

# First Days of a New World

Thomas Robinson, *Easter*, April 21, 2019

## Matthew 28:1-10

<sup>1</sup> When the Sabbath was well past, as the **first day of the week** began to dawn, **Mary Magdalene** and the other **Mary** went to look at the **tomb**.

<sup>2</sup> Suddenly, there was a great **earthquake**, for an **angel** of the Lord had descended from heaven and had come and **rolled back the stone** and sat on it. <sup>3</sup> His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. <sup>4</sup> From their fear of him, the **guards quaked** and became like corpses.

<sup>5</sup> But the angel spoke to the women, **“You, don’t be afraid**, for I know that you are **seeking Jesus who was crucified**. <sup>6</sup> He is not here, for **he has been raised**, just as he said. **Come, look at the place where he was lying**. <sup>7</sup> Now quickly, **go tell his disciples** that he has been raised from among the dead, and look, he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him. Look, I’ve given you the message.”

<sup>8</sup> So quickly leaving the tomb **full of fear and great joy**, they ran to announce this to his disciples. <sup>9</sup> And unexpectedly **Jesus encountered them** with the word, **“Greetings!”** But they came to him and **grasped his feet and worshiped him**. <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus says to them, **“Don’t be afraid! Be on your way and announce to my brothers and sisters** that they should go to Galilee, and there they’ll see me.”

## John 20:19-29

<sup>19</sup> When the evening of that the **first day of the week arrived**, although the **doors were locked** where the disciples were because of their fear of the Jewish leaders, **Jesus came and stood in their midst** and said, **“Peace to you!”** <sup>20</sup> When he had said this, he **showed them his hands and his side**. The disciples broke out in **celebration** when they **saw the Lord**.

<sup>21</sup> Jesus therefore said to them again, **“Peace to you! As the Father has sent me, just so I am sending you.”** <sup>22</sup> And when he had said this, he **breathed into them** (Gen 2:7) and says to them, **“Receive the Holy Spirit**. <sup>23</sup> If you **forgive the sins** of any, they’re forgiven for them; if for any you retain, they’re retained.”

<sup>24</sup> But **Thomas**, one of the twelve, called Twin (Didymus), was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> So the other disciples were telling him, **“We have seen the Lord.”**

But he said to them, **“Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails**, and put my finger into the mark of the nails, and put my hand into his side, **I’ll never believe!”**

<sup>26</sup> Eight days later, again his disciples were inside and **Thomas with them**. Jesus comes, although the **doors had been locked**, stands their midst, and said, **“Peace to you!”**

<sup>27</sup> Then he says to Thomas, **“Stretch out your finger** here and see my hands; and stretch out your hand and put it into my side. **Don’t be faithless, but believing.”**

<sup>28</sup> Thomas responded to him, **“My Lord and my God!”**

<sup>29</sup> Jesus says to him, **“Because you have seen me, you have come to believe. Blessings on those who’ve not seen and yet have come to believe!”**

---

## 1 Corinthians 15:3-8

<sup>3</sup> For I handed on to you among the very first things what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, <sup>4</sup> and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, <sup>5</sup> and that he was seen by Cephas (Peter), then by the twelve.

<sup>6</sup> Later he was seen by more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep (died). <sup>7</sup> Then he was seen by James (Jesus' brother), then by all the apostles. <sup>8</sup> But last of all, as to one born beyond term, he was seen also by me.

---

## **A New World of Life – Breaking Into the Empire of Death**

Celebrating Jesus' resurrection is rejoicing in a challenge that hits us every day and never goes away. We humans everywhere structure life around power over others in all its forms, raw violence, manipulative enticement, structures of control, financial reward... Even our best intentions and policies must be enforced. Behind all is death's power. Jesus' resurrection is the event in which God reveals that his own world/reality is creating life, not threatening death. He shows our patterns of religion, politics, life struggle, are not his eternal reality. He broke into our human empire of death with his Kingdom of life and challenges each of us to see his reality of Love, Grace, Trust. It's there in plain sight, if we're not blinded. But it's hard. We are blinded by our little reality, by fear!

## **Creating a New World and Building on its Reality**

We don't create a New World. God did that in Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Conquering death, revealing creation overwhelming destruction. Jesus invites us into that reality and commissions us to implement/ build life on that physical/spiritual truth. God unites his world. Resurrection is historical fact that pushes our minds to see the world's openness to God. It has a distinct shape. Not one of the disciples is from the elite classes. Jesus chooses to appear first to women, Mary & Mary, to break the assumptions of even those lowly apostles. Testimony in a world of distorted power.

## **God's Forgiveness for the World**

When God draws us into his New World, Jesus commissions tasks that seem impossible. He breaths the Holy Spirit in and commissions his followers to build a world of both forgiveness of sins, but also rejection of the old patterns of power, domination, death. We are called to his life and to see all life within the reality of resurrection. In my person, community, family, nation, world, I'm called to disempower death by identifying sins, forgiving people, turning all from sins and living in a new way of self-giving love.

## **The Importance of Doubt, Knowledge, and Faith**

Often teachers treat the resurrection as a doctrine, a concept, a story from which we can extract an essence and let the rest go. Thomas's experience stands against that. As an event, it's like all historical events. It happened and can't be repeated. But it's important that Jesus was really present, seen, bodily real to the disciples.

God chose very ordinary people but they were as hard-nosed as we would be. None of them expected this or could have constructed it from imagination. Much less a whole group. Yet they lived and died for this truth, for others who did not see it.

## **My Lord and My God!**

The four Gospels include memories of the resurrection from various points of view. They make a point of including doubt. Thomas wants knowledge he can trust/believe. Jesus gives it, and Thomas recognizes far more. Jesus points directly to us this morning!