Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

He Is Risen
Scripture: John 19-20
Code: 1241

He Is Risen!

This morning we are going to concentrate our thoughts upon the death and resurrection of our Lord, To begin with, I would ask you to take your Bible and look at John 10, We are going to look at simply one theme as it weaves its way through the events of the death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, There are so many things that need to be said about this and things which we do not have the time to say, and yet we believe that God has drawn us down to one thought that can be expanded in many dimensions for our understanding and edification this morning.

John 10:17. Our Lord is speaking, and this is what He 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,"

Now our here our Lord Jesus Christ is saying that He has the power to take His own life, that is, He has the power of death, He has the power to take it back again, He has the power of resurrection. This is a monumental claim. Death victimizes everybody, and I think that. the greatest fear in the element of death is the fear of the unknown aspect of it. It isn't so much the dying that bothers people as the not knowing when or how you're going to die. In fact I was recently reading about suicide, '.here was a survey done on some suicides, and they determined that frequently people kill themselves out of the fear of death. Now that may sound strange, but it is the fear of an unknowing death, an unexpected death, a surprise death, a method or a way that they would not prefer to die so they choose to take their own life to remove that foreboding fear. But Jesus controlled death for His own good and His own end and for your good. In the case of a Christian, He controls our destiny including our death and resurrection to life with Him.

This just brings to mind one very important thought that permeates the story of Easter and it is this: No one killed Jesus, People have for centuries argued about who killed Jesus. The Jewish leaders had primarily been blamed and rightly so because they are culpable, they deserved some blame. It was their particular plot and their particular charges and their blackmailing of Pilate that forced the issue in the first place. Others would like to blame the Romans. Certainly the Romans have some blame because they, at least those in leadership in Jerusalem, set aside what was normal justice to

appease an angry crowd and they went ahead and executed an innocent man, so they have to bear some of the blame. When you get right down to it, if you want to know who's to blame for the death of Jesus, all you need to do is listen to Peter in Acts 2:,.3. Peter lays the blame ; right where it belongs, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know. He is just saying, This is Jesus, Who has been accredited to you. "Him being delivered (that is, to death) by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of Whom? God,..." Who was it ultimately responsible for the death of Jesus Christ? It wasn't the Jews, it wasn't the Romans, although they bear guilt for the actual execution and for the sin involved; it was God. It was God Who destined it, God Who determined it, God Who laid it out, God Who planned it, Jesus in an act of submissive obedience as a Son to a Father's will carried out the eternal plan* laid down His life and took it again.

People, don't you ever think for a minute that Jesus was a victim of anybody. Don't you even think that anybody could kill Him because they could not kill Him. Jesus even said to Pilate, You wouldn't have any power over Me if it weren't given to you by God. There was no way Jesus would have died had He not willed to die, On many previous occasions He had passed out of their midst when they had tried to kill Him because His hour was not yet come, not their hour? His hour, In John 19:3O it .says, "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar (sour wine), he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost (spirit)." Nobody took it; He gave it, Nobody killed Jesus; He yielded His life. He was never a victim but only a victor. In II Tim 1 it tells us that He took it again.

Not only did He give His life but He took life again, It says, Jesus Christ has abolished death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. So Christ is the Master of death, even His own dying, the Master of life, even His own resurrection.

When you look at the account of John 19 and 2O what just dominates your thought is the fact that Jesus was in control of every single thing that was going on, Never for one split second was He out of control, Never was He victimized, And He did it all for us.

Now as we look at John's record of the crucifixion and resurrection, because John's purpose is always to present the deity of Christ, we don't see nearly so much emphasis on the pain, nearly so much emphasis on the suffering as we do in emphasis upon the majesty of Jesus. The overriding deity of Jesus just supersedes any other consideration as we view these passages here.

I want to show you just three simple aspects, His dying, His burial, and His resurrection, In each of those three is absolute power to lay down His life and take in it again is made manifest, He is totally in control, Beginningly look at verse 16, Let's consider His dying. Notice how Jesus was in total control of His own death insofar as prophecy was fulfilled in every necessary element fell into place. John 19:16; ?:

"Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified, And they took Jesus, and led him away. And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: Where they crucified him* and two others with him, one either side one* and Jesus in the midst,"

Now stop there for a moment. We see here in those simple three verses fulfilled prophecy that is staggering in its accurateness. Look for example at verse 16, "Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And. they took Jesus, and led him away," It seems a small thing to say "they led him away," but it isn't a small thing, Jesus did not have to be driven, Jesus went willingly; He followed them to the cross, And rightly so because Isaiah 53:7 says He is led as a sheep to the slaughter, He was led, Not like cattle that are driven; sheep are led, Jesus was a sheep, the final sacrificial lamb for all the sins of all the ages; and He was led because that's what Isaiah said a sheep does he follows, Further, notice in John 19:16, "Then delivered he him....to be crucified...." You'll notice that this precedes immediately His mockery of a trial.

