

Easter Day  
Principal Service  
Cycle C RCL

Acts 10:34-43

Like other Greco-Roman historians, the author of Luke-Acts used speeches by principal characters to provide summaries and commentaries on the action. Here Peter sums up the events of Jesus' life as told in the Gospel According to Luke as part of an argument that the Gospel is for all nations. The expression "Lord of all," used here of Jesus, is used by Plutarch in reference to Zeus and to Osiris and by the Wisdom of Solomon in reference to the God of Israel.

OR

Isaiah 65:17-25

The return from exile in 539 BCE did not bring the Jews the bliss they expected. Rather, life in Persian-era Jerusalem was difficult and often dangerous. This led to speculation that the grand promises of the Second Isaiah (Isaiah 40-55) had been overblown and even misleading. It was easy to lose hope in the entire enterprise of reconstruction. The Third Isaiah (56-66) alternates between prophecies of doom if Judah deserts its hope in God and oracles of salvation such as the present lesson, both designed to encourage the struggling citizens of Jerusalem to maintain their trust in God's promises.

Psalms 118:1-2, 14-24

Psalms 118 in Jewish tradition is one of the *Hallel* ("praise") psalms sung before and after the Passover meal. It is an individual *psalm of thanksgiving*. The opening of the temple gates to the psalmist (118:19-20) suggests that the deliverance is not only from mortal illness but also from an illness such as leprosy that might have left the psalmist maimed or unclean and hence unqualified to enter the temple precincts.

1 Corinthians 15:19-26

Paul in 1 Corinthians has directed his hand to the refutation of certain teachers in Corinth who teach an other-worldly, even esoteric interpretation of the faith, one that makes no room for the crass idea of the resurrection of the dead. In answer to this teaching, Paul in 15:1-7 repeated the oral tradition about the death and resurrection of Christ and then made it clear in 8-11 that he too had seen the risen Jesus. On the basis of this evidence Paul in 15:12-19 argues against those who claim that Christian faith does not require belief in the resurrection. Verse 19 is the culmination of his claim that one cannot believe that Christ was raised as a kind of special miracle but must believe that his resurrection was the first of the resurrection that will include us at the end of days (1 Corinthians 15:12-19). In 1 Corinthians 15:20-26 deals with some of the implications of Christ's resurrection. This section is less about a typology of Christ as the second Adam as it is a contrast between this present evil age and the age to come. Christ's resurrection is the bridge between the ages.

OR

Acts 10:34-43

See above.

John 20:1-18

Like Luke, John has two angelic figures at the empty tomb instead of one as in Matthew and Mark. Only in John is the story of Mary from Magdala (a Jewish town in the Galilee) the principal tomb narrative. Most puzzling is the command not to touch Jesus (20:17) since touching is precisely the act that convinced Thomas just ten verses later (20:27). Some investigators account for this as a minor inconsistency introduced from John's source documents. The Aramaic *Rabbouni* corresponds to the Hebrew *Rabbi* ("my teacher"), and its use here

strengthens the shocking claim that Jesus served as a teacher for women as well as for men.

OR

Luke 24:1-12

This writer has taken his account from Mark 16:1-8 but has altered Mark's story in some respects. Only Luke mentions specifically that the women did not find the body in the tomb (24:3), and only in Luke do the angels complain that the women should not be seeking the living among the dead (24:5). Most important is the omission of the information that the disciples will see Jesus next in the Galilee. (See Mark 16:7 followed by Matthew 28:7.) For the author of Luke-Acts it is Jerusalem, not the Galilee, which will be the scene of the resurrection appearances because it is from Jerusalem that this author sees the Christian mission setting out into all the world.

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