**Resurrection Sunday**

(Acts 20:6-12)

(An Easter Sunday Message)

A little boy was eating a *humongous* chocolate Easter Bunny one Resurrection Sunday, when a man walked up to him and said, “You shouldn’t eat that much chocolate at one time. It’s not good for you.” The boy replied, “Oh, yeah? Well, my grandfather lived to be 103!” The man asked, “Did he eat a lot of chocolate?” The boy answered, “No, he minded his own business!”

Speaking of our Lord’s resurrection, here in our text in Acts 20 we’re about to see a couple of *types* of His resurrection—one in the Old Testament that looked *forward* to His resurrection, and one in the *New* Testament that looks *back* on it. The first one is found in the first verse of our text, where Luke says,

**“And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days” (Acts 20:6).**

Luke begins our passage by explaining that he and his companions met up with Paul and his company (cf.20:4,5) after the days of unleavened bread. That’s a reference to the Jewish *feast* of unleavened bread that we read about in Leviticus 23. It was one of three feasts that typified the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

The first was Passover, a feast in which the Jews killed a lamb to atone for their sins. That was a type of how Christ *the Lamb of God* was killed to atone for our sins, as Paul teaches us in I Corinthians 5:7, where he wrote,

**“Christ *our* passover is sacrificed *for us.”***

After the feast of Passover came the feast of Unleavened Bread. Leaven is a type of *sin* in the Bible, so after Passover the Jews ate *un-*leavened bread to picture how the Passover lamb hadn’t died to pay for its *own* sins, since lambs don’t *have* sins. It died to pay for the *Jews’* sins. That was clear type of how *Christ* had no sins to die for either. He died to pay for *our* sins.

And the feast of unleavened bread was followed by the feast of *Firstfruits,* which was a type of Christ’s *resurrection,* as Paul says in I Corinthians 15:20:

**“…now is Christ risen from the dead, *and become the firstfruits of them that slept”***

This feast was *called* firstfruits because Christ was the *first* to rise from the dead *with never-ending resurrection life.* There were Old Testament resurrections, and the Lord Himself raised three people from the dead. But all of those folks just got their old lives back, and eventually died again. Christ was the first to die with never-ending resurrection life.

This feast was *also* called firstfruits because there’s going to be *more* fruits, more people who will rise with never-ending resurrection life, as Paul went on to say in that same passage:

**“Christ the firstfruits; *afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming”* (I Corinthians 15:23).**

If you believe that the death, burial and resurrection of Christ *paid* for your sins, you’re one of “His.” You *belong* to Christ. And because of that, someday *you’ll* rise from the dead because He did. He’s the firstfruits, you’re the more fruits.

So the feast of unleavened bread in verse 6 is a type that looked *forward* to Christ’s death, burial and resurrection *from the Old Testament.* But a few days later here in Acts 20, we have a type of Christ’s resurrection that looks *backward* to it from the New Testament. Verse 7 says,

**“And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.”**

Now the breaking of bread is another name for the communion service, as we see when Paul says,

**“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The *bread* which we *break,* is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” (I Corinthians 10:16).**

In those days, they observed communion by breaking a loaf of bread and passing the pieces around. But no matter how you observe it, the communion service looks *back* on the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, as we see when Paul says,

**“For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, *ye do shew the Lord's death till He come”* (I Corinthians 11:26).**

I know we usually think of the Lord’s Supper as a remembrance of the Lord’s death, but before He can “come” back for us at the Rapture, He had to have come back from the dead. So the Lord’s Supper looks *back* on Christ’s resurrection from the New Testament.

And there’s a reason why God is painting the picture of these two types of the Lord’s resurrection here. It’s because right in the middle of the New Testament, God placed *the dispensation of grace.* And here in Acts 20, we’re about to see a *type* of the dispensation of grace. First, you’ll notice that verse 7 says they came together on the first day of the week. That’s the day the Lord rose from the dead, as John tells us in John 20:1:

***“The first day of the week* cometh Mary Magdalene early... unto the sepulchre, *and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre”* (John 20:1).**

And if you think about it, the Lord’s resurrection marked the beginning of *a second chance on life for Him.* And the dispensation of grace marked the beginning of a second chance on life *for the entire world.*

Don’t forget what was supposed to *happen* to the world after they crucified Christ. David predicted,

**“The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against His anointed, saying, *Let us break Their bands asunder, and cast away Their cords from us.*  He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision. *Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath,* and vex them in His sore displeasure....*Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron;* Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel” (Psalm 2:2-5,9).**

