

DOCTRINE FOR THE YOUNG

THE MIRACLE OF EASTER

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In most ancient times it was known that someday the Lord would be born on earth. But what men did not know was where or when He would be born, or what kind of man He would be when He came. So the Lord made the Israelitish nation and the Israelitish prophets. And the prophets told the people where the Lord would be born, and what kind of man He was to be. Do you remember it is said in the Book of Psalms that when the Lord came into the world, He was to be a King of Glory? So the Israelites looked forward to the Lord's coming into the world with great excitement, for they thought He would come as a great conquering king, like David. They thought He would raise great armies and conquer all the nations of the world. And also they thought He would be a splendid king like Solomon, who would live in a beautiful palace of gold and ivory.

And so they patiently waited for the Lord to come into the world. We know that the Lord is King. He is the King of all kings. For He is the King of all the earth and all the heavens. He is the King of the universe. Yet, when the Lord came, He did not come as the Israelites had expected Him to come. He did not seem to them to be a king. How did the Lord come? The Lord came as a teacher. I want you to think about that. Why did He come as a teacher? Because He had come into the world to teach men His Word.

I am using words. By means of the words I say, the thoughts of my mind enter into your mind. Now that is a miracle. Words are wonderful things. If we are to know someone, they must speak to us by means of words so we can know what's in their minds. Now you can understand why the Lord came as a teacher. He came to speak to us so we can come to know Him. If it weren't for the Lord's Word we wouldn't know anything about the Lord at all. We wouldn't know why He created the world. We wouldn't know Who He is. We wouldn't know anything about Him at all. Now you can see why the Lord came into the world as a teacher. One of the things the Lord taught men when He came into the world was most surprising. He told them that someday He would be taken by evil men and put to death. But He also said, "On the third day I will rise again" (see Mat. 20:19). The disciples did not understand this. They did not believe that the Lord could be put to death. Peter said to Him, "Lord, this shall not happen to You!" (Mat. 22:16).

You know the story well. You know what happened. On the Sabbath before the Resurrection, the Lord came into Jerusalem as a King. All the people went out to greet Him because they thought at last He had come to raise great armies and drive the Romans out of their land, and make them a great people. There was much hope and anticipation. But when the Lord went into the city, He did not drive Herod from the throne. What did He do? He went directly to the temple and drove the merchants and money-changers out with a whip. And He said, "Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise" (John 2:16). Then the Lord retired to Bethlehem, a little town outside of Jerusalem and no one knew where He was except a few disciples. Then the multitude began to get impatient. This same multitude that had greeted Him with palms and "hosannas" began to grow impatient. Their impatience turned into disappointment. And their disappointment

turned into anger. And then their anger turned into hatred. The chief priests and scribes, who had wanted to arrest the Lord and put Him to death for many years, now knew that their time had come, for the people had turned against the Lord.

So they went out and they lashed the people to frenzy, and the people cried out for the Lord's death. They sent officers to arrest the Lord, and took Him to Caiaphas the high priest, and Caiaphas said, "This man is guilty of death." But because the Jews, who were under the Romans, could not put anyone to death, they took Him to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea.

Pilate knew that the Lord was innocent. He went out and washed his hands in front of all the people. And he said, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person. You see to it" (Matt. 27:24). And although Pilate rendered a good judgment as a judge, he was also a coward. He feared the people, just as the high priest feared the people. He gave them the Lord so they could do whatever they wanted to Him. They took the Lord out and put Him to death.

There were certain women who had followed the Lord. They, too, had been His disciples. And they had prepared sweet spices to put on His body, after the custom of the Jews. So they went on the first day of the week, very early in the morning and looked into the sepulchre. They saw two men standing, one at the head and one at the foot, of the place where the body of the Lord had lain. And the angels said to the women, "Whom seekest thou? He is not here; He is risen." But the women didn't know what to think, and they were frightened. So they ran back to the city. They found the disciples, and told them what had happened. So Peter and John ran to the sepulchre, looked in, and saw the linen clothes the Lord had been wrapped in, lying where He had been. The disciples, not knowing what to think, returned to their homes. But one of the women, named Mary Magdalene, stayed outside of the sepulchre, weeping. Suddenly she looked up and saw a man standing near her. And He said unto her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." Then the Lord said, "Mary" (John 20:15-16). And immediately she knew Him. Her heart was filled with a great joy, because she knew now that He was her Lord and her God.

On Easter day, almost 2,000 years later, our hearts, too, fill with joy, because we know that the Lord has conquered the powers of the hells. He conquered death. And in the resurrection from the tomb, the Lord performed the greatest miracle that human beings could ever imagine. There has never been a miracle like this before, and there will never be a miracle like this again. For this is the miracle of the Lord's life. You remember that in ancient times, Elijah the prophet had raised the widow's son from the dead. You remember that the Lord raised Lazarus from the dead. But no one had ever raised himself from the dead. Only the Lord could do that. For He had conquered the hells, He had conquered death, and He arose from the tomb on the third day so that all men might know who He really is. For He is our Lord and our God.

So the great joy that fills our hearts, is the joy we feel when we know that there is really no such thing as death. Death is only an appearance. It is only the natural body that dies. When the natural body dies, then the Lord raises us up into His Kingdom in the spiritual world forever. *This* is the miracle of life, and *this* is the miracle of Easter. And we know that the Lord Jesus Christ is our God, our Father and our Lord forever.

Texts: Matthew 27: 24; John 20:15