

Lutheran Church of the Master
580 Kuhn Road, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188
Curt Gerald, Interim Pastor
April 3, 2010
Easter Eve

"Let's Get Ready to Rumble" *see footnote on page 4

Matthew 28 (The Message)

¹⁻⁴ After the Sabbath, as the first light of the new week dawned, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to keep vigil at the tomb. Suddenly the earth reeled and rocked under their feet as God's angel came down from heaven, came right up to where they were standing. He rolled back the stone and then sat on it. Shafts of lightning blazed from him. His garments shimmered snow-white. The guards at the tomb were scared to death. They were so frightened, they couldn't move.

⁵⁻⁶ The angel spoke to the women: "There is nothing to fear here. I know you're looking for Jesus, the One they nailed to the cross. He is not here. He was raised, just as he said. Come and look at the place where he was placed.

⁷ "Now, get on your way quickly and tell his disciples, 'He is risen from the dead. He is going on ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there.' That's the message."

The Evangelist in the Common Scriptures whose sermon is recorded in and as the book of **Jonah** wrote these words as the prayer of Jonah while Jonah was being held hostage in his underwater taxi that was taking him to where God sent him (i.e., Nineveh) even though he had just been going the other direction (Tarshish).

¹ From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the LORD his God. ² He said:

"In my distress I called to the LORD,
and he answered me.

From the depths of the grave ^[a] I called for help,
and you listened to my cry.

³ You hurled me into the deep,
into the very heart of the seas,
and the currents swirled about me;
all your waves and breakers
swept over me.

⁴ I said, 'I have been banished
from your sight;
yet I will look again
toward your holy temple.'

⁵ The engulfing waters threatened me, ^[b]
the deep surrounded me;
seaweed was wrapped around my head.

⁶ *To the roots of the mountains I sank down;
the earth beneath barred me in forever.
But you brought my life up from the pit,
O LORD my God.*

⁷ *"When my life was ebbing away,
I remembered you, LORD,
and my prayer rose to you,
to your holy temple.*

⁸ *"Those who cling to worthless idols
forfeit the grace that could be theirs.*

⁹ *But I, with a song of thanksgiving,
will sacrifice to you.*

What I have vowed I will make good.

Salvation comes from the LORD."

¹⁰ *And the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.*

The writer of this Gospel, who apparently knew and understood his Jewish history, tradition, faith, and scripture very well, is writing to his own Jewish community and refers, in Matthew 12:38-41, to "**The Sign of Jonah**" when he writes:

³⁸ *Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, "Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you."*

³⁹ *He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. ⁴¹The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one ^[a] greater than Jonah is here.*

I have a sense tonight that Matthew had all of this in mind as he decided how to write his account of the Resurrection of Jesus. He is probably writing some 60 years after the event itself ... so it is possible that he may have mixed together the Jonah event ... Jesus's words about the Jonah event in which foreshadow a similar event for himself (three days in the belly of the large fish ... three days in the heart of the earth) ... and then for a little dramatic effect he includes that interesting phrase "**Suddenly the earth reeled and rocked under their feet as God's angel came down from heaven, came right up to where they were standing.**"

There is no earthquake in Mark's account (presumed to be the first Gospel written) ... there is no earthquake in Luke's account (presumed to have been based on Mark's account along with special Lukan material) ... there is no earthquake in John's account ... only Matthew writes an earthquake into his story.

So I wonder if it is possible that Matthew picks up the theme from the Jonah account

*What I have vowed I will make good.
Salvation comes from the LORD."*

¹⁰ *And the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.*

I wonder if Matthew was trying to say that all of nature itself was involved in this event. Just like God commanded the fish to vomit Jonah onto dry land ... could it be that in this text Matthew wants to say that the earth itself, like an erupting volcano, had no choice but to spew Jesus out of the grave into the garden ... the creation had to release its creator ... and so you get the earth suddenly (only in Matthew's Gospel) starts "reeling and rocking" in order to make the large stone roll away so that the grave opens up and lets go of its temporary inhabitant.

It is as though Michael Buffer was sitting ringside at the event and the announcer for the evening. You may or may not know that Michael Buffer was born and raised in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to an enlisted man in the United States Navy and his wife during World War II. When his parents divorced at 11 months of age, Buffer was raised by foster parents, a school bus driver and housewife, in the Philadelphia suburb of Roslyn. He enlisted in the United States Army during the Vietnam War at age 20 and served until age 23. He held various jobs including a car salesman, then began a modeling career at age 32 before becoming a ring announcer at age 38.

