

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT EASTER?

What is Easter? Easter is a Christian holiday that is dedicated towards the celebration of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. In America and other places, this holiday has been transformed in recent history into a commercialized day that is focused on by many towards candy, gifts, egg-hunting games, the Easter bunny, and family gatherings.

What is the true meaning of Easter? The true meaning of Easter is a celebration of Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross and resurrection from the grave in order to provide a way of salvation through the forgiving of sin.

Romans 10:9 "if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." (ESV)

Why did Jesus come to die? Jesus came to live out and show His truth and love. Jesus explains that "For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth" (John 18:37). Jesus' death is a sacrifice in order to bring those who believe into a right relationship with God. "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). There is no access to God in Heaven without Jesus' death and resurrection.

What happened on Easter? What happened after Jesus' resurrection? The Friday before Easter, Jesus was falsely accused, tortured, and executed by crucifixion (a slow method of killing by hanging, impaled with nails on wooden beams). After Jesus' death, He was buried, and three days later, on Easter, Jesus was resurrected to life. He then physically appeared to hundreds of people, showing His power and wisdom before ascending back into Heaven (John 18-21 & 1 Corinthians 15).

What is the Lenten season all about? Do Christians have to celebrate it? The Bible nowhere commands Christians to celebrate Lent. For those who choose to celebrate Lent, it is designed as a 40 day period of dedicated towards fasting and repentance leading into Easter. Its purpose is to prepare and remind Christians of the celebration of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Where did all of the Easter traditions come from? Should Christians celebrate Easter? Many of the Easter traditions originated in cultural traditions of the past. God warns Christians not to argue about particular days of celebration (Colossians 2:16-17), but that when making daily decisions in life we are reminded that in "whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). We are also warned that "whatever does not proceed from faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). The Bible does call Christians to a regular, ceremonial remembrance of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection through the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:17-34), but not necessarily through an Easter holiday. Christians should daily celebrate Jesus in their drawing near to Him. Christians have the freedom to celebrate Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection on Easter as well if it builds up their faith (1 Corinthians 10:23).

- "Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ." (Colossians 2:16-17)

Why did Jesus have to be both God and human? Although this concept of Jesus being simultaneously human and deity (God) is difficult to grasp, it is a biblical and essential fact. Jesus' birth "under the law" allows the redemption, or purchase, of mankind from under the law (God's perfect standard). Only a perfect human (Jesus) would be capable and sufficient to keep and fulfill the law. Jesus' incarnation (coming in the flesh) and sacrificial, substitutionary death allows a way for humans to be adopted as God's forever children through the paying of the penalty for sin. Jesus' incarnation also allowed for his shedding of blood and death because "under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins." (Hebrews 9:22) Unfortunately the blood of animals is insufficient to sacrificially atone for sin (Hebrews 10:4), so only the shed blood of a perfect God-man could provide a way of salvation.

Jesus' incarnation allowed him to sympathize with our temptations and trials, yet Jesus remained perfect, holy, and without sin (Hebrews 4:15). Jesus came in the flesh to show and teach us the Truth: that Jesus and God the Father are one (John 10:30, 14:8-11) and that Jesus is the only way of salvation (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). World religions and cults teach that salvation can be found by good works or by being "good enough." The reality is that only Jesus, the God-man, is perfect and able to provide a way for salvation.

- But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. (Galatians 4:4-5)
- For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21)
- Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:6)
- And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12 ESV)

Why is Easter so important? Jesus is not simply the "reason for the season," He is the reason for life and for living. It is our hope and prayer that you deepen in the love of Christ this Easter!

What are the prophecies about Easter? The prophecies about Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection are numerous, but here are a few from a **larger list**:

