

Why Easter?

Discover the life changing power of the Easter story

by

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This short course is a brief introduction to the
Christian faith.

Inside you will find the following lessons:

1. Christ died for our sins
2. According to the Scriptures
3. He was buried and He rose again the third day

1 Corinthians chapter 15 verses 3 and 4

Chapter 1

Christ died for our sins

Over the past year or so I have noticed a lot more use of the term “fake news”. There seems to be an ever-increasing number of people trying to persuade us to believe their version of the truth. Some of these back up their views with evidence or rational argument; others less so. Many of these people, who appear to be more or less equally credible, say completely opposite things making it hard to know who to believe.

One of the consequences of this in this age of “fake news” is that people think about the Bible in the same way. It’s just another of these “fake news” stories that people put forward. It might work for some people, but no one should claim it’s true and relevant for everyone. It might be “your truth” – OK for you if it helps – but it’s not “**the truth**” – relevant and crucial for all people whoever they are.

It might be “your truth”... but it’s not “**the truth**”

The problem with this is that the Bible’s claims do not line up with it. One of the writers of the Bible, the apostle Paul, once summed up for some believers in Corinth the core of the Christian message. He put it like this:

“Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures”

Paul said that if anyone holds fast to this truth then they would be saved. For Paul this was the only way that anyone could be right with God – if they accepted that Jesus had died in their place; that Jesus had suffered death on a cross because of wrong things they had done.

Christ died for **our sins**. There are some challenging implications of this simple statement of the Christian message by the apostle Paul. The first implication is that we have sinned. If the Bible’s message is true, then it means we have all done wrong things and sinned against God.

That's not a message I like to hear because it rattles my pride – but deep down I know it's true! I do do things that are wrong. I do fail to do good things I know I should. I have sinned.

... only the death of His Son ... could make me right with God again.

Christ **died** for our sins. The second implication is that God takes my sin so seriously that only the death of His Son, Jesus Christ, could make me right with God again. Instinctively we don't like that. Perhaps for most of us, we would rather admit we've done things wrong but assume

God can 'sort of' turn a blind eye and accept that we've been mainly decent people. Isn't that good enough? Well, the Bible says no! God takes sin so seriously that Jesus had to die for us to have a hope of forgiveness.

But the third implication is great! Paul says that Christ died **for our sins**. That means God cares enough about you and me, that He made a way for us to be spared the right consequences of our sins. Jesus died in our place, and that's the great news that Christians around the world are celebrating this Easter.

Do you see that this can't just be "my truth" , OK for me but not for others? It's either true or it's not. Either Jesus died for my sins or He didn't. So, what do you think? Will you join Paul, and countless Christians around the world in gladly accepting that we have done wrong but that Jesus died for our sins? You must decide for yourself whether the Bible is just more fake news or whether in fact it is life changing truth from God Himself. That's the experience of millions of Christians both today and throughout the last 2000 years, and I pray it would be your experience this Easter.

So, what do you think ... this can't just be "my truth"?



Chapter 2

According to the Scriptures

There have been lots of predictions in the past few years haven't there? We've had predictions about what will happen to the UK economy after Brexit and we've had predictions about the impact of COVID 19. Some have turned out to be pretty accurate, but some have not.

That is the nature of trying to tell what will happen in the future with very limited information and a changing world. It is not easy to predict what will happen. So, it's not that the COVID scientists are really bad at their jobs. They're just having to make fast assessments from imperfect data. It shouldn't be a surprise to us that some of their forecasts are pretty good whilst others are not.

It might surprise you to learn that the Bible also makes quite a lot of predictions. The Old Testament in the Bible was written hundreds of

*The Old Testament makes a number of prophecies about JesusThey **all** came true!*

years before Jesus was born. It makes a number of prophecies about Jesus. A prophet called Micah predicted that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. Isaiah said that a son would be born to a virgin, and would be called Immanuel which means God with us. Isaiah, as well as some of the Psalms describe graphically, details of the death of the Messiah, which all happened when Jesus died on the cross.

Here, I'm only scratching the surface of the Old Testament prophecies about Jesus, but this is the interesting point – they all came true. It wasn't that the Old Testament made so many predictions and just a few of them came true the way that some people seem to make predictions all the time and it's no surprise when occasionally they get it right. No! The predictions about Jesus **all** came true.

And it's not like all the predictions were really vague. If I predicted that

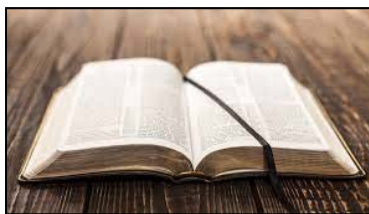
it's going to rain sometime over the next 6 months, you'd rightly not credit me with much insight. But the Old Testament's prophecies are so precise, and were fulfilled in detail. How could that be?

In the first chapter, we started to think about a verse in the Bible that the apostle Paul wrote describing the essence of Christian faith. You can read it for yourself in the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians. Paul writes, **"Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures"**. We thought about what it means that Jesus died for our sins. In this chapter, I just want to remind you again that the things that happened to Jesus were anticipated hundreds of years before He was even born. His death, and His resurrection were both written about in the Old Testament. And then they happened just as the Old Testament said they would.

