

EASTER SUNDAY - MT 27:62-63, 28:5-6 12-04-2020  
HE ROSE, JUST AS HE HAD PROMISED

### **HE IS RISEN; HE IS RISEN INDEED!**

*The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. "Sir," they said, "we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, "After three days I will rise again."*

*The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified, He is not here; he has rise, just as he said, Come and see the place where he lay.*

Have you ever made a promise that you didn't keep? I'm sure that we all have at one time or another. Oh, maybe we had every intention to keep it but something happened and it was just impossible. We may have promised to take our children to the circus but then the car broke down and we couldn't get home in time to go.

When you think about broken promises, you must think about the devil who is called the "Father of Lies." His middle name is "Deceiver." You can't trust anything he says. Remember what he said to Eve in the Garden? "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (Gen 3:5 NIV)

Broken promises? What about politicians? "When I'm elected, I am going to lower your taxes. I'm going to cancel all debts. I'm going to..." For one reason or another these promises are often not kept. How many husbands and wives have broken their vow to be faithful to their spouse? Any way you look at it, the promises we make are not always kept. We may not be able to keep them. We may not want to keep them. There is a lot of truth in the old saying, PROMISES ARE MADE TO BE BROKEN.

That's not the way it is with our Lord. When He makes a promise, He keeps it. There is not one promise God has made that has failed. Not one promise yet to be fulfilled that He will not keep. Our theme for today is a simple one yet so important. That's because our salvation hangs in the balance.

#### **JESUS KEEPS HIS PROMISES.**

- 1. Jesus said that He would die.**
- 2. Jesus said that He would rise.**

When it comes to Christ, the teaching that is challenged most is that of the resurrection. Not only because it is the most amazing promise one can make. It is because everything else that Jesus said hangs in the balance. The Bible puts it this way, "If Jesus is still dead, our faith is in vain."

How do we know for sure that Jesus did indeed die? Maybe he simply fainted or went into some sort of a comma and was revived by the coolness of the tomb. That's what some believe. But the Bible makes it clear that Jesus died just as He had promised. Jesus spoke of this at least three times with His disciples. Even his enemies knew of this amazing claim of Jesus. The Pharisees and Scribes said to Pilate, *We remember while he was still alive that deceiver said, after three days I will rise again.* They didn't believe it. They called Jesus a deceiver! A liar! A con artist, one who was promising to do something He would or could never do.

Yet it is clear, from Scripture that Jesus did die just as He said He

would. Everything the Bible says about Jesus in this regard makes it clear that His death was no hoax. There was no deception here. Jesus kept His word. He died. Consider the facts.

Luke the evangelist reports what Jesus said as He gave up his life on the cross. **Father into your hands I commit my spirit.** Then he died. Death takes place when the spirit leaves the body. The Roman centurion who stood at the foot of the cross saw Jesus die. We are told that when **HE SAW HOW JESUS DIED, HE SAID, SURELY THIS MAN WAS THE SON OF GOD?** This man was acquainted with death. As a centurion in the Roman army he surely must have seen his share of death and we have his testimony recorded for us in Scripture.

We also have the word of the soldiers whose job it was to make sure that those crucified actually died. To speed up the process as the Sabbath approached, they were sent to break the legs of the three men who were being crucified. When they came to Jesus, they didn't have to do that for He was already dead. To confirm it, they took their sword and pierced Jesus' side. The water and blood that flowed testified that he was no longer alive.

We could go on. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus who took Jesus' body for burial, they knew that Jesus was dead. So did the women who went to the tomb to prepare Jesus' body for burial.

To sum it up: Jesus said that He would die and He did. The evidence and testimony are there for all to see. Jesus keeps His promises.

Jesus' promise that He would die did not trouble Jesus' enemies at all. That was what they wanted. It was His promise to rise again that troubled them. It was an audacious promise. But what if it were true? First they worried about the disciples stealing Jesus' body and saying He had risen. To make sure this did not happen, they sealed the grave and placed soldiers there to guard it. In the end, this backfired for the guards could testify that the body was not stolen.

But this was not the only proof that Jesus had risen as He promised. When the women came to the tomb, early on Easter morning, they didn't find a tomb tightly sealed and guarded by Romans. It stood wide open and was empty. There was no body. The cloth strips that were warped around Jesus were neatly placed where Jesus had lain.

Then there were the angels who greeted the women and said, **He is not here, He has risen, just as He said.** These were God's messengers. They could not lie nor did they have reason to. Jesus had risen just as He said He would. Just as He promised.

As if that were not enough proof, there is more. The disciples who hid behind closed doors saw Him. Thomas not only saw Him but was invited by Jesus to put his hand into his side and touch the nail prints in Jesus' hand.

The Apostle John says in his first epistle, **that which ....we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched, this we proclaim.** (1JN 1:1) Many others testified to the resurrection of Jesus. We are told that over 500 saw Jesus alive and many others on more than one occasion. Jesus was alive. He did rise from the dead. He kept His Word.

I was born and grew up in the town of Benton Harbor, Michigan. Our property bordered that of a religious group by the name of the House of David. They were a group of a thousand people or more that were led by a man named Benjamin Purnell. King Ben as he was called by his followers died in December of 1927. King Ben, as I recall, said he would rise from the

dead after 4 days. His body was placed in a coffin in the window of their hotel as they waited. Three days passed. The health department gave them another 24 hours but he did not rise much to the dismay of his followers.

Jesus is the only one who said that He would rise and did. He kept His promise. He said that he would die and said he would rise again after three days and He did. He promised He would and He did.

Jesus always keeps His promises, each and every one of them. We are never alone for Jesus promised, Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the age. He promised, where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

These are just a couple of the many promises that Jesus made. Each one of them just as precious. But today we are compelled to turn to Jesus' promises regarding the resurrection. It is the greatest promise of all! Jesus says, I am the resurrection and the life. **He who believes in me will live, even though he dies, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die."**

There is no greater promise to be had than this. No promise to give us hope when we come face to face with death. No greater comfort when someone we love dies in the Lord. It is God's promise to you and to me - to the world. It is a promise we can count on because Jesus said so. He said he would die and he did. He said he would rise again and he did. He said all who believe in him and die will live again. You can count on it. Praise the Lord! Amen.