



Volume 8, No. 4, April, 2020



Christ the Lord Is Risen Today

*Christ, the Lord, is ris'n today
Hallelujah!*

*Sons of men and angels say,
Hallelujah!*

*Raise your joys and triumphs high,
Hallelujah!*

*Sing, ye heav'ns thou earth reply,
Hallelujah!*

*Love's redeeming work is done,
Hallelujah!*

*Fought the fight, the battle won,
Hallelujah!*

*Death in vain forbids Him rise,
Hallelujah!*

*Christ has opened paradise.
Hallelujah!*

*Lives again our glorious King,
Hallelujah!*

*Where, O death, is now thy sting?
Hallelujah!*

*Once He died our souls to save,
Hallelujah!*

*Where thy victory, O grave?
Hallelujah!*

*Soar we now where Christ has led,
Hallelujah!*

*Foll'wing our exalted Head,
Hallelujah!*

*Made like Him, like Him we rise,
Hallelujah!*

*Ours the cross, the grave, the skies,
Hallelujah!*

WORDS: Charles Wesley (w. 1739)

MUSIC: 14th Century Air, Revised in Walsh's
Lyra Davidica



HE AROSE!

After the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1991, men and women from our congregation in Memphis, Tennessee, began traveling to Ukraine to share the Gospel. My husband, Harold, went on one of the first trips.

Between 200 and 250 Ukrainians gathered in Kiev to hear Harold preach one evening. It happened to be Easter weekend, so the message Harold chose was the resurrection story from the Gospels. Many in the audience, who had been living under communism for 70 years, had never heard of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

Irena, Harold's translator, always did an excellent job. She kept up as Harold preached and translated clearly. Coming to the climax of the sermon, Harold simply said two words and then paused. "He Arose." Irena did not translate. Thinking that she had not heard, Harold repeated, "He Arose." For a second time there was silence, and no translation to the crowd. A third time Harold said a little louder, "He Arose."

When silence followed, he turned to look at Irena. She was crying. She could not speak. Unfamiliar with the Gospel, the impact of the resurrection of Jesus moved her to tears. Irena not only heard and understood the words, she grasped the message. God's son came to this world, and because of our sins, He died, was buried, and arose. The message is just as relevant and timely today. The message of the resurrection must continue to be shared in every language.

Sally Shank, Oklahoma City



Because He Lives

Sometimes this world seems like a pretty dark place. The news reports describe events where this party is offended by that party, and a fight breaks out and

someone is either hurt or killed. Children go missing, and hate between people with different ideas is sensationalized. If this were an accurate portrayal of our times, it would be very sad indeed.

We as Christians see this life in a different way. We have hope. We have a Savior to whom we can pray, and we have eyes that are blessed to see the working of God's power in our lives. Why can we have such hope when people all around us are living in despair?

It's because long ago, a child was conceived by the Spirit and was born in the small town of Bethlehem. He was raised in a family who honored the covenant made between God and His people. They were faithful to live their lives in the right way, and the child grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man.

As Jesus grew to manhood, He understood His role was to show God's love and to instill God's loving principles in a group of men who would have to continue His work after He was gone. He lived with this group for several years, showing them how to have compassion on the weak and unworthy. He spoke of His Father's love and tried to show the spirit of God's commands rather than the letter of the law.

Then the dark day came when Jesus was arrested and judged secretly and was sentenced to death by crucifixion. Jesus died on that cross in the cruelest of punishments, and His body was taken and placed in a tomb. Even the world itself mourned as the sky was darkened and the earth shook.

But that wasn't the end... On the third day, Jesus rose from the dead and left behind an empty tomb! The ladies who had come to anoint His dead flesh ran to tell the apostles that He was not there. What good news for all of us!

It's because of that news that we can see the blessings in our everyday lives and have a wonderful hope for our future. If the upcoming election does not go my way, I can still rejoice because God is in control. He already knows the future, and I can feel secure in my destination. The apostles faced persecution and death, but they had joy in their tribulations. I am not promised a life with no problems or a life of ease, but I am promised that Jesus is always with me. With Him by my side, I can live my life with no fear. I can have the compassion of Jesus for the weak and unworthy because that is what I am without Him.

