**EASTER MESSAGE**

March 27, 2016

1. We refer to this day as Easter, but the word Easter is not found in any of the most accepted translations of the Bible except for the KJV and only once there:

***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 to bring him forth to the people.***

The word comes from the Greek word **πάσχα – pascha,** an annual Israelite festival commemorating Israel’s exodus from Egypt, the Passover

"Easter" originally had no association with Jesus Christ or Christianity. "Easter" has its roots in paganism. The name "Easter" comes from "Eastre" (a.k.a. Eostre), a name for a pagan goddess of spring. There are several derivations of the name in various ancient cultures and languages. The Easter celebration was merged into Christianity when Christian missionaries came into contact with these pagan tribes and their celebrations, they decided to allow the celebrations to continue.

2. The gospels go into much more detail as it covers the Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection.

Matthew used 25 chapters to cover the birth of Christ and His 3 year ministry and 3 chapters to cover Christ’s last six weeks. It is as if time slowed down during this most critical time when Satan pulled out all the stops to achieve victory in the angelic conflict.

John uses 24 chapters to cover Christ’s life and the last 4 are dedicated to His last six weeks. This is because the last weeks of Christ culminated in the completion of His mission and the fulfillment of God’s plan and purpose for the incarnation.

3. **GARDEN of GETHSEMANE.** (the name means “oil press”)

a. Jesus told the disciples to pray at this critical time. They all fell asleep.

b. ***Mark 14:32-42*** says that they fell asleep 3 times even after Jesus had told them it was important for them to stay awake and pray.

c. Jesus prayed 3 times:

***Matthew 26:39 "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will."***

d. This is where Judas led the mob to arrest Him.

4. **CHRIST’S ARREST**

a. “Jewish leaders sent soldiers and guards out in the middle of the night to arrest an innocent man without a warrant in order to have Him stand trial that very night. In doing so, they were breaking not only God’s natural laws but their own laws as well. Night trials were illegal as were nighttime arrests.”

b. Jesus indicated his arrest was unjust when He told His disciples: ***Matt. 26:45 “See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.”***

c. Read ***John 18:2-11***

* Jesus did not scold Peter for having a military sword even though it was against Roman law for Jews to possess one.
* “Under Roman law, citizens had a right to carry personal arms... [However], Roman law forbade Jews and other subject people to carry swords under penalty of death. Apparently, the apostles of Jesus violated the law by carrying a pair of swords.”
* Furthermore, Jesus did not order Peter to give up his sword but to simply put it back into its scabbard, ***Matt. 26:52.***
* Jesus did not reprimand Peter because Peter was obeying the Scriptures that required Jews to defend the innocent. (NET) ***Lev.19:16***, teaches that you must not stand idly by when your neighbor’s life is in jeopardy.
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David B. Kopel, *The Human Right Of Self-Defense*, pg. 111

* Since Jesus is perfectly righteous, He would never protect someone who was guilty of a serious crime from being punished. As deity, He cannot show partiality, and if Peter were guilty, Jesus would have been obligated to turn him over to the soldiers to be punished or executed.
* There is no way that Jesus would be just in taking the side of evil men who were breaking the law by oppressing someone innocent. By doing so, He would be condoning persecution and condemning self-defense.
* Most people rightfully understand the phrase, “Those who live by the sword will die by the sword” meaning that criminals who use weapons to commit a crime will die a violent death either by being apprehended or by capital punishment .
* However, they believe when Jesus told Peter in Matt. 26:52 “Those who take up the sword will also perish by the sword”, it was directed toward Peter for cutting off Malchus’ ear. But Jesus was not directing it to Peter but to the armed criminals who came to apprehend Him unlawfully.

d. ***Luke 22:52-53* Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders who had come against Him, "Have you come out with swords and clubs as you would against a robber? 53) "While I was with you daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on Me; but this hour and the power of darkness are yours."**

***Matthew 26:55-56* At that time Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me as you would against a robber? Every day I used to sit in the temple teaching and you did not seize Me. 56) "But all this has taken place to fulfill the Scriptures of the prophets." Then all the disciples left Him and fled.**

5.  **THE SIX UNLAWFUL TRIALS OF CHRIST**

Trial 1: *John 18:12-14 This was a preliminary hearing before Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest at that time.*

Trial 2: *Matt. 26:57-67 Before Caiaphas. False witnesses were presented and Jesus was spat upon, slapped, and beaten. (Trials 1 & 2 were held at night)*

Trial 3: *Luke 22:66-71 Before the Sanhedrin. They passed Him off to Pilate…*

Trial 4: *John 18:28-38 Pilate could find no guilt in Him. Then He was sent to Herod.*

Trial 5: *Luke 23:6-11 Christ remained silent before Herod who wanted to see tricks. He was then back to Pilate.*

Trial 6: *John 18:39-19:16, and Matt. 27:11-26 Pilate released Barabbas, washed his hands, had Jesus scourged and then ordered that He be crucified.*

6. **JESUS TURNED OVER TO ROMAN SOLDIERS**

So Pilate turned the Lamb of God over to the Roman soldiers (Matt. 27:27-31).

