

The Resurrection Story

By Ronald L. Dart

It would have been very dark when the women began to gather and made their way through the streets. They had gotten up very early on this morning to do their job. They had slept very little, in any case; no one felt much like sleeping. They had all prepared their burial spices before the Sabbath day had begun, and rested the Sabbath according to commandment. And they had all agreed that they would get up very early, and they would make their way to the tomb at daybreak. Very few people would be about and it would be easier for them to do it that way.

There was one major problem as they met, whispering in the dark, that they had not solved. And they didn't know what to do. They didn't know how to get the tomb open, and how they would roll that big stone back. The death of their master had left them all in a state of shock, so it's not surprising that they wouldn't have had their act together on this Sunday morning. Everything had happened so *fast*. Everything was as it always had been, and the next thing they knew he was dead and buried. Now they were really kind of numb, going through the actions and emotions of caring for the dead—because it was their duty, it was what was expected of them and they were doing it because they loved him *so much*.

They came to the entrance of the tomb just as there was enough light in the eastern sky to see their way, and the first thing they noticed was that the guard was gone—that was odd. Then they saw that the tomb was *already open*—that was a shock. It is really hard to overstate the emotional impact on these women when they first realized that Jesus was *gone*. And it's hard today, 2000 years later, to fathom the doubt, the fear, the confusion, and the joy that they experienced before that day was over—to really understand what it meant to them to learn that Jesus was *not* dead, after all. He was alive!

In the weeks that followed, the women told their stories, the other witnesses told their stories, over and over and over again. And they became a part of the testimony of the early church to the resurrection of Jesus. And now, 2000 years later, we struggle with the details of what happened that morning. The stories are confusing in many ways. Who was there? What were they doing? In what sequence did some of these things occur? What about the disciples? Their confusion and wonderment comes through, 2000 years later, as a testimony of what happened on that day and to the truth of it.

When a modern reader picks up a book and starts to read, they expect to read a story in the traditional sense with a beginning, a middle, and an end—a time sequence of the things that take place. This works very well in the Bible, if you just read one Gospel at a time. And, of course, if you stop to ponder for a moment that the men who wrote these Gospels anticipated that that's how people would read them. . . I am of the opinion that not one of the synoptic Gospel writers had seen any of the other synoptic Gospels when they wrote theirs. I think it's entirely likely that John had seen the other three when he wrote his account, because he does

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The Passover Connection

by Ronald L. Dart

As we come to the Passover season, it occurred to me how strange it is how little attention Christians give to their roots—how little they think of where the things that are very important to us in our religion actually come from.

One of the more interesting aspects of this is what is often referred to as the Lord's Supper or Communion, which is taken by many churches. Sometimes they take it weekly, some take it monthly, some take it quarterly. Some believe that you take it as "oft as you will." That means as often as you want to, so they do it hither, yon, and elsewhere. As a result of that, somehow or other, they seem to lose track of what I would call the Passover connection with the Lord's Supper.

The Passover connection is lost on most people, and it is in the Passover that the very roots of that night and of the celebration and observance of that night are found. I think it comes about as a result of most people's ignorance of the holy days. Not only do they not know about the Passover, but they have abandoned the Days of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Pentecost, the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Trumpets, and the Feast of Tabernacles. Consequently, the connection is completely severed, and the awareness of where all this comes from is not clear to people.

It is difficult to comprehend how it could be that a Christian who reads through 1 Corinthians 5 could not see the contrast of putting a man out so that the church could be unleavened, even as it was in a literal sense unleavened at that time of the year—and then proceed to read, "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Corinthians 5:8)—and not conclude that it was absolutely necessary for the church to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It's just there. It's hard to avoid—with the symbolism that goes along with it. Getting the malice and the hatred and the anger out of our

Radio Update

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lives as well as the leavening out of our homes. For indeed, to merely put leaven out of your home and then to retain the malice in your heart, makes you no better than the Pharisees who were themselves responsible for the death of our Savior.

No matter how one looks at this, it's very difficult to escape what Christ did on the night of the Last Supper. I think it's important that we remember our roots as Christians. In the 22nd chapter of Luke, he relates the story of what has been called the Last Supper. There are three curious things about this Passover. And it was the Passover. Jesus called it the Passover. Beforehand, he instructed them to prepare the Passover. When he was there and eating the meal, he said, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover." There is really no question that what he was doing was the Passover. There are three rather interesting things about it. Three changes, if you will, relative to the Passover.

One was the fact that he introduced a new custom to the church which had not been a part of the Passover before—that of washing one another's feet. He also changed the symbols of the Passover from a lamb to bread and wine. The third thing he did was to change the time of Passover service: not to another day, but to a period of time on the same day. The Old Testament Passover was the 14th day of the first month. The New Testament Passover is the 14th day of the first month, but Jesus set the example of observing it 24 hours earlier.

