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**Grace Evangelical Church**  
**Easter Sunday, April 4, 2010**  
**"Jesus Is Risen"**  
**Mark 16:1-8**

This Johnny Hart Cartoon depicts the two choices available to each one in the world today.

Yes, it's either the Easter Bunny, which includes all of man's ideas and religions down through the ages and into our day,

**OR**

It's the trustworthy record of the gospel writers and the apostles that Jesus Christ not only died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sin, but He also conquered the grave bodily on the first resurrection morning to provide eternal forgiveness and life to each one who believes in HIM.

The choice we have to make today, then, is very clear, is it not?

**It's either the Easter bunny,**

OR

**the bodily resurrected Jesus Christ.**

It appears to be an easy choice to decide for the bodily resurrected Christ, but man, in the public arena, continues to go on living his life as if the reality of bodily resurrection never took place. In that process, he makes up different theories about the Jesus Christ and His resurrection. Let's look at some of those theories man has concocted about Jesus' resurrection.

**I. Man's theories about the bodily resurrection of Jesus based upon his changing limited reason.**

**1. Theories that tell us that Jesus' body still occupied the tomb.**

**(1) The unknown tomb theory.**

The executioner probably cast the body of Jesus into an unknown burial pit. This idea completely disregards the account of Matthew that Joseph of Arimathea took the body of Jesus to his own private tomb (Matthew 27:57-60). Before putting His body in the tomb, Joseph wrapped it a linen cloth, laid Jesus' body in the tomb, and rolled a large stone across the entrance of the tomb.

**(2) The wrong tomb theory.**

The women and disciples went to a wrong tomb which was empty. Matthew tells us that Mary Magdalene and Mary were sitting opposite the grave where Jesus was laid by (Matthew 27:61). This theory also ignores the account of Mark and the other gospel writers that the angel told the women to see the place where Jesus was laid (Mark 16:6).

**(3) The legend theory.**

The accounts of Christ cropped up not until years later. The Scriptures like I Corinthians 15:5-8, tell us there were many witnesses to the Lord in His resurrected body.

**(4) The spiritual resurrection theory.**

This is a popular idea today which says that the historical bodily resurrection of Christ did not happen, rather He rose from the dead spiritually. The Scripture tells us otherwise in Luke 24:39 where Jesus in one His resurrection appearances told His disciples to touch Him for a spirit does not have flesh and blood as He has.

**(5) The hallucination theory.**

This suggests that all the appearances of Jesus to His disciples after His resurrection were just hallucinatory hoaxes. They only thought they saw Jesus but they didn't actually see Him. Again Scripture refutes such false thinking for Thomas literally saw Jesus in His resurrected body and believed in HIM (John 20:19-31).

If those theories don't work in keeping Christ from being resurrected bodily, then there are those theories that attempt to explain the empty tomb.

## **2. Theories that attempt to explain the empty tomb.**

### **(1) The disciples faked the bodily resurrection of Christ by stealing Jesus' body, and they went to a martyrs' death for telling a lie.**

The tight Roman security demolishes that idea as the tomb was secured by a Roman guard with a seal set on the stone (Matthew 27:64-66).

### **(2) The authorities stole the body of Jesus.**

This theory ignores why the authorities did not put Jesus' body on display in order to disprove the disciples' preaching that Jesus had risen bodily from the grave. As just noted, the Roman soldier guarded the tomb with a Roman seal on the stone in front of the tomb (cf. Matthew 28:2-4, 11-15). The text tells us that the Jewish rulers bribed the soldiers to lie about what happened to Jesus' body so as to put the blame on the disciples.

### **(3) The resuscitation theory.**

This is called the swoon theory. It is held that Jesus, despite His beatings and scourgings, the wound in His side, and the soldiers' belief that He was dead (John 19:31-36), only appeared to die on the cross. In the cool of the air of the tomb, Jesus revived, shed His grave clothes, rolled back the stone from the door of the tomb, fought off the Roman guards, and appeared as the resurrected Lord to His disciples. How absurd is that.