After the world tried to cut the cord that connected them to God and His anointed by *crucifying* His anointed, God was supposed to send Christ *back* to the world *and break those leaders and their nations in pieces.*

So was David *wrong* when he predicted that would happen? No, of course not! He just didn’t know the mystery that God revealed later *to Paul—*the mystery of the dispensation of grace, the second chance that God gave the entire world. Paul is the *apostle* of this dispensation, as he declared in Ephesians 3:2,3:

***“...*the dispensation of the grace of God...*is given me to you-ward...*the mystery...”**

And here in this type of the dispensation of grace that see developing in Acts 20:7, Paul preached to those disciples at the beginning of the week to symbolize how Paul started preaching *to us all* at the beginning *of this dispensation.*

And when verse 7 says Paul was “ready to depart on the morrow,” that’s a picture of how Paul was ready to depart *at the Rapture* right from the beginning of this dispensation. He even thought he’d live to *see* the Rapture, as we know by the way he described it, saying,

**“...*we* which are alive and remain shall be caught up together...in the clouds, *to meet the Lord in the air:* and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (I Thessalonians 4:17).**

Paul obviously thought he’d be among the “we” who are alive and remain to the coming of the Lord. That’s why he told Titus to be

***“Looking for that blessed hope,* and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).**

Now the Rapture didn’t come in Paul’s day, or in Titus’ day—*but we’re still looking for it!* We’re not looking for the undertaker, we’re looking for the *uppertaker.*

But the question is, are you *ready* to depart at the Rapture? We know Paul was, for in this type in verse 7 it says he was “ready to depart on the morrow.” But are *you* ready to depart on the morrow if the Lord should come? Are you ready to depart should He come *today?*

You may be thinking, “What’s it *mean* to be ready to depart and be raptured?” Well, after the Rapture didn’t come in Paul’s lifetime, he got arrested toward the end of his life, and he knew that Nero was going to *execute* him. But he told Timothy,

**“I am now *ready* to be offered, and the time of *my* departure is at hand” (IITimothy 4:6).**

Once Paul realized he wouldn’t depart with *other* believers at the rapture, he knew he’d *still* depart to be with the Lord *when he died.* And he claimed he was “ready” for this as well. And he went on to tell us what *made him* ready to depart in the very next verse, when he wrote,

**“I am now ready...I have *fought a good fight,* I have *finished my course,* I have *kept the faith”* (II Timothy 4:6,7).**

And if you can say the same thing, then you’re as ready to depart to be with the Lord as Paul was. So, *have you* fought a good fight?

If you’re not sure what that means, look how Paul says *he* fought a good fight in ICorinthians 9:26,27:

**“...*so* fight I...I keep under my body, *and bring it into subjection.”***

That word “so” there means Paul was saying, “This is how I fight the good fight. I keep under my body.” Paul’s body was just like your body. It wanted to *sin,* but he kept under it, and brought it into subjection. So, are *you* fighting a good fight? If you’re not, it’s never too late to start fighting that good fight, and step up your efforts against sin in your life.

But I think Paul’s body *also* wanted *to quit keeping the faith,* because of all the things he had to *go through* for the faith. But he fought his body and *kept* the faith instead.

I’m sure there were times he was *tempted* to quit the faith, when you read about all the times he was hungry, and thirsty, and poor, and afflicted, and weary to the bone with all of his labors for the Lord.

And I don’t know about you, but live has been no bowl of cherries for me either. I mean, I eat pretty well, so I can’t relate to that hunger part of Paul’s experience. But I can relate to that being poor business! And that part about being afflicted rings true as well, when I think of the asthma I’ve had all my life, and the herniated disc in my back that I got much later in life.

*But I haven’t quit!* And neither have you! You’ve got problems too, but you’re still reading articles like this. You’re still keeping the faith! So we’re as ready to depart as Paul was, when it comes to keeping the faith anyway.

But when Paul didn’t get raptured—when he had to keep on preaching instead—we see that pictured in our text in verse 7 when it says Paul continued his speech until midnight.

Now we’re not told what time Paul *started* his message, but I’m guessing he didn’t start it at 11 p.m., or even 9 or 10. Who starts a service at 9 o’clock at night? My guess would be that he began at 6 or 7 and continued till midnight. So I think from now on I too should give messages that last 5 or 6 hours. My record is an hour and a half, when I was speaking in 2005 at a Bible conference in the Philippines. *Things To Come Mission* director Ben Anderson made the mistake of telling me that Filipinos will sit and listen *as long as you keep preaching!*

But when Paul preached a long time here, that was symbolic of how Paul’s *been* preaching for a long time in the dispensation of grace *through his epistles.* The dispensation of grace has now lasted nearly 2,000 years. That’s longer than any other dispensation has lasted. That’s how *patient* and *gracious* God is being toward the world that crucified His Son.

