

## **Easter Sunday**

### A Reflection on the Resurrection

Matt 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20:1–18

- The Empty Tomb (Mark 16:1–8; Matt 28:1–8; Luke 24:1–9; John 20:1–10)
- Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9–11; Matt 28:9–10; Luke 24:10–11; John 20:11–18)
- Chief Priests React to the Resurrection (Matt 28:11–15)
- The Road to Emmaus (Mark 16:12–13; Luke 24:13–35)
- Jesus Appears to the Disciples (Mark 16:14; Luke 24:26–48; John 20:19–23 [to the Ten only])

*Because Easter is not a biblical term (and has pagan origins), some suggest that “Resurrection Sunday” would be a better term. The word only appears once in the King James Bible, at Acts 12:4, where it is better translated as “Passover.” So significant was the event of that Sunday morning that Christians since have celebrated it as “the Lord’s Day,” and it has become our weekly sabbath, replacing the Saturday of the Old Testament. Still, for millennia the term “Easter” has come to be synonymous with resurrection, hope, and the joyful refrain “He is risen!”*

All four gospels begin their resurrection narratives with an account of the empty tomb, preserving the wonder and awe that filled the women who came to the tomb that early morning to find the stone rolled away.

And 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. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. And they said among themselves, “Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?” And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, “Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.” (Mark 16:1-6)

#### Subsequent Appearances

- Jesus and Thomas (John 20:24–29)
- Jesus Meets the Disciples in Galilee (John 21:1–14)
- Jesus and Peter: Three-fold affirmation of Peter’s love (21:15–19)
- Jesus and the Other Disciple (21:20–23)
- The Forty Day Ministry (Acts 1:1–5)
- Apostolic commission (Mark 16:15–18 [still in Jerusalem?]; Matt 28:16–20 [Galilee]; Acts 1:6–8)
- The Ascension (Mark 16:19–20; Luke 24:49–53; Acts 1:9–11)

See also Paul's list of post-resurrection appearances in 1 Corinthians 15:3–9 (Peter, the rest of the Twelve, over five hundred, James the brother of Jesus, "all the 'apostles,'" and, last of all, Paul)

Each of the resurrection narratives carries beauty and power, confirming our own testimonies that Jesus indeed rose from the dead and lives today. For my final Easter message, however, I want to share the implications of his resurrection for us. Inasmuch as Jesus has overcome death, all shall live again. Beyond this, however, is the hope of a glorious resurrection for those who accept him and are true and faithful to the covenants that they make with him. This Easter, the first since my own father's death, has brought new meaning to this message. Because He lives, so shall we . . . accordingly I close with the words of Paul that I shared at Dad's funeral:

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:14–17; see D&C 88:95–98)