

The Via Lucis – The Paschal Way of Light

The Disciples find the empty tomb

Luke 24:1-9

But at the first signs of dawn on the first day of the week, they went to the tomb, taking with them the aromatic spices they had prepared. They discovered that the stone had been rolled away from the tomb, but on going inside, the body of the Lord Jesus was not to be found. While they were still puzzling over this, two men suddenly stood at their elbow, dressed in dazzling light. The women were terribly frightened, and turned their eyes away and looked at the ground. But the two men spoke to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here: he has risen! Remember what he said to you, while he was still in Galilee - that the Son of Man must be betrayed into the hands of sinful men, and must be crucified, and must rise again on the third day."

Then they did remember what he had said, and they turned their backs on the tomb and went and told all this to the eleven and the others who were with them.



Jesus walks with the disciples to Emmaus

Luke 24:17-35



Then on the same day we find two of them going off to Emmaus, a village about seven miles from Jerusalem. As they went they were deep in conversation about everything that had happened. While they were absorbed in their serious talk and discussion, Jesus himself approached and walked along with them, but something prevented them from recognising him. Then he spoke to them, "What is all this discussion that you are having on your walk?"

They stopped, their faces drawn with misery, and the one called Cleopas replied, "You must be the only stranger in Jerusalem who hasn't heard all the things that have happened there recently!"

"What things?" asked Jesus. "Oh, all about Jesus, from Nazareth. There was a man - a prophet strong in what he did and what he said, in God's eyes as well as the people's. Haven't you heard how our chief priests and rulers handed him over for execution, and had him crucified? But we were hoping he was the one who was to come and set Israel free ...

"Yes, and as if that were not enough, it's getting on for three days since all this happened; and some of our womenfolk have disturbed us profoundly. For they went to the tomb at dawn, and then when they couldn't find his body they said that they had a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of our people went straight off to the tomb and found things

just as the women had described them - but they didn't see him!"

Then he spoke to them, "Aren't you failing to understand, and slow to believe in all that the prophets have said? Was it not inevitable that Christ should suffer like that and so find his glory?"

Then, beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them everything in the scriptures that referred to himself. They were by now approaching the village to which they were going. He gave the impression that he meant to go on further, but they stopped him with the words, "Do stay with us. It is nearly evening and soon the day will be over."

So he went indoors to stay with them. Then it happened! While he was sitting at table with them he took the loaf, gave thanks, broke it and passed it to them. Their eyes opened wide and they knew him! But he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, "Weren't our hearts glowing while he was with us on the road, and when he made the scriptures so plain to us?"

And they got to their feet without delay and turned back to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven and their friends all together, full of the news - "The Lord is really risen - he has appeared to Simon now!"

Then they told the story of their walk, and how they recognised him when he broke the loaf.



Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene

John 20:11-18

But Mary stood just outside the tomb, and she was crying. And as she cried, she looked into the tomb and saw two angels in white who sat, one at the head and the other at the foot of the place where the body of Jesus had lain.

The angels spoke to her, "Why are you crying?" they asked. "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I don't know where they have put him!" she said.

Then she turned and noticed Jesus standing there, without realising that it was Jesus.

"Why are you crying?" said Jesus to her. "Who are you looking for?" She, supposing that he was the gardener, said, "Oh, sir, if you have carried him away, please tell me where you have put him and I will take him away."

Jesus said to her, "Mary!" At this she turned right round and said to him, in Hebrew, "Master!"

"No!" said Jesus, "do not hold me now. I have not yet gone up to the Father. Go and tell my brothers that I am going up to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

And Mary of Magdala went off to the disciples, with the news, "I have seen the Lord!", and she told them what he had said to her.



Jesus confirms Thomas in Faith

John 20:26-31

Just over a week later, the disciples were indoors again and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood in the middle of them and said, "Peace be with you!"

Then he said to Thomas, "Put your fingers here - look, here are my hands. Take my hand and put it in my side. You must not doubt, but believe."

"My Lord and my God!" cried Thomas.

"Is it because you have seen me that you believe?" Jesus said to him. "Happy are those who have never seen me and yet have believed!"

Jesus gave a great many other signs in the presence of his disciples which are not recorded in this book. But these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is Christ, the Son of God, and that in that faith you may have life as his disciples.



Jesus appears to his disciples on the shore of Lake Galilee (Tiberius)

John 21:1-14

Later on, Jesus showed himself again to his disciples on the shore of Lake Tiberias, and he did it in this way. Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee and two other disciples were together, when Simon Peter said, "I'm going fishing." "All right," they replied, "we'll go with you." So they went out and got into the boat and during the night caught nothing at all. But just as dawn began to break, Jesus stood there on the beach, although the disciples had no idea that it was Jesus.

"Have you caught anything, lads?" Jesus called out to them. "No," they replied.

"Throw the net on the right side of the boat," said Jesus, "and you'll have a catch." So they threw out the net and found that they were now not strong enough to pull it in because it was so full of fish! At this, the disciple that Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!"

