

## Our Risen Lord

1 Corinthians 15:3-4, *"I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."*

Christ died! There came a day when the sun went down behind a blood-splotched wooden Cross on a hill that was shaped like a skull. All, remembering how the shadow of the Cross caused a black night over the world, said, *"He is dead!"* Pontius Pilate, who had his chance to befriend Him, but spurned the friendship of the King of kings, choosing the friendship of Caesar, said, *"He is dead!"* The smug elders, whose hypocrisy He had condemned, said with glee, *"He is dead!"* The centurion, who supervised the bloody butchery, and had said, *"Truly this was the Son of God,"* said, *"He is dead!"* The Sadducees, ignoring the supernatural, with callous hearts, said, *"He is dead!"* The crowds who passed by and reviled Him, wagging their heads, jestingly said, *"He is dead!"* The Pharisees, with gloating gladness, said, *"He is dead!"* Mary, standing by the Cross, the prophetic sword of Simeon piercing her heart, realizing only part of what was happening, through weeping eyes, said, *"He is dead!"* Caiaphas, whose envy had made him blind, said, *"He is dead!"* All the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things that were done, smote their breast and returned saying, *"He is dead!"* All said, *"He is dead!"* The disciples, seeing the fire of life fade from the eyes that had looked with such tender compassion upon the multitudes, disappointed in themselves, disappointed in Him, as the sun went down behind Golgotha's hill, said, *"He is dead!"*

Christ's royal robe was now a shroud; His only scepter was a reed; His only crown was a crown of thorns; His only throne was a blood-splotched Cross; His only emblems of royal insignia were marks of scourge upon His naked back; His only glory was shame; His only speech was a lonely cry; His only companions were two thieves; His only reign was six hours of torture on a bloody cross; His only king's cup was a sponge filled with vinegar and gall; His only authority was the failure to come down from the Cross. Jesus died!

He was buried. John 19:38-41 reads, *"And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid."* Luke 23:55 add these words, *"The women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid."*

Christ's throne had disappeared into a tomb. His Kingdom had shrunk to the narrow dimensions of a grave. Dark, bleak, and comfortless was the night. There was no balm in it for torn spirits of Jesus' followers. There was no star of hope for their broken hearts.

John 19:38-42 tells what happened, “*And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.*”

The grave, whose only flowers are the faded garlands on coffin lids, had trampled into lifeless dust the Rose of Sharon. The grave, whose only music is the sob of broken hearts, had padlocked the mouth that so comfortingly had spoken to the sad. The grave, whose only light is the darkness of the tomb, had quenched the Light of the world. The grave, whose only fountains are the falling tears of the world, had closed the eyes of Him who wept over Jerusalem. Jesus was dead – and buried!

Out yonder, somewhere, old Bartimaeus' eyes went blind again – this time blinded with tears, as he heard that the One who gave him sight lay blind within the tomb. A dark shadow settled over the home of Zacchaeus, as he thought of Jesus in the tomb. In the city of Nain, a widow's heart was heavy as she thought of Jesus, who gave her son life, now in the tomb. And, over yonder, a certain man whom Jesus found at the pool of Bethesda was weighted down with sorrow heavier than the helplessness of the thirty-eight years that had weighted him down, as he thought of Jesus in the tomb. Sad were many – the deaf, the dumb, the leper – were all sad. Mary, Martha and Lazarus were filled with gloom, as they thought of Jesus in the tomb. And, who knows, but away out yonder in the coasts of the Gadarenes, the man who had been demoniac, could not be comforted now, as he thought of Jesus who had brought him such comfort, now in the tomb. Jesus died and was buried!

Sing with me for my next point –

Up from the grave He arose,  
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes,  
He arose a Victor from the dark domain,  
And He lives forever, with His saints to reign.  
He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!

Low in the grave He lay, Jesus my Savior,  
Waiting the coming day, Jesus my Lord!  
He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!

Vainly they watch His bed, Jesus my Savior;  
Vainly they seal the dead, Jesus my Lord!  
Up from the grave He arose,  
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes,  
He arose a Victor from the dark domain,  
And He lives forever, with His saints to reign.  
He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!

Death cannot keep its Prey, Jesus my Savior;  
He tore the bars away, Jesus my Lord!

Up from the grave He arose,  
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes,  
He arose a Victor from the dark domain,  
And He lives forever, with His saints to reign.  
He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!

*He rose!*

The third day arrived – the first day of the Week, heaven gathered around that tomb. Angels were watching the shining spears and polished shields of the Roman soldiers guard the tomb. For three days Christ's body was held prisoner in that tomb. I'm sure angels were wondering, " *How long would human power exalt itself? How long would man triumph? How long would the powers of darkness hold their jubilee?*" All they needed was God's timing and, as soon as permission was given, the angelic host of heaven were eager to frighten away the guards and roll away the stone. Can you see the angels coming down the steps of glory and hastening to that sepulcher? When the guards saw them they began to shake and became as dead men. Jesus Christ girded Himself with all the power of divinity, tears the crown from the head of death, rose triumphantly from the grave! What a moment that must have been. Hell was preparing for a jubilee. The powers of earth were preparing for a triumph – but the grave could not hold its prey – Jesus Christ proved Himself to be the Son of God.

In Jesus Christ's resurrection rests the whole alphabet of human hope. The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:14, " *If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain*" Verse 17 says, *If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.*"

Jesus Christ was crucified, died, and was buried – to pay the penalty for our sin – and He rose again, to give us New Life in Him!