

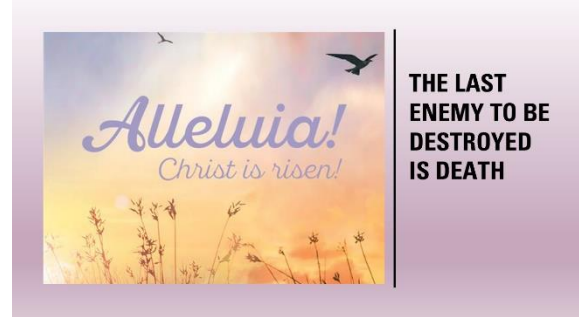
## The Readings on This Day

\*\*\*Click on the links for the Bible Verse(s)

## The Readings on This Day

### Resurrection of Our Lord / Easter Day

By the second century, Christians had shaped Passover into an annual celebration of Christ's resurrection, and by the fourth century they had agreed to keep this Christianized Pascha on the eve of the Sunday following the Jewish festival. By medieval times, the full Easter Vigil had been relegated to monasteries and convents, and so the Sunday morning celebration of Easter assumed priority in most churches. Since to be Christian is to believe in the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, observing Easter became the primary mark of a practicing Christian. The term "Easter duty" arose from the regulation that to be considered Christian, a person was required to make penance and then to attend eucharist at least once a year, at Easter. Since even now many Christians attend worship only on Easter, the challenge is to tell the whole story of salvation while focusing on only three readings and to distinguish Christ's resurrection from a springtime flower show. Luke's resurrection account, by referring to Christ's death, is helpful for this task.



### [Acts 10:34-43](#)

Throughout the eight Sundays of the fifty days of Easter from Easter Day through Pentecost, the three-year lectionary appoints first readings from Acts. The idea is that the Spirit extended the power of the resurrection from the empty tomb to the whole Christian church, spreading throughout the Greco-Roman world. Thus, we can think of each Sunday's reading from Acts as another telling of the resurrection. In the sermon credited to Peter in Acts 10, Luke referred to the witnesses of the resurrection who "ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead." We believers see ourselves as among these witnesses.

*or*

### [Isaiah 65:17-25](#)

For Christians, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is not about the resuscitation of the body of our dead leader, but rather like the creation of an entirely new heaven and earth. Thus, the poem from Isaiah 65 is an apt reading for Easter Day. In recent centuries, this apocalyptic description of paradise figured in Christian contemplation of what heaven would be like after the end of time.

### The Psalm for the Day

The psalm response for the day is [Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24](#), a song of thanksgiving for victory. Although the psalm is cast in the first-person singular, the setting is after a battle, in which "the right hand of the Lord," presumably brandishing a weapon, has conquered. Christians understand that Christ has conquered the powers of sin and death, and medieval art depicted Christ rising from the tomb holding up a cross-shaped standard. The "rejected stone" is Christ, now the cornerstone of the church, on whom the baptized build their lives; this resurrection day is the day that the Lord God has made. It is interesting that in 1559, when Elizabeth I was notified of the death

of Queen Mary, she received the news that she was no longer a rejected stone but finally acclaimed queen by calling out v. 23 of this psalm: “This is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.”

### [1 Corinthians 15:19-26](#)

The reading from Isaiah 65 relies on an ancient belief about the perfection of the first creation, and this passage from Paul suggests the perfection of a final creation. Here we are in the middle, with death and other enemies still powerful forces to contend with. We hope in Christ, the first fruit of the tree of life.

*or*

### [Acts 10:34-43](#)

See above.

### [Luke 24:1-12](#)

Current liturgical advice suggests that John 20 be proclaimed at the Easter Vigil, following the Johannine gospels throughout the Three Days, and that Luke 24 be used on Easter Sunday, following the gospel of the year. Luke highlights the role of the community: the group of women, more than the named three; the eleven and the rest; and Peter. Luke does not attempt to describe the resurrection itself, which is an article of faith, not an observed and reportable fact narrated in the Bible.

*or*

### [John 20:1-18](#)

John’s resurrection account fits well within the Three Days. For commentary on John 20, see the Lectionary Notes on the Easter Vigil.