

Easter

What is it
that Christians
believe



Easter



Here's a simple explanation.

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TRUST

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What is the best gift you've **EVER** received?

A child born, or maybe a diamond ring?

A holiday, or perhaps a new car?

What might be
the best gift you
could receive?



What if someone offered you the gift of a LIFE after this one?

It's shocking, but we all know it — every person alive will one day die.



So, what happens after that?

In a timeframe called eternity, the Bible tells us that we will all end up in one of two places — heaven or hell. We are either God's friends or we are not.

...But this is the context of our story, not the end.

Where WILL I go?

The Bible explains that heaven requires a perfect record.

Have we lied to a parent or friend? Cheated in a test? Hated somebody? Imperfect, fallen, sinful — that's all of us!

Our wrongs are to God what a small bit of sewage in a drink of water is to us. Too much! Heaven is basically out of the question.

Bad news? Yes — but there is good news.

While we clearly have a problem, God loves us and has created a solution — *and that's what Easter is about!*

Is there hope?

Yes, but it comes at a price. The miracle is that someone paid that price for us — and that is the Easter story.

The Christian message is about love. Put differently, it's a rescue story (Apparently, someone out there loves us a lot more than we know.)



Who is he?

About 2000 years ago an innocent man was executed in Jerusalem by the cruellest means used by the Roman Empire. Scourged with a whip 39 times, he was nailed to a cross and left to die.

They buried him in a tomb, but death did not hold him. Three days later this man miraculously came back to life again.

***HE IS THE FOCUS
OF EASTER.***

THIS IS JESUS!



Who is this Jesus?

Born in the small town of Bethlehem during King Herod's reign, then raised in an obscure village to a carpenter's life, Jesus only lived about 33 years.

Yet the impact of what he did is still being felt throughout the world 2000 years later.

What DID he do?

He made the outrageous claim that he was the Son of God, as well as God's long-awaited King for all humankind. He showed us a completely different way of living.

He also promised that those who believed and followed him would have everlasting life.

Could he **PROVE** his claim?

Consider the things
he did:

- Healing those with disabilities, the blind and sick
- raising the dead back to life
- casting out demons
- walking on water
- turning water into wine
- feeding five thousand people with 5 loaves and 2 fish
- commanding a storm to cease.

These are but a few of his miracles.



⁶ All of us, like sheep, have strayed away.
We have left God's paths to follow
our own.
Yet the LORD laid on him
the sins of us all.

⁷ He was oppressed and treated harshly,
yet he never said a word.
He was led like a lamb to the slaughter.
And as a sheep is silent before the
shearers,
he did not open his mouth.

⁸ Unjustly condemned,
he was led away.*
No one cared that he died without
descendants,
that his life was cut short in midstream.*
But he was struck down
for the rebellion of my people.

⁹ He had done no wrong
and had never deceived anyone.
But he was buried like a criminal;
he was put in a rich man's grave.

¹⁰ But it was the LORD's good plan to
crush him
and cause him grief.
Yet when his life is made an offering for sin,
he will have many descendants.
He will enjoy a long life,
and the LORD's good plan will prosper in
his hands.

¹¹ When he sees all that is accomplished by
his anguish,
he will be satisfied.
And because of his experience,
my righteous servant will make it
possible
for many to be counted righteous,
for he will bear all their sins.

¹² I will give him the honors of a victorious
soldier,
because he exposed himself to death.
He was counted among the rebels.
He bore the sins of many and interceded
for rebels.

For more on the
fulfilled predictions see Episode 3
at WhyChristiansBelieve.nz

Are there OTHER proofs? MANY!

One overwhelming
evidence is how
he fulfilled more
than 50 predictions,
written between
500 and 2000 years
before he came.

All who dare to
look at Jesus
find themselves
surprised!

But most astounding
was that he came
back to life again on
the third day after
being genuinely
dead.

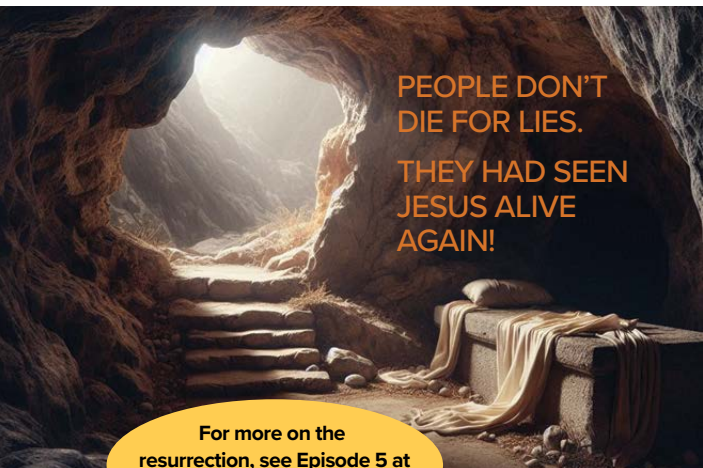
Isaiah 53 — written seven centuries before Jesus

Did the people in his day **BELIEVE THIS?**

A GREAT MANY!

