

I Believe the Son has Risen

DAVE BAST

Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr.—they were all powerful figures who led the struggle for a more just society. Each of them inspired millions, and each of them died a martyr's death. All of them are admired; their words and actions are remembered; they have monuments built to them; but none of them is worshipped. So, why do Christians worship Jesus? Simple; he didn't stay dead. We will celebrate that today on *Groundwork*. Stay tuned.

SCOTT HOEZEE

From Words of Hope and ReFrame Media, this is *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Scott Hoezee.

DAVE BAST

And I am Dave Bast; and Scott, Christ is risen!

SCOTT HOEZEE

He is risen indeed.

DAVE BAST

And this is a program for Easter Sunday, but it is really appropriate for any other Sunday or any other day of the week, for that matter, as well. So, whenever you may be listening to this, we are celebrating the fact that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, as we confess together in the words of the Apostles' Creed.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And that is exactly what we are doing. This is part of our series on the Apostles' Creed. We did a few programs on the first part of the Creed, about God the Father, and creation, and providence; and now we are in the longest section of the Creed, which is focusing on the Son. So, we have looked at the name of Jesus—how he is the Messiah, the Son of God, our Lord. In the previous program, we looked at his miraculous conception—the virgin birth; his suffering under Pontius Pilate; crucifixion and burial; and what it meant that he descended into hell; which brings us to the next line: The third day he rose again from the dead.

DAVE BAST

Yes; so, the last program, if you had a chance to check it out, was packed; and we had a lot to talk about in this whole career of Jesus, really...his life from his conception right through to his death and burial; but now, we are just focusing on this one line: The third day he rose again from the dead. Hallelujah! It is what makes Christians Christian—the fact that this happened, and the fact that we believe it; but first, Scott, let's talk a little bit about that third day business, because often we kind of glide past that and just celebrate the fact that Jesus rose, but why is there so much about the third day; and we might point out, first of all, that it is in scripture.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; one of the most famous passages talking about the resurrection, but also defending it, because Paul was writing to the Corinthians, some of whom apparently had kind of bought into Greek culture, which didn't

think resurrection was possibility or a good idea. So, Paul, in Chapter 15...1 Corinthians 15...defends it. He says:

³[Look], I passed on to you what I received as of first importance, that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures.

The difficulty is kind of doing the math, because Jesus died...it was the time of the Passover...so, Jesus died probably mid-afternoon on a Friday. The next day was the Jewish Sabbath...what we call Saturday, right? And then he rose first thing on Sunday morning. So, we are talking about 40 hours...

DAVE BAST

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

It is not three full days, but if you count Friday, Saturday, Sunday, it happened on the third day...

DAVE BAST

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, it doesn't mean he was in the tomb three full 24-hour days, but this is what happened on the third day after he died.

DAVE BAST

And maybe one of the reasons...and we will talk a little bit more about some other reasons, too, and some other places in scripture where this idea plays out...but maybe one of the reasons is to emphasize the fact that Jesus actually did die. We didn't say anything, really, about his burial in the last program, but that is part of this same idea; and perhaps the emphasis on the third day is to say, no, this wasn't some kind of swoon; he didn't just pass out and then come back to life; also, there are a number of different traditions, especially even early on in Christian history...some of the heretical groups...who denied the fact that Jesus actually died on the cross...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DAVE BAST

They said, no, he substituted...he pulled a trick...he pulled a fast one, and he made Simon of Cyrene die on the cross, for example; but the standard Christian response to that is: No, no. Jesus actually died, physically, completely. His human life was extinguished. He was even buried; for three days he lay in the tomb.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right; in Jewish circles, if you in a tomb for three days, you are really dead. In fact, we will remember in John's Gospel that when Jesus comes to raise his friend Lazarus, it is the fourth day, and they already say: No, no, no; don't take that stone away. It is going to smell, because, you know, you are really, really dead by the end of the third day; and of course we know the Gospels tell us he was embalmed with 75 pounds of embalming glue that put the linen strips on. No, he really was dead; but this third-day idea, Dave, is interesting, because as it turns out, in all of scripture there is a long tradition of something special about the number 3, and very often the third day; and so, a very early and important story in the Bible is when Abraham is told to sacrifice Isaac on Mount Moriah, and the story tells us that they left from home, and on the third day they arrived at the mountain. When the people of Israel left Egypt, they arrived at Mount Sinai to receive God's Law on the third month; and there are many, many other instances of the third day. Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days. The third day is always significant.

