



Daily Verse and Comment

[John 20:1](#)

(1) The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

King James Version

Comparing the various biblical accounts with the traditional teaching reveals that Jesus could not have risen with the sunrise on Sunday morning. Notice [John 20:1](#): "Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, *while it was still dark*, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb" (our emphasis throughout). Jesus had already been resurrected!

If this part of the "[Easter](#) story" is incorrect, what else is wrong? Taking all the clues together, we find that the Bible indicates a Wednesday crucifixion and a late Sabbath—Saturday—resurrection, since, to fulfill the sign of His Messiahship, He had to remain in the tomb a full three days and three nights or 72 hours (for a complete explanation, see "[After Three Days](#)").

Most professing Christians believe that Christ's resurrection focuses on the fact that, having suffered crucifixion and then being buried in the tomb, He was dead, but three days later, He was alive again. As far as it goes, this is true. Jesus Himself writes to the church at Smyrna in [Revelation 2:8](#): "These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life."

However, we must be careful not to be satisfied with the basic truth that He returned to life, for if we do, it does a grave injustice to the spiritual magnificence and significance of the event.

His was no ordinary resurrection, if any resurrection could be considered so. Other resuscitations down through history have been shown to be what we would call "reviving from clinical death": The person's heart stops, his breathing halts, and in fact, he is dead, yet suddenly, he returns to life. In a

similar way, just a short time before His own death, Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11), and later, at Christ's death, "many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many" ([Matthew 27:52-53](#)). These people were all returned to physical life, and while they are astonishing miracles and must have caused untold wonder and joy among their grieving relatives, their mortality was merely postponed. They would die again.

Jesus' resurrection was something altogether different: He was raised to *everlasting* life; He would live forever! In his first sermon on the day of Pentecost, Peter informs the gathered crowd, "[God](#) [the Father] raised up [Jesus], having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it" ([Acts 2:24](#)). Paul explains what happened in a similar way in [II Corinthians 13:4](#), "For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God." Finally, the risen Christ Himself says to the apostle John, "I am He who lives, and who was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen." ([Revelation 1:18](#)). The life that the Father returned to Him was not mere physical life but the immortal spirit life of God.

Because He has passed from death to life, He makes our salvation and eternal life possible. Paul writes in [Romans 6:8-9](#), "Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more." He puts it succinctly in [Romans 5:10](#), ". . . we shall be saved by His life," that is, the life He now lives as our Savior and High Priest. [Hebrews 7:24-25](#) tells us, "But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them." In His final prayer with His disciples, Jesus begins with this thought: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him" ([John 17:1-2](#)).

In these verses, we see hints of a momentous product of Christ's resurrection that contains weighty implications for us. Paul writes in [Hebrews 1:3](#), ". . . when He had by Himself purged our sins, [Jesus] sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." Peter also mentions this in his Pentecost sermon:

"This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear" ([Acts 2:32-33](#)).

Because He was raised from the dead, having paid for our sins in His sinless body, the Father has exalted Him to sit with Him on His throne, where He has the power and the authority to "pour out" the Holy Spirit on the elect, giving them the ability to have a relationship with God and to have eternal life through a similar resurrection. Paul writes in [Philippians 3:8](#), 10-11: "Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, . . . that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, . . . if, by any means, I may attain to the [resurrection from the dead](#)."

In this way, He is "the captain of [our] salvation" ([Hebrews 2:10](#)), the *archegos*, the Forerunner and Trailblazer, who opens the way before God's people and makes it possible for them to attain what He has. And this potential is not limited to some kind of quasi-angelic existence, for the apostle John writes, ". . . when He is revealed, we shall be like Him" ([I John 3:2](#)). Paul concurs in [I Corinthians 15:49](#): "As we have borne the image of the man of dust [Adam], we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man [Jesus]." Man's potential reaches to the divine!

The resurrection of [Jesus Christ](#) is nothing to be taken lightly. We would do well to consider it deeply since it is so vital to God's purpose and to the eternal future of God's elect.

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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