

Matthew Mark Luke John
The Story of Easter

Jesus Enters Jerusalem

Jesus Eats His Last Supper

Jesus' Atonement

The Denial of Jesus

The Cross of Jesus

He Lives

Jesus Enters Jerusalem

Easter is upon us. The celebration, or the remembrance, of Jesus' resurrection from death. Rising to life from death. How can that be?

In the days up to the His resurrection, Jesus had quite a time. He entered Jerusalem to publicly claim his Sonship of God. He ate one last time with his disciples. He suffered inner pain in Gethsemane. He was betrayed, tried, and abused. He was hung on a cross and suffered physical pain and then death on Calvary. Then he appeared to Mary in the Garden, "Mary!"

Jesus came to Jerusalem to convey publicly what he had only suggested previously. That he was the Son of God. He came into Jerusalem on a donkey. Not a chariot. Not a flower-strewn float. But a donkey. People waved branches of leaves and shouted, "Hosannah." His time had come.

There are four versions of the details of that day of his entrance into Jerusalem. A version in the book of Mathew, one in Mark, one in Luke, and one in John. The versions are different.

Mathew reads, in summary, Jesus and his disciples came to Bethpage and Jesus sent two disciples to get a donkey and the donkey's colt (baby donkey). Jesus said that if anyone asks, "What are you doing taking the donkeys," to say, "It's for Jesus," and the person asking will say, "okay." The two disciples brought the donkey and the colt to Jesus. They put some of their clothes on the donkey's colt and Jesus sat on the colt. Many people put their clothes on the ground and waved branches and put the branches on the ground as Jesus came into Jerusalem. The crowd cried, "Hosannah," and when some asked, "Who is this?" the people answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth." Mathew wrote that 800 years earlier, a prophet wrote that the "King" will come meekly sitting on an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass."

Mark reads, Jesus and his disciples came to Bethpage and Bethany (No mention of Bethany by Mathew.) and Jesus sent two disciples to a nearby village and there they would find a colt. (No mention of the donkey.) And when someone asked, "Why are you taking the colt," they said what Jesus told them to say." (No specifics on what to say, unlike the version in Mathew.) and the person asking will say, "okay." The two disciples brought the colt to Jesus, put some of their clothes on the colt, and Jesus sat on the colt. Some people put their clothes on the ground and other put branches on the ground as Jesus rode the donkey into Jerusalem. The crowd cried, "Blessed." (No mention of others asking who it was.) And in the evening, Jesus and the disciples left Jerusalem and went back to Bethany.

Luke reads, Jesus and his disciples came to Bethpage and Bethany and Jesus sent two disciples to find the colt that no man had ever sat on and to bring it to him. Jesus said that if some asked why, to tell them Jesus needs it. The disciples put their clothes on the colt and Jesus sat on it. As Jesus rode into Jerusalem, the followers of Jesus cried, "Blessed." The Pharisees scolded the disciples for saying this. Jesus' reply was that if these people didn't cry out "Blessed" that stones would.

John reads, the people heard that Jesus was coming into Jerusalem, so they took palm branches and went to him crying, "Hosannah, blessed." Jesus found a donkey and sat on it. And this was prophesied 800 years earlier that the King would come sitting on a donkey's colt.

Each person's version is somewhat different. Some are specific, some are general. Some mention one thing. Some mention another. Perhaps each person remembered differently. Perhaps it was a difference in perception or what one person thought was important versus something else.

Do these differences matter? To the person looking for fault, this will be a fault. To the person doubting to begin with, this will add to doubt. But to the believer, these differences probably don't matter. It probably doesn't matter to the person wanting to live by faith whether it was the donkey or the donkey's baby. Or whether two disciples found the donkey or Jesus did.

I think what matters here isn't how the story happened, but that this happened. A man spoke of an event in some detail and wrote it down 800 years earlier. And 800 years later an event occurs as described:

The prophet Zechariah wrote: Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

As Easter approaches, my belief increases, my faith is strengthened, and my hope shines brighter in God, our Father, and in His Son, Jesus, who, in the next few days will do for me that which no one else could do, bring me irreplicable peace and joy...today, always, and forever.

Believe Easter

Jesus Eats His Last Supper

A couple of days had passed since Jesus made his entrance into Jerusalem on the donkey's colt. He was teaching his disciples. It was midday. It was also Passover, the time of year in April to remember when the 10th plague, the spirit of death, passed over the children of the children Israel who were under Pharaoh's rule in Egypt 1,300 years earlier.

There was also a man walking around Jerusalem carrying a pitcher of water. He had come from his house. He was the master of his house, so I assume he had a family. His house likely had several rooms, and it did have a room upstairs, an upper room.

After he filled his pitcher with water he walked back to his house. Two men followed him. They followed him back to his house. Once the man was in his house, the two men walked in and asked, "Jesus is here. Where could he have Passover?" Perhaps the man thought for a moment. Perhaps he knew of Jesus. Perhaps he was there when Jesus came into the city on the colt. He had his house. He had a room upstairs. Perhaps he was going to use it for Passover for his family, but perhaps he could offer it to Jesus.

The man took the two men up the stairs to the upper room. It was furnished and well-adorned. Perhaps the man said, "Will this room work for Jesus?" The two men said, "Yes," and then went about preparing the room for Passover for Jesus.

