

Lectionary Bible Study

For Sunday, April 20, 2025 (Easter Sunday)

Acts 10:34-43 (Amplified)

³⁴ And Peter opened his mouth and said: Most certainly *and* thoroughly I now perceive *and* understand that God shows no partiality *and* is no respecter of persons,

³⁵ But in every nation he who venerates *and* has a reverential fear for God, treating Him with worshipful obedience and living uprightly, is acceptable to Him *and* sure of being received and welcomed [by Him].

³⁶ You know the contents of the message which He sent to Israel, announcing the good news (Gospel) of peace by Jesus Christ, Who is Lord of all—

³⁷ The [same] message which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, starting from Galilee after the baptism preached by John—

³⁸ How God anointed *and* consecrated Jesus of Nazareth with the [Holy] Spirit and with strength *and* ability *and* power; how He went about doing good and, in particular, curing all who were harassed *and* oppressed by [the power of] the devil, for God was with Him.

³⁹ And we are [eye and ear] witnesses of everything that He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. And [yet] they put Him out of the way (murdered Him) by hanging Him on a tree;

⁴⁰ But God raised Him to life on the third day and caused Him to be manifest (to be plainly seen),

⁴¹ Not by all the people but to us who were chosen (designated) beforehand by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead.

⁴² And He charged us to preach to the people and to bear solemn testimony that He is the God-appointed *and* God-ordained Judge of the living and the dead.

⁴³ To Him all the prophets testify (bear witness) that everyone who believes in Him [who adheres to, trusts in, and relies on Him, giving himself up to Him] receives forgiveness of sins through His name.

Discussion Starters

1. What is the context for this story and for Peter's speech? What happened?
2. What is the main point of Peter's sermon? What then is the main point of the gospel message?
3. What does God expect from the people who follow Him?
4. Peter's sermon begins "I now realize." What did he think before? How do you know if your change in thinking is God-prompted or just a yielding to political pressures?

1 Corinthians 15:19-26

¹⁹ If we who are [abiding] in Christ have hope only in this life *and* that is all, then we are of all people most miserable *and* to be pitied.

²⁰ But the fact is that Christ (the Messiah) has been raised from the dead, and He became the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep [in death].

²¹ For since [it was] through a man that death [came into the world, it is] also through a Man that the resurrection of the dead [has come].

²² For just as [because of their union of nature] in Adam all people die, so also [by virtue of their union of nature] shall all in Christ be made alive.

²³ But each in his own rank *and* turn: Christ (the Messiah) [is] the firstfruits, then those who are Christ's [own will be resurrected] at His coming.

²⁴ After that comes the end (the completion), when He delivers over the kingdom to God the Father after rendering inoperative *and* abolishing every [other] rule and every authority and power.

²⁵ For [Christ] must be King *and* reign until He has put all [His] enemies under His feet.

²⁶ The last enemy to be subdued *and* abolished is death.

Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to you that in the end Jesus Christ will be victorious? How would life be different for you if you did not have that hope?
2. What does it mean when it refers to Jesus as the "firstfruit of those who have fallen asleep?"
3. How is death the last enemy to be destroyed? What were the other enemies?
4. Why is the resurrection of Jesus essential?
5. How did death come into the picture? Did God create it?

Luke 24:1-12 (Amplified)

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, [the women] went to the tomb, taking the spices which they had made ready.

² And they found the stone rolled back from the tomb,

³ But when they went inside, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

⁴ And while they were perplexed *and* wondering what to do about this, behold, two men in dazzling raiment suddenly stood beside them.

⁵ And as [the women] were frightened and were bowing their faces to the ground, the men said to them, Why do you look for the living among [those who are] dead?

⁶ He is not here, but has risen! Remember how He told you while He was still in Galilee

⁷ That the Son of Man must be given over into the hands of sinful men (men whose way or nature is to act in opposition to God) and be crucified and on the third day rise [from death].

⁸ And they remembered His words.

⁹ And having returned from the tomb, they reported all these things [taken together] to the eleven apostles and to all the rest.

¹⁰ Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who reported these things to the apostles.

¹¹ But these reports seemed to the men an idle tale (madness, feigned things, nonsense), and they did not believe the women.

¹² But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; and stooping down and looking in, he saw the linen cloths alone by themselves, and he went away, wondering about *and* marveling at what had happened.

Discussion Starters

1. Given what these women had seen and experienced over the last several days, how would you describe their mood as they went to the tomb?
2. What about the experience that morning would have caused the women to be perplexed and frightened?
3. Why did the women not remember the teachings of Jesus until prompted by the angels?
4. Who were the Eleven, and who were the other people with them?
5. Why did the Eleven (and others) not believe the women when they reported what they had seen?
6. Why do you suppose the angels appeared to the women but were gone by the time Peter arrived?
7. What details about the resurrection story are missing from Luke's account?

WRAP UP

What key insight did you gain from this Bible study? How might it make a difference in how you live today?

