

## “Son Rise” (Jn. 20:1-9)

1. A New Day (1-5a)
  - a. All four Gospels mention “first day” rather than “third day” which may seem curious.
  - b. John apparently continues the dark/light motif here.
  - c. The darkness of early morning (as attested by the other three Evangelists) gives way to the light of day where the sun rise parallels its Maker’s defeat over darkness.
  - d. Again, rather than emphasize the third day, the eighth day is in view.
  - e. The Feasts would often (if not always) end with an eight day observance and or celebration (going by memory). Jn. 7:37-8 offers an example and with it how Jesus likened the most celebrated jubilant Feast’s living water unto Himself.
  - f. Furthermore, Jesus’ name equates to the gematria value of 888. In his excellent Greek commentary on Revelation, G. K. Beale mentioned the following:
    - i. The number eight is an essential feature of the number of Jesus and of new creation (the sum of the letters of “Jesus” in Greek add up to 888, on which see further on 13:18).
    - ii. **For example, in *Sib. Or. 1.325, Jesus is represented by the number 888 (I = 10, H = 8, Σ = 200, O = 70, Y = 400, Σ = 200).***<sup>296</sup>
    - iii. **Revelation 13:18** 666 could also be intended as a contrast with 888, the numerical value by gematria of the name “Jesus.”<sup>1</sup>
  - g. More could be said and I’ll just add that the creation days in *Genesis* end with a seventh Sabbath Day – which = now as God has ceased from creating species of life on earth. And in Revelation 21-22 we see a New Beginning – a New Creation (NC) where all that sin/evil had cursed is finally and forever eradicated.
  - h. Perhaps one final mention of the significance of the “first (8<sup>th</sup>) day.” The Apostolic Church met on the new day of each week rather than the seventh and final day of Sabbath the Hebrews were required to observe.
  - i. What’s more: “The book of Acts records that the Spirit came upon the church on Pentecost, which was the day after the seventh Sabbath from the Passover—the eighth day of the seventh week (Lev. 23:15–16).”<sup>2</sup>
  - j. Ok, maybe just one more point. John’s account is framed on seven miracles which serve to set the stage for the 8<sup>th</sup> and final and most significant one viz. Jesus’ resurrection.
  - k. OK, OK, just one final point in the motif of 8 being the number of new beginnings. The year of Jubilee was in essence the beginning of the eight week of weeks i.e. years. After seven times seven weeks (49), the fiftieth began a new day of freedom for all slaves. Did not Jesus come to liberate us from sin’s bondage?
2. A New Creation (5b-7)
  - a. Jesus is the firstfruits of resurrection and the NC. Read 1 Cor. 15:20-23.
  - b. Because He rose, we will rise. In fact, eternal life begins for us when we trust in Him (Jn. 5:24-29 cf. all of 1 Cor. 15 where His physical resurrection precedes our spiritual birth resurrection which precedes our physical resurrection).

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*Sib. Or. Sibylline Oracles*

<sup>296</sup> For other examples from the first century see Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 275–77.

<sup>1</sup> Beale, G. K. (1999). [\*The book of Revelation: a commentary on the Greek text\*](#) (pp. 115–727). W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.

<sup>2</sup> Phillips, R. D. (2014). [\*John\*](#) (R. D. Phillips, P. G. Ryken, & D. M. Doriani, Eds.; 1st ed., Vol. 2, p. 631). P&R Publishing.

