



Christ The Lord Is Risen Today



"Christ the Lord is ris'n today, Alleluia!
Sons of men and angels say, Alleluia!
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!
Sing ye heav'ns and earth reply, Alleluia!

"Vain the stone, the watch, the seal ...
Christ has burst the gates of hell ...
Death in vain forbids Him rise ...
Christ has opened paradise. Alleluia!

"Lives again our glorious King ...
Where, O death, is now thy sting? ...
Once he died, our souls to save ...
Where thy victory, O grave! Alleluia!

"He is not here: for He is risen, as He said." - Matthew 28:6

"Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." - 1 Corinthians 15:55-57

"I am the first and the last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive forever and ever!" - Revelation 1:17-18

"Christ the Lord is Risen Today" has been a message of pure triumph for Christians since the resurrection of Jesus on that first Resurrection morning. This popular hymn was written by Charles Wesley in 1739, and the thrilling truths of his text continue to raise our "joys and triumphs high" in our day.

In writing these devotionals, I have found Spell Check to be somewhat helpful, but sometimes the changes it wants to make are telling. Today, as I typed the verse from Revelation, a blue line appeared below the words, "I was dead." It was assumed to be an error, because "I am dead" would be the normal tense to use. But in the case of Jesus Christ, he did not stay dead, but rose again since He is the Living One who is alive forevermore!

Then the correction appeared again for 1 Corinthians 15:57, where Paul says that Christ's resurrection has given us "the victory" over death. This victory is not a result of competition, but it is "the" final victory over the power of the grave for all believers. Paul David Tripp says, "The resurrection of Jesus Christ is why I get up in the morning. It replaces death with life, vanity with meaning, defeat with victory."

My hymn devotional explains why the resurrection is such an important truth to ponder: "Jesus is not the 'Great I WAS,' but the 'Great I AM.' He is not only a historical fact, but a present-day, living reality. The whole system of Christianity rests upon the truth that Jesus Christ rose from the grave and is now seated at the Father's right hand as our personal Advocate. For the Christian, the resurrection assures us of God's tomorrow. This anticipation makes it possible to live joyfully today, regardless of life's circumstances."

Immediately after Jesus's death on the cross, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks were split; tombs were opened in the process, and the bodies of many saints were raised to life. Those resurrected people came out of their tombs and appeared to many in the holy city. Can you even begin to imagine the impact of that experience for the people of Jerusalem that day?

The Roman centurion, and those who kept guard over Jesus while He hung on the cross, were very frightened when they witnessed the earthquake and the things that were happening. They could not help but cry out, "Truly this was the Son of God!" The women who had followed Jesus looked on from a distance, and they found His tomb empty when they returned with their spices on Sunday morning to anoint His body.

It is interesting to note that Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus were both prominent Jewish leaders, who had not consented to their evil plan to condemn Christ to death. This act of burial actually fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 53:9, which reads: "His grave was assigned with wicked men, yet He was with a rich man in His death, because He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth." Jesus had hung between two thieves at Calvary, but his body laid temporarily in a rich man's tomb, where Roman soldiers stood watch.

The Jewish leaders had gone to Pilate and reminded him that Jesus had made statements about how He would rise again while He was still alive. Therefore they felt it was in everyone's best interest to make the grave secure until the third day, lest His disciples would come and steal Him away. They could then claim that He had risen from the dead, and "the last deception would be worse than the first." Pilate agreed to provide the guards, and he ordered them to make the tomb as secure as they knew how, by setting a seal on the stone.

But we know that there would be no human explanation for the empty tomb that could stand up against the facts of that day, although many have tried over the centuries. The resurrection is the cornerstone of our faith, and we cling to the words of Jesus in John 14:19, where He says, "Because I live, you will live also." Let this bring joy to your heart as you trust in the living Savior!