

Removing All Doubt

Text : **John 20: 1-29**

S#1.

S#2.

A. Today being the first day of the week we meet as always to remember the sacrifice that Jesus freely made on the cross to save us from our sins.

1. In addition this is a day what there is a special “Christian” holiday named Easter.
2. This is a good holiday that has been used to obscure a pagan fertility festival.

B. Our study will be divided into three sections :

S#3.

1. We will start off with the origin of the “Easter” festivities.
2. We will then observe the death and resurrection of Jesus was preplanned.
3. The importance of the resurrection.

S#4.

I. The holiday known as Easter is nowhere mentioned or ordained in scripture.

A. Christians are given the liberty to establish and observe special days.

S#5.

1. **Rom. 14: 5** – One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind. 6 He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God.
2. Each person has the right to observe a special day, **but** not to bind it on others.

S#6.

B. The word “Easter” actually appears nowhere in the New Testament.

1. Only the King James Version of the New Testament has the word Easter.
 - a. **Acts 12:4** – And when he had apprehended him, he put *him* in prison, and delivered *him* to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter (pascha) to bring him forth to the people.
 - b. “pascha” appears **29** times in the N.T. and is universally translated Passover.
 - c. **Acts 12:4** – When he had seized him (*Peter*), he put him in prison, delivering him to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out before the people. (NASB)
2. When the New Testament was translated, it was presented to King James, but he strongly objected that Easter was not in the text so they added it at Acts 12:4
3. The word “Easter” does not appear in more recent and reliable translations.

S#7.

C. The word Easter is derived from the name of a pagan goddess of fertility.

S#8.

1. In Anglo-Saxon England the term was Eostre, (*rabbit was her symbol*)
2. Among the Germanic tribes it was Osten.

3. However, the Spring festival of fertility can be traced back through Syria for millennia and some associate it with Baal worship or back to Nimrod.

D. Being associated with pagan rituals of fertility it was an ungodly festival. S#9.

1. It was a time of drunkenness and immorality.
2. The nearest modern comparison is Mardi Gras in New Orleans or Carnival in Brazil.

E. The Spring fertility festival was so well entrenched that the church leaders decided it would be easier to “Christianize” it than to eliminate it. S#10.

1. From the early years of the Catholic Church this has remain their mission philosophy
2. Their missionaries are taught to synchronize the local cultures with Christianity.
3. For example : The first great church council synchronized Easter with the Passover.
 - a. The Council at Nicaea in 325 A.D. determined it would be the first Sunday following the first full moon after the Spring (vernal) equinox.
 - b. Always falls between March 22 and April 25.
 - c. Prior to this Easter had been celebrated on different days in various regions.

II. Easter celebrates the most important date in all of human history. S#11.

A. It is not for man to know the mind of God or to understand His ways.

1. God planned that Jesus would die on the cross and be resurrected from the dead.
Acts 2: 22 – Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man **S#12.**
 attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know — **23**
 this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.
2. That plan was made before the world was created.
I Pet. 1: 19 – but (*redeemed*) with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished **S#13.**
 and spotless, the blood of Christ. **20** For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you **21** who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.
3. Obviously, God knew man would need a savior before He created us.

B. Jesus was the operative member of the Godhead in creation.

1. **Col. 1: 15** – He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. **S#14.**
16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things have been created through Him and for Him. **17** He is before

all things, and in Him all things hold together. ¹⁸ He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

2. Nothing was created other than what Jesus created.

John 1: 1 – In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and **S#15.** the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

C. Therefore, Jesus is the source of all life on earth, **S#16.**

1. There was a period where the triune God existed and the earth did not exist.
2. Jesus spoke the earth into existence. (*It was dark and covered with water.*)
3. Jesus created light and set the planets, stars, etc. in motion creating days and nights.
4. Jesus then separated the land from the water. (*Lifted the dense cloud cover*)
5. He then created vegetation on the land.
6. Jesus then parted the clouds to allow the heavenly bodies to appear in the sky.
7. When all was prepared for life, Jesus put life in the sea and in the air.
8. After the seas were inhabited, Jesus created all life on earth.
9. On the sixth day Jesus created man and woman ... instructing them to multiply.
10. **Gen. 1: 31** – God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. and there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. **Cf-Eccl 7:29**

S#17.

D. Genesis 3 recounts the fall of man and the rest of the bible discusses God plan.

1. The very first man falls when tempted.
2. The fall of man comes after the plan of God.
3. One must ask himself WHY did God not prevent it ?
4. Why does God do anything ? Why did He even create this world ?
5. There is a spiritual realm about which we know very little and have no right to know
Deut. 29: 29 – The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.
6. God functions within that realm to which we're given neither access nor information
 - a. God rules in both realms.
 - b. God gives all over whom He rules free will SO they serve him voluntarily.
 - c. There are those in both realms who rebel against Him.

7. God provided a way to save mankind, but there does not appear to be a way for those in the other realm to be forgiven.
 - a. Their relationship with God is based upon sight, not faith, but they have free will.
 - b. They do not dwell in flesh as men do. ***They are free to choose, but are not drawn.***
 - c. Man dwells in the presence of evil, but they dwell in an atmosphere of holiness.
 - d. Though man is weak, God has a special love for Him.

