

Mark 16:1-8
The Third Day
WRCoB 3.31.16

I hate to burst your bubble, but . . .
Easter bunnies don't lay Easter eggs

And there is no connection between bunnies and eggs
With our Scripture Lesson today.

There are no Easter eggs to find in or around the tomb
No popcorn or cotton candy

In fact, there is no reference to Easter in the Bible.

Easter's etymology is this.

*Old English ēastre ; of Germanic origin and related to
German Ostern and east; perhaps from Ēastre, the name of
a goddess associated with spring.*

In other words, Easter has no connection
With Resurrection Sunday

Other than the fact, the early Christians
Combined a spring celebration of Easter
With Jesus' Resurrection.

Throughout history, Christians adopted
Pagan symbols and rituals
To make the faith a bit more palatable.

Along with the Easter bunny, and egg
The Christmas tree, holly, mistletoe

Even the appointed day for Jesus' birth
Were all borrowed from the secular world.

I don't personally have a problem with this.

I just want to make clear

The word Easter, even my spell check
Wants to capitalize it
Is not a biblical term.

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Christmas always takes place December 25th.

The date was the selected because of the winter solstice
The darkest time of year.

What better timing for the light of the world
To enter into our reality.

They almost got it right.

The actual winter solstice is December 21st.

But why does the anniversary of his death and resurrection
Jump all over the place
Making spring holiday planning so difficult?

Easter coincides with Passover
For we know Passover occurred
The evening of Friday to sunset Saturday.

Easter occurs on the first Sunday
After the first full moon following the vernal equinox
Thus making it a moveable event.

And so, depending on the year Jesus died
No one can say for sure the date of his actual death.

However, scholars from both Midwestern Seminary
And the University of Chicago
Claim with some degree of confidence
That they have calculated the date.

Based on pretty challenging methodology
Using the Pharisaic/rabbinic calendar
And known historic dates

They have pegged Jesus death on Friday, April 3rd, 33 AD

Here's something interesting
And we'll discuss it more in a minute.

Look at the threes.

Jesus was crucified on
April 3, 33 AD, at 3 PM

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Maybe it's not a big deal.

But I think it is an important finding.

As the scholars from Midwestern wrote

Because Christianity is a historical religion and the events of Christ's life did take place in human history alongside other known events, it is helpful to locate Jesus's death—as precisely as the available evidence allows—within the larger context of human history.

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Mark describes Easter morning in the briefest of ways.

Actually, all the gospel accounts of that morning are brief.

It's certainly briefer than the account
Of the arrest, trials, and the crucifixion of Jesus.

And when you compare them together
None of the gospel accounts are quite the same.

But that's how chaotic eye witness accounts tend to be.

This is what we know from Mark.

Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome
Went early Sunday to where they buried Jesus.

When they arrived
They discovered the stone rolled away
And the tomb empty.

What we know is they met someone inside the tomb.

Mark doesn't call him an angel
Just that he's dressed in white.

He informed the women Jesus was alive
And to go and meet him in Galilee.

Mark 16:8 NIV

Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

That's the end of the story according to Mark.

Now I did not include verses 9-20
Because they weren't part of Mark's original gospel.

Later, scribes inserted the rest of the story
Based on the other accounts
Which were already established.

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It's pretty much a fact
That of the 4 gospels
Mark's gospel was written first.

It was written around 70 AD some 40 years later

Mark was not an eye witness.

His record is a collection of stories from several sources
Including testimony from the disciple Peter.

To read the earliest account of Easter
We'd have to go to the Apostle Paul.

Paul wrote about it in 50 AD
20 years earlier than Mark.

Hear is what Paul has to say.

1 Corinthians 15:3-5 NRSVue

³For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures ⁴and that he was buried and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

This is the earliest written reference
To Jesus' death and resurrection

Paul says, according to Scripture
He died and was buried
And on the third day he was raised.

On the third day.

We can point to several OT passages
That point to the suffering and death of Christ.

The most well-known being Isaiah 53
Commonly known as the Suffering Servant.

Psalms 22, Zechariah 12:10-14 are two more.

But raised on the third day according to the Scriptures?

Where's the Scripture to support that?

Biblically, the third day is a significant.

We know that certain numbers in Scripture
Are symbolically important, right?

For instance, the number 40
Symbolizes a proper length of time for great change.

The rain that fell during the Great Flood was 40 days
The Wilderness Experience was 40 years
Jesus was tempted for 40 days.

But what about the number three?

*The number three biblically represents divine wholeness,
completeness and perfection (John Piper).*

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On the very first, third day, stay with me now
According to Scripture
God first created life on earth.

It was also the third day
That Isaac destined to be killed by his father Abraham
Was spared his life (Gen. 22:1-14)

It was the third day
That Joseph released his brothers from prison in Egypt
(Gen. 42:18).

Jonah was in the belly of the fish
For how long? For three days (Jonah 1:17).

According to Scripture, it was the third day
The people of Israel dying of thirst in the wilderness
Found life-giving water (Ex. 15:22-25).

And when the people of Israel arrived at Mt Sinai
They were told by Moses
To wait for three days.

Exodus 19:11 CEB

**Be ready for the third day, because on the third day
the Lord will come down on Mount Sinai for all the
people to see.**

Queen Esther fasted and on the third day
Entered the King's chambers
To save her people from genocide.

And maybe the greatest third day prophecy in the OT
Comes from Hosea.

Hosea 6:1-2 NRSVue

**“Come, let us return to the Lord,
for it is he who has torn, and he will heal us;
he has struck down, and he will bind us up.
² After two days he will revive us;
on the third day he will raise us up,
that we may live before him.**

And finally, on a lighter note
On the third day
There was a wedding in Cana in Galilee

The day Jesus performed his first miracle
Turning water into wine.

The third day is a day filled with promise and fulfillment
Of new life and new beginnings.

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On the very first third day ever, God created life

Where there was nothing, God created something . . .
Breathing, growing, living, LIFE.

And then, on this, the third day, in 33 AD

God did it again.

God raised up life where before, only death

God broke through the laws of nature
That he himself created
And did something extraordinary

Paul says, Christ was raised on the third day
According to the Scripture.

Note, that Paul didn't say Jesus woke up
Or that he raised himself up
Or that he came out of a coma

No, God, raised him on the third day.

By the same power that created the heavens and earth
The same power that keeps all things in its place
God breathed new life into Jesus

And raised him up not only into this earthly life
But raised him up into the heavenly realm in glory.

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On that particular third day
God raised life from death
Hope from despair

And raised up a new covenant
From out of the old.

God has done a new thing

This is what God has done, according to Scripture.

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And because of this third day
Because of what God has done
God can raise you up too.

God can raise you up from the depths of despair
And give you hope

God can take you out of that dark place
And bring you into the light

A new life awaits you!

One that is full of grace

Because of what God has done in Christ
We no longer need to bear the sins of our past

We no longer need to live in regret and remorse
Reliving past mistakes
Haunted by past experiences
Doomed to repeat them again and again

Because his Resurrection becomes our resurrection.

Because His third day becomes our first day.

For this is the day the Lord has made
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

This is why Easter; Resurrection Sunday is so important.

It stands before you as a testimony to what God has done
And can do in your life.

If God has the power to raise Christ from the dead
You question whether
He has the power to change your life?

Jesus says, ask and you shall receive
Knock and the door will be open.

Make Jesus's death worthwhile
By accepting his gift of life
Made possible through Christ's suffering love.

Let his third day become your first day.