

ROAD TO EASTER

Hymn Story: CHRIST AROSE

Saturday, March 30

[1] Low in the grave He lay
Jesus my Savior
Waiting the coming day
Jesus my Lord

[2] Vainly they watch His bed
Jesus my Savior
Vainly they seal the dead
Jesus my Lord

[3] Death cannot keep his prey
Jesus my Savior
He tore the bars away
Jesus my Lord

[CHORUS]
Up from the grave He arose
With a mighty triumph o’re His foes
He arose a Victor from the dark domain
And He lives forever with His saints to reign
He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!

Robert Lowry (1826-1899)¹ loved to preach. Over a 45-year ministry, he was pastor in churches in New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. He was also a professor and chancellor at his alma mater, the University of Lewisburg (Bucknell University today) and the editor of hymnals for the country’s leading publisher of gospel and Sunday School music, Biglow and Main. He composed over 500 hymns, many of which are still popular today, such as ‘Nothing But the Blood of Jesus’, ‘I Need Thee Every Hour’, and ‘Shall We Gather at the River.’

But his first love was always preaching. Although he could not deny the popularity of his hymns, Lowry considered music his “side issue.” Preparing and delivering a sermon was of greater importance. People said of his sermons: “...few preachers of his day had greater ability to paint word pictures and to inspire a congregation.”² This same skill can be seen in his hymn writing as well.

“Christ Arose” was written in the spring of 1974. As Easter was approaching, Lowry was re-reading the accounts of Jesus’ resurrection in the gospels. He soon found himself sitting at his little pipe organ at home and the words and music for this Easter hymn were quickly put together. It would gradually become one of the church’s favorites Easter hymns. What is unique about this particular hymn is the difference between the verses and the chorus. The verses are sung slowly with a somber dirge-like tone. Then the chorus suddenly breaks into a faster, joyous melody as Christ’s resurrection is celebrated!

As we celebrate Easter this weekend, may our hearts be filled with the joy of Jesus’ resurrection. Remember what Jesus said, “Because I live, you will live also” (John 14:19).

Listen to Christ Arose @ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CtxSWcfH9hk>

¹ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Lowry_\(hymn_writer\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Lowry_(hymn_writer))

<https://www.hymncharts.com/2022/01/30/the-story-behind-christ-arose/>

² <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-nineteenth-century-hymn-celebrates-the-resurrection>