

Easter Sunday

The Champion – *Down but Not Out*

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Text

Matthew 28:1-7

¹ Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb.

² And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it.

³ His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow.

⁴ And the guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men.

⁵ But the angel answered and 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 is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

⁷ And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you."

Acts 1:1-3

¹ The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

² until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen,

³ to whom He also **presented Himself alive** after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

The Champion is the REAL DEAL - the Authenticity of the Resurrection

Easter (Resurrection) is founded on a witnessed, documented, historic event:

- not a fable or the imagination of a religious community
- It is not the story of resuscitation, where someone comes back to life for a little while
- Easter is the celebration of a resurrection, of One who returned to live forevermore.

The Resurrection is based on a reliable testimony by people who are reliable witnesses. The basis for the historic fact of the Resurrection is twofold:

- **The credibility and number of post-resurrection witnesses:** as many as 500 (1Corinthians15: 3-8). These witnesses had no reason to die for what they believed to be true if it wasn't.

Quote

*Without consideration to its content, **the Bible has been proven by secular historians to be an authentic document from antiquity.** Scholars of ancient literature agree that the Bible is the most reliable, unchanged document passed down from ancient history.*

*People who deny it are either **ignorant of history** or **aware of the consequences** of accepting the historic facts that mandate we make a decision about Jesus. **If you accept the historic facts, you have to make a decision!** - Anonymous*

The Champion Shows Himself Alive - Christ Appears After His Resurrection

The Bible says that Jesus made several appearances after His death. They were to several different people over a forty-day period.

The Bible specifically says that on Easter Sunday Jesus appeared to:

- Mary Magdalene - the women that came to Jesus tomb
- Mary (the other of James), Salome and Joanna
- Peter
- The two disciples on the road to Emmaus
- He also appeared to the remainder of the 12 Disciples with Thomas absent
- Later he appeared to them with Thomas present
- There was also an appearance to seven disciples on the Sea of Galilee
- On another occasion He appeared to over five hundred people at the same time
- There is also an appearance to James
- Finally, Jesus appeared to Saul of Tarsus - the man who became the Apostle Paul.

These appearances convinced His disciples, beyond any doubt, that He had risen from the dead. This is a total of 528 people!!!!

- The main reason the disciples believed in the resurrection of Jesus is that they saw Him alive after He died
- Jesus presented Himself alive on several different occasions to His followers
- Testifying, time and time again, to the fact they were eyewitnesses of His resurrection
- This firsthand evidence of the disciples is a powerful argument for the resurrection of Christ
- The disciples knew that He had risen because they saw Him with their own eyes.

The Champion Speaks for Himself - Jesus' Testimony About His Resurrection

First, we have Jesus' own personal testimony in that He was raised from the dead.

I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades. (Revelation 1:18)

Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have. (Luke 24:39)

Conclusion

Calvary is a message of forgiveness and responsibility:

- We may understand that Jesus is Savior, but we haven't understood that the Cross means death to our old ways and our self, and that we are to follow Him daily in the light of the Cross.

At Easter, we celebrate history that has application now:

- Jesus rose from the dead, verifying His claim as Savior for our sins and the Son of God, giving us eternal life. Jesus is alive today and forevermore and promises to meet us in the same way today that He met those in His post-resurrection appearances.

Matthew 28:18-20

¹⁸ And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.