

Resurrection Day  
Pastor Sam Richards  
April 4, 2021 – Easter Sunday

Thanks be to God for the privilege to look into the things of God in order to expound the things of God to the people of God! Easter is a topical event, but the preparation for it is expository. I have the reality of the resurrection as my theme and four points to drive that theme forward. Here they are:

- The fulfillment of prophecy establishes the truth of Scripture.
- The resurrection is God's vindication of Jesus' sacrifice and work.
- Easter demonstrates the power and reality of God. And
- Jesus' resurrection proves that there is life after death.

2 Peter 1:16-21 addresses the fulfillment of prophecy:

**16 For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. 17 For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such a [a]declaration as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory: "This is [b]My beloved Son with whom I am well pleased"— 18 and we ourselves heard this [c]declaration made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. 19 And so we have the prophetic word *made* more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. 20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture [d]becomes a *matter* of [e]someone's own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.**

Footnotes

- a. 2 Peter 1:17 Lit *voice*
- b. 2 Peter 1:17 Or *My Son, My beloved, with*
- c. 2 Peter 1:18 Lit *voice*
- d. 2 Peter 1:20 Or *comes from someone's*
- e. 2 Peter 1:20 Or *the prophet's own*

Peter is drawing on the experiences he had with James and John on the mountain of transfiguration—where they witnessed **His majesty/glory**. One would think that having witnessed His glory once they would have been prepared to recognize the crucified and risen Lord when he appeared in the upper room; but God would remove that veil later, in his own way. (See Matt. 17:1-14 and parallels) **We were eye-witnesses of His majesty. . . . And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you would do well to pay more attention! . . . knowing this first of all, no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation** rather it is God-breathed. This is

in line with Luke 24:26-27; but again, the two disciples did not recognize the risen Lord initially (only **in the breaking of the bread**, v.30).

**26 Was it not necessary for the [a]Christ to suffer these things and to come into His glory?" 27 Then beginning [b]with Moses and [c]with all the Prophets, He explained to them the things *written* about Himself in all the Scriptures.**

**To suffer these things** (things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death and crucified him.) (See Luke 24:19-20) means to fulfill these things that were prophesied concerning himself. Jesus' death and resurrection was prophesied (**things written about him**), they came to pass, therefore the Scripture is true, reliable! Peter, James and John were witnesses of all that, too.

There is another crowd of witnesses we need to acknowledge: the women described in Matthew 28. They are the "first witnesses" to the resurrection! They met the risen Lord, conversed with him. **And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshipped him**(v. 9) They had proof positive that Jesus had arisen and was alive fulfilling the prophecy that he would, **on the third day**, arise. The glorified body of Jesus had properties peculiar to itself: it had the capacity to vanish (Luke 24) and to suddenly appear **in the room** (v.36) in spite of being **of flesh and bones as you see that I have** (v.39). So, the resurrected body was "more than physical," but certainly not "less than physical" despite the ability to locate and relocate at will. It was supernatural in nature, or, perhaps it was just **glorified**, as in taken to the highest level of reality.

My second point, the vindication of Jesus by the resurrection, features itself in several places, notably Romans 1:3-4: **concerning the Son, who was descended from David, according to the flesh, and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord . . .** And the meaning of his sacrifice was sealed: **even as the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many** (Matt. 20:28) **He himself bore our sins in his body that we might die to sin and live to righteousness, by his wounds you have been healed.** (1 Peter 2:24) . . . **whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.** (i.e. his atoning work, Romans 3:25) **He is the propitiation for our sins.** (1 John 2:2) By raising him up and glorifying him, God says "Amen" to his work and sacrifice.

We come now, thirdly, to the proof of "life after death," established in Jesus' resurrection. He is alive as shown by his many appearances after rising from the dead. *This the women saw initially and testified to: **the physical reality and actual presence of Jesus bodily.** And they came up and took hold of his*

**feet and worshipped him**(Matt. 28:v. 9). Even in John, where Mary Magdalene, appearing on her own(?) is singled out for special treatment for interaction with the risen Lord, we understand that she was not actually alone—there were others with her. **Because I live, you also will live.** (John 14:19) **For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.** (Romans 6:23) **But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. . . For as in Adam all died, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.** (1 Cor. 15:20, 21) And Mary did not actually recognize the Lord initially, in John's account—this matter is bypassed by Matthew entirely.

Our last point is the “demonstration of power and might” displayed in the resurrection by the God who is there, who makes all the difference between life and death—even to reverse the latter by bringing the former, life, out of death. **And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.** (1 Cor. 6:14)

**. . . and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might 20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.** (Ephesians 1:19-21, ESV)

Now the reality of God is demonstrated in the reality of the resurrection. We have the testimony of witnesses as to that reality, and it is described as sensible to the senses—touchable, holdable, visible, in those ways “real.” So Easter morning is the fulfillment of prophecy; it is the vindication of Jesus work and sacrifice on the cross (dying for sins); it is proof positive that there is life beyond the grave; and it is all of this in demonstration of the power, majesty and might of the everlasting God. These things are true according the revelation of Scripture and the experiences of those who were there to know it in real time.

**Amen.**