# Daily Reading & Meditation

 Easter Sunday (April 21): **"John saw the empty tomb and believed"**

**Scripture:** *John 20:1-9  [*alternate readings for Easter Sunday: [*Luke 24:1-12*](http://dailyscripture.servantsoftheword.org/readings/2019/apr20a.htm), [*Luke 24:13-35*](http://dailyscripture.servantsoftheword.org/readings/2019/apr21b.htm), [*Matthew 28:1-10*](http://dailyscripture.servantsoftheword.org/readings/2019/apr21c.htm)*,*[*Mark 16:1-7*](http://dailyscripture.servantsoftheword.org/readings/2019/apr21d.htm)*]*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 So she ran, and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." 3 Peter then came out with the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. 4 They both ran, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first; 5 and stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; he saw the linen cloths lying, 7 and the napkin, which had been on his head, not lying with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself. 8 Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; 9 for as yet they did not know the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

**Meditation:** What was it like for the disciple who had stood at the cross of Jesus and then laid him in a tomb on Good Friday, to come back three days later and discover that the sealed tomb was now empty? John, along with Peter, was the first apostle to reach the tomb of Jesus on Easter Sunday morning. Like Mary Magdalene and the other disciples, John was not ready to see an empty tomb and to hear the angel's message, ***Why do you seek the living among the dead***(Luke 24:5)?

What did John see in the tomb that led him to believe in the resurrection of Jesus? It was certainly not a dead body. The dead body of Jesus would have disproven the resurrection and made his death a tragic conclusion to a glorious career as a great teacher and miracle worker. When John saw the empty tomb he must have recalled Jesus' prophecy that he would rise again after three days. Through the gift of faith John realized that no tomb on earth could contain the Lord and giver of life. John saw and believed (John 20:8).

John had to first deal with the empty tomb before he could meet the risen Lord later that evening along with the other apostles who had locked themselves in the upper room out of fear of the Jewish authorities ([John 20:19-23](http://dailyscripture.servantsoftheword.org/readings/john2019.htm)). John testified as an eye-witness to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ: *What we have seen, heard, and touched we proclaim as the eternal word of life which existed from the beginning* (1 John 1:1-4). John bears witness to what has existed from all eternity. This "word of life" is Jesus the word incarnate, but also Jesus as the word announced by the prophets and Jesus the word now preached throughout the Christian church for all ages to come.

One thing is certain, if Jesus had not risen from the dead and appeared to his disciples, we would never have heard of him. Nothing else could have changed sad and despairing men and women into people radiant with joy and courage. The reality of the resurrection is the central fact of the Christian faith. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Lord gives us "eyes of faith" to know him and the power of his resurrection. The greatest joy we can have is to encounter the living Christ and to know him personally as our Lord and Saviour. Do you accept the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection with sceptical doubt and disbelief or with trusting faith and joyful wonderment?

**Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17,22-23**

1 O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his steadfast love endures for  ever!   
2 Let Israel say, "His steadfast love endures for ever."   
16 the right hand of the LORD is exalted, the right hand of the LORD does valiantly!"   
17 I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the LORD.   
22 The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner.   
23 This is the LORD's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.

**A Daily Quote for the Easter season**: *The Womb of the Earth Gives Birth,*by Hesychius of Jerusalem, died around 450 A.D.

"Hidden first in a womb of flesh, he sanctified human birth by his own birth. Hidden afterward in the womb of the earth, he gave life to the dead by his resurrection. Suffering, pain and sighs have now fled away. For who has known the mind of God, or who has been his counsellor if not the Word made flesh who was nailed to the cross, who rose from the dead and who was taken up into heaven? This day brings a message of joy: it is the day of the Lord's resurrection when, with himself, he raised up the race of Adam. Born for the sake of human beings, he rose from the dead with them. On this day paradise is opened by the risen one, Adam is restored to life and Eve is consoled. On this day the divine call is heard, the kingdom is prepared, we are saved and Christ is adored. On this day, when he had trampled death under foot, made the tyrant a prisoner and despoiled the underworld, Christ ascended into heaven as a king in victory, as a ruler in glory, as an invincible charioteer. He said to the Father, 'Here am I, O God, with the children you have given me.' And he heard the Father’s reply, 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool' (Psalm 110:1)." To him be glory, now and for ever, through endless ages. Amen. [excerpt from *EASTER HOMILY 5–6*]

Hesychius of Jerusalem was a priest and a Scripture scholar who worked with Jerome and Cyril of Jerusalem. He wrote a commentary on the whole Bible He died around 450 AD.

author [Don Schwage](mailto:dailyscripture@servantsoftheword.org)

**OPENING PRAYER** "Lord Jesus Christ, you have triumphed over the grave and you have won for us new life and resurrection power. Give me the eyes of faith to see you in your glory. Help me to draw near to you and to grow in the knowledge of your great love for us and your great victory over sin and death." **Amen.**

**CLOSING PRAYER:- “I believe in Your Love”**

Father of love hear my prayer. Help me to know Your Will and to do it with courage and faith. Accept my offering of myself, all my thoughts, words, deeds, and sufferings. May my life be spent giving You glory. Give me the strength to follow Your call, so that Your Truth may live in my heart and bring peace to me and to those I meet, for I believe in Your Love. **Amen**.