DAVE BAST

Right; and Jesus, in fact, pointed to the example of Jonah and the Jonah story when he was asked for a sign: Prove to us that you are the real Messiah; and Jesus goes: Oh, my goodness, you know, how long am I going to have to put up with these people who are demanding some kind of proof from me? I won't give any sign, Jesus says, except the sign of Jonah: Matt.12:40 paraphrased For as Jonah was three days in the belly of the whale, even so the Son of Man will be three days in the earth. In fact, Scott, you reminded me of this earlier with that third day reference. In John 2, we are told the story of Jesus' first miracle, the changing of water into wine at Cana; and it says: On the third day, Jesus went...but there is no explanation of the third day from what there, is there?

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes, you cannot quite count up the days, it doesn't make a lot of...except that John knew that, indeed, just saying the third day was like sign language. It was semaphore—it was secret code to Jewish readers: Ah, this is the day when something important is going to happen. At Cana, it was Jesus' first miracle...his first sign in the book of signs in John's Gospel; but again, all throughout scripture, when the third day comes, something important is going to happen; and so, for the Christian tradition to say that he was raised from the dead on the third day, that tells us something significant is going to happen; and boy, did it, when it comes to the resurrection.

DAVE BAST

Yes, it is the ultimate third day...it is the ultimate significant event that proves everything about Jesus. It changes everything. You know, just try to imagine if Jesus were still dead and buried somewhere in a tomb. I mean, as someone has pointed out, if they ever do actually find conclusively the grave of Jesus, we might as well just pack everything up and go home, because that would be the end of the Christian faith and of the Church; but thanks be to God, Christ is risen!

SCOTT HOEZEE

He is risen, indeed; and we are going to go on now and look at what happened on that amazing third day as we confess it in the Apostles' Creed. So, stay tuned.

Segment 2

DAVE BAST

You are listening to *Groundwork*, where we are digging into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Dave Bast.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And I am Scott Hoezee; and we are looking today, Dave, at just one line of the Apostles' Creed. If you listened to the previous program in this Apostles' Creed series that we are doing, we did quite a few lines; but this line: On the third day he rose again from the dead, is so packed that we are dedicating the entire program to just unpacking that incredible confession in the Apostles' Creed.

Let's go to Luke's Gospel...all four Gospels report the resurrection, but let's kind of summarize the story of what happened in Luke.

DAVE BAST

Right; and it is a little curious when you compare the different Gospel accounts of the resurrection, which we have done in previous years on *Groundwork*. You cannot always make all the details mesh. I mean, was there one angel at the tomb, were there two; Luke says there were two. Did the women come in, did Peter and John enter the tomb, as the fourth Gospel says? So, some of these details are interesting, and they are actually sort of confirming the idea that these are accounts of the same event, but from different perspectives...maybe different witnesses remember things a little differently.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And I think it is a mark of the authenticity of the New Testament that nobody did try to clean up all those inconsistencies or different angles on it. This has all the feel of an authentic series of eyewitness accounts. It is sort of like, you know, six people can witness the same accident of two cars at an intersection and have slightly different angles on it. This is just the way it goes...

DAVE BAST

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, this feels really authentic; and of course, all of the major details agree; and here is another thing that I think props up the authenticity: No human being physically saw Jesus walk out of the tomb, and so none of the Gospels pretend they did. If I were going to embellish this to make people really believe, I would say: Oh, yes; and Peter was standing right there and he saw Jesus walk out, and he cast a shadow, and Jesus said... Nobody saw it, and so they don't pretend otherwise. So, that is authentic.

DAVE BAST

Absolutely; so, what we have to say, Scott, in response to what you have just pointed out is the resurrection of Jesus is actually an inference because it is not literally described in scripture; but it is inferred from the fact that A) His tomb was empty, as the angels announced, and as the disciples themselves examined, and B) He appeared to them, and it really and truly was Jesus. So, as Luke tells it, this is Luke 24. The women go to the tomb early. They are going to finish the job of preparing Jesus' body for burial, which was interrupted, as you noted, by the Sabbath...that is the middle day of the three...and when they get there, they find, to their astonishment, that the tomb is empty. The angel says: Look, he is not here. It is because he is risen. Come and see; and they go and the disciples at first dismiss this; and then Luke tells the story of two of them, one of whom was named Cleopas, who are walking back home to their village in Emmaus, and Jesus appears with them...this wonderful story...again, there is a *Groundwork* program, I think, where we get into that story; but let's listen to Luke now as he describes, not Easter morning, but Easter evening.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right; and so, this is actually, I think, after the Emmaus people rush back to Jerusalem and tell them they saw Jesus alive; and so, they are talking. They are saying: We went to Emmaus and Je...we didn't even recognize him; and ³⁶while they were still talking about all that, Jesus himself stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁷They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. ³⁸He said to them, "Why are you troubled? Why do doubts rise in your minds? ³⁹Look at my hands; look at my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see. A ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." ⁴⁰When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. ⁴¹And while they still didn't believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "[Look], do you have anything to eat?" ⁴²So they gave him a piece of broiled fish. ⁴³He took it and ate it in their presence. ⁴⁴He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you. Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms."

