

# Easter is about WHAT

## Easter Bumper Video

Happy Easter! Welcome to Redemption Church. We are coming to you from Plano Tx and we have good news for you. Jesus Christ is alive.

My name is Chris Fluitt and I am glad to share this time with you.

We sometimes take for granted that people understand *what* Easter is all about. Today I want to talk to you about the what.

Easter is about WHAT

Good reporting is the who, what, when, where, and why. You could spend immeasurable time studying the journalistic reporting of the final week of Jesus' life. All the "who's" of that final week... There is great debate over the "when"... When exactly was the "high Sabbath" and when exactly was Jesus crucified. Archeologist have tried to search out the "where"... where is the spot known as Golgotha/Calvary... and "where" is the tomb?

And then there is the all-important why. I am not sure we have really exhausted all the "why" of the final week of Jesus' life. There is so much depth in this story. I have found that all my study just leads me to more need for study. Can you relate?

Today in an interest of time I would like to focus on the "what."

## What happened?

What did Jesus do? What did Jesus go through? What did Jesus say?

## The Last Supper

Jesus spent an evening with his 12 disciples. This is called the last supper. He shared time with them and even sang a hymn with them. He knelt before them and washed the feet of every disciple... even the one named Judas who Jesus knew would betray him.

It was here at this meal that Jesus shared bread & wine. He told them the bread was His body and the wine was His blood and that we should do this same act in remembrance of Him. We refer to this act as communion and we still partake of his body & blood in remembrance.

Judas the betrayer leaves to go do his evil deed. Jesus & his 11 remaining disciples leave the supper table and go a place called the mount of Olives. Here, Jesus reveals that "this very night" He will be

taken and that all of his disciples will scatter and even disown him. (Matthew 26:31-35) Peter took issue with this and said He would never do such a thing... Jesus told Peter that He would deny Jesus 3 times before the rooster crows.

They traveled further to a garden called Gethsemane that was at the foot of the Mount of Olives. Jesus went to pray and told his disciples to wait and watch with Him.

Matthew 26:38 (NIV2011) Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

Jesus was aware of WHAT was about to happen. What Jesus felt I don't think we could ever fully understand.

Matthew 26:39 (NIV2011) Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

Jesus prays that a cup would be taken from Him... but Jesus submits to the will of the Father.

Then Jesus returns to His disciples to find them all asleep...

Matthew 26:40 (NIV2011) Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter.

Matthew 26:42 (NIV2011) He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."

He prays a 2<sup>nd</sup> time that the cup be taken away, but again he submits to the will of the Father.

And again Jesus finds His disciples asleep, but this time He doesn't wake them. He lets them sleep and returns to pray a 3<sup>rd</sup> time. Matthew 26:44 says that his prayer was the same...

Let this cup be taken away... What is the cup?

## **A Cup of Wrath**

3 Prophecies tell us about the CUP of the Lord filled with wrath, judgment for wrongdoing. (Jeremiah 25:15, Isaiah 51:17, Revelation 14:9-10)

Back at the last supper Jesus offered the cup of his relationship to his followers... He called it the cup of the new covenant... but now in the garden of Gethsemane a cup is being offered to Jesus that He prays 3 times for it to be taken away. This is the cup of wrath & judgment and Jesus surrendered to the Father's will and said "nevertheless your will be done."

Once Jesus had completely surrendered, the hour had come.

Matthew 26:45-46 (NIV2011) Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

Matthew 26:47 (NIV2011) While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people.

They took Jesus and all of his followers scattered, just like Jesus said.

## **Betrayed**

Jesus was betrayed by Judas. Sold for 30 pieces of silver, just as the prophet Zechariah had said. (Zech 11:12-13)

Jesus was taken to a series of illegal court hearings. False witnesses were called to spread lies about Jesus in a court hearing held in the cover of night. His very countrymen were betraying Jesus.

And hanging near the Sanhedrin court was Peter. 3 times Peter was recognized as a follower of Jesus and 3 times Peter denied even knowing Jesus Christ. Upon the 3<sup>rd</sup> denial scripture says that a rooster crowed and Peter remembered what Jesus had said... He had disowned Jesus and began to weep bitterly. Even those closest to Jesus betrayed Him.

## **Sentenced to death**

His own countrymen had sentenced Jesus to death.

Isaiah 53:3 (NIV2011) He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one

from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

Although the Jews sentenced Jesus to death, they did not have the political power to carry out the execution. They had to ask Roman authority to carry out their dirty work, and for this they brought Jesus before the Governor Pontius Pilate.

Pontius saw through the schemes of the Sanhedrin...

Matthew 27:18 (NIV2011) For he knew it was out of self-interest that they had handed Jesus over to him.

Here is what Pilate thought of Jesus.

Luke 23:4 (NIV2011) Then Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd, "I find no basis for a charge against this man."

The Sanhedrin stirred up the crowd and Pilate saw this was going to be a lot of trouble for him, so He asks this important question.

Matthew 27:22 (NIV2011) "What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" Pilate asked. They all answered, "Crucify him!"

Matthew 27:23 (NIV2011) "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!"

This was a blood thirsty crowd, and this pagan man, Pilate, sensed something about Jesus. He attempts to not carry out the death sentence... instead of killing Jesus perhaps I'll just have him severally punished and then release him.

Luke 23:16 (NIV2011) Therefore, I will punish him and then release him."

## **Jesus punished**

The Roman guard were excellent punishers. They knew how to publicly punish someone so harshly for 2 reasons.

#1 Anyone who witnessed the punishment would make sure to never step out of line and receive that punishment.

#2 To gain an admission of guilt from the accused.

