

ON WHICH SIDE OF EASTER ARE YOU?

Luke 24:36-53 John 20:19-21

Introduction: Looking back through history at the lives of Jesus' disciples, how they lived and how they died, we can't help but be impressed. They preached everywhere they went, got into trouble, went to jail and all but one put to death. They were deeply involved in getting the Church started of which we are a part today. Jesus was put to death on a cross between two other men, dying as a common criminal, so thought everyone who witnessed His death. However the cross was where God was able to take the sins of all mankind and put them on His own Son, Jesus and when Jesus died, His death was accepted by God as payment for all the sins of mankind. Jesus was then buried but upon the third day He was raised to life again and after He ascended back to His heavenly Father, the Holy Spirit was sent to get Jesus' Church established. Before the resurrection everyone had one outlook but after Jesus' resurrection their outlook changed. On which side of "Easter" are you right now? Before or After?

I. BEFORE EASTER

1. Jesus' 11 disciples were despairing, humiliated, trembling and broken hearted.
 - They didn't understand the events. They watched Jesus die, saw Him taken down and placed in a tomb. They went away in grief.
2. They grieved at the tragic rejection of Jesus. They grieved at His death and were bewildered.
3. If Jesus were really the Son of God, then why/how this? He had failed. Death and Satan had won. The promised Kingdom was over. Now they were objects of scorn themselves.
4. Their world had ended. Their life was over. Jesus had promised so much. His words were so fine. His deeds so gracious. Now He is dead.
 - They were stuck there, deluded, frightened fools and in great danger.
5. There had really been no forgiveness of sins. There was no real eternal life, no mansion being prepared for them. There was no escape from death.
6. It was back to sacrifices, back to keeping holy days, back to the feasts, back to keeping the Law, back to a world of partial light, back to a world of no hope.

II. AFTER EASTER

1. Go back a week, after the crucifixion and burial of Jesus. Windows are open, doors are unlocked, laughter and singing is being heard. Words, lessons are being given.
2. Almost everything in the world of the followers of Jesus had changed, all was different, something wonderful had happened. Everyone had changed.

3. IF you have given up all hope of solving your particular problem,
 - If your frustrations have made you feel life has no meaning..
 - If the world has gotten so bad for you that you feel God is indifferent or far away..
 - If you have begun to question God,
 - Then you are living on the wrong side of Easter!
4. Why should 11 cowards, locked in a room for fear, suddenly go out and begin to preach to those could make them look like bigger fools?
 - Why did they go out and eventually die as martyrs for Jesus?
5. Two followers of Jesus were walking home after Jesus had been crucified and buried and their hearts were just crushed. A stranger joined their walk and began to talk with them and mentioned scripture. Their eyes were opened, it was Jesus! Their hearts burned within and they hurried back to tell the others.
6. EASTER HAD JUST HAPPENED, JESUS HAD RISEN and they walked and talked with Him.
7. Fears disappeared, courage created, clouded understanding now clear, faith and hope revived and the followers of Jesus began to worship Him openly and preach about the risen Christ.
8. Look at the Cross. Jesus' tormented body, seemingly defeated, His soul deserted Him. What do you hear from Him? "I was wrong. I'm sorry I asked you to follow me? Go to your homes and forget all about me?" NO!
 - *"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit..."* and then the shout from Jesus"
"Tetelestai...!" IT IS FINISHED !

CONCLUSION: By living on this side of Easter you can:

1. Become a new creation by being born again.
2. No longer be under the power of Satan.
3. Walk in the light and knowledge of God.
4. No longer fear death or the grave.
5. Have Eternal Life.
6. Have a new everlasting, eternal body.
7. Rule with Jesus Christ some day.
8. Easter changed the lives of the followers of Jesus and then the world.
9. On which side of Easter are you living?