2018 Feast of Tabernacles

Have you made Feast plans yet? Plan to join us for the 2018 Land Between the Lakes (LBL) Feast site where brethren from CEM, CGI, UCG, and several independent groups came together to build a family friendly Feast.

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not cover a lot of the same material. He didn't see any point in it. He had a perspective—a message that he felt needed to be told—that the others had not gotten straight, or hadn't gotten full and complete, or hadn't really managed to recall, and so he put a different approach to the story.

But the Gospel accounts are not really stories—they are *testimony*. When you understand the power of the idea of witnesses and testimony in the Bible, and how central this concept is to what was being written in the Bible, a lot of things become clearer and take on much more power than they otherwise might have to a casual reader. These stories were written down by these men; they are not biographies; they are *testimonies* to what these men knew, experienced, and touched of the life, the ministry, the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Jesus.

It's important to understand how this testimony came to be written so you can grasp what's going on. Many things can affect a person's testimony. Where you were standing when events took place can change everything. A person standing over *there* might see one set of things. A man standing over *here* might be screened from some things and not see them at all. Later events may suddenly give meaning to things you did not consider important at the time you saw them. They come rolling back in on you as the story develops and then they find their way into your testimony. If you're in court, the rules of evidence can have an effect on testimony—what is allowed and what is not allowed in evidence might be brought into play along the way. For example, we get quite a bit of hearsay in the New Testament—in these Gospel accounts about the resurrection of Christ—along with eyewitness accounts. But we are allowed, in this case, to consider this evidence and weigh it alongside everything else.

Events surrounding the resurrection of Jesus were reported to us by the witnesses, but it's fair to say that the facts are somewhat jumbled. First, the events were not written down for some 30 years after they had taken place. That 30-year period from the time of the

events until the testimony was written down is nowhere near the handicap that it would be in our world today, because the story was told again and again and again and again, every week throughout the church. The witnesses were there and they recounted it, and questions were asked, and penetrating challenges were offered to them. They had to rack their memories to pull up things they might

have forgotten. And as time went by, and as they grew personally, they begin to *understand* certain things Jesus said that they *didn't understand at all* originally. But they remembered. Perhaps the Holy Spirit brought it back to their recollections through events that took place. So we have to understand that all of these things were very important. The 30 years that passed did not diminish the *truth* that the witnesses tell, but it drastically reduced *detail*. And that's where you and I have our problems with it. They always say, the devil is in the details, and *we really want the details*.

The story as reported in the Gospel was compiled in blocks of information from different sources, different vantage points, and different experiences of the same events. And the witnesses, by the time it was all written down, had told their stories over and over. So they were well-known to the church, even memorized, while the witnesses were still there to clarify and to correct—especially to correct somebody who tried to throw some curve into the testimony of the early church. It's important to remember that the testimony that you read in the four Gospels is not merely the testimony of the four men involved; it is the testimony of the 1st century church. Because *they* were there; *they* experienced it too; and they were there to challenge, to argue, to put right mistakes made in the telling of the story. Because the interesting thing about the events that took place on this morning is that *not one* of the New Testament Gospel writers was there. They had to get the testimony from the women who were there.

And, trust me, you were not going to run a bad story of that morning by those women without them standing up and saying, “No, no, no! That wasn't the way it was.”

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Okay, so 2000 years later we struggle with these blocks of information, trying to piece together the story. We know it is the truth, but the details still elude us. Let's look at the events of that wave-sheaf Sunday nearly 2000 years ago. This particular day was a watershed day for the worship of God throughout all time. Beginning in Matthew 28:1, "At the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulcher."

This poses no problem if you just read Matthew. But when you read the other accounts, it slowly dawns on you that Matthew was *not there*. You will also find that the two Marys were not the only women there—which brings to mind the fact that Matthew was giving us hearsay evidence. We will admit it, because we find from other testimony that the testimony is *true* even though it may not be entirely accurate. The fact is that if Matthew had been entirely accurate he would have told us that Salome was there—which he didn't bother to mention to us. There is a small distinction between truth and accuracy. It's normal in receiving testimony. The question is not so much whether it's accurate in all of its details; the question is if it's *the truth* that is being told. And Matthew tells us the truth, even though he omits some details that we would like very much to have had. This little distinction has to be borne in mind. Matthew manages, though, to paint in a part of the picture which confirms what we learn elsewhere and gives us some background.

I want to point out that verses two, three, and four are parenthetical—they are put in here simply to add one other item of background as to how it was when these two women showed up at the tomb. They were worried about how were they going to get that stone rolled back. They were going to get those soldiers to help them do it. Matthew said in verse two: "And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled

back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men" (Matthew 28:2-4 AKJV).

And I don't doubt that for a moment. With a huge earthquake, all of a sudden the stone rolls back and this incredible, great, shining face-like-lightning being is there. They probably passed out on the spot as that took place. This was put in there to explain how the tomb was opened so the women could go in. This was not inserted to show the *time* of the earthquake.

