

Easter Day
Principal Service
Cycle B 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 25:6-9

The latest material in the Book of Isaiah occurs in chapters 24-27 and is sometimes called the "Apocalypse of Isaiah" because these chapters contain themes found otherwise only in apocalyptic writings. One such theme is that of God's universal kingdom in verses 6-9. This vision of the great feast of God in a restored Zion is prefaced by a traditional *hymn* (25:1-5) such as might be found in our Book of Psalms.

Psalms 118:1-2, 14-24

In Jewish tradition, this psalm 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 15:1-11

This is the earliest account of the death and resurrection of Jesus in the New Testament. The formula in verse 3, "I handed on to you ... what I in turn received," refers to handing on something by oral tradition, and this has led some interpreters to believe that the account goes back to the earliest preaching of the church. The importance of the tradition in Paul's argument with the Corinthians is that they cannot believe in the resurrection of Jesus and deny the reality of resurrection for themselves. (See verse 12.) The story of Jesus' appearance to "more than five hundred" (verse 6) is otherwise unknown to us.

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 researchers 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

Mark 16:1-8

Mark 16:8 is almost certainly the close of Mark's Gospel. Mark 16:9-20, the so-called "longer ending," was added in the second century CE as was the addition to verse 8 sometimes called the "shorter ending." Both were added because the enigmatic close of the Gospel "for they were afraid" (Greek: *efobounto gar*) may

have seemed too abrupt and too ambiguous for some of its readers. Nevertheless for Mark to end his Gospel on a note of uncertainty and anxiety is not at all uncharacteristic. Throughout the Gospel, Jesus' actions sow discomfort and misunderstanding even as they achieve the kingdom's goals. This last great sign of resurrection produces in Jesus' followers an even more disturbing uncertainty than the rest of his mighty acts.

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