

## WHAT EASTER IS ALL ABOUT

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### Text:

*John 19:38-20:18... 38* And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave *him* leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. *39* And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound *weight*. *40* Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. *41* Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. *42* There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation *day*; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

*1* The first *day* of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. *2* Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. *3* Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. *4* So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. *5* And he stooping down, *and looking in*, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. *6* Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, *7* And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. *8* Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. *9* For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. *10* Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

*11* But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, *and looked* into the sepulchre, *12* And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. *13* And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. *14* And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. *15* Jesus saith unto her, **Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?** She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. *16* Jesus saith unto her, **Mary.** She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. *17* Jesus saith unto her, **Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.** *18* Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and *that* he had spoken these things unto her.

### INTRODUCTION:

Have you ever wondered what Easter was really all about? I'm sure that you know that the Easter bunny is not real because bunnies don't lay eggs. Why you know that the Easter bunny is a fairytale because nobody has ever seen one.

But you know that Jesus is real because many people have seen Him. You know that Jesus also died because many people saw that too! The real meaning of Easter is what happened after Jesus died, and many people saw that too!

It was a sad day when Jesus died at Calvary many years ago. Jesus had many followers but on that day most of them were in the distance watching their Lord and

Savior die on the cross. I'm sure they thought they would never see Him again. One friend of Jesus' who was a rich man asked Pilate if he could have the body of Jesus, so he could bury Him? His name was Joseph of Arimathea.

## 1. **Death** (John 19:38-42).

### A) **Service of Sorrowful Saints**

Jesus died a terrible death in agony. He died because He was lied about and betrayed. As God, He knows everything. He even knew about His death before it happened (Psa. 22). He could have fought it, but instead, He was determined to go through with it because it was the only way the Father wanted to have sin payed for.

After His death, Joseph and Nicodemus, asked if they could have His body. They wanted to show proper respect to Him. They were running out of time and needed to observe the Passover as was the Jewish custom, so they put Him in a temporary grave. They hurriedly placed Him there and had a large stone rolled over the entrance to the little cave where He lay.

In their sorrow, they thought of God. They thought of His Son, their Messiah. Even though they were sad, they still served God. Many people look for others to serve them when they are sad. They are more focused on self rather than God, or others.

### B) **Sure, Sepulcher of Stone**

Not only is a sepulcher a tomb but it is also any monument of stone that aids in remembering the deceased. They wanted to remember Jesus, and where He lay so that they could come back after the Passover and complete the burial process. They didn't leave the cave open because they didn't want anyone or any wild animal disturbing Jesus' body.

It is still our custom today to mark any gravesite so that people would know someone was buried there. No matter what culture you are from, gravesites are marked to remember the person buried inside.

If you think about it, sepulchers are not designed to keep people in. They are designed to keep people out.

### C) **Sweet Scents of Spices**

Myrrh is first mentioned in the Bible in Exodus 30:23.<sup>1</sup> It was the main ingredient in the holy anointing oil. It was one of the gifts brought by the wise men from the east who came to worship Jesus when He was an infant.<sup>2</sup>

ILLUSTRATION:

Many phrases have been coined by literary genius, tending to soften the harshness of the word death. Whitman called it: "Cool-enfolding death," Ingersoll, "The

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 30:23... 23 Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred *shekels*, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, *even* two hundred and fifty *shekels*, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty *shekels*,

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 2:11... 11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

fine serenity of death;" Shakespeare, "A necessary end." How different are the words of Scripture! Paul says: "To die is gain." "O death, where is thy sting?"

Death, to the children of God, means something vastly different from the meaning given it by unbelievers, no matter how cultured, admired, and respected they may be. Different, too, are the ceremonials connected with the burials. The ancient Christians gathered round their departed loved ones in the Catacombs and sang:

"Good night, beloved, sleep and take your rest.

Lay down your head upon the Savior's breast."

On her death bed, Queen Victoria called for the hymn:

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me. Let me hide myself in Thee."

A great life is a wonderful thing; but infinitely greater is a great death--in the Lord.

## 2. **Burial (John 20:1-10).**

Everyone is going to die someday. There will be a moment when we will separate from these sin cursed bodies. After that moment, when we get out of our bodies, what will happen to them? According to the Bible, they will return to the earth from which they came.<sup>3</sup> This takes time. This is not what happened to Jesus.

### A) **Stone Rolled Away (vs. 1).**

The disciples found the stone rolled away. They were concerned that someone had taken the body of Jesus. Perhaps someone would desecrate it. Perhaps it was killed by wild animals. They did not know what happened, but that stone was rolled away and that took someone to do it. It wasn't an accident. Someone purposed to do it.

### B) **Stooping at the Sepulcher (vs. 5).**

Something told John to stoop and look. He surveyed the situation. The body of Jesus was gone. It looked like there was no struggle. Because he waited, Peter was able to be present. John had a witness that could testify that he did not tamper with a body. Nobody could doubt John.

### C) **Simon looks and sees (vs. 7).**

Simon comes and sees something strange inside the cave. He sees the graveclothes removed but the body is clearly not there. They conclude that someone has taken the body clearly forgetting that Jesus told them He would rise again in three days.

ILLUSTRATION:

## 3. **Resurrection (John 20:11-18).**

They had seen a resurrection before when they witnessed Lazarus coming from the grave. They had not seen someone raise themselves from the grave. That was

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<sup>3</sup> *Genesis 2:7... 7* And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

*Job 34:15... 15* All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.

something altogether different. Jesus' resurrection is proof that He has power over death and the grave.

**A) Seeing Angels sitting.**

Now it is one thing to see the absence of the Lord's body, but to see two angels sitting in the tomb (especially after Peter and John leave) is quite another thing. Just in case she didn't believe what her eyes were showing her, they begin having a conversation with her. They ask her, "Why are you crying?"

**B) Supposing He is the Gardner**

Human logic prevailed when she concluded that the man standing next to her was the Gardner. But it is actually the Lord Jesus Christ. When He tells her who He is, her tears are turned to joy. HE'S ALIVE!

**C) Saying What She saw.**

Jesus tells her to go and tell the disciples what she has seen and who she has spoken to. She wholeheartedly does so because this is the biggest miracle of all, and she was a witness.

ILLUSTRATION:

**CONCLUSION:**

Jesus rose from the dead. This is what Easter is all about. It is the most important Christian holy day. People often are told that Jesus died for them. Better yet, Jesus rose again from the dead for them

**INVITATION:**

Because Jesus rose from the dead, He proved that we also can raise from the dead. But only Jesus has the power to raise people from the dead and give glorified bodies. Like Thomas, Jesus wants us to believe on Him and trust Him? Are you trusting Jesus today?