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- c. The NC has begun 2 Cor. 5:17!
  - d. Just as in the creation of the cosmos where there was first chaos and darkness before the Word of God caused order and light, the darkness of death and night gave way to the Light of the World – the Word made flesh, who raised Himself to order the NC!
3. A New Faith (8-9)
- a. Resurrected Israel
    - i. It is orthodox consensus that Jesus is the New Israel – the Prophet greater than Moses who delivers His people from bondage and into the Promised Land.
    - ii. It is also perceived and thus telegraphed that this new and resurrected Israel would become a reality after she had all but been decimated by the canon’s order of books and their content. We’ve already seen how the creation account mirrors the Gospels’ NC account (e.g. Jn. 1:1), and the NT ends with Zechariah’s prophesy that God is coming to dwell with them on earth and *Malachi* thus foretold of the messenger who will prepare the way for the LORD Himself. More specific to our passage: in *Jeremiah* and *Lamentations* the downfall of Israel is recorded and her monarchy ended. Yet in *Ezekiel*, we see that the skeleton of Israel’s religion will be revived and the then future Temple would be universal.
    - iii. Jesus’ resurrection fulfills both of those realities and so much more.
  - b. Faith’s progression: Richard Phillips points out the three different Greek verbs which John used to describe how they saw (perceived) what was (and what wasn’t) in the tomb. “John describes the progression of faith in this episode by means of three different Greek words for *to see*: *blepo*, *theoreo*, and *horao*. The first of these, *blepo*, means simply “to look and see.” This word appears in John 20:5, which states that when John first looked into the tomb, “he saw the linen cloths lying there.” The second word, *theoreo*, appears in verse 6 to describe what happened with Peter: “Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there.” This verb, which gives us our word *theorize*, means “to wonder regarding something’s meaning.” Peter looked on the graveclothes and thought about what he was seeing... John tells of his belief in the resurrection by using a third word, *horao*, which can mean ‘to see with comprehension and understanding’”<sup>3</sup>
  - c. A New Faith
    - i. It’s not a different faith but a new one (Mat. 5:17). God had always pointed to such. →
    - ii. But the darkness must precede the dawn. Death precedes new life (Jn. 12:24). And doubt and confusion will give way to faith and illumination.
    - iii. Likely, the disciples had experienced defeat, doubt, depression, and dismay. Then after hearing from Mary, they likely experienced alarm (vv. 3-4), intrigue (vv. 5-6), and then elation and belief (vv. 7-8).
  - d. A Fertile Faith
    - i. Ours is a faith that keeps growing as we continue to learn, trust, praise, pray, confess, witness, serve, suffer, etc.

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<sup>3</sup> Phillips, R. D. (2014). *John* (R. D. Phillips, P. G. Ryken, & D. M. Doriani, Eds.; 1st ed., Vol. 2, pp. 628-9). P&R Publishing.

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- ii. I am a skeptical soul. I have reexamined my faith countless times. Well, actually not my “faith” but the evidence for it. Each time, my faith grows as I study, observe, and meditate.
- iii. I get hot at professors like Bart Ehrman, who prides himself on getting new Christian college students to recant their faith in Scripture. He points out supposed errors and contradictions in Scripture so as to undermine its authority. I’ve heard him do so numerous times. Perhaps one of his anecdotes is this passage in John where Mary is said to go to the tomb whereas the Synoptics record that she went with others. It’s likely that she either went twice: once before dawn and then with others. Or she went once with others early and John simply mentions only her because she was the one who ran to inform the men. See **Further Study: Mary** below.
- iv. Incidentally, my favorite Ehrman fallacy is how He says that Jesus’ own testimony serves as a witness against Him in Mat. 24:33-34. For a scholar, he sure has overlooked glaring evidence of prophesy and fulfillment which verify Jesus’ profound prophesy.
  - v. Progressive Revelation: is the concept of how biblical theology is developed by the growing motifs in the canon. Expound.
  - vi. As more revelation is revealed, more puzzle pieces come into view and the portrait emerges until the NT reveals the “Cornerstone” who is Christ (Ps. 118:22; Isa. 28:16 cf. Mat. 21:42; Eph. 2:20. →
- vii. Eph. 2 parallels Ezekiel’s message of Temple resurrection.
  1. Jesus is the Temple (Jn. 2:19).
  2. Ezekiel foretold a resurrection and new Temple.
  3. Paul explained that we have been raised up and seated with Him in the heavenly places (Eph. 2:6) and that He builds both Jew and Gentile into one holy Temple of which Jesus is the Cornerstone.
  4. The motifs combine in harmony. Ezekiel’s prophesies re: resurrection, cleansing, new heart and Spirit along with the new Temple are confirmed by Paul after their fulfillment in Jesus’ resurrection.
- viii. My point is that our faith, not unlike the faith of the OT saints, grows with revelation and illumination. Our faith is not in a new God but a clearer revelation of Him. Faithful Hebrews trusted the LORD and followed His Law and Prophets – which pointed to Messiah. The Disciples trusted and followed Jesus, though until His resurrection they did not fully understand v. 9.
- ix. If you desire a stronger faith, you need not look to an object other than Christ. You merely need to look deeper into Him – His Word. Evidence abounds though it must be sought. Revelation is clear but it must be discerned. Faith can be fertile but it must be exercised in study and meditation where the Spirit imparts illumination. Listen to and read good preachers and teachers who disseminate the revelation of God’s Word and your faith will be fertile.
- x. Many brilliant souls have attested that Jesus’ resurrection is “the best attested fact in history.”<sup>6</sup> Many legal scholars have scrutinized the evidence in the light

