

940403 AM Easter

THE INDISPUTABLE SIGN

The Gospel by John

Open with me to John's Gospel Chapter 20. When we come to the garden and see the empty tomb we are struck with the simplicity and power of the scene.

- Its very early in the morning.
- We meet a small group of saddened and weary women.
- The road they must cross runs in front of the gruesome skull shaped hill of death where they had seen their Lord Jesus Christ die on Friday.
- They were last at the cross and now first at the Tomb.
- They were only going to finish the burial preparation, tidy up and bid one last tearful farewell. [Luke 24:1]
- And then it happened, they saw it. The stone was not rolled away or toppled over. *That massive stone had been removed.* The word means picked up, taken away. Its like going to work at a bank and arriving to see the vault door of solid steel torn from its hinges and set away from the doorway.

To them it was staggering, real and very moving.

To us it often is humdrum and monotonous.

But it was the **ULTIMATE, INDISPUTABLE SIGN**. The finale of a perfectly orchestrated and choreographed showing by God.

For you see although there are many philosophies, ways of life and religions, *Christianity is altogether different. It too is a way of life, but not one to which an individual Christian can attain. The standard is so high that no one but Christ ever lived or could live the Christian life. Everything depends on a living relationship with Christ, who therefore must Himself be alive.*¹

Now, look at the last two verses of this chapter. The Apostle John built his book around some special signs Christ performed to show who He really was. This morning we must decide what our response will be to the **INDISPUTABLE SIGN**, the Empty Tomb.

Before we do that though, lets cross three and a half of the greatest years of Earth's history. Let John the Apostle sketch across the fabric of the Life of Christ seven bright strokes. They are arrows all pointing the way and glowing with truth. He is the Son of God. He is the Promised One. He is the Savior, our only hope.

¹ Dave Hunt, *How Close are We*, Eugene: Harvest House, 1993, p.86.

SIGN NUMBER ONE [John 2:1-11] Water into wine
Quietly, behind the scenes Jesus begins to show His power.

He is Lord of Creation

SIGN NUMBER TWO [John 4:46-54] Nobleman's son
From afar He intercepts a sick and dying lad by merely a word. At the instant He spoke a boy 16 and a half miles away is healed. At the very moment.

He is Lord of Time and Space

SIGN NUMBER THREE [John 5:1-15] Withered man at Bethesda
Thirty eight years a man is trapped, and then he meets up with Jesus.

He is Lord of our physical limitations.

SIGN NUMBER FOUR [John 6:1-14] Feeds 5,000
All of life can be reduced to whether or not we receive the basic needs for continued existence. Jesus is able to provide those at any time, in any location and in any amount.

He is Lord of our physical needs

SIGN NUMBER FIVE [John 6:15-25] Walking on water
No power man has devised can rival the force of the elements, of the winds and oceans. We can forecast, satellite map and observe - but only Jesus can walk on waters that are convulsing and calm them instantly!

He is Lord of Nature

SIGN NUMBER SIX [John 9:1-41] Man born Blind
Doctors who work with the organ of sight have the greatest difficulty accepting the myth of evolutionary development. The wonders of sight are only rivaled by the originator and giver of the ability.

He is Lord of Sight

SIGN NUMBER SEVEN [John 11:1-44] Lazarus
The Jews had a superstition that said the spirit of the departed one hung around for three days before going to the netherworld. Christ waited until the fourth day so that there would be no doubts.

He is Lord of Life and Death

You see the ultimate problem mankind faces is the problem of DEATH.

The mystery of God is seen in these thousands of years in which sin and death run riot.

- There is no village and there is no hamlet without its raging, and there is no human heart without its dark black drop.
- There is no life without its tears and its sorrows.
- There is no home that ultimately Death does not break up, and
- there is no family that does not see the circle of the home dissolve in the depths of the grave.
- There is no life that does not end in death. The pages of history, from the time of the first murder until this present hour, are written in blood, tears and death.
- For these thousands of years, God has allowed Satan to wrap his vicious, slimy, filthy, cruel tentacles around human life and around this earth.
- Does God know it?
- Is He indifferent to it?
- Is He not able to cope with it?

And of course the answer is yes. He shows He is Lord even of the greatest enemy - DEATH.

In rapid succession John shows Christ to be all we ever could possibly need.

- He is in total control of Creation,
- He commands disease,
- He can open eyes,
- He controls the weather,
- He can make food,
- He can dispel death.

The question that remains to be answered is, what do you do with a Risen Christ?

Lets find that answer in the night Jesus met with a seeker of everlasting life. So, to conclude this Resurrection morning message lets go back to the start of Christ's ministry in John 3. Perhaps the best known of all the verses in the Bible is in this chapter.

Jesus narrowed the questions of eternal life down to three essentials. They are still essentials.²

RESPONSES: Jesus only offered two options. Either you can believe or disbelieve Him. He is right or wrong. If He is telling the truth, and I believe He is, then there is only one way to heaven - HIS. So, what will your response be? Belief or Unbelief?

² Adapted from Chuck Swindoll, *Issues and Answers in Jesus Day*, Fullerton: IFL, 1990, p. 96.

DESTINIES: As far as Jesus goes its only Eternal Life or Eternal Death. There are no other comfortable choices. He draws the line and declares the alternatives and we are left to pick a destiny. Behind this door is:

- endless life, peace joy and
- the presence of God forever.

Behind this door is

- the blackness of darkness forever in unquenchable fire,
- worms that never die and
- the horror of knowing you made the eternally wrong choice.

CHOICES: Only Jesus could be so bold as to say there is no middle road on the highway to heaven. Its all or none. Its receive the free gift of eternal life or reject it. No choice is to make the answer to Him be NO. As Moses so aptly said it: Deuteronomy 30:15-20 See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, *and that* ye shall not prolong *your* days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, *and* that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he *is* thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them. (KJV)

What will it be? The choice is yours. What will you do with the INDISPUTABLE SIGN, the Empty Tomb, The Risen Christ?