

EASTER

The Hope of Easter

Lesson w/answers

This weekend we celebrate the greatest and most impactful event in all of human history: the day that Jesus the Christ arose from the grave. The chains of sin and the slavery that it brings to our lives have been broken. So we celebrate the Hope of Easter and the knowledge that, like Christ, we too are raised from the dead to an eternal life. In his death and resurrection, we can have the assurance that nothing in this life or in this world can separate us from His great love and the gift of eternal life that comes only from Him.



The joy that fills our hearts and the peace that passes all understanding all result from knowing that Jesus died and was raised again. We now have that hope of an eternal life with Him because of the empty grave. Can you think of anything we can celebrate more than this?

As we gather this Sunday to worship and praise Him, let's also be in prayer for the millions around us who do not have that hope and who do not know that joy. Let's pray that through our worship and our lives, this week God will reach another lost soul for His kingdom.

And as we look at the account of Jesus' death and resurrection recorded in the Gospel, or "Good News", of Mark, I pray that Jesus will speak to each of us as we study this historic and eternal event.

Read Mark 15:42 - 16:20; then consider the following:

1. When Christ died on the cross, who was the first person to acknowledge that he was indeed the Son of God?
 - a. ANSWER: The Roman Centurion in charge of the crucifixion.
2. When Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate to ask for Jesus' body for burial, why did Pilate call for the Centurion? What did he want to know, and why was he surprised by Joseph's arrival?
 - a. ANSWER: Crucifixion was known to be a slow and painful form of capital punishment, lasting many hours, and sometimes days. Christ's time on the cross until his death was shorter than Pilate expected, and he needed the Centurion in charge to confirm that indeed Jesus had died.
3. Why are these two questions important? Why is the significance of these two simple acts so important that God included them in His Holy Word?
 - a. ANSWER: They demonstrate that Jesus was recognized by a non-believing Gentile soldier as the Son of God, even before the Jews recognized it. And they demonstrate and that a soldier, a Centurion, trained in the administration of capital punishment declared Jesus dead, both at the scene of the crucifixion and then later to Pilate. Therefore we can know for a certainty that this story of Jesus death was real and not fabricated by zealous followers trying to start a revolution.
4. Why is it significant that Jesus' death occurred at the beginning of the Passover?
 - a. ANSWER: During Passover, the Jews were told to sacrifice the Passover Lamb. Similarly, Jesus, the Lamb of God, was sacrificed so that His blood could be used to cover our sins.

5. Why is it important for us to understand what it means to be covered in the blood of Christ?
 - a. ANSWER: During the original Passover, when judgment came to Egypt, God kept all those whose homes were covered in the blood of the Passover lamb from judgment. Death did not take the first-born of those homes, and the Israelites were delivered from their bondage. Today, we are given that same promise, that Jesus' blood cleanses us from our sins; so that when judgment comes, we too will be passed from judgment into life, and freed from the bondage of sin. We are promised eternal life through the shed blood of Christ.
 6. What is the "good news" proclaimed by the angel in Mark 16:6?
 - a. ANSWER: That Christ was not in the tomb, that he had indeed risen from the grave and was alive, as evidenced by the empty grave.
 7. How did Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome know that Jesus was alive, rather than being concerned that someone had moved his body? (Mark 16:7, Matthew 26:32)
 - a. ANSWER: In Mark 16:7, the angel tells them that Christ is in Galilee, just as Christ had prophesied.
 8. What was the initial reaction of everyone that the ladies told about their encounter with the empty grave and the risen Christ?
 - a. ANSWER: It was a reaction of disbelief, just as today - even with all of the proofs of Christ's life, death and resurrection available to mankind - many do not believe.
 9. Did Christ actually appear to the disciples?
 - a. ANSWER: Yes; see Mark 16:14.
 10. After Christ arose, what did he tell his disciples to do? Do you think that it also applies to us today, as His followers?
 - a. ANSWER: He told them to tell the whole world about the Good News. And, yes, we are to do the same. How could we not, if we are filled with the joy and the hope of Easter? How can we not tell everyone we know of the Good News!
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Does the disbelief of those who hear the Good News of His resurrection in any way change the truth? No; of course not. It's still a fact that Jesus died for us, was buried, and on the third day rose again; and today He sits at the right hand of the Father.

This Sunday, as we celebrate that resurrection, and the great gift Christ has given us, let's renew our efforts to follow his command in the days and years ahead. Let's tell the whole world that Jesus is alive and is coming again, and that He wants everyone to be saved, to be reborn, to inherit the gift of an eternal life – the same gift that He has already given you and me!

Happy Easter Everyone!

In Christ,

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