

## Christ's Victory Over Death

Sabbath Afternoon, November 5

Think of how much it cost Christ to leave the heavenly courts, and take His position at the head of humanity. Why did He do this? Because He was the only one who could redeem the fallen race. There was not a human being in the world who was without sin. The Son of God stepped down from His heavenly throne, laid off His royal robe and kingly crown, and clothed His divinity with humanity. He came to die for us, to lie in the tomb as human beings must, and to be raised for our justification. He came to become acquainted with all the temptations wherewith man is beset. He rose from the grave and proclaimed over the rent sepulcher of Joseph, "I am the resurrection, and the life." One equal with God passed through death in our behalf. He tasted death for every man, that through Him every man might be a partaker of eternal life.

—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 13.

Through the cross we learn that our heavenly Father loves us with an infinite and everlasting love, and draws us to Him with more than a mother's yearning sympathy for a wayward child. Can we wonder that Paul exclaimed, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ"? It is our privilege also to glory in the cross of Calvary, our privilege to give ourselves wholly to Him who gave Himself for us. Then with the light of love that shines from His face on ours, we shall go forth to reflect it to those in darkness.

—*Ellen G. White Comments, in The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 5, p. 1133.*

Jesus placed the cross in line with the light coming from heaven, for it is there that it shall catch the eye of man. The cross is in direct line with the shining of the divine countenances, so that by beholding the cross men may see and know God and Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent. In beholding God we behold the One who poured out His soul unto death. In beholding the cross the view is extended to God, and His hatred of sin is discerned. But while we behold in the cross God's hatred of sin, we also behold His love for sinners, which is stronger than death. To the world the cross is the incontrovertible argument that God is truth and light and love.

—*Signs of the Times, March 7, 1895.*

Sunday, November 6

## A Sealed Tomb

The priests gave directions for securing the sepulcher. A great stone had been placed before the opening. Across this stone they placed cords, securing the ends to the solid rock, and sealing them with the Roman seal. The stone could not be moved without breaking the seal. A guard of one hundred soldiers was then stationed around the sepulcher to prevent it from being tampered with. The priests did all they could to keep Christ's body where it had been laid. He was sealed as securely in His tomb as if He were to remain there through all time.

So weak men counseled and planned. Little did these murderers realize the uselessness of their efforts. But by their action God was glorified. The very efforts made to prevent Christ's resurrection are the most convincing arguments in its proof. The greater the number of soldiers placed around the tomb, the stronger would be the testimony that He had risen. . . . Roman guards and Roman arms were powerless to confine the Lord of life within the tomb. The hour of His release was near.

—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 778.

Although the Jewish rulers had carried out their fiendish purpose in putting to death the Son of God, their apprehensions were not quieted, nor was their jealousy of Christ dead. Mingled with the joy of gratified revenge, there was an ever-present fear that His dead body, lying in Joseph's tomb, would come forth to life. Therefore "the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while He was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night, and steal Him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first." Matthew 27:63, 64. Pilate was as unwilling as were the Jews that Jesus should rise with power to punish the guilt of those who had destroyed Him, and he placed a band of Roman soldiers at the command of the priests. Said he, "Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch." Matthew 27:65, 66.

The Jews realized the advantage of having such a guard about the tomb of Jesus. They placed a seal upon the stone that closed the sepulcher, that it might not be disturbed without the fact being known, and took every precaution against the disciples' practicing any deception in regard to the body of Jesus. But all their plans and precautions only served to make the triumph of the resurrection more complete and to more fully establish its truth.

—*The Story of Redemption*, pp. 228, 229.

Monday, November 7

## “ ‘He Is Risen!’ ”

By raising Christ from the dead, the Father glorified His Son before the Roman guard, before the satanic host, and before the heavenly universe. A mighty angel, clothed with the panoply of heaven, descended, scattering the darkness from his track, and, breaking the Roman seal, rolled back the stone from the sepulcher as if it had been a pebble, undoing in a moment the work that the enemy had done. The voice of God was heard, calling Christ from His prison house. The Roman guard saw heavenly angels falling in reverence before Him whom they had crucified, and He proclaimed above the rent sepulcher of Joseph, “I am the resurrection, and the life.” Can we be surprised that the soldiers fell as dead men to the earth?

