

THUS IT IS WRITTEN

Jesus, on a number of occasions, taught His disciples that He had to be killed, but would rise from the dead. On one occasion, Jesus said, “The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.” (Luke 9:22) On another occasion, He said, “Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men.” (Luke 9:44) On another, He said:

Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again. (Luke 18:31–33)

Jesus’s disciples understood what He meant about being killed, and, on the first occasion, Saint Peter even vowed to prevent it; yet, they did not understand what He meant about rising from the dead, and they did not understand the Scriptures. Jesus’s disciples did not understand the Scriptures about the resurrection of the Christ until He rose from the dead and explained the Scriptures to them.

Early in the morning on the third day, some of the women went to the tomb to anoint Jesus’s body with spices. They discussed needing someone to roll away the stone that covered the entrance, but, when they arrived at the tomb, they saw that someone had already rolled it away. They entered the tomb, and, when they saw that Jesus’s body was not there, they did not know what to think. (Luke 24:4) Mary Magdalene ran to tell Peter and John that someone had removed Jesus’s body from the tomb, and that she and the other women did not know what had become of it. While the remaining women were at the tomb, two angels appeared to them, and said:

Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. (Luke 24:5–7)

Then the women remembered what Jesus had said about rising from the dead. (Luke 24:8) The women reported to some of the disciples that they had seen Jesus’s tomb empty, and that angels had told them that Jesus was alive, but those disciples did not believe them. (Luke 24:22, 23) Peter and John, when Mary Magdalene told them about the empty tomb, ran to see for themselves, with Mary Magdalene and another Mary following. When the two men saw that the tomb was empty, they believed Jesus had risen, but they did not yet understand the Scriptures. (Luke 24:12; John 20:8, 9) Peter and John returned to their home, but the two women remained at the tomb. They saw an angel, sitting atop the stone, who told them that Jesus was risen, and to see for themselves the empty tomb, and to tell Jesus’s disciples. When Mary looked inside the tomb, she saw two angels. They asked her why she was weeping, and she answered that someone had taken Jesus’s body. When Mary turned back, the risen Christ appeared to her. When Mary Magdalene told the disciples that she had seen Jesus alive, they did not believe her. (Mark 16:10, 11)

That same day, Clopas and another disciple traveled from Jerusalem to a village called Emmaus. As they walked, Jesus joined them, but they did not recognize Him. Jesus asked them what they were discussing that made them so sad. They told Him that they spoke of Jesus, who was a prophet who said and did great things, and that the people believed in Him, but the chief priests and rulers executed Him. They had trusted that Jesus

would redeem Israel, but He had been three days dead. Yet, some of the women of their company had told them that they had gone to Jesus's tomb, and found it empty, and that angels had told them that Jesus was alive. Some of the men had gone to the tomb, and confirmed that it was empty, but they did not see Jesus alive. It seems that the men did not know what to think, but did not believe that Jesus was alive. Jesus then said to them, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" (Luke 24:25, 26) Jesus rebuked them for their unbelief. Whether they saw Jesus alive, or not, they should have believed that He was, because the Scriptures taught that the Christ would be humiliated and then exalted. Then, beginning with Moses, and continuing through all the prophets, Jesus showed them what the Scriptures taught about Him.

As the three drew near to the village, Jesus, not willing to presume upon the two men, would have continued on His way, but they invited Him to stay with them. As they sat down to eat, Jesus blessed the bread, and broke it, and gave it to the men. Then their eyes opened, so to speak, and they recognized Jesus. Then Jesus vanished from their sight. The two men said to each other, "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" (Luke 24:32) When Jesus explained to them the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit kindled the fire of faith in them, and they believed that He was Jesus, risen from the dead. Then they returned to Jerusalem, and joined the eleven disciples, and some others, but Thomas was absent. They all believed that Jesus had risen from the dead, because Peter had seen Jesus alive. The two that came from Emmaus told the others that Jesus had explained to them the Scriptures, and that they knew him through the breaking of bread. This is to say that Jesus is known by faith, not only by the Word, but by the sacrament of Holy Communion.

As they were speaking, Jesus appeared to them. He said to them, "Peace be unto you," but they were terrified, and thought Jesus was a spirit. So, Jesus said to them, "Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." (Luke 24:38, 39) The disciples should not have been frightened, or troubled; He was not a spirit, but Jesus in the flesh, and they should have known. So, Jesus told them to see his hands and feet, that they bore the scars of crucifixion. He told them that they could touch Him, for He was not a spirit, but flesh and bone. Yet, for the disciples, Jesus risen from the dead was too good to be true, and they were reluctant to believe their eyes. Their wish for Jesus to be alive was so great that they dared not believe it. At the Last Supper, Jesus had told them, "And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." (John 16:22) Jesus asked them if they had anything to eat, and they gave Him some fish, and some honeycomb, and He ate them. He did this, not because he needed any food to sustain Him, but so that He might offer to His disciples yet another proof that He was flesh and bone, and not a spirit.