Now R?san said that when a person is tried, there is a two- day period before he can be executed, They have to wait two days in case there would be any further evidence, in case there would be anything that the gentleman or the person being executed would need to take care of in the intervening time, But in the case of Jesus they tried Him in the morning and He was on the cross before afternoon. Why the hurry? Why the rush? I'll tell you why. Because Isaiah 53:8 said that's the way it would happen. Isaiah 53:8 says, "He was taken (implied there is to His death)" "He was taken (to His death) from prison and from judgment (trial):.,," Isaiah said, He will go from prison and trial and execution, and he didn't see anything intervening; and that's exactly the way it happened, Jesus was controlling the process of Roman jurisprudence so that it even violated one of its own rules because that's what Isaiah said would happen. He went from Gabbatha, the pavement, the place of His trial, to Golgotha, the cross, the place of His death, Notice again verse 17. "And he bearing his cross..." Jesus carried at least the crosspiece of His cross if not perhaps all of it, and that fulfills a typical picture in Gen 22:6 where you have a type of Christ, A type is a prophetic picture rather than a prophetic statement, Isaac was a picture of Christ. Isaac was to be offered as a sacrifice, In Gen 22:6 it says, "And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son;,.," So Isaac went right up Mount Moriah carrying the wood that was to be used in his execution, So Jesus carried His own wood; so Jesus bore His own cross in a perfect fulfillment of that one who was a picture of Him to come. Further, look at John 19:17, "And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha:" You say, Is that significant prophetically? Yes, He went forth, What does "went forth" mean? It means , He went outside the city walls, Why did He go outside the city walls? He went outside the city walls because that was Roman law, Roman law said no one can be crucified inside the city, Roman law had that prescription, and they followed through. They had a place outside the wall, the Hill of the Skull, It was called that because its shape resembled a skull. He was taken there, which was the normal place for execution to be

crucified, Now what ia interesting is in Exodus 29:14. It says, "But the flesh of the bullock, and his skin,and his dung, shalt thou burn with fire without (outside) the camp:..." Why? "it is a sin- offering." Way back in Exodus when God instituted the offerings for sin, He said they are to be taken outside the camps. Jesus died outside the city as the perfect sin offering, He fulfilled the picture of the sin-offering of the Old Testament to the letter. The Romans didn't have anything to do with that; they had no concept of that when they made their rules, but they made them none the less because God know that sometime there was coming a Messiah Who wanted to fulfill that picture, and He did, Further in John 19:16 it says they delivered Him to be crucified. Verse 18, They crucified Him.

Beloved, that's another exact fulfillment. Ne way would that have been anticipated, The Jews did not crucify people; the Jews stoned people. There was a place in Jerusalem. Historians tell us, which is a place of execution, called Beth-??? there was an eleven-foot drop and below there was some flat area. The body of the person to be stoned was thrown off the edge, the eleven- foot edge, He would hit, be stunned; and then immediately the first witness who accused him would drop the first rock, aiming at his head. The second accusation would be brought forth and that speaker would drop the next rock, and the crowd would join in until he was dead. That was the Jewish manner of execution. But this One was to be crucified, That was a Roman way to die, and it wasn't even historically connected to Judaism. You say, But what does that fulfill?

Back in Numbers 21:6-9 tells us that when Israel was bitten by snakes, God said, You raise up a serpent on a rod and anybody who looks up and sees the serpent on the rod will be healed, Moses made a brass serpent on a rod in the midst of the camp and when anybody looked, they were healed. Jesus said in John 3:14* "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:" Jesus said, Just like Moses lifted that rod in the wilderness, that's the way I'm going to die, that's the way I'm going to be lifted up; and indeed when He died, He was lifted on a cross, totally foreign to the Jewish mind; and yet. that's exactly what the prophecy indicated, Further, Deut 21:23 said,.Cursed is anybody that hangs on a tree, Jesus bore the curse of all time,. and consequently He was hanged on a tree, fulfilling to a letter again the prophecy. There He hangs on the cross, dying from severe inflammation, swelling of the wounds, unbearable pain from torn tendons, agony by the horrible weight of His body held only by those wounds, suffocating by the rearrangement of His internal organs, with a throbbing head and a burning thirst, He hangs on the cross. He looks for all intents and purposes like the victim, but He is not the victim. He is ordering every detail of His own execution to fulfill the design, the plan that He laid down in eternity, He is the Master controller of every event.