Before his death his disciples ran for their lives. But after he had returned back to life these same men willingly died for their belief.

10 of the 11 remaining disciples were executed for their beliefs, not to mention many thousands of others at that time.



**PEOPLE DON'T
DIE FOR LIES.
THEY HAD SEEN
JESUS ALIVE
AGAIN!**

For more on the
resurrection, see Episode 5 at
WhyChristiansBelieve.nz

What if it's TRUE?

Well over one billion people believe it is!

Many Christians claim a life-changing experience as a result; also that it's not just religion but is real!

As further evidence, the New Testament has been shown to be the world's most reliably preserved ancient document. There are more copies of it and dated earlier than any other book from the ancient world.¹

If Jesus did come to life again, then discovering Jesus is the very purpose for which we were born!

For more on the history of the Bible texts, see Episode 2 at WhyChristiansBelieve.nz

¹ With over 25,000 copies, today even sceptics of the Christian faith confirm that the evidence shows all books of the New Testament to have been written within the lifetimes of the eyewitnesses of Jesus' life, and to be more accurately preserved than any other book of antiquity.

What has this got to do with EASTER?

Jesus died on that² weekend in about AD 30. This is what Easter is about celebrating:

A problem needed fixing.

Our wrongs required a just punishment.

...and God did it!

In love, Jesus took a punishment we deserved. The sin-stained record of our wrongs can now be wiped clean. If we will turn to ask God's forgiveness, while committing to follow his teachings, we will be restored as his friends — while also being restored to our purpose as God's children living on Earth to help others — in addition being restored to eternal life with God beyond this life.



2 Technically Jesus died on the Jewish Passover weekend. The name 'Easter' was added 600 years later when the Germanic, Celtic and Nordic peoples embraced the Christian faith. 'Easter' was their name for the month of April — named after one of their previous gods. An equivalent would be our month of January — which is named after the Roman god Janus. (When did Jesus die? "Easter!") The name stuck for us because we are in the English speaking (Celtic) part of the world. Note: Some suggest Jesus died in AD 33.

There has got to be a catch **SOMEWHERE**, right?

YES THERE IS!

It's like you get given a free movie ticket with popcorn, but you have to actually watch the movie with your popcorn.

God's gift of love and forgiveness, along with a restored friendship and purpose, are all free in the sense that there is nothing any of us can do to earn a clean record. (No amount of good activity could ever wipe the dirt stains of sin away).

But it's not just a 'ticket to heaven'. It's about being willing to turn toward God to know him and seek his good plan for our lives. Studying Jesus' teachings helps us to do this.





Does it work in real life?

Can God really be known?

IT IS THE EXPERIENCE OF MANY MILLIONS OF PEOPLE THAT HE CAN!

Stories of people's remarkable spiritual journeys after reaching out to God are easily found online. The connection with God is real!

Check out the difference Jesus makes in Episode 7 at WhyChristiansBelieve.nz

Watch short 4-minute stories at HopeProject.co.nz/stories

How do people RECEIVE this 'Easter' gift?

BY ASKING WITH FAITH THROUGH A PRAYER LIKE THIS.

“ Dear Lord Jesus. I believe you are the Son of God. Thank you for dying on the cross for my wrongs. I choose to now turn to you. Please forgive my wrongs and give me the gift of eternal life. Help me to understand your teachings. Help me to live a life that pleases you. I thank you that I am now your friend and you are my Boss, my Lord and my loving Saviour. Amen. ”

What's next?

To know God better while growing in love and faith, Christians practice three key habits.

They read the Bible — to understand what Jesus was like and how God wants them to live.

They talk to God in prayer — to seek his blessing for others and his help in their lives so that they can live selflessly.

They connect with a Church community — to learn about God from others while finding friends who can encourage their faith journey. It's like how a coal only stays hot when it is in the fire.

These habits shape the way we grow.



THE END — and the beginning...

So that is what Christians believe
about Easter:

*That God gave us
an AMAZING gift*

*A gift that is
available to all
who want it*

...including YOU!

Weblinks...

Investigate WHY many believe this faith to be true

WhyChristiansBelieve.nz is a seven-part video series, free online.

Investigate WHAT the Christian life involves

Find an Alpha Course to explore the nature of Christian living with a group.
Alpha.org.nz/try-alpha

Hear powerful stories of faith and hope

HopeProject.co.nz/stories

Visit a church near you

HopeProject.co.nz/churches

Start reading a Bible

Download a Bible like the one at
YouVersion.com/the-bible-app

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