

Introduction to the readings for Easter Sunday.

Old Testament: Isaiah 25: 6-9

To understand this reading, one really ought to go to ch 24, which paints a dire picture of judgement. Ch 25 gives a message of hope, that in spite of disobedience, we have a picture of mercy and of life beyond the suffering. There is a picture of rejoicing and plenty, with rich food, and good wine; darkness and doubt will be removed, and all will be invited to share in the bounty, drawn to God's holy mountain at Jerusalem. This will be a time when Israel will find that anti-Semitism will finally be ended and salvation and unity will be established finally.

Epistle: Acts 10: 34-43

The account of Peter's visit to Cornelius and his preaching to the family shows the pattern followed by the Apostles as they sought to tell the good news. Jesus' life and doings are rehearsed, ending in his death and resurrection which brought new life to people. It is this which is the evidence for the truth of the resurrection. The way to God is open to all – it just needs an act of repentance for forgiveness to be received.

Gospel: John 20: 1-18

Here is the account of the first meeting of Jesus's followers with the risen Lord – and none recognised him at first, though the 'beloved disciple' clearly had an inkling. The grave clothes lying undisturbed clearly indicated that Jesus' body was not stolen – they would have been scattered or taken away with the body. It was only when Mary heard a familiar and much-loved voice that she realised who it was speaking to her. We should remember that it will be only a meeting with the risen Jesus that will convince people of the truth of the gospel. No amount of argument will convince others that Jesus lives! It is up to us to reflect this new life.