Speaking of other dispensations, do you remember how long Methuselah lived? Genesis 5:7 says,

**“...all the days of Methuselah were *nine hundred sixty and nine years”***

Do you know why God *let* him live that long? It had something to do with the meaning of his name. The name Methuselah means, “when he is dead, it shall come”—and it was talking about *the flood!* God purposely waited 969 years to send the judgment of the flood on the world, to show how patient and gracious He is. And so var, He’s waited *nearly twice that long* to send the judgment of the Tribulation that will follow the dispensation of grace, once again to show the world His patience and grace.

We see more symbolism in verse 8, where our text says,

**“And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.”**

Now before we address the typology here, why do you think they *needed* so many lights? The answer is, *so they could read their Bibles!* They hadn’t gathered together in that upper room to chew the fat and shoot the breeze. Paul was a Bible teacher, and they had their Bibles open to see if what he said was so. And if many people are going to be reading many Bibles, then you have to have many lights so they can see what they’re reading.

But once you use lights to read the Bible, the Bible can give *you* light! The psalmist prayed,

**“The entrance of Thy words *giveth light;* it giveth *understanding* unto the simple” (Psalm 119:130).**

As you can see, the word “light” there is another word for *understanding.* And the reason God wants you to have a good understanding of His Word is found in an earlier verse in that psalm, where the psalmist prayed,

**“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, *and a light unto my path”* (Psalm 119:105).**

God doesn’t give us light on His Word to puff us up with knowledge. He gives us light and understanding so we can learn to walk in His path.

So in verse 8 of our text, when it says that there were “many lights” as Paul was preaching, it’s symbolically saying that there were many lights *of understanding* being experienced by the disciples as Paul preached.

And the same thing happens today when we teach Paul’s gospel. I can’t tell you how many times at *Berean Bible Society* I hear from people who write to say that they were reading our *Berean Searchlight* magazine, or one of our books, and “the light went on, and I finally understood the Bible!”

But as you read verse 8, don’t picture the kind of lights that illuminate our homes these days. Lights in those days were *lanterns* or *torches,* and either one of those will heat up a room and suck up all the oxygen in a hurry. And when that happens, people get *drowsy.* I see it in my own church on the days when we have an extra large crowd. Between their body heat, and their insistence on breathing up all the oxygen, I sometimes see people *nodding off,* despite the fervent interest the people in my church have for the Scriptures.

And I say all that because a guy nodded off in Paul’s service as well. Verse 9 says,

**“And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.”**

Now first of all, that account tells you how very hot and crowded that upper room was that night, if the only seat left in the house was in a window. The young man probably didn’t mind too much, since this at least gave him access to whatever fresh air might have wafted in that night.

But if you live in a house with a second or third level, you know by experience that *heat rises.* Our lower level family room can be quite comfortable in the summer, but the bedrooms upstairs can be just as *uncomfortable.*

I’m told that if a woman fell asleep in church in colonial days, an usher with a feather attached to the end of a long pole would wake her up by tickling her chin. If a man fell asleep, the other end of that long pole had a wooden ball that the usher would use to conk him upside the head.

But when *Eutychus* fell asleep, that’s a picture of what happened to *the professing Church* during the 2,000 years Paul has been preaching through his epistles in the dispensation of grace. The Church symbolically fell asleep under Paul’s ministry, and stopped listening to him.

And when *the Church* stopped listening to Paul, it fell out the window and died, because Paul’s the only one tho tells us we’re saved by faith without works. He’s the only one who tells us we’re not under law, we’re under grace. He’s the only one who tells us we’ll be raptured before the Tribulation. And once the Church lost those things—and all the rest of the things that only Paul teaches—it shriveled up and *died.*

And it began to die *before Paul was even dead.* Look what Paul wrote in his last epistle in II Timothy 1:15, where he lamented,

**“...all they which are in Asia *be turned away from me.”***

And after the Church turned away from Paul, it evolved into the Roman Catholic Church, and was dead as a doornail for the next *thousand years,* during what we call the Dark Ages of the dispensation of grace.

