

Easter Day – The Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ

Alleluia, Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

St. John's Gospel chapter 20, verses 1 to 10, gives us, what must be, a first hand account of that early morning visit to the tomb of Jesus. Mary Magdalene, grieving, unable to sleep, goes to the burial place “while it was still dark”. In the bleak, pre-dawn light she sees that the tomb has been interfered with. The stone at the entrance had been moved! “So she ran, and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved” Breathless, already in tears? She gasps out her story:- “*They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.*” Note the “we” ! According St. Mark's Gospel, Mary Magdalene was accompanied by others on the early morning visit to the tomb.

Upon hearing the news, “*Peter and the other disciple set out . . . They both ran, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.*”. This kind of detail is what makes the story so believable! Peter, a little older (and maybe carrying a bit more weight!) is beaten to the tomb by the younger disciple – most likely the author of the Gospel, the apostle John.

John stoops and looks into the tomb, “*he saw the linen cloths lying there . . .*”

The author of this Gospel is very careful in his choice of words! The one he uses here for “*he saw*” is the Greek word “blepei”. It means “He had sight of” or “He caught sight of”.

Peter arrives – and being Peter, rushes straight in! “*he saw the linen cloths lying, and the napkin, which had been on His head, . . . rolled up in a place by itself*”. A different word this time for “He saw” - the Greek word is “theorei” meaning “He perceived or He discerned”. He put his brain in gear and began to work it out! He “theorised” about what he saw!

John then follows Peter into the tomb “*and he saw and believed*”! Yet another word for “he saw”. In this phrase the Greek word is “eiden” from the irregular verb “horao”. It goes a stage further and means “to behold, to see with the mind”.

I believe that we have, in this Gospel, an eyewitness account of the visit of the disciples, Peter and John, to the empty tomb on that first Easter Day! Everything about it rings true! The details are so vivid, the playing down of Peter's seeing, and not really taking it on board!

John is recording what he saw and knew to be the truth. He is writing for you and for believers everywhere “*that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.*” (Gospel of John, Chapter 20, verse 31)

Alleluia, Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

*Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
Endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won:
Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
Kept the folded grave-clothes where thy body lay.
Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
Endless is the vict'ry thou o'er death hast won.*

*Edmond Budry (1854-1932)
Tr: Richard Hoyle (1875-1939)*