John 3: 16 – For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

S#18.

E. We are not told why God waited thousands of years before sending the Savior.

1. God considered the time and set forth a schedule.

Gal. 4: 4 – But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,
2. Jesus was aware that there was a timeline for His ministry and His sacrifice.
 - a. **John 2: 3** – ... the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." **S#19.**
 4 And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does that have to do with us?
 My hour has not yet come."
 - b. **Mark 1: 14** – Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

F. Jesus taught His followers about His impending death and resurrection.

1. His followers believed in the resurrection of the dead.

John 11: 21 – Martha then said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 "Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." 23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." 24 Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." 25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" 27 She said to Him, "Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the ... **S#20.**
2. Jesus taught the disciples that He would be crucified and be resurrected in three days
 - a. **Matt. 16: 21** – From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must **S#21.**
 go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.
 - b. **Matt. 20: 17** – As Jesus was about to go up to Jerusalem, He took the twelve **S#22.**
 disciples aside by themselves, and on the way He said to them, 18 "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, 19 and will hand Him over to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify Him, and on the third day He will be raised up."

S#23.

III. The resurrection of Jesus was the most significant event in all of human history.

A. Even though the disciples had been taught the resurrection was coming, **S#24.** they had not emotionally accepted it as fact. (*We believe some things academically.*)

1. **John 20: 1** – Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already taken away from the tomb.

a. Why was Mary at Jesus' tomb ? **Luke 23:55-56** ... To put spices on the body.

b. She was surprised and distressed to find the tomb empty.

2. **John 20: 9** – For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must **S#25.** rise again from the dead. **10** So the disciples went away again to their own homes.

a. This is the same Peter who told Jesus He would not let Him be crucified. **Matt 16**

b. They were disappointed at the empty tomb not excited with anticipation.

3. The Apostles would not even believe Mary's eye witness account of the resurrection.

a. **John 20: 18** – Mary Magdalene came, announcing to the disciples, "I have **S#26.** seen the Lord," and that He had said these things to her. **19** So when it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews.

b. They obviously did not believe the testimony of Mary.

c. In the Jewish system the testimony of a woman was worthless. *Jesus chose Mary*

4. The Apostle Thomas would not even accept the testimony of many.

a. **John 20: 25** – So the other disciples were saying to him, "We have seen the **S#27.** Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

b. This is the Apostle who insisted that they go die with Jesus in

John 11: 16 – Therefore Thomas, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, so that we may die with Him."

c. **Thus**, Thomas had seen the raising of Lazarus.

B. All of these believed after having seen the resurrection .. they no longer doubted.

1. Mary clung to Jesus.

2. The disciple eagerly told Thomas.

3. Thomas worshipped.

C. After His resurrection Jesus spent 40 days building the faith of His disciples.

1. **Acts 1: 3** – To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by **S#28.** many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.

2. At His first appearing after His resurrection Jesus commanded was evangelism.
John 20: 20 – "Peace be with you." 20 And when He had said this, He showed **S#29.** them both His hands and His side. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord. 21 So Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you."
3. They could have no doubts b/c were sent out as witnesses of His resurrection.
 - a. **Acts 1: 8** – but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon **S#30.** you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."
 - b. **Acts 1: 21** – "Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have accompanied **S31.** us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us — 22 beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us — one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection."

D. The resurrection was the backbone of Apostolic preaching.

1. **Acts 2** ... Peter preached the death, burial and resurrection
2. **Acts 4** ... Peter and John preached the resurrection
3. **Acts 17** ... Paul preached the resurrection in Athens
4. **Acts 24** ... Paul proclaimed the resurrection to the Jews
6. **Acts 25** ... Paul preached the resurrection to king Agrippa.

E. The bodily resurrection is a cardinal doctrine of Christianity.

1. **Rom. 1: 4** ... It is the consummate proof of the deity of Jesus.
2. **I Cor. 15: 12-14** ... If there is no resurrection there is no forgiveness for sins.
3. **Rom. 6: 5** ... Our hope of resurrection is directly linked to the resurrection of Jesus.

CONCLUSION : Our constant prayer should be :

Phil. 3: 8 – More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing **S32.** value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

INVITATION : Do you know Christ ? Are you waiting for the resurrection ? **S33.**

S#34. ... Communion slide

Lesson Text :**John 20: 1-29**

1 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already taken away from the tomb. **2** So she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, " They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him." **3** So Peter and the other disciple went forth, and they were going to the tomb. **4** The two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter and came to the tomb first; **5** and stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings lying there; but he did not go in. **6** And so Simon Peter also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he saw the linen wrappings lying there, **7** and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself. **8** So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb then also entered, and he saw and believed. **9** For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. **10** So the disciples went away again to their own homes.

11 But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping; and so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb; **12** and she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying. **13** And they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." **14** When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. **15** Jesus said to her, " Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, "Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away." **16** Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (which means, Teacher). **17** Jesus said to her, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'" **18** Mary Magdalene came, announcing to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and that He had said these things to her.

19 So when it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." **20** And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord. **21** So Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you." **22** And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. **23** "If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained."

24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. **25** So the other disciples were saying to him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

26 After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you." **27** Then He said to Thomas, " Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing." **28** Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" **29** Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed."