

5 Things Every New Believer Should Know About Easter

All over the world Christians celebrate Easter every spring. But for the new believer, discarding the ideas that this holiday is based on bunnies, eggs and candy is critical for experiencing all that God has for them at this time of year.

1. Easter is about the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

The most important thing to know about Easter is that it's not about a fictitious rabbit who brings candies and other treats to children in plastic eggs (thank goodness). Easter is really what many Christians know as Resurrection Sunday. After dying on the cross for the sins of the world on Good Friday (more on that in a bit), Jesus rose from the dead on the third day, Sunday. This is what makes our faith valid. Without the resurrection, death would not have been conquered. The entire basis for Christianity is that Jesus is alive today! There is no other religion in the entire world that shows God to be so merciful as to give Himself up for humanity—and none so powerful that He was able to defeat death itself. Because of this resurrection, we now can have eternal life with God.

“Early on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb while it was still dark and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb” (John 20:1).

Mary was the first person to see that the stone had been rolled away. The stones to seal up tombs were not light, but rather incredibly heavy and would've taken more than one or two men to roll away. To see a tomb with a stone rolled away is a major deal! Jesus foreshadowed His own grave stone would be rolled away when He raised Lazarus up from the dead, needing the tombstone to be rolled away.

“He saw the linen cloths lying there, and the cloth that was around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but wrapped in a place by itself” (John 20:6-7).

Peter and John saw the grave clothes Jesus was wearing neatly put in the tomb—something only Jesus Himself would’ve done.

At this time, Jesus’ followers didn’t understand that Jesus had risen from the dead until He appeared directly to them.

“On the evening of that first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst, and said to them, ‘Peace be with you,’ When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. The disciples were then glad when they saw the Lord (John 20:19-20).

By presenting Himself to them as fully and completely alive after His death, Jesus changed everything for the disciples and for all of humanity forever. Eternal death no longer had to be ours.

2. Good Friday wasn’t very good for Jesus. However, it was the most sacrificial and loving thing anyone has ever done for us.

This is the day Jesus died on the cross. Unfortunately, we live in a society that downplays the actual pain and torment of everything He went through for us. There even seems to be an unspoken misconception about how painful dying on the cross really was. Jesus was flogged before He ever took to the cross. He had a crown of thorns beat into His skull and He had to carry the massive structure of the cross up to Golgotha where He would have thick nails hammered into His hands and feet. To be nailed to the cross meant a struggle for breath that would only make the pain of the nails that much worse. I don’t think any of us would be willing to go through all this pain to take on the crimes of someone else—including our enemies. However, through His shed blood, the payment for our

sins was justified.

“And the veil of the temple was torn in the middle” (Luke 23:45).

The tearing of the veil in the temple is more than just a random occurrence that happened when Jesus died. This meant that sin's separation between God and man was removed. All people now had the opportunity to enter into relationship with the heavenly Father.

3. The lesser known “Maundy Thursday” is a very important day in the grand scheme of the Christian faith.

This is the night of the Last Supper between Jesus and His disciples. This is when the first communion was taken as Jesus led the disciples through it.

“Then He took the bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is My body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.’ In like manner, He took the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood which is shed for you’ (Luke 22:19-20).

This is the same night that Jesus washed the disciples feet as a sign of His cleansing power against sin and as a model for how we should serve others. Jesus was later betrayed by His disciple, Judas, arrested and saw the disciples flee in fear, including His friend Peter. This was such an intense night that Jesus actually sweat blood and asked His heavenly Father if what was to come for Him on the cross could be taken away, but prayed “not My will, but Yours, be done.” This night was the beginning of everything to come on Jesus' journey to the cross.

4. Jesus' week of fulfilling prophecy began on Palm Sunday when He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey.

The Sunday before Jesus died on the cross, He came into Jerusalem riding a donkey and people scattered palm branches on the ground. Why is this significant? Because this event was foretold in the book of Zechariah in the Old Testament.

"See, your king is coming to you; he is righteous and able to deliver, he is humble and riding on a donkey, a colt, the offspring of a donkey" (Zech. 9:9).

The King of Kings had come, and He was on His way to save His people, even if they didn't fully know what that looked like at the time.

The crowds that went before Him and that followed Him cried out:

"Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" Hosanna in the highest!" (Matt. 21:9).

5. Jesus' death and resurrection isn't meant to be remembered once a year.

Just because we take a moment once a year to collectively celebrate what Jesus did for us doesn't mean we only think about His death and resurrection once a year. We are to remember daily who He is and what He did for us. He gave up everything to cleanse us from sin and have eternal life with God. There is no one else who could do that, but because of His love for us, He gave everything for us. So, take time each day to thank Him for what He did so you could experience true freedom and love.

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