And we see that typified here in Acts 20 when *Eutychus* fell asleep on Paul and died. But we also see the *solution* for the Church in the last three verses of our text:

**“And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.**

**“When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.**

**“And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted” (Acts 20:10-12).**

Now here we see a picture of what the Church *needed* when it fell asleep and died under Paul’s ministry. They needed *him* to raise them from the dead! He himself was long gone, *but his epistles were still in the Bible!* And the Dark Ages began to *end* when Martin Luther started reading Paul’s *Epistle to the Romans,* and recovered the foundational Pauline truth of salvation by faith without works. Then John Darby recovered the Pauline truth of the pre-trib rapture, and Pastor J. C. O’hair recovered the Pauline truth about water baptism. Eventually, the Church recovered *all* of Paul’s truth—and that *raised the Church from the dead,* just as Paul raised Eutychus.

But look what Paul predicts will happen to the church in I Timothy 4:1

**“in the latter times *some shall depart from the faith”***

In the last days of the dispensation of grace, the Church is going to fall asleep on Paul *and die again.*

And that word “some” there sometimes means *nearly all,* as it does when Hebrews 3:16 says,

***“For some,* when they had heard, did provoke...that came out of Egypt by Moses”**

As you may remember, everyone but Joshua and Caleb provoked the Lord when Moses led Israel out of Egypt! So why does Hebrews say only “some” provoked?

Well, what you’re seeing there is an example of God being *kind* in telling the story of Israel’s past. Kind of like when Hebrews 11 says nothing about how Sara laughed when God told her she’d have a son at age 90! In recording that event, it just says she judged Him faithful who promised.

And when God says *some* will depart from the faith, I personally believe that’s just an example of God being kind in describing the *future* of the Church. I believe *nearly all* will depart from the faith.

And that’s a departure that the Lord will fix *with the Rapture.* He’ll take us to heaven, where the light of Pauline truth will fix everything that’s wrong with the Church, as we study God’s Word throughout the ages.

And I think that’s why Paul told Titus to be looking for that blessed hope! I think after all Asia departed from Paul, he thought the only thing that could fix the Church was for the Lord to take it home. It was just fortunate for the Church that God let Luther and Darby and the rest of those men raise the Church from the spiritual death she’d fallen into.

Why would I think that? Well, do you know what the name Eutychus means? It means *fortunate.* And my dictionary says that the word fortunate means *something good that happens unexpectedly.* And when all Asia turned away from Paul, I think he expected that nothing but the rapture could bring the Church back from the dead. But quite unexpectedly, the recovery of Pauline truth did. And we see that pictured with Eutychus, when that first day of the week turned out to be a resurrection Sunday *for him* as well.

Do you know what the church *lost* when they fell asleep on Paul? Look how Paul says he *got* some of the things he taught. Speaking of himself in the third person, he wrote,

**“I knew a man in Christ...*caught up to the third heaven.* And...heard *unspeakable words,* which it is not *lawful* for a man to utter” (II Corinthians 12:2-4).**

When the Lord caught Paul up to heaven, he told him words that were not “lawful” to utter—like how now we can eat bacon! That wasn’t lawful to utter under the law of Moses. And Paul heard other unspeakably wonderful things as well, the unspeakably wonderful words of the grace message.

And the Lord *gave him* those words in the *third* heaven. And when Eutychus *fell* from that *third loft,* that’s a picture o how far the church fell when the fell away from Pauline truth. But grace pastors and teachers can take you *back* to the third heaven every time they teach Pauline truth.

But here’s a question. If verse 9 says Eutychus was taken up “dead,” how come Paul said his life was still in him in verse 10? I mean, we know he was dead, because there was a doctor there on the scene who could *verify* that he was dead. We saw in verse 6 that Dr. Luke had joined Paul’s entourage. And while you or I might not be so sure if a man was dead or not, surely a doctor knows when life has left a man’s body.

So why’d Paul say his life was in him? I believe its because Eutychus was a picture of the Church, and the Church never *really* died. That is, God’s testimony on earth never complete gave up the ghost. It just went to sleep. And sleep is a euphemism for death in the Bible. When you’re sleeping, we say you’re dead to the world.

And that’s what happened to the Church! That’s why Paul said,

**“Awake thou that *sleepest,* and arise from *the* *dead,* and Christ shall give thee *light”* (Ephesians 5:14).**

Of course, Paul wrote that to individual believers, not to the Church as a whole. When a Christian falls asleep under Pauline teaching, he experiences a kind of spiritual death. He doesn’t lose his salvation, but all of his spiritual vital signs are flatlined, and he shows no sign of the spiritual life within him.

When that happens, he needs the *light* of God’s Word *through the Apostle Paul* to reaise him up out of that spiritual death sleep. And that’s what happened to the Church at large as well.