

QUASIMODO GENITI—THE OCTAVE OF THE FEAST OF THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD

Text: St. John 20:19-31

ALLELUIA! CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED! ALLELUIA!

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

On this side of Heaven, there has never been, nor shall there ever be, a so-called “*Golden Age*” of the Church. If there ever was such an “*Age*” it would have been in the days when CHRIST our LORD walked among us. Yet, even then, the religious authorities scorned the Word of God and even rejected God Himself in the person of JESUS.

They rejected Him, arrested Him, beat Him nearly to death, and then crucified Him. JESUS was, as we confess, crucified, dead, and buried. A great stone was rolled across the mouth of His tomb to prevent the theft of His body and any fraudulent claims that He had risen from His grave. Such things were hardly necessary. Even His own disciples did not expect Him to rise from the dead; they did not remember what He said.

The people of God did not remember what God had said and promised—certainly not the Sadducees and Pharisees, though of all people, it truly was they who should have remembered. After all, had God not told them even as Moses recorded, “*And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.*” And again, “*The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear....*”

The prophet Isaiah wrote, “*Therefore the LORD Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a SON, and shall call His Name IMMANUEL.*” And again, “*In that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious... the LORD shall set His hand again the second time To recover the remnant of His people who are left....*” And again, “*For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people*

He was stricken. And they made His grave with the wicked—But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth.”

The prophet Micah wrote, *“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting. Therefore He shall give them up, Until the time that she who is in labor has given birth; Then the remnant of His brethren Shall return to the children of Israel. And He shall stand and feed His flock In the strength of the LORD, In the majesty of the Name of the LORD His God....”*

And the prophet Malachi, *“For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a SON is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His Name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting FATHER, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”*

These prophecies, and others, prophesied the coming of God’s anointed and what He would do, but God’s children did not remember; or perhaps they chose to forget.

Nor did His disciples remember. They lived with JESUS, they sat at His feet and learned from Him. They ate with Him, they laughed with Him, and cried with Him; they saw His miracles. Even more, they saw the prophecies of old fulfilled in Him. But they did not remember.

The disciples did not remember that no less than three times did JESUS tell them what to expect and warn them about what was to come. Three times He told them, *“The SON OF MAN must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.”* And again, *“For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: ‘And He was numbered with the transgressors.’”* And once more, *“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the SON OF MAN be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”*

JESUS’ disciples’ understanding was dulled, their hearts, overcome by grief and fear. They did not remember, nor could they accept the words of the women, whom they must have assumed, were even more overcome by emotion than were they. They did not believe that angels greeted the women with the words, *“Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, saying, ‘The SON OF MAN must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.’”* But they did not remember. Neither did they remember JESUS’ words to them on the night of His betrayal into the hands of His enemies, *“But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.”*

They did not remember, nor could they accept the words of the disciples who ran in the dark of night, the seven miles from Emmaus to Jerusalem, to spread the news that they had seen the LORD. They did not remember and so they could not believe.

So, here we are today. Do you remember? Do you believe? Perhaps the Words of Christ, Himself are more to the point: *“O you of little faith, why do you doubt?”* Do you demand to put your fingers in the wounds in Jesus’ hands and your hand into the wound in His side? Must you see before you will believe? *“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”*

Our LORD took on the flesh of sinful man to fulfill all things demanded of us by the Law of God; things which we could not do ourselves. He came to establish peace where there is no peace, that is, He came to establish peace in the hearts of His people through the forgiveness of their sins.

But first He had to die. First, He had to *“suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed.”* First, *“the SON OF MAN [had to] be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”* First, He had to *“be raised the third day.”* Do you remember?

Do you remember that JESUS *“has redeemed [you,] a lost and condemned creature, delivered [you] and freed [you] from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with silver and gold but with His holy and precious Blood and with His innocent sufferings and death, in order that [you] may be His, live under Him in His Kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, even as He is risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity”*? Do you remember?

Do you believe that it is JESUS, who in His mercy breathed life into your dead, dry bones? Do you believe that JESUS, even as He rose from His grave, will return on the clouds of Heaven to open your grave and raise you up to live with Him for eternity?

These things He has promised He will do. Do you remember? He remembers, and He will do it. For JESUS is the SON of the living God and He cannot lie. Believe in Him and you will have overcome all obstacles to your salvation. For, *“Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that JESUS is the SON of God?”* and *“...this is the witness of God which He has testified of His SON.”*

What we do not remember, our LORD will not forget. When we forget His promises of life and salvation, He holds His pierced Body before us saying, *“Take, eat; this is My Body which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me.”* When we forget, when we doubt, when we hide ourselves away in fear, He holds the Chalice before us saying, *“Drink of it, all of you; this is the Cup of the New Testament in My Blood which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it in remembrance of Me.”* We eat, drink, and remember our God who saved us by becoming one of us, and then died and rose from the grave for us.

So, come now to CHRIST's table of peace and remembrance. Here, we remember and proclaim His death until He comes again. Here, we receive His peace, for our life is in His Blood, and He has given it upon the altar for the forgiveness of our sins.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

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