

# What if... Easter Never Came?

Easter 2024

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## **What if Jesus wasn't resurrected and the tomb wasn't empty on Sunday morning?**

*18“Listen,” [Jesus] said, “we’re going up to Jerusalem, where the Son of Man will be betrayed to the leading priests and the teachers of religious law. They will sentence him to die. 19Then they will hand him over to the Romans to be mocked, flogged with a whip, and crucified. But on the third day he will be raised from the dead.”*

—Matthew 20:18-19 (NLT)

## **Jesus predicted *how* he would die and that he would be *raised* from the dead on the third day.**

*62The next day, on the Sabbath, the leading priests and Pharisees went to see Pilate. 63They told him, “Sir, we remember what that deceiver once said while he was still alive: ‘After three days I will rise from the dead.’ 64So we request that you seal the tomb until the third day. This will prevent his disciples from coming and stealing his*

*body and then telling everyone he was raised from the dead! If that happens, we'll be worse off than we were at first." 65 Pilate replied, "Take guards and secure it the best you can." 66 So they sealed the tomb and posted guards to protect it.*

—Matthew 27:62-66 (NLT)

**What if, on Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at Jesus' tomb, and nothing happened?**

**Christianity would have died in that tomb.**

**The Apostle Paul asked the "what if" question in a letter to Christians in Corinth in Greece, some of whom were claiming there was no resurrection of the dead.**

*12 But tell me this—since we preach that Christ rose from the dead, why are some of you saying there will be no resurrection of the dead? 13 For if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised either. 14 And if Christ has not been raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your faith is useless.*

—1 Corinthians 15:12-14 (NLT)

## **IF EASTER NEVER CAME...**

- **Jesus' teachings can't be trusted.**

*15 And we apostles would all be lying about God—for we have said that God raised Christ from the grave. But that can't be true if there is no resurrection of the dead. 16 And if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins.*

—1 Corinthians 15:15-17 (NLT)

- **there's no forgiveness of sins.**

*In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost!*

—1 Corinthians 15:18 (NLT)

- **there's no heaven.**

*...if there is no resurrection, "Let's feast and drink, for tomorrow we die!"*

—1 Corinthians 15:32 (NLT)

- **there's ultimately no hope.**
- **suffering itself is simply tragic.**

*And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world.*

—1 Corinthians 15:19 (NLT)

- **sin and death really do have the last word in this life.**

*But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died.*

—1 Corinthians 15:20 (NLT)

**Paul is confident Jesus is resurrected because of all the witnesses and his own experiences.**

*5[Christ] was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. 6After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. 7Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles. 8Last of all, as though I had been born at the wrong time, I also saw him.*

—1 Corinthians 15:5-8 (NLT)

**Easter proved that if Jesus could come back from the grave, as he said he would, then everything else he said is true.**

**We were created *by* God *for* God, and our lives aren't complete until we commit them to Him through Jesus Christ.**

**The sad thing is that even though Easter really happened, some of us live *as if* it never came.**

**The early church changed their day of worship from Saturday to Sunday, the day Jesus was risen, because they believed every Sunday was a little Easter.**

*Some people have gotten out of the habit of meeting for worship, but we must not do that. We should keep on encouraging each other...*

—Hebrews 10:25 (CEV)

**We *need* to be together so we can remember and encourage each other, so we can live each day the truth that Easter *did* come - Jesus *is* alive, sin and death have *no* hold on him or any of us who follow *him*.**

*3What a God we have! And how fortunate we are to have him, this Father of our Master Jesus! Because Jesus was raised from the dead, we've been given a brand-new life and have everything to live for, 4including a future in heaven—and the future starts now!*

—1 Peter 1:3-4 (Message)

**Because Easter came and Jesus was raised from the dead, we're offered new life and heaven, and it all begins now, as soon as we welcome Jesus into our lives.**

**If you know that Easter really did come, that Jesus really was resurrected and lives today in you through his Spirit, then God will give you the resilience you need to overcome the struggles of life.**

*22But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23gentleness, and self-control....*

—Galatians 5:22-23 (NLT)

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**Next Week** – *Building a Resilient Life*: Identify the Pain