Notice further in John 19:1?, "...they crucified him, and two others with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst," You say, Is it significant that He died with two criminals? Yes, it's significant. Isaiah 53:12 says, ",,,and he was numbered with the ' transgressors;,,." In His death, when He dies it will be with criminals; it will be with sinners that He dies; and He did. He arranged for that as well to occur. Look at John 19:23 "Then the soldiers, when they bad crucified Jesus, took his garments, and

made four parts,..." History tells us there customarily four soldiers responsible in a crucifixion, and they would divide the four things that a person would normally have, shoes, a belt, a headpiece, and an outer cloak. And they did that. They divided that. But there was also an undercoat that was seamless, and they did not want to tear it. Verse 24 says, "Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it,,,." Let's not tear this up; we'll throw the dice and see who wins it, Here were these witless, godless, callused executioners, having finished their bloody work, doing what they always did, simply going through the motions of dividing up the dead man's clothes. Little did they realize that they were responsible for fulfilling the Scripture to the very letter? Psalm 22:18 said, "They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture (cloak)." They fulfilled the prophecy to the letter, a prophecy they never even conceived of, a prophecy they never even knew existed; but Jesus made sure every detail was fulfilled. John 19:24 ends this way: Why did they do it? Why did they do this? "...that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which saith," and He quotes Psalms 22:18, "They parted My raiment among them, cloak and for My vesture they did cast lots, These things therefore the soldiers did," Why? Because the prophecy said it, and they were witlessly fulfilling God's prophecies, According to Cannon Liddon there are 332 prophecies fulfilled explicitly in Jesus Christ, 332. The probability of that happening is 1 in 84 with 100 zeroes, and yet it happened.

Look at John 19:19, "And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS." You say, What was Pilate saying there? Did he believe that? Not for a minute. Why did he do it? Because he wanted to mock the Jews; it was blatant sarcasm. Look, you Jews; here's your King, JESUS OF NAZARETH. Nazareth was a despised place. THE KING OF THE JEWS. That's the kind of King you deserve, a bloody one hanging on a cross with a couple of common criminals. You see, Pilate had been cornered and devastated by the blackmail of the Jews, and he was lashing out at them in a desperation, an attempt to gain some sense of sanity and equilibrium. So he put that sarcastic sign up there, It was supposed to be, you see, the crime on that sign; but there was no crime. So he just used it to mock the Jews, and they were furious.

Verse 2O says,"This title then read many of the Jews; for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin." Anybody could read it. Verse 21. "Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews, (22) Pilate answered, What I have written I have written," I'm not changing it for anything"! That was a blow on the Jews from Pilate. Stupid Pilate. Coward Pilate. In a panic he attempted to gain some revenge, slammed the sign on that cross that was sarcasm in his mind but for all ages it was the truth He made a statement of the majesty of the Son of God that the world has never been able to forget or ignore. You see how Jesus even controlled what was on the sign above His head? He took the stupidity of a man like Pilate and made him speak the truth, Further, look at verse 25. Here you see the majesty of Jesus and the absolute control that He exerts at this time, hanging there, bleeding as He is, hanging there suffering agony, the agony of sin. The death was the end of the suffering; His suffering was up 'till His death, Now, while hanging alive* He

is bearing sin. This is the anguish. In the midst of it all, , look what He does in verse 25, "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother,..." That's Mary. Mary by now knows what Simeon meant when 3O years before Simeon had said her heart would be pierced through with a sword, and it is being as she watches her beloved Son and Savior. "and his mother's sister..." That likely is Salome, who is the mother of James and John, "Mary the wife of Cleophas,,,." Perhaps her sister-in-law "and Mary Magdalene," Do you notice that everybody named there has the same name, Mary? Do you know what Mary means? It means bitterness. Bitterness, It was bitter for all of them, There was one other there. (26) "When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved,.,." Who is that? John, All those great big virile he-man types among the disciples long gone, scattered, Zechariah said, When the Shepherd is smitten, the sheep will be scattered; and they were. They all forsook Him and fled except for one, gentle John and four women. Four women and John had more courage than all the other men. They're there, He's not really all alone, He doesn't ask them for sympathy, He doesn't soy, Could you do this for me or do that for me? Do you see how I am suffering? Can you see My pain? Notice what happens in verse 26, "When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!"