Jesus suffered and died because of me. It was the only way I could be cleansed and made whole enough to be in the presence of God. I can approach the throne of God in prayer because Jesus died to split the veil between man and the presence of God. He gives me hope, which is not wishful thinking but a deposit toward the future that God has promised me.

It reminds me of the words of a song, "Because He lives, I can face tomorrow, Because He lives all fear is gone; Because I know He holds the future, And life is worth the living just because He lives."

Lorna Smith, Lubbock, Texas



HOW I LOVE THE GREAT REDEEMER!

When I think of the Redeemer, hymns start running through my head, such as "I will Sing of My Redeemer," "Since I have been Redeemed," and my favorite, "The Great Redeemer." The first words in that song are, "How I love the Great Redeemer!"

When I was in college, two of my closest friends regularly went to the Church of Christ Bible Chair on campus for devotionals and other activities. Occasionally, I went with them. One of the songs most frequently sung was, "The Great Redeemer," which I had not heard before hearing it there. Instantly, I loved this wonderful song of love and praise. But loving the Great Redeemer? That was new to me. During my formative years, "hell's fire and brimstone" sermons were the order of the day. I never heard anything about God loving me, nor did I hear anything about loving Him in return. The whole concept was a mystery to me, but I loved the song.

Thankfully, God has allowed me to live long enough to learn to love Him, not just fear Him. I have learned that He loves all His human creations, including me. That concept is still too wonderful for me to fully grasp. It leads me to think of how much His loving me cost Him, ¹⁸*For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors,* ¹⁹*but with the **precious blood of Christ**, a lamb without blemish or defect.* 1 Peter 1:18-19 (emphasis added).

It was in His plan long before I came into being. When Eve sinned by taking the fruit at Satan's suggestion, God cursed Satan: ¹⁴*So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life.* ¹⁵*And*

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” Genesis 3:15

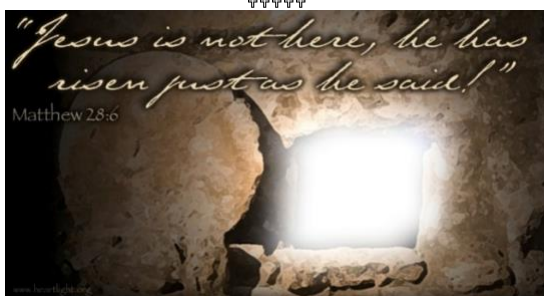
Another song I love is, “Redeemed.” It always seems like the title should be “Redeemed!” But it is published without the exclamation point. The refrain is simply, “I’m redeemed! By love divine; glory, glory, Christ is mine, Christ is mine; All to Him I now resign, I have been redeemed!” What a joy and privilege it is to be able to sing such wonderful words of praise and thanksgiving!

Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary says, “How can we fail to rejoice, having been freed from the oppressive bondage of slavery to sin (John 8:34; Romans 6:18), the law (Galatians 4:3-5; 5:1), and the fear of death (Hebrews 2:14-15)? ‘Therefore, if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed’ (John 8:36).”

In the Old Testament, one definition of a redeemer was one who freed or delivered another from bondage by paying a ransom price. An example of a redeemer was Boaz who acted as redeemer for Ruth. Jesus was/is the ultimate redeemer by giving His life as “*a ransom for many*” (Mark 10:45). We have our redemption “*through His blood,*” (Ephesians 1:7).

With deep gratitude to God for His love, I now truly love the Great Redeemer. One way I choose to express it is combining phrases from two songs, “Since I have been redeemed, I will sing of my redeemer!”

Evelyn Waite, Rolla, Missouri



Just Wondering...

Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. They said therefore among themselves, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be,” that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: “They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.” Therefore the soldiers did these things. (John 19:23-24)

I wonder...which of the four soldiers won Jesus’ tunic? Was he a young man who had been pressed into the service of the Roman army? What was his character like? Did he have any feelings of compassion for this man who was being crucified before his very eyes? Had his heart already been so hardened by his military training and experiences that this was just another duty?

I wonder...what was the lasting result of that day on this soldier? Was he just in a hurry to get back to his game of lots? Did he ever wonder about the guilt or innocence of these victims of crucifixion? Was he listening and wondering when Jesus told the thief on the cross, “*Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.*” (Luke 23:43) Did he ever wonder about this man who could speak of Paradise in the midst of torture and agony?

