**A Glorious Day!**

**Text:** Matthew 28:1-8

**Introduction:** I have never seen the need to participate in the commercialization of this day. In particular, I feel no need to join in the Roman Catholic misunderstanding and misuse of the celebration of the Resurrection. Let’s begin by reading from Matthew 28:1-8. After we have read this passage, we will pray and ask God to bless His Word to our hearts and minds.

Although we don’t join in such silly and pagan things as Easter egg hunts, this is nevertheless a glorious day, and a day worthy of celebration. Atonement for the sin man was accomplished that morning Christ Jesus rose from the dead. You and I needed that Atonement! We could never have saved ourselves from the just penalty of our sins through our own ingenuity or morality or our careful wrought works of righteousness. No sinner in ancient Israel ever had their sin atoned for by any means other that provided by God. The sinless and innocent had to die a substitutionary death on behalf of the corrupt and the guilty.

The crucifixion was a dark and terrible moment. The whole earth turned dark for three hours. God hid His face from His own Son. But the Resurrection was a glorious day! The Saviour arose and the power of death and hell were broken. No longer is the believer separated from His Creator! No longer is under the authority of sin and Satan!

**The Concern at the Sepulchre (1).**

We are going to begin by considering the concern at the sepulchre. What concern confronts us? Even in His death, some were there give. Even though their hearts were broken, their minds were confused, and the expectations dashed, they came to the tomb of Jesus with the intention of giving.

Although we only read Matthew, I think you understand that to get the full picture, all four of the Gospels need to be consulted. But for time’s sake, we are only going to read Matthew. Here we are informed that certain ladies went very early, before dawn, to see the sepulchre. Mark’s Gospel tells us these ladies came so very early to the sepulchre with the purpose of bringing sweet spices and anointments to wrap around the body of Christ. Those ointments were precious and valuable. They did this though they had doubtless seen that Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus had already put one hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes within the linen used to wrap up the Lord.

Isn’t there a needful lesson gleaned by considering their purpose? We can infer that though they had seen others give liberally, they did not slacken their own generosity to the Lord. Yes, I know their gift was not needed. The living Saviour required no death ointments. But God honors though who trust Him enough to generously give back to Him of that which He has allowed us gain. Do you remember the gift of Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus? She was criticized for her gift of precious ointment. But Christ rebuked her critics and declared in Matthew 26:10-13, “Why trouble ye the woman? For she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did for my burial. Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.”

That is the same principle taught in Luke 16:10-12. How patently unscriptural to try and use grace as a means to lessen our obligation with respect to giving! While recognizing their error in thinking the Son of God needed death ministrations, we ought to follow their example and do something for our Saviour that doesn’t make us look cheap. Isn’t that how most professing believers worship their Lord? They give no more than they can comfortably afford.

Our worship of the Saviour ought to include sacrificial gifts. We should be careful not to let our service be dictated by our own notions or our culture’s expectations. It should be rendered according to the Word of God. God did not give what He could afford. He gave the most expensive Gift ever given! He gave a gift we could never have purchased on our own! What is your concern on this glorious day?

**The Commotion at the Sepulchre (2-4).**

Next, I would like us to examine the commotion at the sepulchre. An earthquake had occurred before those ladies came early in the morning to the tomb. The Greek grammar used here in Matthew may even indicate it took place sometime after the resurrection because it is associated more with the arrival of the angel than with the resurrection of Christ.

When earthquakes occur, many wonder if they are the direct judgment of God or a natural phenomenon? The fact is, unless the Word of God reveals it to be so, we cannot possibly know which if any earthquakes, or other kinds of natural disasters for that matter, are directly from the hand of God. All such speculating is a waste of time and may even approach to taking the Lord’s name in vain. Just because God allowed some phenomenon like an earthquake to occur, does not mean God is responsible for it.

The Bible says "the angel of the Lord" descended from heaven, came and rolled back the stone from the door. When King Jesus arose from the dead, His resurrection was heralded by this angel of the Lord which descended from heaven. While not being dogmatic, whenever we read in any part of the Scriptures of "the angel of the Lord," we should understand it to be Christ Jesus.

Further support for this view is the description of His countenance being like lightning, and His raiment white as snow. This agrees with the description of the risen Saviour in Revelation 1:12-16. It also is similar to the description of the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7:9.

Some feel that only Old Testament references to the angel of the Lord should be applied to Christ, but that is inconsistent. There is certainly no reason preventing us from presuming this angel of the Lord is a theophany of Christ the same as in all Old Testament passages.

