**Sin, Death and Hell Conquered**

Based on [Mark 16:1-8](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Mk16.1), [1 Cor. 15:51-57](https://biblia.com/books/esv/1Co15.51-57), and [Job 19:23-27](Job%2019:23-27)

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The Resurrection of Our Lord ~ Easter Day

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Early in the morning, after the Sabbath was over, women were carrying spices to Jesus’ tomb, to anoint him. He had died on a cross, executed by sinful men. They had followed him because they loved him, but sadly they did not understand that he would rise from the dead (John 20:9), nor what it all meant…that he would rise, and his resurrection of Jesus Christ would culminate his victory over sin, death, and hell.

Death is the god of the natural man. In his estimation death is all powerful, unconquerable, and irreversible. Death is also his savior and deliverer. Death rescues from pain. Death rescues from grief, depression, or so people say today.

But we know that physical Death is not an end. It is not a way to escape from a sad and suffering life. It is not the greatest threat to a happy and successful life. Physical Death is simply a death of the body, while one’s spirit and consciousness continue to exist either in heaven with God’s grace or in hell with God’s wrath.

Death does not end your existence; it never has. Those who believe that believe a lie, and put their trust in a ghost. Physical Death is only the separation of body and soul, and it is--properly speaking--only the death of the body. The body remains on the earth to decay in the grave but the soul is immortal.

We should get one thing straight this Easter festival. Jesus’ resurrection does not establish the immortality of the soul. The soul will exist forever. But what Jesus has done in his resurrection is he has *undone* death. And Jesus taught the Jews, “**Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear the voice of the Son of Man and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment**” (John 5:26).

What Jesus has done in rising from the dead is he has undone physical death for all people, and undone spiritual death for all who believe. **And so on the last day he will bring all people from their graves, the righteous and unrighteous, the sheep and goats.** Soul will be reunited with body. Those who refused baptism and Christ will inhabit again their old sinful flesh, and together with it be condemned to eternal torment. The book of Revelation calls this “the second death” (Revelation 21:8), consigned to the lake of fire forever prepared for the devil and his angels. The second death is hell.

All mankind was destined for hell. Since, Adam ate the fruit that God had forbidden him, the fruit of the tree of forbidden knowledge, the fruit of which God said, “**for the day you eat of it you shall surely die**”—because of this all must die physical death, and all have inherited sin and deserve the second death of hell.

But those who have believed on Christ, through baptism have died to sin and been given a new life so that, as Job has said, “**After my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another**.” His skin, his old sinful flesh will die forever, but he knows that he will be given a new, transfigured body, with a heart of flesh, to walk in the newness of life with his redeemer forever. This is the victory, Alleluia!

To celebrate Easter rightly, and the resurrection of Christ we must understand the full extent of his victory. **In rising from the dead, he conquered sin, death and hell, these *three*.** To deal with them separately is a mistake and wrongly divides the Word of God. But Paul writes comprehensively to say, “**the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.**” What he means is that the reason *death* is so terrifying to us is because of *sin*; and the reason *sin* is so terrifying is because *the Law condemns sinners to hell*. Since the fall, sin, death and hell, these three have remained, and the greatest of these is hell. But in the resurrection of Jesus, they have been conquered for those who believe.

So the Son of God came down from heaven, was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. **He lived a life of mercy, and grace, humility, faithfulness and obedience to his Father for about thirty-three years.** During that time, he, like us struggled against sin and the devil, and suffered temptation struggled and fought against it. But when the final three-day battle was begun He first suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; then He descended into hell, and finally on the third day he rose again from the dead.

He was crucified, and on the cross he defeated sin. We have already dealt with this on Passion Sunday and on Good Friday. **When Jesus said, “It is finished” he had finally suffered the full punishment and wrath for our sin that the law required.** The Law required hell for sin, that’s what Scripture means by saying “the power of sin is the law.” Hell is the righteous wrath of God against sin; and the Law requires Hell for sin, and Jesus suffered the full extent of hell on the cross. But death could not hold him, and hell could not claim him, and he rose again, Alleluia!

Hell is the wrath of God against sin; but hell is also a place. **It is that place where the evil are gathered together and the wrath of God is poured out upon unrighteousness**. It is a prisionhouse for those who would not turn to him who bought them. And as Christ says, “There is a chasm between there and heaven, so that no one may pass from one place to another” (Luke 16:26). It is a quarantine.

After he had defeated sin, next Christ in his body descended into the place called hell. He did not go there to suffer. He went there in victory and glory. He bound up Satan, plundered the keys to death and Hades (Rev. 1:18), and preached victory over the devils and spirits in hell’s prison (1 Peter 3:19). He disarmed the prince of this world and his servants, and making a public spectacle of them in triumph over them (Col. 2:15). The Son of Man judges Satan’s kingdom fallen and crushes it under his feet (Genesis 3:15).

Because Christ has conquered hell, Satan cannot accuse and torment the conscience of one who believes. All sin has been atoned for, and Satan can only lie to your conscience, the same way he lied to Eve. He only has power if you believe him. And if you believe him, he can torment you, as he did Judas, and drive him to despair and suicide and perdition. But if you instead call him by his real names--liar and murderer--and do not believe his words but Christ’s words, he will flee from you, and Christ who is in you will forgive all your sins, and give you eternal life.

On Friday, Christ conquered sin, on Saturday hell and the devil. Today is Sunday, the first day of the week, the eighth day of the new creation. It is on the third day that he is raised from hell and the grave, proclaiming victory over Death itself. Death could not hold him…because hell could not claim him…because he knew no sin. But he became sin, to suffer hell and die in our place, disabling death, disarming its sting, and giving us the victory.

And son now, what are we to do? Are we to turn to death, or to life? Now that the victory is won, do we turn to the grave or to Christ? The world says “Nobody lives forever”: false. Everybody lives forever, they live either in eternal death or eternal life. Choose eternal life which the Son of Man will give you. Christ has won it for all, and offers it freely to those who would believe.

Sin, death, the devil and hell are enemies. Renounce them and cling to Christ, our Passover lamb who has been sacrificed. He is not here, he is risen and ascended, but he gives us his Holy Spirit here, his own body and blood to eat and drink here. This sacrament is the Paschal feast of victory, giving us the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation.