

Text— Matthew 28:1-8

Fellow redeemed sinners, redeemed by the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

Today is Easter Sunday, also known as the feast of the resurrection of our Lord. Celebrating the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ lives is what this day is all about; it's NOT about bunnies, baskets of eggs, and candy, which are distractions used to take folk's minds off the real reason for the holiday. Sweet treats and family gatherings can be enjoyed any time; but, let us on this day first and foremost celebrate the glorious bodily resurrection of our Lord Jesus, "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification," as Romans 4:25 relates. Take it to heart we would all be headed for hell if not for the redemptive work of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, for Holy Writ reports in no uncertain terms, "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 3:23-24; 6:23)

To help us focus on what Easter is truly about, our Scripture selection emphasizes:

"JESUS IS RISEN!"

With that as our theme may we, in view of our text and with the help of the Holy Ghost, see—

- 1) When it first became evident Jesus is risen
- 2) Why it is certain Jesus is risen
- 3) Why we should be joyful that Jesus is risen

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Verse 1, ----- (Matthew 28:1)

Jesus had been crucified on a Friday, He died and was buried on that day we know as Good Friday. It's called Good Friday because on that day Jesus paid for all the sins of all people with His holy and precious blood which He shed while nailed to the

accursed tree of the cross. The Jewish Sabbath day was on Saturday; and so, our text informs us: *In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.*

Interestingly, prior to our Scripture selection we learn that on Good Friday, "When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed. And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre. Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch." (Matthew 27:57-66) Hence, the two women named Mary had seen Jesus' body entombed, and Roman guards stationed at the sealed sepulcher to ensure that Jesus' body would not be stolen.

Now, since the Sabbath was a day of rest for the Jews, Luke 23:56 reports that the women who had beheld the sepulcher and how Jesus' body was laid, "returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment." Subsequently, we learn from Mark 16:1, "when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him." Thus, the women

came to the sepulcher fully expecting to find Jesus' corpse there, for they desired to honor Him by anointing His body with the sweet spices and ointments they had prepared. Mark 16:3 informs us that while en-route to the tomb, "they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" So, I repeat, the women came to the sepulcher fully expecting to find Jesus' corpse there, for they desired to honor Him by anointing His body with the sweet spices and ointments they had prepared. Accordingly, at the time Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were carrying their prepared spices to the tomb, it was not yet evident to them that Jesus was risen.

Verses 2-6, -----. (Matthew 28:2-6)

Upon Mary Magdalene and the other Mary arriving at the tomb, they beheld an awesome sight, for, *behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.*

Can you imagine how it must have been for those ladies? The women arrived at the tomb, saw the huge cylindrical stone rolled away from the entrance to the burial vault, saw a bright white shining angel sitting upon the stone, and saw the tough Roman guardsmen frozen with fright and unable to move.

The women did not have time to become frozen with fear as the Roman guards were, for immediately, *the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.* Yes, the angel answered the ladies' look of surprise and awe by telling them not to fear. The holy angel knew that the women were seeking Jesus who had been buried there; and so, the angel gave those ladies some astounding glad tidings when he said concerning Jesus: *He is not here: for he is risen, as*

he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. Thus, it first became evident to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary that Jesus is risen when a holy angel told them the good news and they beheld the empty place where the Lord Jesus' body had lain. The women had evidence of Jesus' resurrection by sight and by sound as they heard the glad tidings and saw the empty tomb, being informed by a holy angel of the Lord.

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As we continue to ponder our text, let us see why it is certain Jesus is risen.

Verses 1-4, -----. (Matthew 28:1-4)

Take it to heart that the angel of the Lord did NOT come to let the resurrected Jesus out of the tomb; no, the resurrected Jesus was already out of the tomb, for prior to His death He had said, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." (John 10:17-18) Indeed, Jesus is true God in addition to being true man, "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," declares Colossians 2:9. Yes, Jesus Christ is the God/man; and so, resurrecting Himself and passing through solid material was no problem for Him. My friends, it is certain Jesus is risen because He had the divine power to accomplish His resurrection and He used that power to do so.