I wonder...what happened to this soldier after the fact? Was he taught and converted later? Was he, like the Jews in Acts 2:37, “cut to the heart”? Did he also ask, “...what shall we (I) do?” Was his life ever changed by what he saw and heard that day? Did he treasure this garment that had belonged to the Son of God? Or did he simply use it to cover himself on a cold night?

I wonder...what were the lasting effects of having “won” the tunic that had belonged to Jesus, Son of the Most High God?

Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, “Not one of His bones shall be broken.” And again another Scripture says, “They shall look on Him whom they pierced.” (John 19:31-37)

I wonder...which one of the soldiers thrust his spear into Jesus’ side? Could it have been the same one who had earlier won the tunic? Was he battle hardened? Had he plunged his spear into many other men in times of battle? Was this just another stab of the soldier’s spear as in so many battles? Did some of the precious blood of

Jesus splatter on him? Did he ever realize what that blood represented, what it means to every human ever born? Did he ever realize it could mean true freedom for him?

I wonder...how did he sleep that night after having been at the foot of the cross? Did the moans and cries of those being crucified trouble his sleep? In his dreams that night, did he hear Jesus' voice saying through His agony, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." (Luke 23:34) Did he ever realize that he was one of "them"?

I wonder...did this soldier tremble when darkness covered the land for three hours—in the middle of the day? (Matthew 27: 45). Did it cross his mind to wonder how Jesus could be concerned about His mother while He was dying on a cross? (John 19:36-37) Did he think of his own mother and wish he could see her again soon? Did he ever shudder when remembering Jesus' cry of, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46) Did he tremble with fear when the earth quaked and he heard his own centurion declare, "Truly this was the Son of God!" (Matthew 27:54)

¹¹ Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. ¹² When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, ¹³ saying, "Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.' ¹⁴ And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure." ¹⁵ So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day. (Matthew 28:11-15)

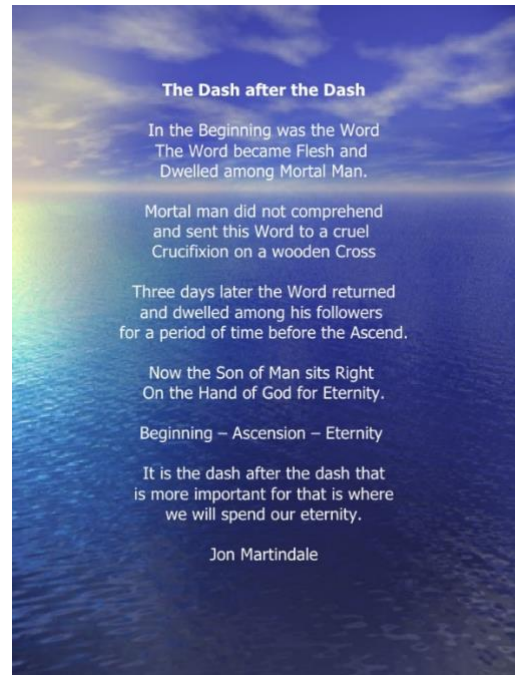
I wonder...did this soldier tremble with fear when he heard that this man, in whose death he himself had played a part, was resurrected from the dead? Had his conscience troubled him when he took blood money to lie about Jesus no longer being in the tomb?

I have many questions about the soldiers who were there on that day, but I have no answers. The Bible does not tell us anything more about them. We don't know if their lives were changed by the events of that day. We don't know to what other duty stations they might have been assigned. We don't know if they heard converted Jews bursting with the news of this Messiah, about freedom and salvation in the Son of God. We don't know if they ever encountered anyone from Cornelius' household and heard how salvation had come, even to the Gentiles,

through this Jewish Messiah. We don't know if they ever heard any of the apostles preach the gospel. There is so much we don't know, and yet, *I wonder...*

Evelyn Waite

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June 27-July 1, 2020

Red River, New Mexico

Wonderful speakers! Beautiful singing of many voices! Beautiful mountain setting!

Be There! You will be inspired and uplifted!

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Sunrise is a monthly newsletter written and/or assembled by members of the Rolla Church of Christ. Sunrise is printed and distributed (primarily via email) to individuals and congregations around the country. All previous issues can be accessed by going to <http://www.seekgrowserveandlove.org>. Click on the Resources tab, then on Sunrise Newsletter. You will find the current issue plus all previous issues.

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