

Making Sense of Easter

Easter - 2023

After being judged throughout Thursday night, Jesus was condemned to death by the Sanhedrin (Israel's ruling council) for claiming to be the Messiah (Mark 14:60-64). Sometime around 9 am on Friday morning, Jesus was nailed to a cross outside Jerusalem by the Romans. After Jesus died at around 3 pm, some of Jesus' followers took his corpse and quickly washed it and rubbed it with 75 pounds of spices. Then, they wrapped his body in linen cloth and laid it in a new tomb (Matthew 27:57-61).

What happened on Easter Sunday?

1st - Jesus rose from the dead.

All four Gospels record that Jesus rose from the dead early Sunday morning after spending a portion of three days in the grave. The resurrection of Christ is the climax of the Gospels because it is the cornerstone of the Christian faith. Everything we are and hope for is based on Jesus' resurrection.

2nd - There was a great earthquake.

This was the second great earthquake in three days. The first occurred when Jesus yelled, "It is finished" and released his spirit to the Father on Friday afternoon. Matthew's Gospel says the earthquake occurred because an angel came down from heaven and rolled the tombstone aside then sat upon it (Matthew 28:2-4).

3rd – Mary Magdalene arrived at the tomb.

All four Gospels tell us some women set out before dawn on Sunday morning to visit Jesus' tomb. John's Gospel tells us when Mary saw the tomb open, she assumed someone had taken Jesus's body, so she ran to tell Peter and John. (John 20:1-2).

4th – Peter and John ran to the tomb.

John's Gospel tells us that Peter and John ran to the tomb and looked into it. The empty grave clothes were enough to convince Peter and John that Jesus had risen from the dead (John 20:8).

5th – Mary Magdalene returned to the tomb.

John's Gospel tells us Mary returned to the empty tomb after Peter and John returned home. She was filled with grief because she did not have a chance to mourn properly. But Jesus did not leave Mary in sorrow (John 20:11-16).

6th - The other women arrived at the tomb.

After seeing the empty tomb, and hearing the angel's message, the women left to tell the disciples that Jesus was alive (Luke 24:5-7; Matt. 28:8-10). Then the women ran into Jesus (Matt. 28:8-10)!

7th - Jesus appeared to two men on the road to Emmaus, to Peter, and to ten of his disciples.

Jesus spent the rest of Easter Sunday comforting his followers and explaining to them how his sacrificial death and his resurrection were prophesied in the Old Testament scriptures (Luke 24; John 20; 1 Cor. 15:5).

The first Easter was an emotional roller coaster! Jesus' followers began the day with sorrow - mourning the loss of their Teacher, Master, and Messiah. They ended the day with hope – eating, laughing, and loving on their risen Lord!