I don't know if you've ever taken much time to read the Bible? One of the reasons I'm convinced it's true is this fact that so many things about Jesus were predicted long before He was born and actually happened. That can't have been by chance. And if these bits of the Bible are right, it makes sense to me that the bits that tell me about God are true. And so are the bits that tell me about my sinfulness. And so are the bits that tell me that God loved us enough to send His Son Jesus to save me.

So many things about Jesus were predicted long before He was born and actually happened.

So now I want to ask you whether you'd take the time to read the Bible and decide for yourself about its message. If you already have a Bible, why not read some of the Old Testament prophecies about Jesus? You could read Psalm 22 or Isaiah 53, and then read some of the New Testament gospel accounts of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Why not read it and discover for yourself that Jesus died for your sins, that Jesus loves you, and that Jesus wants to give to you new, eternal life?



Chapter 3

He was buried and He rose again the third day

In the first two chapters we have considered something that the apostle Paul wrote when he was trying to describe the key message of Christianity. He said:

“Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures”

We first talked a bit about the fact that Jesus died for our sins, and then the fact that the Bible is a remarkable book, describing in great detail what would happen to Jesus, many hundreds of years before He was even born. But in this chapter, I want to think about the last part of Paul’s statement.

“He rose again the third day”

Easter is the time of year when Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ – the fact that we believe He rose from the dead and is now alive in heaven, waiting for the day when He will come back again to take His people to heaven.

I could spend a lot of time trying to prove to you why I think it is perfectly reasonable to believe that Jesus really did die, and really did rise again from the dead. But you can find plenty of information about that in books or on the internet. What I want to do in this chapter is to point out the consequences of the resurrection.

You see in the same part of the Bible where Paul makes this clear statement of Christian truth that we’ve been thinking about, he also spends a lot of time describing what would happen if the resurrection was just made up.

If Jesus did not rise from the dead a Christian’s faith is empty.

Paul says that if Jesus did not rise from the dead a Christian's faith is empty. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, then all of us stand condemned because no one has taken the judgement our rebellion against God deserves.

But Paul goes further. He says if Christ did not rise from the dead, and Christians have no hope of heaven, then they are the most miserable people in the world – in fact they are laughable. They might as well just do what they like and live how they please - eat, drink and be merry. Christians who spend their lives for the good of others, or who suffer because they are Christians, as many still do today in some countries, are just wasting their lives. They might as well give up.

But this Easter, millions of Christians all over the world will be celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ. They believe that Jesus really did die for their sins, and really did rise again from the dead three days later. Are they all crazy? Are they all laughable and worthy only of your ridicule? Or are they onto something.

Have they come to see something wonderful and true in the Christian message?

*... everything hangs
on the resurrection...
Christians have hope
...and forgiveness*

For the apostle Paul, everything hangs on the resurrection. If Jesus really did die and rise again, then Christians have hope of heaven and really can know forgiveness of sins, and new life. But if Jesus did not rise again from the dead, Christianity has nothing worth having. So which is it?

I'm not here to twist your arm and try and force you to become a Christian. But I'd love you to read the Bible for yourself. If you'd like one, then we'd be happy to send you one, free of charge, if you email office@emmausuk.com. I think if you read for yourself about how Jesus died for your sins, and was buried and rose again then, like me, and like millions of Christians all over the world, you'd come to see that it really is true. Paul says that if you take God at His word, and believe these key truths – you can enjoy the same hope – life!



Exam questions - please fill in the online exam form found at the bottom of the courses page.

1. The Bible

- a) claims to be one version of the truth.
- b) is “fake News” as it is full of errors.
- c) is reliable and our only source of ultimate truth.

2. The author of the verse that forms the basis for the study was

- a) Paul.
- b) Peter.
- c) John.

3. What is the root cause of our reluctance to believe?

- a) Science.
- b) Pride.
- c) Credibility.

4. What is the second implication mentioned in the first chapter?

- a) We have all sinned.
- b) Only the death of His Son could make me right with God.
- c) The wages of sin is death.

5. Who predicted the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem?

- a) Isaiah.
- b) David.

c) Micah.

6. The meaning of the name Immanuel is

- a) God with us.
- b) Saviour.
- c) Christ the Lord.

7. Which of these chapters does not contain prophecies about the Messiah?

- a) Psalm 22.
- b) Daniel 6.
- c) Isaiah 53.

8. What do Christians celebrate at Easter?

- a) The birth of Jesus.
- b) The resurrection of Jesus.
- c) The ascension of Jesus.

9. What is the Christian faith without the resurrection?

- a) A comfort.
- b) A credible religion.
- c) Empty.

10. The death and resurrection of Jesus does not give the Christian

- a) a hope of Heaven.
- b) forgiveness of sins.

c) the promise of an easy life.

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What do you say?

What reasons are there for people not to believe the good news about Jesus?

Do you think that these are valid?

Once you have completed the questions please return this booklet for marking to:

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