

## **THE LORD'S RESURRECTION**

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*Lessons: Mark: 16, Heaven and Hell 316*

All four of the Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—tell us how, on the third day after the Lord's burial in the cave of rock, the Marys and the other women who loved the Lord, came to the sepulchre "very early in the morning the first day of the week"; how they found the stone rolled away from the mouth of the sepulchre and heard the comforting words of the angel, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you seek Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here, for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead"; and how the women "departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring His disciples word" (Mark16:6-7).

The same story is told by the four writers of the Gospels because it is of such importance. The fact that the Lord rose from the tomb with the whole body, leaving nothing behind but the white linen garments in which Joseph of Arimathea wrapped it, is the most holy and important teaching concerning the resurrection. By it we are taught beyond doubt that the Lord is God; that the Lord Jesus Christ, who had been born as a babe in Bethlehem, who had lived with people on earth teaching and leading them, healing their diseases and giving them comfort in their troubles, was not a man as other men, but was and is our God and Savior. He alone rose from the grave with the whole body. Other men rise only as to the spiritual body. They leave their natural body in the grave. The Lord, then, by rising with the whole body, which other people leave behind, showed beyond doubt that He was not as they; that He is God. This is the first and most important truth to be seen and acknowledged in the Lord's resurrection.

The Lord who rose from the tomb was not partly God and partly man. He was wholly God; God even as to the bones and flesh which with people return to the dust of the earth from which they came. That we may believe and love this truth, the truth that the Lord Jesus Christ is the one God of heaven and earth, is the principle reason why we celebrate Easter. This truth has been entrusted to the New Church, and every New Church person must be a disciple of the Lord proclaiming it throughout the world.

This is why the Lord rose early in the morning as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week. For the Church does not rise in a person until he acknowledges the Lord as God; until he knows and believes that the Lord, who was crucified and buried and rose again on the third day with His whole body,

is the one only Savior and Redeemer of all people. And we acknowledge and believe this only when we worship Him and live according to His commandments.

In order that all people might believe and not doubt, the Lord not only rose from the sepulchre with His whole body, but He also appeared to His disciples many times after His resurrection. By this the disciples knew that the Lord was God, and they prepared to go forth and announce this truth in all the world.

But the first Christian Church did not long proclaim this truth. After the days of the disciples, the Church soon turned to worldly things and forgot the Lord, until finally many said that He was only a man. So this Church came to an end and it became necessary for the Lord to come again. This He did in the spiritual sense of the Word, the Writings of the New Church. In these Writings we are taught on every page that the Lord's Human is Divine. Every New Church person is sent out into all the world to teach the gospel that the Lord God Jesus Christ reigns, whose kingdom shall be from ages to ages. It is to the proclaiming of this truth that we should especially remind ourselves in celebrating the Lord's resurrection.

But we cannot all be ministers and teachers. We cannot all proclaim this truth to great numbers of people. However, each one of us should learn how the Lord is God and we should announce it in our lives and to all who are willing to listen. We do this when we go early to the sepulchre. To go early to the sepulchre means to seek the Lord first in all things of our lives; - at the beginning of each day, the first day of the week, and in each new state to seek the Lord first. We do this when we read the Word. Every day we should make the reading of the Word the most important thing, and that which is most important is the first and from it we begin a new spiritual day. Each week, the first day of the week, we should approach the Lord in worship. This worship should be the most important thing of the week and all our work and play should be arranged to make it possible. To those who seek the Lord in the Word through reading and worship, the Lord comes. He enlightens their minds with truths so that they may know the way they should go. And when they walk in it, they are proclaiming every moment of their lives that the Lord is God.

The most important of all the ways to seek the Lord is by living according to His commandments. This we do when we shun evils as sins against Him. Whenever we are about to begin something new, and in everything we do, we should first seek whether or not it is according to the Lord's commandments. If it is against them, we should turn away from it. If it is in agreement with them, then in doing it we shall come to know the Lord. This is to seek the Lord early in the morning. In this way we are prepared to become His disciples and to join with all good people in proclaiming that the Lord God Jesus Christ reigns, and after death we shall see Him in the glory of the Sun of Heaven—the Lord who

on this day rose from the tomb, our Redeemer and Savior, our Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*