

YEP, JESUS' TOMB IS STILL EMPTY

I. [Matthew 28:1-10](#) [Luke 24:13-35](#) [1 Corinthians 15:1-19](#)

A. Today is the most victorious day of the year on the Christian calendar. Last Sunday we celebrated Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, riding a donkey as people waved palm branches and shouted *Hosanna*. But the greatest entry into Jerusalem was when Jesus strolled victoriously out of His tomb. Before His ascension 40 days later, He'd appear to His disciples and countless others many times. At one point He appeared to 500 folks in a single setting. "*He is risen!*"

B. All 4 Gospels share accounts of Jesus' resurrection. The NT books emphasize the event over and over and over again. Books aplenty have been written about the evidence, both empirical and logical, surrounding this epic event. We even have some copies of Val Grieve's book, *Your Verdict on the Empty Tomb*. But while we may influence your thinking on the matter, only God alone by His Spirit can convince your heart. And this we pray He will do that even today!

C. So on this Easter Sunday I want to share three of my favorite Resurrection passages. I hope these will bolster your faith and help you savor the victory...

1) [Matthew 28:1-10](#) (ESV) kicks us off: *1 Now after the Sabbath (Saturday), toward the dawn of the first day of the week (Sunday), Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. (They had burial spices.) 2 And behold, there was a great earthquake, (Happened at the crucifixion too.) for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. (Mission accomplished!) 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. (Intrepid Seal Team Rome stood guard!) 4 And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. 5 But the angel 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 has risen, as He said. Come, see the place where He lay. (Past tense!) 7 Then go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead, and behold, He is going before you to Galilee; there you will see Him. See, I have told you." 8 So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell His disciples. 9 And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" (The most splendid of greetings ever uttered!) And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell My brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."*

2) [Luke 24:13-35](#) (ESV) is always a joy to revisit. It happens later that Sunday while two dejected followers make their sad journey home from Jerusalem: *13 That very day (Sunday) two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, 14 and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. (Jesus' arrest, trial, and bloody crucifixion.) 15 While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. 16 But their eyes were kept from recognizing Him. 17 And He said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. 18 Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered Him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" (Oh but Jesus knew!) 19 And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20 and how our chief priests and rulers*

delivered Him up to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. **21** But we had hoped that He was the one to redeem Israel. **(That's what the palm-branch-wavers thought too.)** Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. **22** Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, **23** and when they did not find His body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that He was alive. **24** Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but Him they did not see.” **25** And He said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! **26** Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?” **(“Behold the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world!” 2 Cor. 5:21!)** **27** And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. **(Cleopas & Friend receive a crash course in OT!)** **28** So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if He were going farther, **29** but they urged Him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.” So He went in to stay with them. **30** When He was at table with them, He took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. **31** And their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him. **(Oh how I pray this for all you--for open eyes and open hearts! Was it the scars that gave Him away? Was it the way He broke the bread like when He fed the thousands? Or just Divine illumination?)** And He vanished from their sight. **32** They said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked to us on the road, while He opened to us the Scriptures?” **33** And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, **34** saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” **35** Then they told what had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of the bread. **(Then Jesus appears yet again, to the whole group, save Thomas...)**

3) 1 Corinthians 15:1-19 (NIV) part of Paul's treatise on Resurrection. 58 verses in total, we'll just read the first 19. Corinth was beginning to doubt the validity of resurrection so Paul gives them good reason to believe yet again: 1 Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. **2** By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. **3** For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, **4** that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, **(He is risen!)** **5** and that He appeared to Cephas **(Peter)**, and then to the Twelve. **6** After that, He appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. **(Eye witnesses)** **7** Then He appeared to James **(His skeptical brother who thought Jesus was crazy.)**, then to all the apostles, **8** and last of all He appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. **9** For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. **10** But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them--yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. **11** Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed. **12** But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? **13** If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. **14** And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. **15** More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that He raised Christ from the dead. But He did not raise Him if in fact the dead are not raised. **16** For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. **17** And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. **(There's couple choices: A good prophet was merely**

executed, just another martyr who spilt his blood for a noble cause OR Jesus was God the Son, the Lamb without spot or blemish who shed His blood for our sins!) *18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. (Are your departed loved ones lost?) 19 If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.*

D. Some day in our local cemetery or some other beautiful burial site we'll have our bodies laid to rest or our ashes spread about. But the earth will not hold our remains forever. One Day terra firma as well as the waters deep will give up their dead. We will rise just as Jesus did. Every beautiful cemetery will be excavated with angelic shouts and trumpets heard round the globe. 'Dem bones (ours included) gonna rise again!' And this day reminds us that that Day is coming!

*** 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 54-55 (NLT) prepares us for that Day. This is our Easter Benediction:** *"Our earthly bodies are planted in the ground when we die, but they will be raised to live forever. Our bodies are buried in brokenness, but they will be raised in glory. They are buried in weakness, but they will be raised in strength. They are buried as natural human bodies, but they will be raised as spiritual bodies. For just as there are natural bodies, there are also spiritual bodies... Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled: 'Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?'"*

He is risen! He is risen indeed!

*** Close with Prayer...**