

Lesson 108 – CHRIST IS RISEN Matthew 27:55—28:6

(Matt. 27:54) – Here, Matthew records a remarkable confession made by a Roman *“CENTURION, AND THEY THAT WERE WITH HIM, WATCHING JESUS.”* These were tormentors of Christ. When they *“SAW THE EARTHQUAKE, AND THOSE THINGS THAT WERE DONE”* [all the miraculous events surrounding the crucifixion], *“THEY FEARED GREATLY, SAYING, TRULY THIS WAS THE SON OF GOD.”* Was this a confession of faith brought on by the power of the Holy Spirit through Godly fear, or was it simply an acknowledgement of Jesus because of the miracles? It was the latter because we know that the gift of saving faith is given to God’s elect by the power of the Spirit in the preaching of the Gospel of God’s grace in Christ, not by seeing miracles.

(Matt. 27:55-56) – These women were true disciples of Christ, and they showed their God-given love for Him and their God-given courage, even *“BEHOLDING AFAR OFF.”* Peter and the rest of His disciples, except John (John 19:26-27), were conspicuously absent. *“AMONG WHICH WAS MARY MAGDALENE”* out of whom Christ had cast out seven devils; and who having received much from Him, loved much, which she showed by her zealous and constant attachment to Him. *“MARY THE MOTHER OF JAMES AND JOSES,”* the same with the wife of Cleophas, and sister to Mary, the mother of Jesus. *“THE MOTHER OF ZEBEDEE’S CHILDREN,”* that is, of James and John; her name was Salome (Mark 15:40) .

(Matt. 27:57-61) – Here, we are introduced to *“A RICH MAN OF ARIMATHAEA, NAMED JOSEPH.”* We know very little about him. In fact, he is not mentioned before this incident, and he is not mentioned after it. He was a man of considerable wealth and a disciple of Christ. *“HE WENT TO PILATE, AND BEGGED THE BODY OF JESUS,”* and Pilate commanded to give him the body of Jesus. He took the Savior’s dead body down from the cross, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and buried it in his own new tomb. He then had a *“GREAT STONE”* rolled to seal the entrance to the tomb. *“MARY MAGDALENE, AND THE OTHER MARY”* sat by the tomb.

(Matt. 27:62-64) – The unbelieving Jewish religionists were so much against Jesus and His message of truth that as they remembered that He said, *“AFTER THREE DAYS I WILL RISE AGAIN,”* they anticipated His disciples would try to steal His body and tell people He had risen from the dead. They asked Pilate to post guards at the sepulchre to make sure this did not happen and the last deception would be worse than the first. Pilate told them to set guards at the watch to make sure none of His disciples do this. They did so and sealed the stone to prevent it. Obviously, they did not know and believe that Jesus of Nazareth was (and is) the true Messiah, the Savior of His people, and God

manifest in the flesh. Death and the grave could not hold Him (Psa. 16:10; Acts 2:27; 13:35).

(Matt. 28:1-4) – The two women who had sat at the tomb had left and returned. *“AND, BEHOLD, THERE WAS A GREAT EARTHQUAKE”* – As the death of our Lord was attended with physical signs of God’s power and victory, so was His resurrection from the grave. *“FOR THE ANGEL OF THE LORD DESCENDED FROM HEAVEN, AND CAME AND ROLLED BACK THE STONE FROM THE DOOR, AND SAT UPON IT.”* God was pleased to make His Son’s resurrection a glorious thing, accompanied by signs and wonders. Therefore, when His Son arose as the Conqueror of death, hell, and the grave, He shook the earth and sent an angel wrapped in glory to the scene. The angel’s *“COUNTEenance WAS LIKE LIGHTNING, AND HIS RAIMENT WHITE AS SNOW:”* – This messenger from God represented power and righteousness, both of which brought Christ out from death and the grave. He had finished His work and accomplished that which God requires in saving His people from their sins. Therefore, death and the grave could not hold Him captive (1 Cor. 15:55-57). He must live because righteousness demands life. This holds true for His people given to Him by the Father before the world began. *“AND FOR FEAR OF HIM THE KEEPERS DID SHAKE, AND BECAME AS DEAD MEN”* – No power on earth could have held Him in the tomb.

(Matt. 28:5-6) – The angel said to the women, *“FEAR NOT YE: FOR I KNOW THAT YE SEEK JESUS, WHICH WAS CRUCIFIED. HE IS NOT HERE: FOR HE IS RISEN.”* Having satisfied completely the just wrath of God against the sins of His people, and having established the perfect righteousness whereby God has justified them, Christ arose from the grave. Paul wrote that Christ *“was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification”* (Rom. 4:25). *“AS HE SAID”* – Our Lord Himself declared His resurrection to be the foundation and cornerstone of our hope. He said to Martha in *John 11:25, “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:”* He said *John 14:19, “Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me: because I live, ye shall live also.”* When John wrote of Christ’s teaching the disciples of His work of redemption and the work of the Holy Spirit in the new birth in *John 16:8-11*, He taught of the Spirit convincing God’s elect in the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He taught that the Spirit would convince us *“of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see me no more”* (John 16:10). This was a direct reference to His resurrection and ascension to the Father as the Redeemer and Intercessor of His people.

The angel then said to the women, *“COME, SEE THE PLACE WHERE THE LORD LAY.”* There was much evidence of our Lord’s resurrection, and the empty tomb was one of many. This was no hoax or myth. It was the reality and truth of everlasting life from Christ for all His people for whom He died and arose and for whom He now lives.