And I heard on the radio Friday as I was driving, I was listening to a Good Friday service and somebody was preaching on that text. They said that Jesus was saying, Mother' look at Me! See what I'm suffering. See My pain, That isn't what He was saying at all, The longer I listened the more angry I became. If you're going to preach, at least find out what it means. He is not calling attention to Himself, He is saying, Mother, look at John. He's your son now. Then in verse 27 He said to John, John, look at your Mother. Do you see what He was doing? John was brokenhearted; Mary was brokenhearted; so He gave them to each other, He isn't asking them to look at Him. He is saying, John, take care of My Mother. Mother, take care of John, These two broken-hearted people apparently were the most anguished of all and so He gave them to each other. I tell you, when I read things like that I know something of the majesty of Jesus, He was so in control, He was detached in the sense from His own pain so much so that He could take care of the needs of those He loved, Don't forget that on the cross He also wrapped His arms around the thief who was there and took him to Paradise. Don't you think for a minute He was a victim; He controlled everything everything about His death.

Notice verse 28, "After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith* I thirst." Oh, this is so beautiful, He's right on schedule, It says Jesus knew everything was done. Every prophecy had been fulfilled, every detail to the letter, everything was in ' place, His omniscience had provided all that understanding. He knew the plan, the plan was done, the plan was fulfilled, Satan was defeated, sin was put out of the way, death was conquered, the price of God's justice was compensated, everything was finished? it was done. Only one small prophecy remained, Psalm 69:21 said about Him in His death ",.,in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." So at the end of verse 28 He said, "I thirst." He reaches back and grabs the one unfulfilled prophecy. In

order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, He said, "I thirst." (29) "Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop,,.," That's a long reed, "and put it to his mouth." (3O) "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost (spirit).

You say, How did Jesus die? Did He bleed to death? No, because later when they pierced His side the blood was still there. How did He die? I'll tell you how He died. He died because He willed Himself to die, He yielded His life, He gave it up. What He said at the end was not I'm finished. No. He said, It is finished. He bowed His head. No slump to the side, The Greek seems to indicate that He actually pushed His head forward and willfully yielded His spirit. He was in control of death, The nails didn't kill Him, The blood loss didn't kill Him. The exposure didn't kill Him. He gave His life, When they came by to check and make sure about it, to break His legs, they didn't break His legs because what? He was already dead, Why was He already dead? Why did He die so soon? Because He wanted the world to know He wasn't a victim. Do you know something? Do you know that Jesus died amazingly soon for somebody crucified? Sooner than the thieves, and undoubtedly He was stronger than they with that sinless body that He had had up until this point, He must have been a man among men, and yet He died before the two thieves because they broke their legs, You say, Why did He die so soon? He died so soon because He was done bearing sin and He willed Himself dead, He had power over death, He died about three o'clock on the same He was crucified in the morning, and some people lived two to three days and more when they were crucified, Jesus commanded death when He wanted it.

Now notice something else. Verse 31, "The Jews therefore because it was the preparation,.." That is, the day before the Sabbath, "that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was a high day,)..." This was a special, superspecial Sabbath, it was Passover Sabbath. "besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, the brake not his legs:"

Now watch, The Jews had a very, very great concern. According to Deut 21:22-23 they couldn't leave that dead body exposed on the Sabbath, so they wanted Pilate to get that body off the cross before six o'clock in the evening, before the sun went down because they didn't want to defile the Sabbath. Can you believe it! The hypocrisy of wanting to maintain the Sabbath while you've just killed the Lord of the Sabbath. But that's what they were doing. Pilate, would you send your soldiers to break-- and the word for break in the Greek means to shiver to pieces. They took a large mallet, sort of like a sledge hammer, and they devastated the legs until they were crushed and limp and the body would then slouch and suffocate its internal organs, and death would come immediately.

Get them dead so we can get them down before we desecrate the Sabbath, Incredible! So the soldiers did do:hat and Pilate said, All right, They came to Jesus, and He was already dead, Why?

