

The New Creation

Mark 16:1-8 (ESV)

There is something perplexing about the creation account in Genesis chapters 1 and two that might be easy to miss — I know I didn't notice it for a long time. God created the heavens and the earth; and the account details each day in which God created. The Scripture finishes each telling of the day's outcome, each thing which God had made, with this phrase, "**And there was evening and there was morning, the so-and-so day.**" This marked the end of a day's work and the beginning of another. Yet, it is different with the seventh day. God rested on the seventh day, blessed the seventh day, and made the seventh day holy. But, the Scripture says nothing about the next day. It never says, "And there was evening and there was morning, the seventh day." In this way God's Word marks this creation as being in a perpetual "seventh day." This is how the Bible means to separate this creation, this creation which rebelled against God, committed sin, and was cursed with death from the new creation which is to come. I wanted you to notice this because of how the account of our Lord's resurrection starts: "**When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him.**" "When the Sabbath was past..."; in this way, the evangelist Mark is recounting how the women waited until Sunday to attend to Jesus at the tomb. But, he is also marking this moment of the resurrection as something special; he is marking it as the day of the new creation. The Sabbath has passed: the seven days of this creation are over. The eighth day has come! The old has passed away; behold, the new has come! Through his death and resurrection Jesus has ushered the beginning of a new heavens and a new earth. He has ushered in everlasting life.

WITH HIS RESURRECTION, JESUS HAS BROUGHT NEW LIFE.

We find three marks of the new creation in our Lord's resurrection account; one, the new day has dawned; two, God has given a sign to order our time; three, he has finished the new creation with a new man, a new living being.

The women appeared at the tomb very early in the morning. They were entering the graveyard when light was dawning and the sun had just arisen. This is the time and place where they were first to experience the joy of new life. They were about to experience the dawning of God's new creation. These women were not the only ones to experience the dawn of a new day in the resurrection of Jesus. You too experience the sun of righteousness dawning upon your life as you have received the power of our Lord's rising from the dead. I think we have a beautiful testament to this reality in our tradition of calling the day of Jesus' resurrection "Easter." Most other languages refer to this day as "Pascha" from the word for the Passover. This is a mighty fine name and

connects our Lord's work to the time and setting where Jesus finished his act of redemption: that same time where the Israelites celebrated God's redemption from Egypt. "Easter," though, comes from the name for "dawning" or "sunrise."

Easter testifies to this new day reality in which all Christians partake. Easter means that you have experienced, you do experience, and you will experience the eternal day of sun where death has no power over you and sin is eliminated. That is what is special about Easter.

When the women appeared at the tomb, they were greeted by an amazing sign: Jesus was not there! **"And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. And he said to them, 'Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him.'"** God loves to give signs and tokens of his power and wonder. Just as God gave signs in his creation (he created the sun, moon, and stars to mark days and nights, months and seasons), God has given the sign of an empty tomb. He did the first work to testify to man of God's magnificence as the Creator. The later sign of the empty tomb is to show his mercy as the re-Creator. This sign of the empty tomb is for the foundation of your faith; it is for you to trust in. The signs of the cosmos have ordered the days of man; they have helped put structure into creation. The sign of the empty tomb does the same. Your life revolves around this empty tomb. Your going down and your rising, your coming and your going, are all centered in this: your Savior lives forever and will never die again. This is the sign for your faith.

The empty tomb also reveals the pinnacle of God's new creation: the crucified man has become the risen man. God has made a new living creature. In his creation he made Adam a living creature by forming him from the dust of the ground and breathing into him the breath of life. This new creature, the new living man, was not from the ground, but from heaven. Our Lord Jesus descended from heaven, was born of the virgin Mary, and was made man so that all might become living creatures once again. To do this he defeated death with death; his life strove with death in a gruesome battle, but the victory remained with life. This is testified to you by these words of the young man sitting in the tomb: **"He is risen; he is not here."** Jesus is not among the dead; no, he is risen, he is living! He is the new living man of the new creation: appearing on the first day of the new creation.

God had sanctified the Sabbath, the seventh day of creation, and made it holy. He set it apart because he had rested from all his work. Now, Jesus has sanctified his resurrection day because it is a new day of a new creation. The seven days of the old creation have passed; the new day has dawned. The sun is here and will never more be diminished. Easter has come and it will remain. The Lord has given you the sign of the empty tomb as a testament to this fact. You are now a new creation. You are fashioned as a new creature, living with the same life as the one who was crucified but now is arisen. To him be the glory, to the end of the ages. Amen.