



PO Box 703929  
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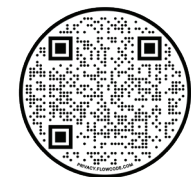
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# EVAN TELL'S TOOLBOX

SPRING 2024

## SHARING THE CELEBRATION OF *Easter*

### Sharing Easter in Three Words

by DR. LARRY MOYER

The thrust of the entire Bible can be summarized in three words: **Jesus saves sinners.** Let's consider that statement one word at a time starting with sinners.

#### SINNERS

A poll taken in the U.S. included these questions: Do you think you're going to heaven? Do you think your friends are? Most people felt they had a good chance of going to heaven. Interestingly, most people also felt their friends would not make it! By nature, we are prideful. We believe that our good deeds outweigh our bad. But God's standard is not goodness. It is perfection. To enter heaven and live forever with God, we must be as perfect as He is perfect (Matt. 5:48).

Measured by that standard, whether we have sinned once or a thousand times, we have all fallen short. The Bible declares, *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God* (Rom. 3:23).

What is the consequence of falling short of God's standard of perfection? The Scriptures declare, *The wages of sin is death* (Rom. 6:23). That means because we have sinned, the punishment we deserve is to be separated from God forever.

CONTINUED INSIDE ►

# SHARING THE CELEBRATION OF *Easter*

## JESUS

How can one sentenced to death escape such punishment? Only if someone is willing to exchange places and be their substitute. But that someone must be perfect. A sinner cannot die for a sinner any more than one criminal can take another criminal's punishment.

The only One who met the requirement of perfection was Jesus Christ, who the Bible says, *knew no sin* (2 Cor. 5:21). He took our place by dying on a cross two thousand years ago. On the cross, He took the punishment you and I deserved. *God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us* (Rom. 5:8).

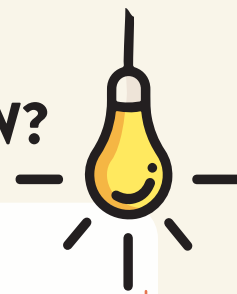
Jesus did what our good works could never do. **We are saved by Christ's dying, not by our doing.** Three days after His death, Christ came back to life. It is the resurrection of Christ that Easter morning celebrates. By rising from the grave on the third day, He proved He had conquered sin and death. Easter declares to the world that Christ died for our sins and rose the third day (1 Cor. 15:3-5).

## SAVES

Thanks to what Christ did on the cross, salvation from our sin is available. We can be saved through faith in Jesus Christ: *For by grace* (underserved favor) *you have been saved* (delivered from sin's penalty) *through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast* (Eph. 2:8-9).

The Easter message of the Bible is not difficult to understand. It can be captured in just three words: Jesus saves sinners. It's just as easy to share as well. Who can you share the message with this Easter season?

## DID YOU KNOW?



### THE REAL ORIGIN OF THE WORD "EASTER"

This time of year, the inaccurate statement that our word for Easter comes from Pagan origins (Eostre) begins to rear its head. However, for quite some time now, the scholarly consensus has been that the word "Easter" has enjoyed an "always-Christian" origin: The early Latin name for the week of Easter was *hebdomada alba* or "white week," referring to the white robes of those who had been newly baptized. German protestants, speaking Old High German, translated *Alba* to *Ostarun* (which is actually a plural form of the word). From *Ostarun* we get the German *Ostern* and the English *Easter*.

### ACTION STEP: JUST TALK ABOUT JESUS

When it comes to evangelism, we tend to think ourselves out of conversations. We spend so much time anticipating responses, thinking through potential questions, and imagining outcomes, that we never approach the topic. But here's the thing. It's been shown time and time again that unbelievers are more surprised at our silence than they are offended at our message. So, what's the solution? We need to be better about simply talking about Jesus. Bring Him into your everyday stories; share how He has moved in your life; testify about what He has accomplished. Just talk about Jesus as the Holy Spirit prompts you and watch how God moves in your conversations!

# A REASONABLE RESURRECTION

by BROCK ANDERSON



The tomb is empty. It is a fact that has been declared and defended by the most seasoned historians and archaeologists from Christian and non-Christian backgrounds for the past two thousand years. But have you ever seen the non-Christian claims for why the tomb was empty? Here are the best of the best.

### THE DISCIPLES STOLE THE BODY AND/OR MADE IT ALL UP

There is one devastating question that prevents it from being a logical option: what would have been the benefit? We know from history that first century followers of Christ, including the disciples, were persecuted and martyred in horrendous ways. We also know that no one willingly dies for what they know to be a lie. These truths alone seal the coffin for this claim. But if more is needed, consider this: Christianity turned Roman and Jewish culture upside down. Thousands upon thousands abandoned tightly held beliefs to enter a life of mockery and severe persecution through a strategy of "take my word for it?"

### JESUS SURVIVED THE CRUCIFIXION

The basic premise here is that Jesus suffered on the cross, but somehow survived. This theory never made much traction because thousands were crucified in Rome, and the death rate was 100% (the resurrection rate was only one). However, to add insult to injury, in 1986, the Journal of the American Medical Association put the theory to bed. Their findings on the process of crucifixion are brutal and hard to read, but the conclusion of the scientists was that any claim that Jesus did not die on the cross is at odds with modern medical knowledge.

### THE DISCIPLES HALLUCINATED THE EVENT

Much like the "Jesus survived" theory, this is at odds with all modern medical and psychological knowledge – namely that hallucinations, like dreams, are private/individual events. A person in a group may hallucinate and try to convince others, but even then, the group never agrees on exactly what they are supposed to be seeing. Such is not the case with the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus. He appeared to several groups and more than 500 people in total according to 1 Corinthians 15:5. They all saw exactly the same thing: Our Risen King.

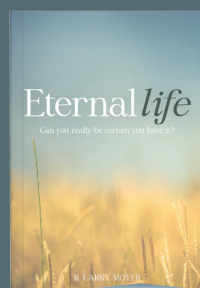
What's the benefit of knowing things like this? Facts like these can be very helpful in the process of pre-evangelism with unbelievers. They can help evoke a response of "I've never considered that" or "I never knew that fact." Suddenly, someone disinterested in the gospel is all ears, and we have the opportunity to share the best news ever! These facts also provide added confidence for us as believers – a reminder that the resurrection isn't just a belief we hold, but a historical fact for all to behold.

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## NOTE

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