DAVE BAST

Notice the details here, and very interestingly, when Jesus appears for the first time to his assembled disciples...and that would have included maybe ten or so of the inner core of the Twelve...Judas obviously wasn't there. Thomas, we know from John's Gospel, wasn't there...

SCOTT HOEZEE

And we've got these two Emmaus people, who were in the room...

DAVE BAST

And there were probably some others, too. Some of the women were there. Their first reaction isn't: Oh, look; Jesus, you rose from the dead! Hallelujah!

SCOTT HOEZEE

Hi; how you been?

DAVE BAST

Yes; their first reaction is: Oh, my goodness. What is this?

SCOTT HOEZEE

I'm terrified...

DAVE BAST

Is this some kind of ghost?

SCOTT HOEZEE

Some kind of ghost...

DAVE BAST

Some kind of apparition?

SCOTT HOEZEE

You know, some critics and cynics over the years have said: Well, you know, those 1st Century people...they were such naïve bumpkins; they probably thought people rose from the dead all the time. I mean, they weren't sophisticated enough to know this just doesn't happen. Yes, they were. In the previous program when we were talking about the virgin birth, you pointed out, Dave, they didn't know biology back then the way we do now, but Mary and Joseph knew how babies got made, and this was an unusual situation. People back then knew what happened to dead bodies...

DAVE BAST

Exactly.

SCOTT HOEZEE

They stayed that way. So they were blown away by the idea that Jesus could be alive, and their first indication...their first reaction, rather...wasn't: Wow, well, he's alive. Well, that happens sometimes. It's: No, this has to be a ghost. This cannot be real.

DAVE BAST

So, Jesus begins by trying to prove to them that it is really him, and that he is really real. He actually has, again, a physical body, even though obviously it is really quite radically different. Paul would call it later a spiritual body, whatever that means. We are not exactly sure...

SCOTT HOEZEE

An oxymoron.

DAVE BAST

He didn't seem to be bound anymore by the ordinary laws of time and space; but he ate with them. He would do that on another occasion. He is real, he is transformed, he is glorified, but he is still Jesus; and then Jesus says...or Luke reports:

⁴⁵Jesus opened their minds to they could understand the scriptures. ⁴⁶He told them, "This is what was written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁵⁰You are witnesses of these

things.

Which is actually Luke's version of the Great Commission.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; I [Jesus] am going to send you what the Father promised. Stay until you get power from on high. So, the Holy Spirit is going to come, and then they will be his witnesses. So, yes; this is Luke's version of what we get in Matthew 28, the better known Great Commission, but it is the same idea. I [Jesus] am alive; I am here. Go tell people that this has happened.

DAVE BAST

And the Good News...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DAVE BAST

Jesus is alive, and there is forgiveness now. All the things that he promised...and you remember, again, during the Gospels, if you remember some of those stories, how Jesus would so freely forgive people their sins; and that was always scandalous to the authorities, because they said: Well, only God can forgive sins. Well, guess what? You know what the resurrection demonstrates? Jesus is God. He has authority to forgive, and he has bequeathed that authority, amazingly, to us. We can announce this in his name.

SCOTT HOEZEE

One thing we don't often remember, even at Easter, is that Jesus didn't raise himself. He was raised by the power of the Father; and in the tradition of the Church, Dave, theologians have long understood that that biblical emphasis, that Jesus didn't self-rise, he was *raised* by the Father, that was the Father's way of saying: Everything he said leading up to his death I am officially approving; including what you just said, Dave; that free offer of forgiveness of sins...all those parables...everything. God the Father is saying: Yup; that was all true, and here is the proof of it. I have brought him back to life.

DAVE BAST

Right; so, we will look at one more wonderful passage that shows us what Jesus actually looks like now. We will do that as we wrap up the program.

Segment 3

SCOTT HOEZEE

I am Scott Hoezee, along with Dave Bast, and you are listening to *Groundwork*, as we are coming, in this part of the program, Dave, to an end of our look at the line from the Apostles' Creed: The third day he rose again from the dead. We have wondered about the significance of that third day. We just looked at some of Luke's story of the resurrection, and how Jesus' living presence was an utter shock and an utter surprise that even caused people to doubt that it could even be true. They didn't think resurrections happened every other day. They weren't naïve. This was something new. This just doesn't happen. Something new had happened—a new day had come. It changed everything.

