***“ God has raised Him from the Dead”***

***Easter 2024***

*HAPPY EASTER: The celebration of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.*

*This weekend we reflect upon the most important three days since the creation of the world, Jesus’ death and resurrection!*

*Jesus, God’s only begotten son who was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, taught us about the kingdom of God, did many miracles, fulfilled all the Messianic prophecies, died on the cross as the perfect sacrifice making atonement for our sins, then conquered death by be raised to life offering us eternal life and freedom from the bondage of sin.*

*Jesus was fully man AND fully God.*

*His death on the cross showed us that He was fully man,*

*The power of His resurrection showed us that He is fully God!*

*We celebrate the resurrection on the* *first Sunday following the first full moon following the spring equinox*.

Basically the first Sunday after the first full moon of spring. It can occur as early as March 22nd and as late as April 25th. This year it’s March 31st.

**“Resurrection Sunday” (as I like to call it) *should* be celebrated the First day of the week following Passover, which is always on the 15th of Nissan (the full moon of late March or April). This year that is Monday April 22nd.**

The word “Easter” is not mentioned in the Bible. Except for older versions of the King James version in Acts 12:4 where it inaccurately replaces the word Passover.

Acts 12:4 “Then he imprisoned him [Peter], placing him under the guard of four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring Peter out for public trial after the Passover [KJV: *Easter*].

The actual Greek word in this verse is “Pashca” in Acts 12:4 – meaning “Passover.”

The Third Day following Passover(The beginning of feast of unleavened Bread**)** Is a more accurate way of celebrating The death and Resurrection of Jesus than “The Sunday after the first full moon of Spring.”

Let’s read Mark’s account of The Resurrection, pay special attention to the reaction of the three women who visited the tomb.

**Mark 16:1-11 “**When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus’ body. **2**Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb **3**and they asked each other, “Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?”

**4**But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. **5**As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.

**6**“Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. **7**But go, tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.’”

**8**Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

**9**When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons. **10**She went and told those who had been with him and who were mourning and weeping. **11**When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, they did not believe it.”

**THE THREE WOMEN AT THE TOMB**

Women at the tomb in Mark’s account:

   Mary Magdalene

   Mary, mother of James (apostle) & Joses

    Salome, mother of James & John (wife of Zebedee)

A stone wall with a hole in it

Description automatically generated

**They were neither expecting nor rejoicing over Jesus’ resurrection at first**

* “they were alarmed.”
* “Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb.”
* “They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.”
* *“those who had been with him, who were mourning and weeping.”*
* *“When they heard that Jesus was alive, …they did not believe it.”*

Jesus had told them at least three times that he would die and rise again, but when the time came for it to happen, they did not believe…

Because they at first did not believe, they were *“looking for the living among the dead”.*

**Luke 24:1-8 “**On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. **2**They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, **3**but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. **4**While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. **5**In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, *“Why do you look for the living among the dead?***6**He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: **7**‘The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’ ” **8**Then they remembered his words.”

**What is looking for LIVING AMONG THE DEAD?** *Trying to find Jesus buried in the grave, or the tomb, when He is fully alive.*

Jesus was ALIVE, but they were looking for Him in a cemetery among dead people. He was not there!

He had told them that he would rise from the dead, but they either did not believe it or did not expect it.

Even nowadays, when people talk or think about Jesus, do they think of Him as someone who was, or someone who IS?

Is He regarded as someone who lived, then died and that’s it?

OR as someone who lived, then died and was raised from the dead and is still alive?

The world continues to make this mistake. *Looking for the* ***living*** *among the* ***dead.***

Many people, regard Jesus as simply a Historical figure. Some even consider Him a great man who lived many years ago, who said and did many good things, who was unfairly mistreated and eventually unjustly killed by the evil authorities.

This is a popular belief in secular culture, in colleges and among some other religions.

*Albert Schweitzer* (the great humanitarian) wrote a book called the “The Quest for the Historical Jesus”. Which depicted as a just a Historical figure who like all other historical figures, lived then died.

*Thomas Jefferson* compiled a book called “The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth” where he took a Bible and {in his owns words} “with razor and glue” cut out all the teachings and actions of Jesus from the Gospels, excluding all his supernatural works, His miracles and His resurrection.

He basically only wanted to accept what was written about, and said by Jesus, that denied His supernatural power, including his resurrection.

He was looking for the living among the dead, because he did not fully believe.

***2nd Tim. 3:5 “…having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.”***

They want to lump him in with other great teachers and philosophers throughout the ages who said and did many great things, but are now dead and gone.

They are looking for a person who is living among the many historical figures who are dead.

The difference is, Jesus is **not** dead and gone He is **alive** and very present here today.

Everything we believe is based on this truth*.*

Paul says:

**1st Cor. 15:14** “And if Christ has not been raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your faith is useless.”

**WE SHOULD BE – “*LOOKING FOR THE LIVING AMONG THE LIVING”?***

Jesus is Alive and He dwells among the Living.

All of us are guilty from time to time of treating Jesus as if He were someone who existed many years and years ago, and all He left us was an ancient book to read. (The Bible)

But when we look into the Bible it tells us that Jesus is Alive! And He poured His Holy Spirit out upon us!

We have to believe it and live like we believe it!

Jesus did not tell us to; “baptize them in the Name of the Father Son and *Holy Bible*”,

It’s the Father, Son and Holy Spirit!

*The writer of the book is still alive!!!*

**Romans 8:11 “**The Spirit of God, who **raised Jesus from the dead**, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this *same Spirit living within you*.”

Do you believe this? The Spirit is living in us?

Each one of us who have believed upon Jesus in our hearts, and received salvation is given a deposit of the Holy Spirit within us.

**Eph 1:13-14** “When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, **14**who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance.”

***The Holy Spirit is given to us as a result of Jesus’ Resurrection.***

***He was sent by the Father after Jesus died, rose again and ascended.***

**John 16:7,13“**But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate (Holy Spirit) will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. **…** **13**But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth.”

**Acts 1:8 “**But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you;”

**Eph. 1:17-21“**I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spiritof wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.”

***This is why we can minister in His love with His power offering people Healing, Hope and Salvation in Jesus’ name!***

We have this Power through the resurrection not only for ourselves but to *others.*

*Jesus wants to deliver ALL of us from the bondage of a life of sin and death. That’s why He died and Rose again!*

**But there is one requirement, THAT YOU BELIEVE!**

**Believe in Him as Lord, Believe in Him as Savior, trust him with your whole life, and your eternity.**

**Romans 4:24 -25** “*for us who believe* in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. **25**He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.”

**Romans 10:9-10“**If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. **10**For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.”

“…believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead!!!”

**This Easter do not move on from this moment, until you truly submit your will to God, bow to His Lordship, accept Him as your savior, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead.**

**Closing prayer; (stand and receive)**

**Eph 1:18-21 “**I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may *know the hope* to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, **19**and his *incomparably great power for us who believe.*

That power is the *same as the mighty strength* **20**he exerted when ***he raised Christ from the dead***and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, **21**far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.”

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