



Paul and Silas in Prison

Acts 16:16-40

Lieutenant Ruby Starlight stepped onto Skylab Omega's bridge. "Visitor arriving! Visitor arriving! In 5-4-3-2-1!" The computer announced. Ruby turned around just in time to see Ambassador Nofutu jump through the door.

"Merry Easter! Merry Easter! Boogah, boogah, boogah, Kong-a-loosh!" he greeted in his usual cheery manner. His hat flapped wildly as he jumped and danced around the room.

Ruby smiled. "Ambassador Nofutu! Good to see you. And you got it right! It is Easter!"

"It is? Hooray, it's Easter! It's Easter! What is Easter?" he asked.

It was Ruby's turn to stare. "What? You don't know about Easter?"

Nofutu plopped down on the floor in front of the command chair. "No. Is it important?"

"The apostle Paul said what happened that day was of the very first importance!" Ruby sat down in the chair.

"Do we have a big celebration with cupcakes? Do we get to sing songs of praise?" Nofutu asked clapping excitedly.

"Absolutely!" Ruby exclaimed.

"I love to sing God's praises!" Nofutu agreed. "But Lieutenant Ruby, why is Easter such a special day to praise Jesus?"

"Because, it's the day we remember how Jesus changed everything!"

"What is this change?"

"Well, to understand that you have to go back to the beginning of time. In fact, it's the greatest story ever told. And it's all found in our Bible," she began.

"Ah yes! Bible time! Bible time!" Nofutu leaped to the Bible box and whisked out the Bible. "Here you go! Tell me more!"

"Well, you see, the Bible is a love story about God and us," Ruby explained.

"Because He loves us so much?" Nofutu sat back down on the floor.

"Yes," Ruby agreed. "In the beginning, God created a perfect world and made the first two people, Adam and Eve. But they disobeyed God and brought sin and death into God's world."

Nofutu looked puzzled. "This is all very sad. I thought you said Easter was a happy day."

"There is a happy ending," Ruby reassured him.

Nofutu clapped. "Oh good! I love happy endings!"

"The apostle Paul explains it in 1 Corinthians 15:21-22," Ruby picked up the remote.

"Ooh, Easter beepity boops! Can I do the Easter beepity boops?" Nofutu pleaded.

Ruby let him have the remote. "Here you go. Happy Easter." And as the words appeared, she read, "For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive."

Nofutu blinked. "I am confused. Is Paul saying that because of Adam's sin we all die?"

"Yes, in a way," Ruby explained. "Before Adam sinned, there was no death at all for anyone! It was a perfect world."

Nofutu leaned forward. "I thought this had a happy ending..."

"It does, because of what happened that first Easter. Jesus died on the cross for our sins and He was raised on the third day. Mary Magdalene saw the whole thing!" Ruby read again, "Three days after Jesus died on the cross, Mary went to the tomb where Jesus was buried."

"Was she a friend of Jesus'?" Nofutu asked.

"Yes," Ruby confirmed. "When she got to the tomb she noticed the stone blocking the entrance had been rolled away. She ran to tell Peter and John and they came running."

Nofutu gasped, "Did they see Jesus?"

"Nope. All they saw were the linen cloth that His body had been wrapped in. They went home, but Mary stayed. Then she looked in the tomb and saw two angels. They asked her why she was crying," Ruby continued.

"She was probably crying because she missed Jesus," Nofutu guessed.

Ruby smiled. "Very good, Nofutu! Then she turned around and saw Jesus."

"Did she give Him a great big hug and say Kong-a-loosh?" Nofutu said clapping.

"No, she didn't recognize Him at first, but then He called her by her name," Ruby shared.

Nofutu's hand flew to cover his mouth. "He knew her name?"

"He knows all of us by name," Lt. Ruby pointed first to Nofutu, then to herself.

"What did Mary do next?" Nofutu asked gleefully.

"She told His followers the good news that Jesus had been resurrected!" Ruby finished.

"Hooray, Jesus is resurrected!" Nofutu cheered and twirled around for a moment. Then he stopped and stared at Ruby. "What is resurrected?"

"It means He rose from the dead," Ruby explained.

Nofutu smiled. "Of course, and now Jesus is alive forever and always!"

"Yes and one day we will be like Jesus and we will be with Him," Ruby added.

"You mean resurrection is going to happen to you and me one day?" Nofutu gasped.

"Yes! To all who believe in Jesus—He will raise us and give us life forever with Him," Ruby said with a smile admiring her friend's reaction.

"Wow, how is Jesus going to do it?" Nofutu said stunned.

Ruby shrugged. "No one knows. It's a mystery. Let me explain it in Paul's words. Let's look at 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 on the Virtual Bible." Ruby suggested and then read, "Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed."

"Oh, now I see," Nofutu pointing at the screen. "Jesus died for us and God raised Him to life, so that we could have life forever close to him. Now that's a happy ending. We can celebrate Easter every day!"

"That's why they call us the Easter People – we're the people that will be with Jesus now and forever," Ruby explained.

Nofutu bounced his hat up and down, "Oh, yes because Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever!" He jumped towards the door and waved. "So long Happy Easter Person. Kong-a-loosh!"

Ruby laughed and waved to her friend. "Happy Easter! Good-bye!"