He wanted the world to know for all time that nobody took His life; He gave it. And they didn't break His legs, but just to be sure (verse 34) "But one the of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side,..." Jammed a sword into His side, "and forthwith came there out blood and water." Serum and blood, You say, What does that mean? There are so many medical analyses of that I'm not even going to try to get into it because I don't know anything about it. I've read every possible medical analysis and find so much divergence, Let me just give you what I feel might have happened. Very simply. In the first place Pilate marveled that He was dead already according to Mark 15:44, Pilate was absolutely amazed that He died so soon. He had fulfilled the prophecy in keeping all His bones and not one of them broken because Psalms 34:2O said "He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken," The Psalmist predicted it, and that's exactly what happened. He was already dead. How did He die? The releasing of blood and water could be several things, It's simply the fact that blood separates after it sits for a while into a clear element and a dark element. It may have been that that just flowed out. Others say that around the heart there is a pericardium, a sack around the heart, Between the pericardium and the heart muscle there exists a fluid; and when the side was pierced, those two fluids of blood and serum mixed in flowing out, There are other explanations that have been given. You say, What would the Bible tell us? The only thing the Scripture even begins to say is in Psalms 69. Psalms 69 is describing the crucifixion because it also talks about His thirst and His vinegar in verse 21, In verse 2O it says this, "Reproach (or sin) hath broken My heart."

When anybody asks me how Jesus died, I quickly say in the simplest terms, He died of a broken heart, If you want to get medical about it, maybe His heart ruptured. Stewart ??? of Grand Rapids, Michigan, said it is extremely rare, well nigh impossible for a normal heart to rupture, But he went on to hypothesize that perhaps Christ's suffering as no man has ever suffered in history, experienced a ruptured heart.

Somehow the weight of sin on the human body. Do you know something? The weight of your own sin on your body is going to kill you some day. Did you know that? It is appointed unto man once to what? die, We're all going to do it unless the Lord raptures. The wages of sin is death. It's built in. The spiritual reality of sin has physical consequence. Right? It just might be that the spiritual weight of all the sins of all the people of all the ages resting on one human body was too much and physically His heart When couldn't handle it. .That's a possibility. But He was dead, He willed His heart to cease, it ceased. You know, in a sense He died physically that way. He died with His Spirit in a second way left His body, And thirdly, He died in a spiritual way when He was separated from God and said, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me? All that simultaneously occurring, and yet He was in control of everything. Even after He was dead, He made sure they didn't break His legs because John 19:35, "And he that saw it bare record (witness), and his record (witness) is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe, For these things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled, (Psalms 34:2O) A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another Scripture saith (Zech 12:10) They shall. look on him whom they pierced." Why didn't they break His legs? Why didn't they pierce Him? Because that's what the prophets said they would do, and He

made sure they did it.

Second, Look at His burial. If you think it's amazing that He controlled His death, and it is, look at His burial in verse 38. "And after this Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews."

Incidentally, Joseph of Arimathea, we know from the other gospels, was a very wealthy man, was a member of the Sanhedrin, so he voted on the execution of Christ; very likely he voted "no," was a believer but a secret believer, Now all of a sudden be goes to Pilate to take the body of Jesus, "Pilate. gave him leave, He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus." Now Jesus is already dead, Three o'clock in the afternoon. Gotta get Him in the ground and get Him in the ground quickly before the Sabbath, The Jews are worried about that, but let me tell you something else. God wants Him in the ground before the Sabbath because He has to be .in the grave part of Friday so that He can be dead for Friday* Saturday and Sunday. Beloved, if you're worried about three days and three nights, don't worry about it. That's a Hebraism that refers to any given part of a day. So if He was dead any part of Friday, Saturday, Sunday, that constitutes three days and three nights in the Hebrew terminology. So He had to be in that grave before Saturday began, and the Hebrew day begins in the evening when the sun goes down. So they were in a hurry to get Him there because they didn't want to desecrate the Sabbath, and He was in a hurry to get Himself there because that's what He said He would do.

You know, He picks the most unlikely guy, a secret disciple who hasn't said peep about what he believes. Joseph of Arimathea has been stealing around in the background. All of a sudden he comes to the front and it tells us in the gospel of Mark chapter 15 verse 43 that Joseph of Arimathea went boldly to Pilate, What happened to change him? He would have bean immediately excommunicated out of the Sanhedrin he would have lost his reputation, riches, and so forth, He was a wise man apparently, a devout man, a counselor, a righteous man in Jewish terms. Now he is going to lose everything that he has in his society and claim to identify with Christ, and he does it boldly. Why? Why this man?