1. **Triumphal Entry** – Zechariah 9:9, Isaiah 62:11, John 12:13-14, Matthew 21:1-11
2. **Betrayed by a Friend** – Psalm 41:9, Mark 14:10
3. **Sold for 30 Pieces of Silver, Potter's Field** – Zechariah 11:12-13, Matthew 26:15, 27:6-7
4. **Judas' Position Replaced** – Psalm 109:7, Acts 1:18-20
5. **False Witnesses' Accused Him** – Psalm 27:12, Matthew 26:60-61
6. **Silent When Accused** – Isaiah 53:5, Matthew 26:62-63
7. **Struck and Spit Upon** – Isaiah 50:6, Mark 14:65
8. **Hated Without Cause** – Psalm 69:4, John 15:23
9. **Suffered Vicariously** – Isaiah 53:4, Matthew 8:16-17
10. **Hands and Feet Pierced** – Psalm 22:16, John 20:27
11. **Crucified With Sinners** – Isaiah 53:12, Matthew 27:38
12. **Mocked and Insulted** – Psalm 22:6-8, Matthew 27:39-40
13. **Given Gall and Vinegar** – Psalm 69:21, John 19:29
14. **Hears Prophetic Words Used As Mockery** – Psalm 22:8, Matthew 27:43
15. **Prays for His Enemies** – Psalm 109:4, Luke 23:34
16. **Side Pierced** – Zechariah 12:10, John 19:34
17. **Soldiers Cast Lots for His Clothes** – Psalm 22:18, Matthew 15:24
18. **Not a Bone to Be Broken** – Psalm 34:20, John 19:33
19. **Buried With the Rich** – Isaiah 53:9, Matthew 27:57-60
20. **Resurrection** – Psalm 16:10, Matthew 28:9
21. **Ascension into Heaven** – Psalm 68:18, Luke 24:50

Check out these helpful resources:

“How Can I Be Sure I am a Christian?” trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-be-sure-im-a-christian

“How Can I become a Christian?” trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-become-a-christian

“Evidence for Jesus” trustworthyword.com/evidence-for-jesus

The Case for Easter by Lee Strobel

Easter Week - What Happened, Day by Day

If you have ever wondered what happened during each day of Easter week, I hope that you find this summary helpful. Be sure to look up and read the verses to see how amazing Jesus is!

Palm Sunday - On a Sunday, almost 2,000 years ago, as Jesus approached His crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus' presence "stirred up" the whole city of Jerusalem as He was worshiped with the words "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" (Matthew 21:8-11). May we worship Jesus today!

Monday - On a Monday, almost 2,000 years ago, as Jesus approached His crucifixion and resurrection, "all the people were hanging on his words" (Luke 19:48). May we do the same today!

Tuesday - On a Tuesday, almost 2,000 years ago, as Jesus approached His crucifixion and resurrection, many nonbelievers sought to entrap and trick Jesus. Upon hearing Jesus' truth-filled answers and divine wisdom, His enemies "marveled" (Matthew 22:22) and the crowds were "astonished" (Matthew 22:33). May we marvel at and be astonished by our wondrous Jesus!

Wednesday - On a Wednesday, almost 2,000 years ago, as Jesus approached His crucifixion and resurrection, His enemies came against Him for His death, but crowds came to Him for His words of life! (Luke 21:37-22:2). May we come to Jesus for life today!

Thursday - On a Thursday, almost 2,000 years ago, as Jesus approached His crucifixion and resurrection, Judas betrayed Jesus and His other disciples disappointed Him. May we "watch and pray that" we likewise "do not enter into temptation" (Matthew 26:41).

Good Friday - On a Friday, almost 2,000 years ago, as Jesus was crucified, He proclaimed "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). May we daily repent of our ignorant and willful sin against our Savior and hear His promise to true believers that "you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43).

Saturday - On a Saturday, almost 2,000 years ago, as Jesus approached His resurrection, nonbelievers sought to deny Jesus' deity and to stop His fame (Matthew 27:62-66), but no-one and no-thing could prevent Jesus' resurrection. May we rejoice that nothing can "separate us from the love of Christ" (Romans 8:35).

Easter Sunday - On a Sunday, almost 2,000 years ago, after Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, people who encountered the resurrected Jesus felt their "hearts burn within" them while Jesus talked with them and opened the Scriptures to them (Luke 24:32). May Jesus open our hearts, minds, and spirits to celebrate His presence with us through His Spirit and His Word! "The Lord has risen indeed!" (Luke 24:34) May we long for the day when He returns, but until that day, may we be worshipping Him "with great joy" and "continually...blessing God" (Luke 24:52).

Jesus' final words from the cross

1st Word from the Cross - Luke 23:34 "Father forgive them, for they do not know what they do.

2nd Word from the Cross - Luke 23:43 "Today you will be with me in paradise"

3rd Word from the Cross - John 19:26-27 "Jesus saw His own mother, and the disciple standing near whom He loved. He said to His mother, Woman, behold your son.' Then He said to the disciple, 'Behold your mother.'"

4th Word from the Cross - Mark 15:34 "And at the ninth hour, Jesus shouted in a loud voice, 'Eloi, Elon, lama sabachthani?' which is translated, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

5th Word from the Cross - John 19:28 "He said, 'I thirst.'"

6th Word from the Cross - Luke 23:46 "Speaking in a loud voice, Jesus said, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."

7th Word from the Cross - John 19:30 "Jesus said, 'It is finished.'"