I said that there were no witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus, so we have no testimony as to the time of his resurrection. Someone disputed me in a letter saying that the *soldiers* were witnesses because they were there when the earthquake happened; they were there when the angel came and the stone was rolled back. However, there is no suggestion that they saw Jesus in the process. And nobody would trust the testimony of those soldiers because they turned out to be liars for money. They could only testify as to the time of the earthquake and to seeing the angel, and that *may or may not* have been the moment of the resurrection. There's nothing here to tell us that. All we can say with certainty is that, some time before the first witnesses arrived at the tomb, Jesus was raised from the dead and the tomb was opened.

We know *nothing* from testimony of the timing of these events. We can *infer* from surrounding events that the earthquake took place not long before the women got there. We can *infer* the time of resurrection from other Scriptures—like three days and three nights. But otherwise we're speculating. We draw our inferences but, beyond that, we cannot say for sure because there were no witnesses to this. But the opening of the tomb was not to let Jesus out; it was to let the witnesses in. So that event does not time the resurrection. To hear all of *The Resurrection Story*: go to our website, www.borntowin.net to see the entire transcript or listen to the full message, return the existing order form, or call us at 1-888-BIBLE-44 and request your *FREE* copy.

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That the man of God may be proficient and equipped for every good work.

CEM Mission Statement

Christian Educational Ministries (CEM) was founded in November 1995 by Ron and Allie Dart as an independent, non-denominational ministry to serve the public and individual Christians of every kind through the ministry of Ronald L. Dart. Mr. Dart, an ordained minister and evangelist, has served God through hundreds of sermons, broadcasts, Bible Studies, and books—bringing clarity and simplicity to topics.

CEM promotes Ron Dart’s radio ministry, *Born to Win*, which is heard from coast-to-coast. His clear, conversational, and inviting style can be heard the world over. The *Born to Win* website, www.borntowin.net, features more than 1000 of Mr. Dart’s timeless sermons and studies at any one time.

Our mission is:

- First, to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. (Matthew 28).
- Second, to teach the disciples of Jesus Christ so that they may be “proficient and equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:17).
- Third, to teach and train this generation and the next with studies and programs focused on youth, through the Dart’s special passion, Youth Educational Adventures (YEA). (Deuteronomy 11:19, Proverbs 22:6).
- Fourth, to bring God’s people closer together, through cooperative efforts wherever they may be. (2 Corinthians 5:18).

To this end, we teach the Bible and its Truth, with a goal of helping people make their own lives work while they are a positive influence and blessing to those around them. Follow Mr. Dart and CEM at www.borntowin.net, Facebook, YouTube, and other media.

April Scripture Writing Plan

We encourage you to read each day’s scripture and then write it down in a notebook, a journal, on index cards, in a text message or whatever method you know works best for you. If you can’t write it down, consider speaking the scripture and recording it on your cell phone or voice recorder. Our goal is to have read and written down a minimum of 365 scriptures by the end of 2018. Let’s do this and see the value it brings to our lives.



April 01	John 3:16	April 11	Ephesians 4:2-3	April 21	John 15:9-10
April 02	1 John 4:7-8	April 12	Ephesians 4:4-5	April 22	John 15:12-13
April 03	Proverbs 17:17	April 13	1 Peter 4:8	April 23	1 John 3:16-18
April 04	1 Corinthians 13:1-3	April 14	Matthew 5:43-48	April 24	Deuteronomy 7:9
April 05	1 Corinthians 13:4-8	April 15	1 Corinthians 16:14	April 25	Psalms 86:15
April 06	Romans 12:9-10	April 16	Colossians 3:14	April 26	Romans 5:8
April 07	Romans 12:20-21	April 17	Mark 12:29-31	April 27	Proverbs 3:3-4
April 08	Romans 13:8-10	April 18	1 John 4:9-12	April 28	1 John 3:1
April 09	Proverbs 10:12	April 19	1 John 4:16-18	April 29	Luke 6:27-31
April 10	Proverbs 20:6-7	April 20	1 John 4:19-21	April 30	Luke 6:35
				Bonus	1 Corinthians 13:13

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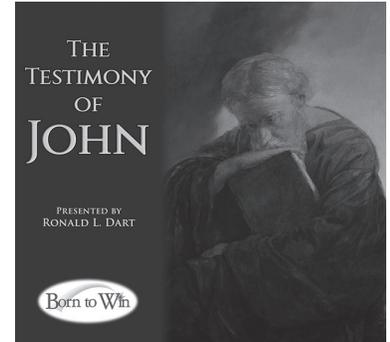
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The Resurrection Story CD FREE

There was a natural jumble of real witnesses telling the truth about what they saw and what they experienced, and trying to make sense out of it. Jesus was dead. Now, he was alive. And the implications of that simple fact echo down to us and back in time through all Old Testament history. This is *the most important day* in the history of the world. You can ignore the story, if you can. Believe it, if you will. And if you believe it, your life has got to change. Add this message to your audio library.

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