

Bible Stories for Adults

The First Easter

Matthew 28:1-15

Opening

Gathering: What would you think if someone told you that a friend you just buried was now alive?

Today's Focus: Jesus rose from the dead, as He had promised, and showed Himself to disciples on Easter.

Key Verses: *He is not here; He has risen, just as He said.* Matthew 28:5-6

They told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. Luke 24:9, 11

Opening Prayer

Lesson

Easter

Early Christians celebrated Jesus' resurrection either on Passover day or on Sunday following Council of Nicaea, 325 AD – Church leaders agreed to celebrate on the same day
First Sunday after the ecclesiastical moon on or after March 21 (vernal equinox)
Western Christians use the Gregorian calendar, Eastern Christians use the Julian calendar
Early Christian missionaries to the Saxons converted their springtime festival into Easter
Used name of Eostre, their "Goddess of the Dawn"
Kept some traditions - Easter rabbit (fertility) and eggs (new birth)

Jewish Burials

Wealthy used caves, both natural and man-made, as family tombs, Others were buried
Shelves or niches in large caves would hold individual bodies, sealed by flat stones
Criminals could not be buried in family tombs - guilty could not be buried with the just
Criminal and poor bodies were burned in trash heap in Valley of Gehenna
Bodies were wrapped in strips of linen with spices to keep odor down
John 11:38-40, 43-44
After a body was placed in a tomb, a large stone was rolled in front of entrance
Matthew 23:27-28

Jesus is Buried (Luke 23:50-56)

How was Jesus' body kept from being burned or thrown away as for other criminals?

Luke 23:50-52

What did he do with Jesus' body?

Luke 23:53

Did Joseph get any help?

John 19:39-40

Why was Joseph in such a rush and unable to fully wash and rub Jesus' body?

Luke 23:54

If Joseph and Nicodemus were alone, how did the disciples know where Jesus was buried?

Luke 23:55

Why didn't the women wait and add their own spices to Jesus' body after Joseph was done?

Luke 23:56

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Guard The Dead (*Matthew 27:62-66*)

- How did the chief priests disobey their own traditions against working on the Sabbath?
Matthew 27:62-64
- Did the leaders ask Pilate to do it so they wouldn't have to work on the Sabbath?
Matthew 27:65-66
- The seal was a cord stretched across the stone and secured with clay on each side

The Women Go to the Tomb (*Mark 16:1-3*)

- What did the women do their first chance after obediently observing the Passover Sabbath?
Matthew 28:1
- How anxious were they to get to the tomb?
John 20:1a
- What concerned them as they walked?
Mark 16:1-3

The Earth Shook Again (*Matthew 28:2*)

- Who would move the stone for them?
Matthew 28:2
- How had God's creation responded to Jesus' death?
Matthew 27:50-51

The Women Reach the Tomb (*Luke 24:2-4*)

- Did the women see the angel roll back the stone?
Luke 24:2-3
- How did Mary of Magdala (town in Galilee) react to what she saw?
John 20:1-2
- What did the other women do?
Luke 24:4
- How does Matthew describe the appearance of the angels?
Matthew 28:3
- What does this appearance mean?
Exodus 34:29, 34-35

The Angels Announce Jesus' Resurrection (*Luke 24:5-8*)

- What did the angels say to the women?
Luke 24:5-8
- Had Jesus clearly explained that He would rise or had He said so in a parable?
Luke 18:31-34
- On the Third Day* - Not after three days
- Did the angels give the women any instructions?
Matthew 28:5-7
- Four messages: *Don't be afraid; He has risen; Come and see; Go quickly and tell.*
- Did the women immediately go tell the disciples?
Mark 16:8

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Peter and John Go to the Tomb (*John 20:3-9*)

How did Peter and John react when Mary Magdalene told them Jesus' body was gone?

John 20:3-5

What did Peter see that showed Jesus' body had not been hastily stolen?

John 20:6-7

After seeing the empty tomb, did Peter and John believe and understand that Jesus had risen?

John 20:8-9

How does Luke record Peter's reaction?

Luke 24:12

Mary Magdalene Returns to the Tomb (*John 20:10-18*)

After following Peter and John to the tomb, what did Mary Magdalene do after they left?

John 20:10-11

What did she see in the tomb and why was she crying?

John 20:12-13

Who did she think may have moved Jesus' body?

John 20:14-15

How did Jesus let her know who He really was?

John 20:16

What did Jesus say when Mary tried to hug Him in her excitement?

John 20:17

What did Mary do in response?

John 20:18

Jesus Appears to the Other Women (*Matthew 28:8-10*)

Had Jesus appeared to anyone else before Mary saw Him?

Mark 16:9-11

Who did He appear to next?

Matthew 28:8-9

What did Jesus say to them?

Matthew 28:10

What About the Guards? (*Matthew 28:11-15*)

What had happened to the guards when the angel came and rolled back the stone?

Matthew 28:2-4

Where were the guards while all of these people were visiting the tomb?

Matthew 28:11

With this proof, did the chief priests come to recognize Jesus as the Messiah?

Matthew 28:12-15

On the Road to Emmaus (*Luke 24:9-18*)

After all that had happened in the early morning, did the disciples believe and understand?

Luke 24:9-11

What happened as a couple of believers walked back home to Emmaus that afternoon?

Luke 24:13-17

Common for travelers to join up and walk and talk together to pass the time (2-3 hrs)

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The Story of Jesus (*Luke 24:18-27*)

How did they indicate that Jesus' death and empty tomb were the topic of Jerusalem?

Luke 24:18

How did they explain Jesus' story to this stranger?

Luke 24:19

Luke 24:20

Luke 24:21

Luke 24:22-23

Luke 24:24

How did Jesus answer their confusion?

Luke 24:25-27

A Revealing Dinner (*Luke 24:28-32*)

How interested were these disciples in hearing this stranger?

Luke 24:28-29

What caused them to recognize who this stranger really was?

Luke 24:30-31

After recognizing Jesus, did they feel they should have recognized Him earlier?

Luke 24:32

The Response of Believers (*Luke 24:33-35*)

Although it was dark and dangerous outside, what did these disciples do?

Luke 24:33

Had anything else happened since these men had left Jerusalem?

Luke 24:34

After hearing this update from the apostles, what did the two do?

Luke 24:35

After a full day of events, did the apostles finally believe and understand?

Mark 16:12-13

What amazing thing then happened that helped them believe? (Next week's lesson)

Luke 24:36

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. How anxious am I to see Jesus? (*John 20:1-18; Matthew 7:7-8; Mark 1:35-39; Luke 2:41-50; 4:42-44; 8:40-48; Philipians 1:21-26; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18*)
2. Who have I told that Jesus has risen from the dead?
(*John 20:1-2, 18, 24-25; Luke 24:9-10, 33-35; Acts 2:36-41; 4:8-12, 18-20; 1 Cor 6:14; 15:1-11*)
3. How have I recognized the presence of Jesus in my life?
(*John 20:16, 20, 28; 14:20-23; Luke 24:31-32; Genesis 28:16-17; Psalm 16:11; 21:6; 139:7-10*)
4. When have I felt without hope?
(*Luke 24:17-21; John 20:13; 2 Corinthians 1:3-11; Ephesians 2:12; 1 Thessalonians 4:13*)
5. How has God shown me that He is in control, even during seemingly impossible times?
(*Luke 24:17-27; John 20:13-18; 2 Corinthians 4:7-10; Ephesians 2:12-13; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14*)