DAVE BAST

Yes; and Jesus' last words to his disciples were: You are going to witness to this. I am going to give you the Spirit and he will empower you to bear witness to me, to the truth of my resurrection, and also to the implications of that...what that means for forgiveness; and we want to read the words of one of the great witnesses, very near the end of the New Testament, the last of the apostles, really: The Apostle John, in his vision in Revelation, where in Chapter 1 he describes what the risen Jesus looked like as he appeared to him. So, this is Revelation 1, beginning at verse 12:

When I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴The hair on his head

was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like a blazing fire. ¹⁵His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters.

SCOTT HOEZEE

¹⁶In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. ¹⁷When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said, “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. ¹⁸I am the Living One. I was dead, and now look, I am alive forever and ever; and I hold the keys of death and Hades.”

DAVE BAST

And what is so significant about this vision of John is what Jesus says about himself; because earlier, in the very opening verses of Revelation 1, God says: I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Living One, who was and is and is to come; and here, Jesus repeats almost the same thing, as if to say: You know, all that God is...me too. I am the First and the Last; I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive forever and ever. That really is why this Easter acclamation that we have been using, and that Christians repeat, especially on Easter...we don't just say: Christ *rose*; we say: Christ *is* risen, because he is alive; and I don't know how you picture Jesus...you know, there have been a lot of different paintings that artists have made...but this picture is so dazzling that John just collapses in front of the glory of this powerful, risen Lord Jesus Christ.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And indeed, it means death no longer...it is the final enemy, scripture says—death—not even the devil; the final enemy is death; and Jesus has destroyed it; and this is reflected on, also, in Hebrews Chapter 2...familiar words to many of us, talking about the incarnation of Jesus, which we looked at in the previous program in this series:

¹⁴Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself (Jesus) likewise shared the same thing so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death—that is, the devil—¹⁵and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death.

So, there it is. We have been freed from this servitude that we have been held in thrall by fear and the prospect of death; and we don't have to feel that way anymore.

DAVE BAST

Right; Jesus has won the victory. You know, we said in the last program...we talked a little bit about this phrase: He descended into hell...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DAVE BAST

And we referred to the medieval tradition called in English the harrowing of hell; in the Eastern Church it is called the *anastasis*, which literally means resurrection, but it is a scene that is often depicted in art, where Jesus has kicked down the doors of hell—of Hades—of the underworld; and he has grabbed the keys, and he has taken them back with him. That door has been destroyed and demolished, and whether or not he literally set free the souls of the Old Testament saints when that happened, again we said that is a little bit murky, but I happen to believe he didn't need to because they were already in the Father's presence because of their faith and hope in the promised Messiah.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DAVE BAST

But for us, the message is clear, isn't it?

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right; and it is good news; and let's admit, just pastorally, sometimes it is good news that is hard to hold onto. You know, there is that great line in 1 Corinthians 15: Where, O death, is your sting? I remember reading an Annie Dillard short story. This family that is so sad, burying their father in a cemetery. The minister at the graveside says: Where, O death, is thy sting? And this guy looks around at all the broken faces of his family; he looks at all the tombstones in the cemetery, and he says: Where, O death, is thy sting? Well, it is just about everywhere.

DAVE BAST

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And indeed, it does still hurt...

DAVE BAST

Yes, sure.

SCOTT HOEZEE

We do still hate, hate, hate the parting of our loved ones, even loved ones who are full of faith, full of the hope of the resurrection; for now, death still hurts. We are not fully in the kingdom, where death is once and for all banished and every tear will be dried from every eye; but, over and over the saints testify that this belief that the third day he rose again from the dead...that death has been swallowed up in victory is more than enough to help us go on and believe and know that these loved ones from whom we must part...we will see them again in our Father's bright kingdom.

DAVE BAST

Well, as we say, we walk by faith and not by sight, because in our sight, this last enemy, death, is still looming large; and as you said, it is horrible and terrible and it rips us apart...it rips our hearts apart to lose those whom we love; but again, notice what Hebrews actually says; It was by his death that he destroyed the one who had the power of death. If ever death seemed to have the last word, it was on Friday afternoon at Golgotha. We talked about Luke 24, and we passed over that story of the two going to Emmaus, but we did refer to it; but if you recall what they said, Scott: We thought he was the one. Well, in fact, he *was* the one, as his resurrection proved.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Thanks be to God. Well, thanks for listening and digging deeply into scripture with *Groundwork*. We are your hosts, Scott Hoezee and Dave Bast, and we hope you will join us again next time when we continue this Apostles' Creed study by exploring the scriptures that inform our beliefs about Jesus' ascension into heaven, and where Jesus is now.

Go to our website, groundworkonline.com. There, you can share what *Groundwork* means to you, as well as ideas for future *Groundwork* programs.

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