I'll tell you why, Because he had a tomb right near where the cross was and they could get Him in there in a hurry so they wouldn't have to miss the time limit. He was rich, and he had to be a rich man. Isaiah 53:9 said He would make His grave with the rich. He had to be a rich man. He had to have a grave right in the right spot to get Him there quickly. And he. did, I believe he had to have a grave that had never been occupied so there wouldn't be any confusion later on. Perfect man, secret disciple. Jesus, while He was dead, worked on Him and got him to do it.

Verse 39, Here comes another sneaky one. "And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night,,.." He was also a little clandestine about the whole thing, but now he comes to the fore and he is bringing "a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight." That's about

72 pounds. Myrrh is a liquid; aloes are a powder. They were aromatic spices used to sprinkle the body, and that many pounds would be used only. in the burial of a king. Isn't that beautiful? Here came Nicodemus, who came only by night before this, identifying with Christ. How come these two secret people come to the front? Oh, this is important, Nicodemus was the teacher in Israel, and here is the teacher in Israel saying to all people for all time, This is the Christ. "Then took they the body of Jesus, (verse 4O) and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. (41) Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulcher, wherein was never man yet laid. (42) There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews, preparation day;..."

They get Him in on the preparation, the day before the Sabbath, Friday. "for the sepulcher was nigh at hand (close by)," See, all the details of His own burial. Listen to me, once you die you won't have anything to do with it, Jesus controlled every detail, Yes, His death, His burial prove to me that He is right when He said, I have power to lay it down and take it again.

Let's go to that third, His resurrection, John 2O? Watch, "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulcher, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulcher."

Dear Mary Magdalene is going to come down and finish anointing Him because they had to get Him in in a hurry. She sees that the thing is open, "Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, (that's John) and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid him." Somebody stole the Lord! Great faith, Great faith, "Peter therefore went forth" Peter spent a lot of time doing that, just surging. "and that other disciple, and came to the sepulcher. So they ran both together:,,." They just took off and ran to that place, "and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulcher. John was very gentle, John was very timorous, John got there, and verse 5, "And he stooping down, and looking in,..," A little concerned. "saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter.,." Thundering about 15 feet to the rear, "following him, and went into the sepulcher,.,." Just blew right by John and went on in, "and seeth the linen clothes lie," The linen clothes lying there. "And the napkin that was about His head, not lying. with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself." Here are the clothes, lying there, just in the form they were left. Here's the napkin folded gently and sitting right at the head. You say, What does that mean? If somebody had stolen the body, they wouldn't have bothered to hang around the tomb long enough to 't have bothered to fold them all nicely unwrap it; and if they had, they certainly wouldn't, and lay them in the proper place, Jesus just came right out of them. The fact that they were still there is proof that He rose from the dead. You see, He even controlled that, the linen, controlling His own resurrection, every detail of it, "Then went in also that other disciple," verse 8, "Which came first to the sepulcher, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead." They hadn't been studying the Bible They didn't expect this, But watch. It says at the end of verse 8, and

this is the key, Then went also that other disciple, John, and believed." Came to believe. He didn't believe before. He went in, and he came to believe. What made him believe? Walking into an empty tomb, what would he believe? He believed in the resurrection. That's obvious. Verse 9.

What made him believe in the resurrection? What did he see that made him believe? He saw only two things, What were they? The linen wrappings and the napkin, and they were in such a form as to prove to him that Jesus had risen from the dead.

Beloved, that's the message of Easter, He took His life back again. He bad the power to do that just as He had the power to give it, Do you believe? Jesus said at the home of Mary and Martha, I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me though he were dead yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Then he said to them, Believest thou this? Do you believe He arose from the dead? Do you believe He can give you eternal life? Do you believe that He could cause you to rise? Do you believe that He can conquer death for you? He did it, and He said, Because I live, you can live also, You say, how do I appropriate it, John?

Paul said this, If thou shalt confess Jesus as Lord with thy mouth and believe in thine heart that God has raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be what? saved, For with the heart man believeth, and with the mouth confession is made of the salvation, Do you believe? Do you believe God raised Him from the dead? Then confess Jesus as Lord, and you will be saved. Then Easter won't be just a day; it'll be a way of life.

Father, thank You for our fellowship this morning. Thank You that Christ is alive, Thank You that He has changed and transformed our life and destiny. Thank You for the pictures we've seen in the Scripture this morning that have opened up to our understanding the reality of His power over death and life and that He Who commanded death for Himself and commanded life for Himself has promised to command death and life for us as well, So death, as the choir sang earlier, loses its sting because of the victory Christ provides for us, Thank You for the reality of that and for our blessed Christ to Whom we dedicate everything we've done today, We pray in His name. Amen.

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