* He was stripped naked
* They put a robe on him and a crown of thorns
* They gave Him a reed for a king’s staff
* He was beaten on His head with the reed
* They knelled before Him and mocked Him
* They spat on Him
* They scourged Him (***John 19:1***)
* Then they led Him off to crucify Him

**Christ's resurrection: Historical fact**

***Jerry Newcombe Exclusive****: tells of skeptics who studied evidence & converted to faith; 3-31-14*

*Have you ever heard of Theudas? How about Judas of Galilee? They were would-be messiahs in the first century. How many followers do these men have today? Zero, zip, nada.*

*Of course, we’ve all heard of Jesus Christ. One-third of humanity professes to believe in Him. But I guarantee you we would never have heard of Him had He not risen from the dead.*

*Whoever you are, whatever you believe, you have a vested interest in looking into the issue of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. There are millions today who simply dismiss the message of Christianity out of hand and don’t realize the eternal peril they are in by doing so.*

*On the first Easter, the tomb of Jesus was empty. That is a historical fact. Furthermore, the original skeptics of the resurrection were the disciples themselves. The only explanation for their turn from cowering in fear to boldly proclaiming Christ, though it cost virtually all of them their lives, was that they had encountered the risen Jesus.*

*The late Chuck Colson worked in the Nixon White House. He said: Compare the Watergate scandal with the resurrection. With Watergate, there was a human conspiracy; but once it began to break, it collapsed completely. And 80 men went to jail, Colson being one of them. But nothing (not even torture, nor martyrdom) could stop the disciples who proclaimed the resurrection of Jesus.*

*Honest skeptics who have examined the evidence have eventually become believers. Repeatedly.*

* *Gen. Lew Wallace (1827-1905) was an unbeliever and set out to disprove the faith he later came to embrace and help to promote. His pro-Christian book, “Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ,” became the basis for the 1959 film of the year.*
* *One of the best-known defenders of the Christian faith of today is Josh McDowell, but as a young college student, he was very skeptical about the historicity of Christianity. In fact, he spent some time on study leave at the British Museum specifically to refute the faith.*

*After a few weeks of intense study, he realized how wrong he was. He realized that the Christian faith is based on the facts of history, available for anyone open-minded enough to discover.*

*He became a dedicated believer, has written many books, including the best-selling, “Evidence That Demands a Verdict,” and has proclaimed Christ all over the world. Josh McDowell said of the resurrection of Jesus: “It’s the most fantastic fact of history.”*

* *C. S. Lewis (1898-1963) was one of the greatest Christian writers of the 20th century. He taught at Oxford and at Cambridge University. But as a young man, he had been an atheist, until he examined Christianity more closely. He describes himself in “Surprised by Joy” as “the most dejected, reluctant convert in all of England … drug into the kingdom kicking, struggling, resentful, and darting [my] eyes in every direction for a chance of escape.”*
* *Lee Strobel used to be the legal affairs editor of the Chicago Tribune. He graduated Yale Law School and was no intellectual slouch. He also was a confirmed skeptic. But when his wife started attending church, he decided to go on a quest: to use his investigative skills to examine the claims of Christianity, including the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.*

*Strobel was honest enough to follow where the evidence would lead him. He became a Christian and now is a leading apologist. He has now written such classics as “The Case for Christ” and “The Case for Faith.”*

* *Author Dr. Mike Licona, professor at Houston Baptist University, told me that he had serious doubts as a young man: “So, I resolved to do a thorough investigation and go where the evidence led. After years of research, the conclusion was inescapable that Jesus had risen from the dead, and the Christian gospel turns out being true.”*

*Licona’s key professor was Dr. Gary Habermas of Liberty University. Habermas is one of the greatest scholars on the resurrection alive. He tells me: “I struggled through many years of religious doubt, for some 10 years straight and then more sporadically for many more years beyond that. It dominated my thinking during those years.”*

*He concludes: “Having studied other philosophies and world religions along the way, at one point I thought I was becoming a Buddhist. Throughout my entire search for answers, nothing quieted my toughest questions more thoroughly that did my detailed study of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This event became my anchor and foundation for faith ever since.”*

*Skeptics are welcome to examine the evidence for themselves. He is risen indeed*

*Read more at:* [***http://www.wnd.com/2015/03/christs-resurrection-historical-fact/#ePyjyEcVwR2pJZqc.99***](http://www.wnd.com/2015/03/christs-resurrection-historical-fact/#ePyjyEcVwR2pJZqc.99)