You may or may not know that in 1982, Buffer began his career as a ring announcer. By 1983, he was announcing all boxing matches promoted by Bob Arum's Top Rank on ESPN, which gave him a national identity at a time when ring announcers were strictly locally hired talent.

By 1984, and this is what you probably know, Buffer developed the catchphrase "Let's get ready to rumble" in his announcing, which gained enormous popularity. He began the process of obtaining a federal trademark for the phrase in the 1980s, which he acquired in 1992.

Sugar Ray Leonard once said, "*When [Buffer] introduces a fighter, it makes him want to fight.*"^[5]

Michael Buffer is currently the announcer for all HBO and RTL (Germany) boxing matches, along with Versus matches promoted by Top Rank.

During his career, Buffer has announced the World Series, Stanley Cup Finals, NBA Championships, and NFL playoff games. He has appeared on various talk shows hosted by Jay Leno, David Letterman, Arsenio Hall, Conan O'Brien and Jimmy Kimmel. He has also appeared on *Saturday Night Live*, *In Living Color* and *Mad TV*. He has been animated in *The Simpsons*, *South Park*, and *Celebrity Deathmatch*, and he appeared in the eurodance song *Let's Get Ready To Rumble* by K.O.s ft. Michael Buffer and in its video. He has played himself in various films including *Ready to Rumble* and *Rocky Balboa*, and in 2008 Buffer appeared as Walbridge, the main villain in the comedy *You Don't Mess with the Zohan*. Buffer is currently the host of Versus' boxing retro show *Legends of the Ring*, which is produced by Top Rank, Inc., where he is ring announcer for most of their top matches. He also appeared on NBC's *Deal or No Deal* on

December 10, 2007, and opened the finale of the seventh season of *American Idol* (owned by RTL Group; Buffer is the ring announcer for RTL-televised boxing matches in Europe) on May 20, 2008, which employed a boxing theme. On July 19, 2008, Buffer announced the Affliction: Banned mixed martial arts show. On November 10, 2008, Buffer started the heads-up action at the 2008 World Series of Poker final table with a modified version of his trademark statement, "Let's get ready to shuffle up and deal".

Buffer has been reproduced as an action figure in both Toy Biz's WCW line and Jakks Pacific's Rocky line. Buffer also recorded player introductions for the 2009-10 Duke University basketball team.

Had Michael Buffer been alive in Matthew's day, I could imagine Matthew writing Michael Buffer into this Gospel story ... so that as Mary Magdelene and the other Mary are coming to the tomb this booming voice would have thundered through the garden saying ...

"AND NOW, LET'S GET READY TO RUMBLE" ...

... and the camera would be jolted as the ground rocks and reels and rumbles ...

... and the stone is jolted away from the door of the tomb and smashes into the rocks at the end of the track ...

... and this figure comes leaping out into the fresh air ...

... and the two Marys recognize that it is Jesus ...

... and Jesus is ready to go ... it isn't that his work is over ... it is really that his work has just begun in a new way ...

... the Sabbath is over ... looking back to what God has done in the Creative Past is no longer the center of attraction ...

... now this new work has begun ... which is so important that the Church will eventually change its Holy Day from the Sabbath (the last day of the week when God "rested") to Sunday (the first day of the week when Jesus took on the fight over death and evil which still continues ... except that now he is the trainer ... and you and I are the fighters in the ring who are already the winners because of Him.

And this story continues tomorrow morning at 6:28 and 10:00AM.

Stay tuned!

Amen

***Trademark**

Buffer began using the phrase "Let's get ready to rumble!" in the early 1980s. By 1992, he acquired a federal trademark for the phrase. Buffer uses his famous phrase in various licensing deals including the platinum selling album *Jock Jams* by Tommy Boy Records, the video games *Ready 2 Rumble Boxing*, *Ready 2 Rumble Boxing: Round 2* for the PlayStation 2, Nintendo 64, Dreamcast and Game Boy Advance and *Greatest Heavyweights of the Ring* for the Sega Genesis and numerous other products.^[8] In addition, he has used variations of the phrase in advertisements, including the popular commercial for Mega Millions in which he says "Let's get ready to *Win Big!*" and the Kraft Cheese commercial in which he says "Let's get ready to *Crumble!*".

As of 2009, Buffer had earned over \$400 million from licensing on the trademark.^[9]