Our text says the angel of the Lord descended from heaven came and rolled back the stone from the door, and then sat upon it. Ancient tombs were often sealed with a very heavy round stone door. The stone sat in a grooved channel. To open the door, pry bars would be used as levers to roll the stone out of its groove. This would usually take several men to accomplish. It was not a challenge to the angel of the Lord, however.

Do not think it was needful on the part of the angel of Lord to open the tomb so Christ could get out. Neither Christ Jesus, not the angel (if it was not Christ) needed the tomb door opened to go in or out. The Lord's glorified, resurrected body is not inhibited or in any way hindered by physical obstacles (John 20:19).

As we see from our text, the door of the tomb was opened, and the Roman guards were incapacitated by their fear, so the disciples could look and see that Christ was indeed risen from the dead. I think there is a certain dramatic posture in the angel of the Lord sitting upon the stone. It was a posture of victory and defiance (1 Corinthians 15:54-58).

An earthquake, a heavy stone door rolled away, and a smiling figure so brilliant that hardened Roman soldiers fainted. The God we serve not only provided Atonement for His fallen creation, He comforted those with faith while frighting nearly to death those who remained in unbelief. Have you believed? The Angel did not tell the guards, “fear not,” that was the message for those who believed. Fear does not control those who trust the Bible.

**The Communication at the Sepulchre (5-7).**

Then, we must go on and give thought to the communication at the sepulchre. You realize that God never seeks to prove His existence to man. Therefore, the Bible is not always given in the form of a sequential chronological record. Each Gospel record is given more thematically than chronologically. If Luke records two angels while Matthew and Mark record only one, it is because that suited the Spirit's purpose to so record the life of Christ with four Gospels to paint a one picture. A house photographed from all four sides may seem to be four different buildings, but each photo provides a unique perspective of the same house.

It also makes the harmonization process rewarding. It is evident that God left many questions to be answered only through the long effort of prayerful, diligent study. Answers to hard questions are never found through unbelief. We expect to find answers to hard questions because the Bible is God’s Revelation not His obscuring of truth.

There were at least four women who had left Jerusalem(?) before daylight to anoint the body of Jesus with spices. Mary Magdalene had rushed ahead of the others and found the tomb empty. She then hasted to inform Peter and John of the disappearance of the Lord's body. This left at least three others, perhaps more, arriving at the empty tomb. However, they were not unmet.

Matthew says an angel spoke unto them, "Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said." Mark describes the angel as a young man clothed in a long white garment who said to them, "Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: He is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you."

Luke's account is more emphatic. Two angels rebuked the ladies. "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee." Two things stand out in the angelic message. The first is the concern for the disciple's state of mind. They were told not to be afraid. As disciples of Christ, we ought not to fear men who can do nothing more to us than to kill our body and so present us to Christ our Saviour. They killed Christ Jesus, but He became the firstfruits of the same resurrection we will experience (1 Corinthians 15:20).

The second thing is a strong urging to remember the Word of God. Remembering the Bible will always help dispel fear. It seems that more often than not, when angels were employed by God as messengers in the New Testament it was not to deliver new revelation; it was to remind Christians of what God had already said. Our peace of mind is usually in direct proportion to our faith in what the Bible says.

How much peace rules in your heart and mind? When troubles assail you, where do you resort to find peace? Do you retreat to corner and close your eyes and cover your ears? Do you call your therapist? Do you go berserk and vent all over everyone around you? Or, do you pick up your Bible and prayerfully ask God to strengthen your faith?

**The Celebration at the Sepulchre (8).**

Lastly, please consider with me the celebration at the sepulchre. Do you see the change in attitude after the angelic message had been received? The women, who had previously been grief-stricken were now filled with joy. Joy will certainly put speed to our actions. Do you have that joy? Or, are you overcome by grief and stress and insecurity?

If you are not busy serving Christ, I suspect you probably lack joy. But why should a Christian be depressed? We serve a risen Saviour! I think it is a shame when Christian people lack joy in serving the Lord Jesus Christ! When I got saved, serving the Lord Jesus seemed the natural thing to do. No one ever suggested to me that I should take that service one year at a time. If service was enjoyable then I should keep it up for another year. If not, then like the old saying goes, “The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence.” What would it take for you to quit serving the risen Saviour?

Remember the resurrection and rejoice! When you rejoice, service and ministry are a pleasure. When you rejoice, your light shines brightly in this dark world. Our commission is to go quickly with a message that the Lord Jesus is risen from the dead and those who believe in Him shall see. Those dear ladies believed, their fear was banished. Their fear was overcome by joy and they did run to spread the Good News! Because of the Resurrection, we can now be His messengers taking that glorious Good News to all the world!