### **(4) The Passover Plot theory.**

This theory was set forth a number of years ago by Hugh Schonfield in his book, "The Passover Plot." Schonfield conjectured that Christ plotted to fulfill Old Testament prophecies about the Jewish Messiah and only appear to die on the cross. His plot failed, and He ended up on the cross and died. An unknown man was subsequently mistaken by Mary and the disciples. No one ever corrected their misapprehension. Of course the record in John 20:10-18, when Jesus appeared to Mary after His bodily resurrection, tells us that she recognized Jesus as being the Jesus who had died and now was alive in his resurrected body.

**These are all the different theories that man in his changing limited reason has come up with to try and either keep Jesus bodily in the tomb or to somehow explain away His bodily resurrection as never happening in our space time relationship.**

**What then does the other side of the coin have to say?**

**II. God's truth presented in the Bible is His unchanging unlimited revelation. What does this tell us over against man's changing limited reason?**

### **1. The biblical God operates in time (Mark 16:1-3).**

**Note what our text, the biblical record, tells us in Mark 16:1-3**

"When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, brought spices so that they might come and anoint Him. Very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen.

**Mark is recording for us an event which was certainly told to him later by Peter.**

**But the event was not only recorded by Mark, it was also recorded by Matthew chapter 28:1,** "Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary came to look at the grave." Then Matthew adds, "And behold a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it."

**Luke also records the activity on the first resurrection morning,** "But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb" (Luke 24:1-2).

**John also adds his account of that first resurrection morning,** "Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already taken away from the tomb." (John 20:1).

**All four gospel writers give us the record of the women coming to Jesus' tomb on that first resurrection morning.**

**Are the writers deceived about what is happening? Are they carrying on some kind of legend? Are the women thinking that this is Jesus' tomb when it is not?**

**Of course the answer to each question is no. To their different readers, they included the different historical facts regarding the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. Information that is dependable and accurate, totally reliable.**

**All the gospel writers include the resurrection account of Jesus from the dead, because it solidifies what Jesus Christ came to do for us in His death, burial, and bodily resurrection.**

**And what is that?**

**The biblical God not only operates in time, He defeats and conquers time.**

**2. The biblical God defeats and conquers time (Mark 16:4-6).**

**Note our Mark text again.**

"Looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away, although it was extremely large. Entering the tomb, they saw a young man (evidently an angel) sitting at the right, wearing a white robe; and they were amazed (awe struck) And he said to them, 'Do not be amazed (continually awestruck); you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here, behold, here is the place where they laid Him.'"

The Jesus who was crucified and laid in a tomb, thought dead and gone, is not in the tomb where Joseph of Arimathea laid HIM. He has conquered the grave bodily. Jesus is alive in a resurrected body.

Jesus' bodily resurrection is substantiated by his many post resurrection appearances.

\*\*He appeared to Mary Magdalene (John 20:10-18).

\*\*To Peter (Luke 24:34, I Corinthians 15:5).

\*\*To the disciples on the Emmaus road toward evening (Luke 24:13-32).

\*\*To the disciples after the appearing to them on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:36-43) where Jesus told His disciples to touch Him and see that a spirit has not flesh and blood as He has.

\*\*To the disciples in the upper room with the exception of Thomas (John 20:19-25).

\*\*To the disciples, including Thomas, in the upper room on the next Sunday night (John 20:26-31).

\*\*To seven disciples beside the Sea of Galilee – where He showed Himself to them and ate bread and fish.

\*\*To the apostles and more than 500 brethren and James, the half brother of our Lord (I Corinthians 15:6-7).

\*\*To those who witnessed Jesus' bodily ascension into heaven (Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 24:44-53; Acts 1:3-12).

**When we take the unlimited revelation of God in the Bible, and compare it to the limited reasoning of men, there is no doubt that the unlimited revelation of God in the Bible is true. The evidence is overwhelming! Christ conquered the grave bodily.**

**This means that the time box we all live in has been broken wide open, for the master who controls the box, death itself, has been defeated. This box into which we are all born, in which we live awhile, and finally die, no longer can make the final claim on humanity.**

**Why so?**

**\*\*Jesus was God – He was deity.**

He was eternity itself, never having a beginning or an end (John 1:1; 8:58:10:30; Hebrews 1:8). Those who deny Jesus' deity have no way out of time's box where the master controller is physical and spiritual death.