—*Lift Him Up*, p. 102.

Christ was the medium through which [the Father] could pour out His infinite love upon a fallen world. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.” 2 Corinthians 5:19. God suffered with His Son. In the agony of Gethsemane, the death of Calvary, the heart of Infinite Love paid the price of our redemption.

Jesus said, “Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again.” John 10:17. That is, “My Father has so loved you that He even loves Me more for giving My life to redeem you. In becoming your Substitute and Surety, by surrendering My life, by taking your liabilities, your transgressions, I am endeared to My Father; for by My sacrifice, God can be just, and yet the Justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.”

None but the Son of God could accomplish our redemption; for only He who was in the bosom of the Father could declare Him. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it manifest. Nothing less than the infinite sacrifice made by Christ in behalf of fallen man could express the Father’s love to lost humanity.

—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 13, 14.

[The Roman guard] were filled with amazement as they saw that the great stone had been rolled from the door of the sepulcher and that the body of Jesus was gone. They hastened to the city to make known to the priests and elders what they had seen. As those murderers listened to the marvelous report, paleness sat upon every face. Horror seized them at the thought of what they had done. If the report was correct, they were lost. For a time they sat in silence, looking upon one another’s faces, not knowing what to do or what to say. To accept the report would be to condemn themselves. They went aside to consult as to what should be done. They reasoned that if the report brought by the guard should be circulated among the people, those who put Christ to death would be slain as His murderers. It was decided to hire the soldiers to keep the matter secret. . . . For the sake of money, the Roman guard sold their honor, and agreed to follow the counsel of the priests and elders.

—*Early Writings*, p. 183.

Tuesday, November 8

## Many Arose With Him

When Jesus, as He hung upon the cross, cried out, “It is finished,” the rocks rent, the earth shook, and some of the graves were opened. When He arose a victor over death and the grave, while the earth was reeling and the glory of heaven shone around the sacred spot, many of the righteous dead, obedient to His call, came forth as witnesses that He had risen. Those favored, risen saints came forth glorified. They were chosen and holy ones of every age, from creation down even to the days of Christ. Thus while the Jewish leaders were seeking to conceal the fact of Christ’s resurrection, God chose to bring up a company from their graves to testify that Jesus had risen, and to declare His glory. . . .

Those who came forth after the resurrection of Jesus appeared to many, telling them that the sacrifice for man was completed, that Jesus, whom the Jews crucified, had risen from the dead; and in proof of their words they declared, “We be risen with Him.” They bore testimony that it was by His mighty power that they had been called forth from their graves.

—*Early Writings*, p. 184.

Let us not mourn and grieve because in this life we are not free from disappointments and afflictions. If in the providence of God we are called upon to endure trials, let us accept the cross and drink the bitter cup, remembering that it is a Father’s hand that holds it to our lips. Let us trust Him in the darkness as well as in the day. Can we not believe that He will give us everything that is for our good? “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” . . .

What a theme for meditation is the sacrifice that Jesus made for lost sinners! “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.” How shall we estimate the blessings thus brought within our reach? Could Jesus have suffered more? Could He have purchased for us richer blessings? . . . In our present state, favored and blessed as we are, we cannot realize from what depths we have been rescued. We cannot measure how much deeper our afflictions would have been, how much greater our woes, had not Jesus encircled us with His human arm of sympathy and love, and lifted us up.

We may rejoice in hope. . . . He died that He might wash away our sins, clothe us with His righteousness, and fit us for the society of heaven, where we may dwell in light forever.

—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 315, 316.

