

John 20v1

13th January 2019am Hill and Arcadia

A new start

The very first Divine **promise and prophecy** (*Genesis 3:15*) pointing to Jesus, speaks of Him being “*knocked down but not out and gone*”.

If Jesus was to bruise **the serpent’s head** after His own heel had been bruised by the enemy, then He must rise from the dead.

Also we see that according to Peter (*1 Peter 3:20-21*) the passing of **the ark** through the waters of judgement on to safe ground foreshadowed the resurrection.

The deliverance of **Isaac** from the altar, after he had been given up to death 3 days before (*Genesis 22:4*), is interpreted by the Holy Spirit as a receiving of him back from the dead; this being a type of the resurrection of Jesus.

There is **Jonah** who emerges from the belly of a big fish after three days and three nights; again pointing to the resurrection of Jesus.

We also have **prophecy** preparing us for this great event; as in...

Psalms 16:9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. 10 For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. 11 You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Believing in the physical and historical resurrection of Jesus is not **an optional** theological idea.

Not only did Christ die for our sins, but also he rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures (*1 Corinthians 15:1-4*).

It is the suffering and death of Christ along with His resurrection that is **provides substance** to the gospel message *1 Corinthians 15:14 And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.*

Read John 20

John 20 records **the events** of that resurrection Sunday morning; giving some detail of the appearances Jesus made to some of His disciples after He had risen from the dead.

Our interest today is in **Mary Magdalene**. But before we get to her specifically, I would like us to think about the timing of the resurrection of Jesus.

John 20:1 Now on the first day of the week...

Because we know that all the ways of God express His perfect wisdom, **what significance** is there for us to see from the clear statement that Mary made her way

to the tomb on the first day of the week later discovering Jesus had rose from the dead?

One reason is that it was most fitting that Jesus, as head of the new creation, should rise from the dead on the first day of the week – implying that a new beginning had been inaugurated.

1 Personal and cosmic hope finalized

During **the OT times** the Sabbath was the memorial of God's finished work in the old creation.

Genesis 2:3 So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

But after the resurrection of Jesus **the early church** very consciously and deliberately moved to the first day of the week as their 'Sabbath'. For them now after resurrection the Sabbath is the memorial of Christ's finished work which brings about the new creation.

What God had made in the beginning was good; but man in his disobedience and rebellion **chose a pathway** leading to brokenness, suffering and death. That is the way of the world as we know it and experience it.

The world and its people ended up **in trouble with God**... *Romans 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men...*

But God! But God and His redeeming, saving, rescuing, renewing, re-creating work through Jesus.

On the cross Jesus had met the **full requirements** of the moral law on behalf of sinful people. Justice was served and mercy shown.

Salvation was achieved for people who were **not His people** but would become His people. Individual people from every nation tribe and language will be gathered to assemble in worship at the throne of God in heaven.

The salvation that was achieved is being applied to individual people. And then at a particular point in time (that day), **the old order** of things will pass away and there will be a new creation – a new heaven and a new earth.

Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week finalizing **much needed hope** for broken people and for a broken world.

There is **a message** for you and me as believers - about much needed hope at the beginning of a new year.

What we know and what we have and experience will not always be.

The life of a believer, in the present and especially in the future, *'is more than and greater than and above'* political turmoil, hatred, racism, war, atom bombs, global warming, disease, poverty, victimization, persecution, disappointment, brokenness and death.

These things never have **the final determinative word or action**. There is always hope for the believer in the worst situation and after the worst situation.

There is always **the prospect** of better things ahead for those who receive the good news of the gospel of Jesus.

For you if you are **truly converted** by the Spirit of God to Christ... *2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

You live your life no longer under the condemnation and wrath of God but as a **beneficiary** of the accomplishments of Jesus;

In affliction the prospect of God holding on to you giving you all you need to cope...

2 Corinthians 12:9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

You can always be confident of God's **favourable presence** through thick and thin.

Matthew 28:20 And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Even in death... *2 Corinthians 5:1 For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

Ultimately **no fear** on that day when Jesus returns to finally usher in His kingdom

1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

All of what Jesus accomplished on the cross as the object of God's wrath has **finalized personal and cosmic hope**. He has achieved and is achieving new beginnings for broken people and a broken world.

Know as you face 2019 and beyond that as a believer you are **not at the mercy** of circumstances and systems and kings and disease... hope in the present and for the future has been secured by Jesus.

With that hope in mind let us know **turn to Mary**... *John 20:1 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.*

2 Personal devotion demonstrated

John **singles out Mary Magdalene** as the first of the followers of Jesus to get to the tomb.

This is the Mary out of whom the Lord Jesus had **cast seven demons** (*Mark 16:9; Luke 8:2*). She was someone who had been subjected to the particular and personal horror of Satan's possession.

But now delivered Mary was **devoted** to Jesus. We already see evidence of this in *Luke 8:3* where she is 1 in a group of 3 women who supported Jesus in ministry out of their means.

It is not difficult to see that Mary was: **JC Ryle** "...one whose gratitude to our Lord for deliverance was gratitude that knew no bounds ...of all our Lord's followers on earth, none seem to have loved Him so much as Mary Magdalene. None felt they owed so much to Christ"

Other evidence of her devotion expressed by another author: "*She was last at His cross, and first at His grave*", "*She stayed longest there, and was soonest here*".

It seems to me that Mary was devoted to Jesus; even when it seemed **all was lost**; when the chips were down. She loved Jesus. While others could sleep and get on with other things, she was up before sunrise to get to the grave.

It could be said that having received much, she loved much, and loving much, she did much, giving evidence of her love for Jesus.

The personal devotion demonstrated by Mary does in a big way bring clarity to a **question** which every professing believer and servant of Christ ought to ask...

How is it that many who profess and call themselves Christians, do so little for the Saviour whose name they bear?

How is it that many, whose faith and grace it would be unkind to deny, work so little, give so little, say so little, take so little pains to promote the cause, and bring glory to Christ in the world?

I would suggest that the answer is that they have a **low sense of obligation** to Christ? Where sin is not felt at all, nothing is done.

JC Ryle: "*the man who is deeply conscious of his own guilt and corruption, and deeply convinced that without the blood and intercession of Christ he would sink deservedly into the lowest hell, this is the man who will spend and be spent for Jesus, and think that he can never do enough to show forth praise.*"

How will you and I be kept from or rescued from apathy and slackness and laziness and complacency and distraction and excuses?

Only when we see the sinfulness of our sin, and the amazing grace of Christ more and more distinctly; then and only then will we stop being cold and lukewarm and lazy in our work for Jesus.

It is then that the **words of Paul** will resonate through our being...

2 Corinthians 5:14 For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; 15 and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

Unwillingness to step and to the plate and be spent for Jesus has less to do with busyness and more to do with **a weak apprehension of personal sin** and domesticated understanding of the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

Conclusion

Every New Year provides an opportunity for **a new start**.

Hope is the key that opens the door of encouragement and perseverance.

Love for Jesus is the key that opens the door to meaningful Christian service.

Are these **the keys** you are carrying around in your heart? If so...

- Hope will take the place of **fear and uncertainty** in 2019.
- Love will enable you **not to waste** the year ahead on useless things.