

4-6-2023 - Easter

What *is* the Story of Easter and what does it mean for all of us?

The background and story of Easter, and what lead up to it, is found throughout the Bible. It begins with the fall of man to sin, as found in Genesis, and still today we were all born into sin. Then throughout the Old Testament we are told of one prophesy after another of God sending a Savior, a Messiah, who will come to save us from the world and our sins. Then in the New Testament, God tells us from the Gospels through the book of Revelation the fulfillment of His promise. As an example, in John 3:16-, He tells us: *“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.”*

So, what happened on the first Easter Day? Let us go back a few days and see how it unfolded, as related by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in the Bible:

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### **“The Triumphal Entry”**

Matthew 21:7-9 *“<sup>7</sup> They brought the donkey and colt, laid their cloths on them, and sat Him [Jesus] sat on them.. <sup>8</sup> And a very great multitude spread their cloths on the road: others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. <sup>9</sup> Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying:*

*“Hosanna to the Son of David!*

*Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!*

*Hosanna in the highest!”*

### **“Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus”**

Matthew 26:14-16 *“<sup>14</sup> Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests <sup>15</sup> and said, “What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?” And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. <sup>16</sup> So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.”*

### **“Jesus Celebrates Passover with His Disciples”**

Matthew 26: 18 *“And He said, “Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, “The Teacher says, ‘My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.’”*

### **“The Prayer in the Garden”**

Matthew 26:36 *“Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, “Sit here while I go and pray there.”*

Matthew 26:39 *“He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying “O Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”*

### **“Jesus handed over to Pontius Pilate.”**

Matthew 27:1-2 *“<sup>1</sup>When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put Him to death. <sup>2</sup>And when they had bound Him, they led Him and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor.”*

### **“Pilates Decision”**

John 19:6 *“Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, “Crucify Him, crucify Him!”*

### **“The Soldiers Mock Jesus”**

Matthew 27: 30-31 *“<sup>30</sup> Then they spat on Him and took the reed and struck Him on the head. <sup>31</sup> And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified.”*

### **“The King on the Cross”**

Mark 15:24 *“And when they had crucified Him, they divided His garments, casting lots for them to determine what every man should take.*

### **“Jesus Dies on the Cross”**

Mark 15:33 *“Now when the sixth hour had come, there was a darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.”*

Luke 23:46 *“And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, **“Father, ‘into Your hands I commit My spirit.’”** Having said this, He breathed His last.”*

### **“Jesus Buried in Joseph’s Tomb”**

Matthew 27: 57-59 *“<sup>57</sup> Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself has also become a disciple of Jesus. <sup>58</sup> This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. <sup>59</sup> When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,”*

John 19:40-41 *“<sup>40</sup> Then they took the body of Jesus and bound it in straps of linen with the spices, as is the custom of the Jews is to bury. <sup>41</sup> Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid.”*

### **“He is Risen!”**

Luke 24: 1-7 *“<sup>1</sup> Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. <sup>2</sup> But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, <sup>3</sup> Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. <sup>4</sup> And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shinning garments. <sup>5</sup> Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? <sup>6</sup> He is not here but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, <sup>7</sup> saying, ‘the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.’”*

Matthew 28: 8-10 *“<sup>8</sup> So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy and ran to bring His Disciples word. <sup>9</sup> And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying “Rejoice!” so they came and held Him by the feet and worshipped Him.*

<sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

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This being a synopsis of what happened from Palm Sunday, through to Jesus defeating death on Easter, omitting a few of the more gruesome parts, the Bible tells us from several accounts, what happened that glorious day over two thousand years ago. Further testimonies of God's Love for us are found throughout the New Testament. As one example, we are told in Paul's letter to the Ephesians 2:4-7:

*"But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages He might show the incomparable riches of His grace, expressed in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus."*

Also, in 1 John 4:10, He tells us: *"This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."*

In closing, I wish you all a Blessed Easter, and may you carry His Love, Mercy, and Grace with you always. Now,

***May the Lord bless you and keep you.***

***The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.***

***The Lord look upon you and give you peace.***

***In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.***