

**Easter Day  
Principal Service  
Cycle A RCL  
Revised**

**Acts 10:34-43**

Acts is the second volume of a two-volume work, Luke-Acts, written at the end of the first century CE or at the beginning of the second century. In accordance with the conventions of the Greek historians, the unknown author of Luke-Acts uses the speeches of principal characters in Acts to provide summaries and commentaries on the action. Here Peter sums up the events of Jesus' life as told in the Gospel of Luke, using this summary as part of an argument that the Gospel is for all nations. The expression "Lord of all," used here of Jesus we find used by Plutarch in reference to Zeus and to Osiris and by the Wisdom of Solomon in reference to the God of Israel.

OR

**Jeremiah 31:1-6**

Jeremiah was a southern prophet who lived in Jerusalem during the fall of the Assyrian empire and the brief extension of King Josiah's rule into the former Israel. Indeed, for a brief moment it seemed as if God might restore David's kingdom north and south; and our passage reflects this moment of hope in the form of a prophecy. The prophecy holds that the hills of Ephraim and Samaria, occupied by the Assyrians in 722 BCE, would return to the renewed Israel (31:5-6). The old division between Israel and Judah, however, would vanish; and the citizens of the united nation would no longer go up to the old Israelite cult shrines of Bethel and Dan but make their sacrifices in Jerusalem (Zion), in the city of David and in the temple of Solomon.

**Psalms 118:1-2, 14-24**

Jewish tradition includes Psalm 118 among the *Hallel* ("praise") psalms and has appointed it for singing before and after the Passover meal. Modern form critics call it an individual *psalm of thanksgiving*. The opening of the temple gates to the psalmist (118:19-20) suggests that the psalmist received deliverance from mortal illness only but also from an illness, such as leprosy, that might have left the psalmist maimed or unclean and hence unqualified to enter the temple precincts.

**Colossians 3:1-4**

Paul almost certainly did not write Colossians, but the themes in this passage come directly from Paul. Initiation into the Christian community means identification with Jesus's death and resurrection. Reference to Christ sitting on God's right hand reflects Psalm 110:1.

OR

**Acts 10:34-43**

(See above.)

**John 20:1-18**

Like the Gospel of Luke, John's Gospel has two angelic figures at the empty tomb instead of one as in Matthew and Mark. The story of Mary from Magdala (a Jewish town in the Galilee), however, is unique to John and is John's principal tomb narrative. Most puzzling is Jesus' command to Mary not to touch him (20:17) since touching is precisely the act that convinced Thomas of the truth of the resurrection only ten verses later (20:27). Some researchers account for this problem as a minor inconsistency introduced from John's source documents. The Aramaic *Rabbouni* corresponds to the Hebrew *Rabbi* ("my teacher"), and its use here strengthens the shocking claim that Jesus served as a teacher for women as well as for men.

OR

**Matthew 28:1-10**

Although no Gospel describes the resurrection itself, Matthew's Gospel does recount the unsealing of the tomb by an angel. Jewish burials of the period in Jerusalem were in cysts cut into the walls of limestone caverns (either natural or artificial). On the anniversary of one's death, after the body had decomposed, the skeleton would be disarticulated, placed in a bone-box (ossuary), and stored in the same cave. Large stones often sealed the entrance rather than doors or gratings so as to contain the smell of decomposition. Only Matthew tells us that both Marys who visited the tomb actually saw the risen Jesus. John only, however, tells us of Mary Magdalene's encounter with Jesus in the garden.