

# EASTER

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Easter Sunday: Jesus is Alive! Seeing is Believing w/Answers

John 19:28-20:30

On Palm Sunday, there was a great deal of excitement as the coming King of Kings, Jesus, entered the city of Jerusalem. Christ, the Lamb of God, entered the city through one gate, while through another came the sheep for the annual Passover meal. Secular sources indicate that approximately 250,000 sheep were brought from the fields outside of Bethlehem to Jerusalem, where over two and half million Jews had gathered from all over the known world to celebrate Passover. They had heard about, and many had seen, this man Jesus. Accordingly, Jesus was greeted with the crowd's praise as he neared the city, "Hosanna!".

There are many parallels between the first Passover in Exodus Chapter 12 and Christ's death on the cross; and how God protects His own from death through the sacrifice of the Lamb. Paul's message in Ephesians addressed the breaking down of the partition (reconciliation) between the Jew and the Gentile that occurred at Christ's death and resurrection.

As we celebrate that resurrection, it is useful to look at the events in those early hours and days just following Easter Sunday—and the many proofs that Christ is indeed alive, and coming back again. We serve a living Savior, and we know it—reminding ourselves of the reasons why we know it helps us celebrate with certainty the resurrection of our Savior.

If you have never experienced the saving power of Christ, I pray that this lesson will open your eyes to the reality that Christ is real, he's alive, and he's coming again. HE IS THE MESSIAH! Hallelujah!

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***Read John 19:28-20:30; then answer the following questions:***

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1. In John 19:28-42, cite how specific verses in this passage indicate that Christ actually did die and didn't just fall asleep. (You should see proof from many different events and actions within these verses.)
  - a. ANSWER 1: Verse 30 tells us that Christ "gave up his spirit".
  - b. ANSWER 2: Verses 33-34 indicates that the Roman soldiers, who were trained in capital punishment through crucifixion and trained to make sure a prisoner was dead before taking them off the cross declared Jesus dead. To make sure, pierced his side with a spear.
  - c. ANSWER 3: Verses 38-40 tell us that two Jews, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, received permission from Pilate to take the body for burial. Pilate would not have released Jesus' body to them unless he knew that Jesus was dead. These verses also describe two well trained Jews going through the process of preparing a body for burial, wrapping it and so on, none of which would have occurred unless they knew Jesus was dead.
2. Who declared Jesus dead? The Disciples? His mother? Mary Magdalene? The Romans?
  - a. ANSWER: The Roman soldiers, trained in crucifixion and trained to ensure that a person is dead, declared Him dead.
3. Who first discovered the empty tomb? Was it a disciple or a Pharisee?
  - a. ANSWER: Neither; it was Mary Magdalene, the demon possessed woman that Jesus had healed by driving out seven demons.
4. Who was first to actually enter the tomb?
  - a. ANSWER: Simon Peter, the aggressive one of the disciples, went in first to confirm that indeed the tomb was empty.
5. Who was the first person to believe that Jesus was indeed the true Messiah? Why? Had he seen the risen Christ?
  - a. ANSWER: According to John 20:8-9, it was John, the writer of this Gospel account, who first believed. Seeing the empty tomb, he knew for a certainty that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, the Christ. Significantly, the second verse, verse 9, indicates that at the time John realized Jesus was the Messiah, he was not aware of nor "understood" the scriptures that foretold that the Messiah (Jesus) would rise again from the grave. Thus, John knew that Jesus was the Messiah based solely on what he had experienced while Jesus was alive and the evidence of his resurrection displayed through the empty tomb.
6. Who was the second person to believe that Jesus was the Messiah? Why?
  - a. ANSWER: Mary Magdalene was the second. Jesus physically presented himself to her and instructed her to go and tell the disciples that he was alive and had risen from the dead.

7. What did Mary do after seeing and believing Christ?
    - a. ANSWER: She went immediately and told the disciples about the good news.
  8. What did the disciples say to Thomas when he entered the room?
    - a. ANSWER: They told him that they had indeed seen the risen Christ, that they had seen Jesus. Thomas of course did not believe and stated that he would not believe until he also physically saw the risen Christ.
  9. What was Thomas' reaction when he realized who Christ was?
    - a. ANSWER: He recognized immediately who Jesus was, the Messiah. "My Lord and my God", he proclaimed.
  10. How many people actually saw Christ after he was raised from the dead? (see 1 Corinthians 15:1-8)
    - a. ANSWER: At least 514 people saw the post-resurrection Christ, according to Paul's account; based on this description, there were probably a lot more than that number.
  11. What did Christ say to Thomas about people who saw him and believed, versus those of us who would come many years later, not actually see Christ, and yet also believe?
    - a. ANSWER: Jesus said "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."
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Can we then honestly believe that a man who we know was actually born and walked this earth, who fulfilled all of the prophecy in the Old Testament about the Messiah perfectly; a man who ministered, performed miracles, died on the cross, and was declared dead by Roman Soldiers (who were trained in death by crucifixion); a man who was buried by Jews (who knew how to bury dead people), rose from the dead, was seen by no less than 514 or more people for forty days after his resurrection, and was taken up to heaven which was also witnessed by many—and who said he would return for us just as the scriptures spoke? Can we then put all of our trust and faith in him as our Savior? You Bet! There is no other like Christ. He is our Savior, he is alive, he is seated at the right hand of God, and HE IS COMING AGAIN! Praise God for His great grace, and Christ for his death and resurrection. We are saved, and we know it; and we know it because Christ really is alive, and the grave really is empty! Hallelujah!

Let us celebrate His resurrection and keep our eyes open for the signs of His coming. Today we are two thousand years closer to his return; so let us live and act as the people of God, anxiously awaiting the return of our Savior. Knowing that if our death precedes his coming again we will pass from death into life and be immediately in His presence. As he told us, God is the God of the living, not the dead. Praise Him for his great love and sacrifice for us.

May God bless you during our never-ending celebration of Easter!

In Christ,

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