Verses 5 & 6, -----. (Matthew 28:5-6)

Note well what the Lord's heavenly messenger said to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, for *the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.*

Thus, it is certain Jesus is risen because an angel of the Lord testified to the fact and showed that the

tomb was empty. Angels of the Lord do NOT lie since they are God's messengers, for Hebrews 1:14 states, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" The obvious answer being: yes, the holy angels serve the Lord and do His bidding.

Notice also that the angel of the Lord not only testified to the fact Jesus is risen, but also instructed the ladies to remember that Jesus had said He would rise again. For instance, we read in Matthew 17:22-23 that Jesus said to His disciples, "The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry." And, even early in Jesus' public ministry He had said, as recorded in John 2:19-21, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body." So, on more than one occasion Jesus had mentioned that He would die and rise again the third day. Consequently, it is certain Jesus is risen because Jesus cannot lie since He is in fact truth personified, the sinless only begotten Son of God.

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As we continue to ponder our text to its conclusion, let us see why we should be joyful that Jesus is risen.

Verses 5 & 6, -----. (Matthew 28:5-6)

Observe the holy angel identified *Jesus, which was crucified as the Lord* who had been laying in the sepulcher. Thus, we are reminded that JESUS IS LORD, and therefore since Jesus is true God in addition to being true man we should be joyful in His resurrection since His holy blood which He shed has definitely paid for all of our sins in full, yea, the sins of the whole world have been paid for in full! It's as we read in 1 Peter 1:18-21, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your

fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God." Oh, Jesus Christ's blood is truly precious, of infinite value, since His blood is God's blood because Jesus is true God in addition to being true man, sinless man.

We never need to doubt that our sins have truly been paid for by the holy and precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, for 1 John 1:7 informs us, "the blood of Jesus Christ [God's] Son cleanseth us from all sin." Accordingly, we should be joyful Jesus is risen since that fact is proof-positive that God the Father has accepted Jesus' perfect sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, for 1 Peter 3:18 reports, "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." And, the Apostle Peter in 1 Peter 1:3-5 says to all Christians, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." Therefore, praise be to God, for He has given us good reasons to surely be joyful that Jesus is risen.

Verse 7, -----. (Matthew 28:7)

The women had beheld the empty tomb, the very spot where Jesus' body had been laid. The ladies were assured by the angel of the Lord that Jesus is risen; then, the angel said to them: *go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.* Hence, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were instructed to bring the good news of Jesus' resurrection to His disciples, and were to inform them that they would

all see Him alive in Galilee. The angel assured them it would be so. Therefore, we too should be joyful Jesus is risen since the fact is attested to by a holy angel and by multiple witnesses who were not expecting to see Jesus alive.

Verse 8, -----. (Matthew 28:8)

What did the women do after the holy angel instructed them to tell Jesus' disciples that He is risen from the dead? *They departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.*

The ladies did not stand there and demand to see Jesus with their own eyes first, nor did they remain sad-faced and depressed; no, *They departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.* They were fearful over seeing the bright and shining messenger of God; and, they were filled with great joy over the fact that the Lord Jesus was truly risen from the dead and they would soon see Him. Accordingly, the women did not dawdle, but ran to Jesus' disciples to give them the wonderful news.

Fellow Christians, we too should be greatly joyful Jesus is risen, for we too shall soon see Him with our eyes when our bodies are resurrected by Him on the Last Day. Yes, we can and should confess as did Job of old, "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." (Job 19:25-27)

We should be joyful Jesus is risen, for because He lives we can be certain we shall also live. Jesus is our living Lord and Savior, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into

the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (Acts 4:12; John 3:16-18)

Let us daily and sincerely repent of our sins, for 1 John 1:9 assures us, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Let us cling to God's only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, with heart-deep faith, for John 3:36 declares in no uncertain terms, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." Yes, Jesus Christ is the ONLY WAY to God and heaven, for, "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." (Romans 8:34) Indeed, Jesus loves us; Jesus is our Lord; Jesus is our Savior, Jesus is our Deliverer from doom; Jesus is our Rescuer from never-ending ruin; for Jesus Christ lives, JESUS IS RISEN. Amen.

m.e.l.