Hearing this, Peter slipped on his clothes, for he had been naked, and plunged into the sea. The other disciples followed in the boat, for they were only about a hundred yards from the shore, dragging in the net full of fish. When they had landed, they saw that a charcoal fire was burning, with a fish placed on it, and some bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring me some of the fish you've just caught." So Simon Peter got into the boat and hauled the net ashore full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three altogether. But in spite of the large number the net was not torn.

Then Jesus said to them, "Come and have your breakfast." None of the disciples dared to ask him who he was; they knew it was the Lord.

Jesus went and took the bread and gave it to them and gave them all fish as well. This is already the third time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples after his resurrection from the dead.

Jesus confers primacy on Peter

John 21:15-18

When they had finished breakfast Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these others?" "Yes, Lord," he replied, "you know that I am your friend."

"Then feed my lambs," returned Jesus. Then he said for the second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" "Yes, Lord," returned Peter. "You know that I am your friend."

"Then care for my sheep," replied Jesus. Then for the third time, Jesus spoke to him and said, "Simon, son of John, are you my friend?" Peter was deeply hurt because Jesus' third question to him was "Are you my friend?", and he said, "Lord, you know everything. You know that I am your friend!"

"Then feed my sheep," Jesus said to him.



Jesus entrusts his disciples with a universal mission

Matthew 28:16-20

But the eleven went to the hill-side in Galilee where Jesus had arranged to meet them, and when they had seen him they worshipped him, though some of them were doubtful.

But Jesus came and spoke these words to them, "All power in Heaven and on earth has been given to me. You, then, are to go and make disciples of all the nations and baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to observe all that I have commanded you and, remember, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."



Jesus ascends into Heaven

Acts 1:4-14

On one occasion, while he was eating a meal with them, he emphasised that they were not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the Father's promise.

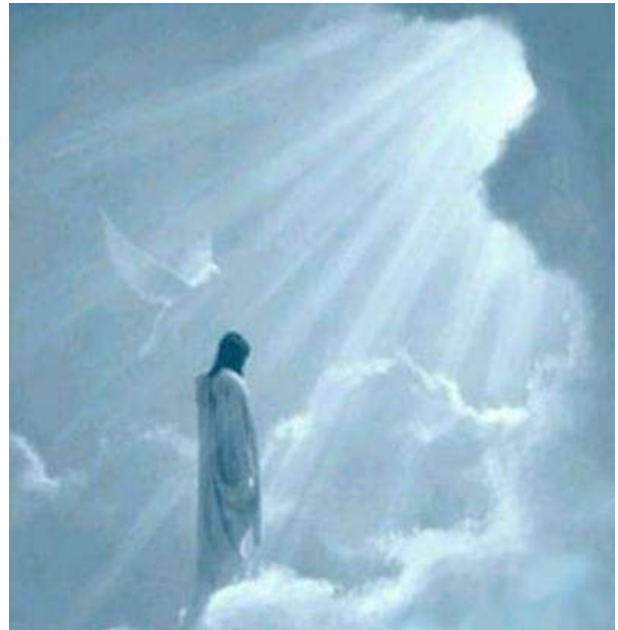
"You have already heard me speak about this," he said, "for John used to baptise with water, but before many days are passed you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit."

This naturally brought them all together, and they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you are going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

To this he replied, "You cannot know times and dates which have been fixed by the Father's sole authority. But you are to be given power when the Holy Spirit has come to you. You will be witnesses to me, not only in Jerusalem, not only throughout Judea, not only in Samaria, but to the very ends of the earth!"

When he had said these words he was lifted up before their eyes till a cloud hid him from their sight. While they were still gazing up into the sky as he went, suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them and said, "Men of Galilee, why are you standing here looking up into the sky? This very Jesus who has been taken up from you into Heaven will come back in just the same way as you have seen him go."

At this they returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives which is near the city, only a sabbath day's journey away. On entering Jerusalem they went straight to the upstairs room where they had been staying. There were Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Patriot, and Judas the son of James. By common consent all these men together with the women who had followed Jesus, Mary his mother as well as his brothers devoted themselves to prayer.



An introduction to Ephesians

Writer: The apostle Paul

According to some modern scholarship: Possibly written c AD62 by a secretary and signed by Paul, or, towards the end of the 1st century by an unknown Christian writer using Paul's name to give the letter authority

Date: c AD62; sent with the letters to the Colossians, and to Philemon

Where written: Under house arrest in Rome

Readers: The church in Ephesus, but also a circular letter to other churches in the province of Asia;

Reason: The Christian Jews of Asia may have been keeping themselves somewhat aloof from Gentile converts. In this general letter, Paul shows that God sent Christ to break down the ancient barriers between Jew and Gentile; through a shared faith, all are one as the Church of Christ. The second part of the letter (Ch 6) has advice on the Christian life including the well-known verses on the "armour of God".