During a flogging, a victim was tied to a post, leaving his back entirely exposed and stretched. The Romans used a whip, called a flagellum which consisted of small pieces of bone and metal attached to a number of leather strands. The number of strikes is not recorded in the gospels. The number of blows in Jewish law was set in Deuteronomy 25:3 at forty, but later reduced to 39 to prevent excessive blows by a counting error. (Holmans). The victim often died from the beating. (39 hits were believed to bring the criminal to "one from death".) Roman law did not put any limits on the number of blows given. (McDowell)

During the flogging, the skin was stripped from the back, exposing a bloody mass of muscle and bone. Extreme blood loss occurred from this beating, weakening the victim. perhaps to the point of being unconscious. The Roman soldiers where skilled in the art of flogging... Each strike would be harder & harder to gain that admission of guilt.

All Jesus had to do to get them to stop was to speak out an admission of guilt. How tempting it had to have been to do something in order to make the pain stop.

Isaiah 53:7 (NIV2011) He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

## **Jesus ridiculed**

At the hands of these gentile Roman soldiers Jesus was ridiculed in cruel ways.

John 19:2-3 (NIV2011) The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe and went up to him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they slapped him in the face.

They took thorns and fashioned a crown. They jammed this crown down on the head of Jesus. They laughed at his pain and mocked his kingship.

Does anyone remember where thorns come from in scripture? In Genesis 3 Adam is told that because of his sin thorns and thistles will be produced in his fields. (Genesis 3:18) Jesus is crowned with the sin of Adam.

He is mocked with a purple robe which symbolized royalty. They called Jesus king of the Jews and slapped him in the face.

Remember that Pilate had Jesus beaten in order to save him from the death sentence...

John 19:4-6 (NIV2011) Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him."  
When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!" But Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him."

This crowd wanted the blood of Jesus.

Matthew 27:24-25 (NIV2011) When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!" All the people answered, "His blood is on us and on our children!"

## **What happened?**

These are just some of the things that happened before he was sentenced to death.

Jesus was being executed by the Roman government, and they were known for their most cruel form of execution – The Crucifixion.

The Jews cried out for Jesus to be crucified.

## **Jesus Crucified**

Jesus was forced to carry the cross beam of the cross to the sight of the execution – a hill called Calvary/Golgotha.

Having been nearly beaten to death Jesus did not have strength to carry the cross beam all the way to the site. So a man was pulled from the crowd to complete the journey. We are told that man's name was Simon of Cyrene.

Once they had reached the site, they assembled the cross and laid Jesus upon. There they took large spikes.

## Spikes

These spikes were large. Archeologists estimate they were anywhere from 3 to 7 inches long and around a half inch in diameter.

And you must know what they did with these spikes. They hammered these spikes through his hands and feet, hanging him on the cross.

The same hands that broke the bread that fed the multitude, healed the blind man, that motioned his disciples to follow him... those hands were brutally pierced.

The same hands that walked in peace, traveled among the outcast, and carried the news of God's love... those hands were mutilated by the spikes blow.

Jesus was pierced just like the prophet said.

Zechariah 12:10 (NIV2011) "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son."

## Jesus Crucified

So much happened upon that cross... So many prophecies fulfilled upon that cross. A thief received and a thief rejected Christ upon that cross. A Roman soldier confessed that Jesus surely was the Christ as he saw him hanging on the cross. Mary lost a son but gained a new son upon that cross. Jesus prayed for us "Father forgive them..." upon that cross.

There suspended between heaven & earth... as He had said "If I be lifted up I will draw all men to me."

There upon that cross so much happened, but ultimately Jesus died upon that cross.

## Jesus died

That is *what* happened.

He cried "it is finished..." He said "Father into your hands I commit my Spirit" and he breathed His last.

He died.

## Jesus buried

2 men who were members of the Sanhedrin court took His body. These men, Nicodemus & Joseph of Arimathea prepared his body for burial. We don't know much more about these men, but they honored Jesus and no doubt thought highly of Him. They saved the body of Jesus from being thrown in a ditch, and instead Joseph had Jesus buried in a tomb.

The tomb was a cave and it had a large stone for a door. It was a stone so large that it would have taken several strong men to roll the stone from the entry way.

The high priest, head of the Sanhedrin, went to Pontius Pilate and told him that the Sanhedrin feared the body of Jesus would be taken by his followers. So Pilate put roman guard on the tomb of a dead man. The Roman soldiers guarded him day and night.

For 3 days Jesus laid buried in a tomb. But what happened next is shocking.

Mark 16:2-6 (NIV2011) Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.

## Jesus Rose

He appeared first to a woman with a sordid past. She had been possessed with 7 demons (Mark 16:9). Jesus appears to her and calls her by name.

Mary tells the disciples. Peter & John run to the tomb and find it empty.

Jesus appears to the disciples later in a room. He walks right through the wall and they see Jesus alive & well.

Easter is about what. This is what happened.



## What happened?

This is what happened. It is written down in 4 gospels. It was and is preached throughout the world. Many aspects of WHAT happened are verified by historians who wrote outside of scripture.

Easter is about WHAT HAPPENED, but that is not the only what of Easter.

Pontius Pilate asked this question.

Matthew 27:22 (NIV2011) “What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?” Pilate asked...

## What will you do with Jesus?

You need to know what happened, but you must also answer the question “WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH JESUS THE CHRIST?”

Will you worship or will you turn and walk away?

Will you confess your sin or will you leave unchanged?

Will you give your life to Jesus or will you remain the lord of your own life?

What will you do?

Because WHAT I told you today is true.. it means a LIVING Jesus is in the room right now. What are you going to do with that?

You walked in here with problems, but there is a LIVING Jesus in the room who has the power over all problems, death, hell, and the grave. What are going to do with that?

The power of this story is found in what you will do with Jesus the Messiah.