**\*\*Jesus was also man. He was human.**

Luke tells us that He was born as a baby (Luke 2:7). The Word, Jesus, who is eternity itself, became flesh and tabernacled among us (John 1:14). He was born of the descendant of David according to the flesh (Romans 1:3). Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself (Jesus) also partook of the same (Hebrews 2:14). He grew up and ministered, getting tired, needing rest, and physical nourishment.

**Jesus is really eternity in time. God in flesh, living in time's box. But that wasn't the end. That was just the beginning, for there was also what Jesus did.**

**2. Because of what Jesus did.**

He lived a perfect life under the law of God. He is the end of the law for righteousness (Romans 10:4) And what is the penalty for breaking God's law? The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). Who is going to pay the wages of death, this master controller over time? No one in history has done that except Jesus Christ who laid down His life for each of us, becoming our substitute, to pay the penalty for our breaking God's law in His death, and then rising from the grave bodily (cf. I Peter 3:18; I Corinthians 15:3-4;

The bodily resurrection of Christ demonstrates that time's box with the master controller death, no longer can be the controller. The risen bodily Christ is now the controller, for He has defeated time and the master controller of us all, death itself.

**So what does that mean for all of us here today that Jesus Christ who is eternity in time has defeated time and its master controller death?**

**III. You and I can make the life-changing positive response to the bodily resurrected Jesus Christ (Mark 16:7-8)**

The text tells us in Mark that the angel told the women in the tomb to go tell Jesus' disciples and Peter that Jesus had gone ahead to Galilee. There Jesus will be seen.

The women were terrified as what they had seen and heard and went out of the tomb trembling and astonished gripped by fear, not saying anything to anyone. Matthew adds that they left the tomb with fear and great joy and told the disciples. Mark must have meant that they didn't say anything to anyone around them at the time. Luke tells us that they women were terrified when they saw the angel, but the angel calmed their fears and he reminded them of what Jesus had said about His death and bodily resurrection, they remembered, and returned to tell these things to the eleven. John adds that they went to Simon and told Him about Christ's resurrection.

**At first there was seeming unbelief and doubt about Christ's bodily resurrection. Let's not be too hard on these people, for I'm sure we would have been in the same state of mind – expecting Jesus to still be in the grave, but now was bodily alive from the tomb.**

**But eventually the disciples and the women became convinced believer's in the bodily resurrected Christ. They responded in total faith to Him. They had a life-changing experience, a supernatural transformation, into being faithful witnesses of the Lord, which is so clearly depicted after Jesus' ascension, and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost in the Book of Acts.**

**That life-changing response, then, from us includes several areas.**

### (1) Faith.

Jesus said that as many as received Him to them He gave the authority to become the children of God, be a part of His forever family (John 1:12; Romans 10:9-13; Ephesians 2:8-9). Each of us has to make the decision to accept Christ as personal Savior, for it's in accepting Christ as personal Savior that we receive the resurrection life He has one for us, His very nature, so that time no longer can master us through the master controller death.

Faith in Christ provides the believer Christ's eternal life, so that at the end of this life, the believer's spirit or personality goes into the presence of the Lord, with the guarantee that one will have a new body like the Lord's glorious body when He returns for His church.

### (2) Follow.

Jesus said that my sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they continually follow me (John 10:27). The believer in Jesus Christ, possessing His resurrection, eternal life, listens to what He is telling him or her through the Word of God, and seeks in the Spirit's power to do what the Bible says. This should happen in one's personal life, in the relationship of husband and wife, in the family relationships, in the church family, at work, at school, in the neighborhood. Paul told young pastor, Timothy, to pursue (command, continually) righteousness, faith, love, and peace (II Timothy 2:22). The question we can ask ourselves is, "What would Jesus do?"

### (3) Fight.

Again, Paul told the young pastor, Timothy, "Fight (A command -continually) the good fight of faith. Lay hold of eternal life" (I Timothy 6:12). Be on the alert as a follower of Christ. You're in a spiritual battle. The life with Christ is not for the lazy or for those who like to be a follower of Christ but don't take up the challenge to resist the devil, and to stand firm in the Lord.

There's an awful battle going in the spiritual world of reality between the forces of the biblical God, and the forces of the evil one. Satan is not happy with victorious living in Christ. He wants to bring the believer down spiritually. Paul tells us in Ephesians 6 to "Be strong in the Lord and the power of His might.... To put on the whole armor of God to be able to stand against the wiles of the evil one.

The resurrection life of Christ is irresistible. It is full of faith not fear. It provides us Christ's eternal hope in the midst of the battle. Whether we live or die we are the Lord's. When we pass from this life, our personalities go into the Lord's presence with the promise of being with the Lord forever when He returns. We are always victors in Christ regardless of what is happening in our lives.

### (4) Flee.

Then Paul told Timothy to "flee (Command -continually) from youthful lusts" (II Timothy 2:22). God is telling us in His word that we are not to be involved in those things that cause us to think and act in a way that brings dishonor to God and His holy character. We are not to read certain literature, or watch certain programs on TV, or go to certain movies, or get involved in what is evil on the internet that appeals to the old lusts and wickedness of the human heart. We need to keep our minds focused on what is true, honorable, what is right, pure, lovely, and of good repute (Philippians 4:8).

Yes, we will be tempted in different areas in our lives in regard to the world, the flesh and the devil, but we are to use the word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit and say, "No," to sin and "Yes," to righteousness. When we do yield to temptation, we should be quick to confess our sin, and return to fellowship with the Lord. If struggles in certain areas continue, we should get good biblical counseling.

### (4) Focus.

As believers who possess Christ' resurrection, we should in the power of the Holy Spirit keep focused on the Lord as we serve Him in the many different areas of our lives. Paul told the Philippians these classic words.

**"Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it (talking about having complete maturity in Christ in practice), but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14).**

**What was Paul's focus in his life with his Lord? To be like Jesus and to glorify Him in whether he was eating or drinking! That's why Paul also wrote in Philippians 1:21, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."**

Paul knew the bottom line in living for Christ. He was either living for Christ or living for self.

Paul knew that if he didn't keep in mind the reality that He was doing everything for Jesus Christ that he would be soon doing what he shouldn't be thinking or doing.

He must not get into double-mindedness. It was keeping focused on the Word of God that kept him focused on Jesus Christ. James knew the same thing. For he wrote that a double minded person is unstable in all his ways (James 1:8).

When the believer who possesses Jesus resurrection life starts to have thoughts of lust, of covetousness, of feeling sorry for one's self, of thinking that God doesn't answer prayer, or God doesn't care about me any more, the believer, if he doesn't deal with such thoughts immediately, confessing them to the Lord, will soon find himself or herself floating away from keeping focused on Christ and serving Him.

**God wants the believer to know that even in the challenging times He is there with him encouraging him on telling him that since He is for him no one is against Him.**

Yes, Jesus Christ has conquered the grave bodily. We celebrate His bodily resurrection today.

**Man's changing limited reason says impossible. Jesus did not rise from the grave bodily.**

**Sad to say those who believe such are still living in time's box with the master controller death with no way out**

**God's unchanging unlimited revelation says it has happened in time!! Jesus Christ conquered the grave bodily.**

**Now resurrection life and forgiveness are available to all.**

**The life-changing positive response to the resurrected Jesus Christ brings personal eternal (resurrection) life and forgiveness to the believer.**

That response involves:

Faith  
Follow  
Fight  
Flee  
Focus.

**Yes, Easter is also the time of renewal, a time to make a recommitment if need be living for Christ is one has been slacking off in following, fighting, fleeing, and focusing.**

**Let's enjoy living in the resurrection life of Jesus Christ this week as we obey the Holy Spirit in our lives each day!!**

This picture tell us that the Tomb of Jesus is empty. He is risen from the dead. He is risen indeed.

A pastor was speaking to a group of second-graders about the resurrection of Jesus when one student asked, "What did Jesus say right after He came out of the grave?"

The pastor explained that the Gospels do not tell us what He said.

The hand of one little girl shot up. "I know what He said: He said, 'Tah-dah!'"

**Yes, "Tah-dah! Jesus has conquered the grave bodily!" What a glorious morning!!**