

April 21, 2019
THE ROAD TO HOPE - Part 5
“Easter Sunday”

Many believe that what happened on this weekend so long ago remains the most important event in human history.

Sooner or later we all experience challenging, even devastating events in our lives.

Saturday - Matthew 27:62-66, Mark 16:1, Luke 23:56, John 19:40

Matthew 27:62-64 (ESV): “⁶²The next day [Saturday], that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate ⁶³and said, ‘Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, ‘After three days I will rise.’ ⁶⁴Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, ‘He has risen from the dead,’ and the last fraud will be worse than the first.’”

In the weeks leading up to his death, Jesus had predicted that he would be captured, beaten, crucified and killed, but he also said he would rise on the third day.

Matthew 27:66 (ESV): “So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.”

Sunday - Matthew 28:1-15, Mark 16:1-13, Luke 24:1-49, John 20:1-25

Matthew 28:1 (ESV): “Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.”

Matthew 28:2-4 (ESV): “²And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men.”

Matthew 28:5-7 (ESV): “⁵But the angel said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him....”

The angel reminds the women that Jesus had *said this would happen* - it’s proof Jesus can do anything and be trusted!

Matthew 28:8-10 (ESV): “⁸So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹And behold, Jesus met them and said, ‘Greetings!’ And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. ¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.’”

The very fact the writers said Jesus first appeared to the women is a strong indicator to us that this really happened, because no one in that time would have made up the story this way.

Matthew 28:11-15 (ESV): “¹¹While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. ¹²And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers ¹³and said, ‘Tell people, “His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.” ¹⁴And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.’ ¹⁵So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day.”

In trying to counter the claim that Jesus was risen from the dead, the authorities would have done everything in their power to produce his body, but no body was ever produced, and no disciple of Jesus ever backed off their story.

While a person *might* die for a good cause, who’s willing to die for a lie?

Some dismiss the resurrection, but *no one* has been able to disprove it.

C.S. Lewis: “Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important.”

What do I think about the Christianity and the resurrection?

If the resurrection is true, then...

- **Jesus really did die for our sins, so that we don’t have to carry the weight of past guilt and shame with us forever.**
- **Jesus is who he said he is – the Son of God – and he came that today we might have the fullest life possible.**
- **Jesus’ promise can be trusted that he has gone ahead of us to prepare a place for us, where there will be no more suffering, struggles or tears, and as I follow him and trust him, my future with him is assured.**

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NLT): “For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.”

On Easter morning the world learned that God had not been defeated; that, instead, it had always been God’s plan so that He could offer hope and salvation to all who *choose* to believe and follow His Son Jesus Christ.

The resurrection assures you that Jesus is alive, and he's offering you the riches of *his life forever!*

New Series: God Never Said That! *(starting next week!)*

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