJ)

God must observe the foolishness of those who are still attempting to refute the claims of the gospel in Jesus Christ and feel sadness at their gullibility. The same lie was perpetrated in the Garden of Eden, that being that God is a liar, and it resulted in man's sin and the accompanying curse. Since Jesus is the only sacrifice sufficient to remove the power of sin, death, and the curse, it is no surprise that Satan works so hard to discredit the death, burial, and the resurrection of Jesus. He continually tries to claim that Jesus was not even a man of history, let alone, the Son of God. He has blasphemed Him, mocked Him, convinced others to participate in his efforts to eliminate Him from man's consideration and still he fails because the gospel of Jesus in the power of God for salvation and He will always prevail. It is our purpose, as part of His body, to uplift, celebrate, praise, and live in the name of Jesus, and allow the Holy Spirit to empower us to be His disciples.

We therefore with confidence can declare: **He is risen! He is risen indeed!** This declaration becomes even more powerful if we live every day as if we truly believe that He is. When we live in obedience to His Word, acknowledge His ownership of our lives, and share His gospel with others, we show, with our lives that He is risen indeed. With this in mind, let's make this Easter celebration one in which we focus on and rejoice in His resurrection. When we engage in all the other "Easter" activities, that have captured the season, let's not replace the real focus of why we celebrate at this time with something that has nothing to do with His resurrection. Let's make this a resurrection celebration instead. **Pastor Doug**