Then Jesus said to them, "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me." (Luke 24:44) Then Jesus opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. He told them that all the Scriptures are about Him, and that He is their fulfillment. He gave them this summary: "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke 24:46, 47) The Scriptures teach that the Christ was to suffer for the sins of men, and not suffer mere pain, but death. The Scriptures also teach that the Christ was to rise from the dead on the third day. Moreover, the Scriptures teach that, as Christ had to die for the sins of men, and to rise from the dead, repentance and remission of sins would be preached to all the nations of the world, beginning in Jerusalem. This is the gospel, namely, that men are sinners, but God sent His Son into the world to die for their sins. His death is a propitiation of the sons of he

world. Because the Son did not deserve to die, God raised Him from the dead. If a man would be forgiven his sins, then He must repent of them, and believe that Jesus has both died for his sins, and also risen from the dead.

Then Jesus said, “And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.” (Luke 24:48, 49) The disciples were not only witnesses of His life, of His mighty words and works, but also of His death, and of His resurrection, the greatest proof of His claims. Jesus would make His disciples, His followers, to be His apostles, sent into the world to bear witness that Jesus is the Christ who died for the sins of the world, and whom God raised from the dead. As apostles of Jesus, they would have His authority to proclaim the gospel to the world, and the world is bound to believe them. Jesus told them that, before they went out into the world, they should wait in Jerusalem, and there God would send to them the Holy Spirit, as both the Father and the Son had promised. Through the prophet Joel, God said:

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. (Joel 2:28, 29)

Jesus told His disciples, “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth,” and, “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.” (John 14:16, 17; 15:26, 27) The Father and the Son would send into the world the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, and He would give the apostles the words to say, and to write, so that they would be authoritative witnesses to the truth.

After God sent His Spirit to the apostles, Peter and John one afternoon went up to the temple to pray. There was a man there, who was lame from the beginning of his life, and every day people would lay him at a temple gate so that he might ask alms of those at the temple, and, when he saw Peter and John enter, he asked alms of them. Peter fixed his gaze on the man, as did John, and Peter said to the man, “Look at us.” So, the man, expecting to receive something from them, gave them his attention. Peter said to the man, “Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.” (Acts 3:6) Then Peter took the man by the right hand, and raised him up, and the man was made well, and he, walking and leaping, and praising God, went into the temple with the two apostles. The people in the temple recognized the man as the one who daily begged alms at the gate, and they were amazed. A great crowd gathered, and Saint Peter said to them:

Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. (Acts 3:12–16)

Saint Peter addressed the man of Israel, God's covenant people. He asked them why they marveled at the lame man's healing. He asked them why they looked at him and Saint John as if they themselves healed the man through their power or piety. They could not take credit for the healing, but had to give credit where credit was due, and it was due to Jesus of Nazareth. This Jesus the men of Israel delivered to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, and denied Him, although Pilate believed He was innocent and would release Him. They denied the Holy One of God, the One who is truly just, and they demanded that a murderer be released. This Jesus is the Prince of life. Jesus said that, just as the Father has life in Himself, so He gave to His Son to have life in Himself. (John 5:26) Jesus said that He is the resurrection and the life. (John 11:25) In the greatest crime in history, even greater than the death of mankind, the men of Israel killed the Prince of life. The men of Israel denied Jesus, the Son of God, but God glorified Him by raising Him from the dead, a fact to which Saint Peter and Saint John bore witness. By faith in the name of Jesus the man who was too weak to walk, or even to stand, was made strong enough, not only to walk, but to leap. Faith in the name of Jesus made the broken man whole.

The Saint Peter said:

And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. (Acts 3:17–21)

The apostle granted that the men of Israel, and their rulers, did not know what they were doing when they killed Christ. Yet, in what they did, God fulfilled what He through the prophets had revealed, namely the suffering of Christ for sinners. Given what the men of Israel did to Christ, there was only one recourse for them: repent of their sins, and turn to God. If they would do this, then God would forgive their sins. Although they killed Christ, His death was a propitiation for sins. Saint Peter understood first-hand that of which he spoke, for he had denied Christ, but, because he repented, Christ forgave and restored him. Saint Peter preached the gospel that he himself believed, and that Christ told him to preach. Moreover, if the nation of Israel would repent, there would be times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, for then He would once again send Christ into the world, for Christ must remain in heaven with God until the time when God would put the world right, even doing away with death, as He promised through His holy prophets.

Saint Peter continued:

For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities. (Acts 3:22–26)

The apostle reminded the people that Moses had told their forefathers that God would raise up a prophet like him, from among the people, and that the people should heed everything that prophet might say, and everyone that did not heed him would be destroyed. Not only Moses, but Samuel and all the prophets after him told of the coming Christ. The Israelites of Saint Peter's time were descendants of the prophets, and children of the covenant that God made with the patriarchs. It was to Abraham that God made the promise that in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed. (Genesis 22:18) So, it was to the Jews first that God sent His Son Jesus to bestow upon them the great blessing of repentance and forgiveness. For Isaiah the prophet prophesied, "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. As for me, this is my covenant with them," (Isaiah 59:20, 21) and, "this is all the fruit to take away his sin." (Isaiah 27:9; compare Romans 9:26, 27) God sent Christ to the Jew first, but, according to the promise God made to Abraham, Christ is for the entire world. God sent His Son into the world to save it, by making atonement for sin, and forgiving all those who repent. This is the message of the gospel. This is the message of the Scriptures.

Let us believe the prophets and the apostles. Let us believe that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. Let us always repent and believe in Him.

Unto the Father, and unto the Son, and unto the Holy Spirit, be ascribed in the Church all honor and glory, might, majesty, dominion, and blessing, now, henceforth, and ever. Amen.