COMMENTARY – EASTER SUNDAY YEAR C

Isaiah 65:17-25

65:17–25. In these verses the Lord described the millennial kingdom, which is seemingly identified here with the eternal state (new heavens and a new earth). In Revelation, however, the new heavens and new earth (Rev. 21:1) follow the Millennium (Rev. 20:4). Most likely Isaiah did not distinguish between these two aspects of God's rule; he saw them together as one. After all, the Millennium, though 1,000 years in duration, will be a mere pinpoint of time compared with the eternal state.

The need for new heavens and a new earth is suggested in Isaiah 51:6. During the Millennium Jerusalem will be a place of joy (65:18). Also the Lord Himself will rejoice over it, for sorrow will be vanished (v. 19). Though death will still be present, life spans will be extended (v. 20) and people will enjoy safety and the produce of their vineyards (vv. 21–22). God's blessing will be on their work and families (v. 23) and He will speedily answer their prayers (v. 24). Wild animals will lose their ferocity (cf. 11:6–8; Hosea 2:18) and harmony and safety will prevail under God's good hand (Isa. 65:25). (On God's holy mountain see comments on 11:9.)

Acts 10:34-43

10:34–35. These words of Peter were revolutionary. They swept away the prejudice and indoctrination of generations of Judaism. However, Gentile salvation certainly was a doctrine known in the Old Testament (cf. Jonah; Gen. 12:3). In the Old Testament the Jews were God's Chosen People, the special recipients of His promises and revelation. Here Peter stated that God's program was reaching out to the world through the church.

There is considerable debate about Peter's words that God accepts men from every nation who fear Him and do what is right. This does not teach salvation by works because a person's first responsibility before God is to fear Him, which is tantamount to trusting Him and reverencing Him. It is the New Testament parallel to Micah 6:8. Furthermore, God's acceptance of such people refers to His welcoming them to a right relationship by faith in Christ (cf. Acts 11:14).

10:36–37. Peter then outlined the career of Christ (vv. 36–43), the sovereign Lord of all, through whom God sent ... the good news of peace. Bible students have often observed how this parallels the Gospel of Mark almost perfectly. Mark began with John's baptism and traced the ministry of the Lord Jesus from Galilee to Judea to Jerusalem and finally to the Crucifixion, Resurrection, and the Great Commission.

10:38. The word *Messiah* means "Anointed One"; so when Peter said, God anointed Jesus of Nazareth he was saying, "God declared Him the Messiah" (cf. Isa. 61:1–3; Luke 4:16–21; Acts 4:27). This declaration occurred at the Lord's baptism (cf. Matt. 3:16–17; Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21–22; John 1:32–34). Isaiah spoke of the Anointed One performing great deeds (Isa. 61:1–3), and as Peter declared, He went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil.

10:39–41. Peter affirmed that he and his associates were personal eyewitnesses of all Jesus did. They, that is, the Jews ... killed Him by hanging Him on a tree, an ignominious form of execution. Earlier Peter had told Jews in Jerusalem, "You killed the Author of life" (3:15); to the rulers he said, "You crucified" Him (4:10); and to the

Sanhedrin he replied, "You killed" Him "by hanging Him on a tree" (5:30). And Stephen too told the Sanhedrin, "You ... have murdered Him" (7:52). On five occasions in Acts, the apostles said they were witnesses of the resurrected Christ (2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:41; 13:30–31). After Christ's resurrection the disciples ate and drank with Him (cf. John 21:13). This was proof that the resurrected Lord Jesus was no bodiless phantom and it explains how Christ was seen (Acts 10:40).

10:42–43. Peter made it clear that Christ's ministry results either in judgment (v. 42) or salvation (v. 43). The key phrase is, Everyone who believes in Him. This Greek construction consists of a present participle with an article, which is almost the equivalent of a noun (in this case "every believer in Him"). The key element in salvation is faith, belief in Christ. This message of forgiveness of sins (cf. 2:38; 5:31; 13:38; 26:18) through faith in the Messiah was spoken of by the prophets (e.g., Isa. 53:11; Jer. 31:34; Ezek. 36:25–26).

Luke 24:1-12

24:1–9. The first people to learn of the resurrection of Jesus were **the women** who had been faithful in following Him. They found out about the Resurrection first because of their devotion to Him. For after His death they brought more **spices** for His burial **on the first day of the week** (cf. 23:55–56). **They did not find the body** they were looking for. Instead they saw **two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning**, an obvious reference to angelic beings. These **men** reminded them of the words Jesus had spoken about His crucifixion and resurrection (9:31; 18:31–34). The women went to report to the apostles and **others** what they had seen (24:9).

24:10–12. The apostles **did not believe** the report **the women** brought them **because their words seemed ... like nonsense**. This was because they had seen Jesus' death and had seen His body placed in the grave. But **Peter ran to the tomb** and found what the women had described. Still he did not understand **what had happened**.