Wednesday, November 9

## Witnesses of the Risen Christ

The two travelers [from Emmaus], panting with the haste with which they have made their journey, tell the wondrous story of how Jesus has appeared to them. They have just ended, and some are saying that they cannot believe it, for it is too good to be true, when behold, another Person stands before them. Every eye is fastened upon the stranger. No one has knocked for entrance. No footstep has been heard. The disciples are startled, and wonder what it means. Then they hear a voice which is no other than the voice of their Master. Clear and distinct the words fall from His lips, "Peace be unto you."

"But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And He said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have. And when He had thus spoken, He showed them His hands and His feet."

They beheld the hands and feet marred by the cruel nails. They recognized His voice, like no other they had ever heard. "And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, He said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And He took it, and did eat before them." "Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord." Faith and joy took the place of unbelief, and with feelings which no words could express they acknowledged their risen Saviour.

—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 802, 803.

Jesus, in His treatment of Thomas, gave His followers a lesson regarding the manner in which they should treat those who have doubts upon religious truth, and who make those doubts prominent. He did not overwhelm Thomas with words of reproach, nor did He enter into a controversy with him; but, with marked condescension and tenderness, He revealed Himself unto the doubting one. Thomas had taken a most unreasonable position, in dictating the only conditions of his faith; but Jesus, by His generous love and consideration, broke down all the barriers he had raised. Persistent controversy will seldom weaken unbelief, but rather put it upon self-defense, where it will find new support and excuse. Jesus, revealed in His love and mercy as the crucified Saviour, will bring from many once unwilling lips the acknowledgment of Thomas, "My Lord, and my God."

—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1151.

Thursday, November 10

## **“The First Fruits of Those Who Have Died”**

Christ arose from the dead as the first fruits of those that slept. He was the antitype of the wave sheaf, and His resurrection took place on the very day when the wave sheaf was to be presented before the Lord. For more than a thousand years this symbolic ceremony had been performed. From the harvest fields the first heads of ripened grain were gathered, and when the people went up to Jerusalem to the Passover, the sheaf of first fruits was waved as a thank offering before the Lord. Not until this was presented could the sickle be put to the grain, and it be gathered into sheaves. The sheaf dedicated to God represented the harvest. So Christ the first fruits represented the great spiritual harvest to be gathered for the kingdom of God. His resurrection is the type and pledge of the resurrection of all the righteous dead.

—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 180.

The value that God places on the work of His hands, the love He has for His children, is revealed by the gift He made to redeem men. Adam fell under the dominion of Satan. He brought sin into the world, and death by sin. God gave His only-begotten Son to save man. This He did that He might be just, and yet the justifier of all who accept Christ. Man sold himself to Satan, but Jesus bought back the race.

You are not your own. Jesus has purchased you with His blood. Do not bury your talents in the earth. Use them for Him. In whatever business you may be engaged, bring Jesus into it. If you find that you are losing your love for your Saviour, give up your business, and say, “Here I am, Saviour; what wilt Thou have me to do?” He will receive you graciously, and love you freely. He will abundantly pardon; for He is merciful and long-suffering, not willing that any should perish.

We, and all that we have, belong to God. We should not regard it as a sacrifice to give Him the affection of our hearts. The heart itself should be given to Him as a willing offering.

—*Messages to Young People*, pp. 69, 70.

Jesus Christ has given Himself as a complete offering in behalf of every fallen son and daughter of Adam. O what humiliation He bore! How He descended, step after step, lower and lower in the path of humiliation, yet He never degraded His soul with one foul blot of sin! All this He suffered, that He might lift you up, cleanse, refine, and ennoble you, and place you as a joint heir with Himself upon His throne. How shall you make your calling and election sure? What is the way of salvation? Christ says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” However sinful, however guilty you may be, you are called, you are chosen. “Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you.” . . . The blood of Jesus is a never-failing passport, by which all your petitions may find access to the throne of God.

—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 251.

Friday, November 11

## For Further Reading

*The Desire of Ages*, “Why Weepest Thou?” pp. 788–794;

*The Desire of Ages*, “Peace Be Unto You,” pp. 802–808.