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<sup>6</sup> Matthew Arnold, quoted in James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 2:640.

of legal standards. One of them, the famous English jurist Sir Edward Clark, wrote, ‘As a lawyer I have made a prolonged study of the evidences for the first Easter day. To me the evidence is conclusive, and over and over again in the High Court I have secured the verdict on evidence not nearly so compelling.’”<sup>7 4</sup>

### Further Study:

**Mary:** Mary of Magdala (*cf.* notes on 19:25) is prominent in the first resurrection account of each of the four Gospels, but only here does she appear alone. It is quite uncertain how this report is to be reconciled with those in the Synoptics. Perhaps she went to the tomb alone (John), and then returned with some other women (Synoptics), right on the trail of Peter and the beloved disciple. If so, we are to think of her as becoming separated from the others after their arrival at the empty tomb (vv. 10–18). Many argue that the plural ‘we’ (v. 2) hints that Mary Magdalene was *not* alone on her first trip to the tomb (though other explanations for the ‘we’ are possible: *e.g.* Bultmann [p. 684 n. 1], rightly cites both Aramaic and Greek parallels where the plural is merely a mode of speech, without plural referent). Bernard (2. 262) argues that a Jewish woman in first-century Jerusalem would not be likely to walk alone, in the dark, to a place of ceremonial dirt, a place of execution; but grief may breed courage as readily as cowardice. Certainly there are Gospel parallels where one Evangelist mentions two or more people while another Evangelist mentions only the most prominent, but on the whole it seems wiser to apply this principle to Mary’s second trip to the tomb (assuming there were two trips) than to the first (*cf.* notes on vv. 11–12).<sup>5</sup>

**Verse 9:** Neither Peter nor the beloved disciple at this point understood *from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead*. By the time John wrote that was no longer the case: the church had worked out a detailed understanding of the Old Testament by which to understand and explain the life, ministry, death and resurrection of their Lord (*cf.* 1 Cor. 15:3–7). At this point, however, the fledgling faith of the beloved disciple was grounded on what he had seen (and not seen!) in the tomb. The singular *Scripture* (*graphē*) may suggest that a specific Old Testament text is in mind (Sanders, p. 422, n. 3, suggests Ps. 16:10; Bruce, p. 386, thinks of Lv. 23:11 or Ho. 6:2), but it is also possible that it refers to the entire Scripture. The failure of the disciples to grasp the teaching of Scripture at this point is confirmed by similar patterns of belief and misunderstanding reported by Luke (24:25–27, 32, 44–47; *cf.* notes on 2:19–22).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Stott, *Basic Christianity*, 47.

<sup>4</sup> Phillips, R. D. (2014). [John](#) (R. D. Phillips, P. G. Ryken, & D. M. Doriani, Eds.; 1st ed., Vol. 2, pp. 628–629). P&R Publishing.

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<sup>5</sup> Carson, D. A. (1991). [The Gospel according to John](#) (p. 635). Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

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<sup>6</sup> Carson, D. A. (1991). [The Gospel according to John](#) (p. 639). Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans. Emphasis mine.