You see, earlier that day Peter and John, knowing it was Passover, came to Jesus and asked him where they would have the Passover meal. Jesus told them to go into the city. He told them they would find a man walking about with a pitcher of water, and that they should follow the man home. And Jesus told Peter and John that when they get to the man's house they should say, "Jesus told us to ask you where your guest chamber is and if we could have Passover there." And Jesus said that the man would show them his upper room and that is where they should prepare the Passover meal, which became the Last Supper. (Mark 14:12-15)

A few days before, Jesus told two disciples they would find a donkey and colt. And they did. Jesus told two disciples they would find a man with a pitcher of water. And they did. At the last supper Jesus told Judas that he would betray him. And he would. Jesus told Peter he would deny him. And he would.

And at the last supper Jesus said he loves us. And he does. He said he brings us joy. And he does. He said he would not leave us comfortless. And he doesn't. And he said he brings us peace. And he does. He said in this upper room, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it (your heart) be afraid."

Believe Easter

Jesus' Atonement

Having entered the city, and having had the last supper with the disciples, Jesus now has the pinnacle of all his or our experiences: his suffering in Gethsemane.

These 4 days before our Easter are not the same number of days as those that passed during Jesus' final days. Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem was days before the last supper. Something I didn't realize (one of four things I didn't realize) is that the last supper, Jesus' suffering in Gethsemane, and Judas' betrayal of Jesus did happen on the same day. It seems it all happened within hours of each other, perhaps in one evening's time.

Mathew reads that at the end of the last supper Jesus and the disciples sang a closing hymn then went to the Mount of Olives (perhaps a half mile's walk), and then walked to Gethsemane. Mark reads the same. Luke reads that after the last meal, Jesus went to where he was accustomed to going, the Mount of Olives. He doesn't mention Gethsemane. Perhaps because Gethsemane is a garden at the base of the Mount of Olives.

At the Mount of Olives is where Jesus told Peter that he would deny him. And (the second thing I didn't realize) is that it seems Judas was not there. He was not with the disciples. He was at the dinner (where Jesus told him he would betray him) but it seems he wasn't at the Mount of Olives nor in Gethsemane.

In just a moment, Judas will be with the soldiers to take Jesus. Which means, perhaps, that after dinner when they left the house to walk to the Mount of Olives, Judas took off. Mathew reads that after Jesus' Garden experience, he was talking with the disciples and "Judas came" with lots of people with swords. Mark reads, then "cometh Judas" with lots of people. Luke reads that a great multitude of people and Judas "went before" Jesus.

The third thing I didn't realize is that Judas' betrayal was, as Mathew and Mark read, "immediately" after Jesus' Garden experience. Luke even reads that while Jesus was talking with the disciples about them having slept, Judas shows up. What a night!

Now for the fourth thing I didn't realize. Jesus' experience in the Garden of Gethsemane was the central event of his and our lives: the atonement. But the word "atone," or "atonement," is not found or even referred to in Mathew, Mark, Luke, or John. If someone reads these books without any knowledge of the atonement, they, perhaps, would stop at "pass this cup from me," and wonder, "What is the cup? What's in the cup? Why does Jesus not want the cup?"

When I think of Jesus' suffering in Gethsemane and a cup, I immediately can feel how many cups I've filled needing Jesus to take from me. And he has. I am so grateful Jesus kept his cup to fill with what was, and will be, in my cups.

Believe Easter

The Denial of Jesus

The entrance to Jerusalem. The last supper. The Garden of Gethsemane. Then Judas betrayed Jesus in the Garden. Then Peter denied knowing Jesus. He denied him three times. How did that take place? There are a few versions. Who recognized Peter? Where were they? What did they say? How did Peter respond? And what about the cock crowing? When was it? How many times? And what did Peter do?

Peter's Denial #1

John reads: Peter stood by the door of the palace. A lady that managed door said, "You're one of Jesus' disciples." Peter replied, "I am not."

Luke reads: Peter sat by a fire and a lady said, "This man was with Jesus." Peter said, "No, I was not."

Mark reads: Peter sat with the servants and warmed himself by the fire. A lady said, "You were with Jesus." He said, "I don't know what you are talking about."

Cock crow #1: Then Peter went outside to the porch and heard a cock crow.

Mathew reads: Peter was sitting in the palace. A lady said, "You were with Jesus." Peter replied, "I don't know what you are saying."

Peter's Denial #2

John reads: Peter walked over to a fire the soldiers had made and warmed his hands. The soldiers said, "Aren't you one of Jesus' disciples?" He said, "No."

Luke reads: another person (don't know where) saw Peter and said, "You are one of them." Peter replied, "No, I'm not."

Mark reads: another lady saw Peter on the porch and said to the people nearby, "This is one of them." And Peter denied it.

Mathew reads: Peter went out to the porch. A lady (probably on the porch) said to the others, "This person was with Jesus." Peter replied, "I do not know Jesus."

Peter's Denial #3

John reads: A high priest by the fire who was at the Garden who saw Peter cut off Malchus' ear happened to be Malchus' cousin. He saw Peter and asked, "Didn't I see you at the Garden?" Peter said, "No."

Cock crow #1: And immediately the cock crew.

Luke reads: Then another person (don't know where) said, "You were with Jesus." Peter replied, "I don't know what you are talking about."

Cock crow #1: And as Peter was replying he heard the cock crow. Jesus was there. Jesus heard Peter. Jesus just looked at Peter. And just then Peter remembered that Jesus had told him, “Before the cock crow, you will deny me three times.” And Peter wept bitterly.

Mark reads: Then another person (don’t know where) said, “I know you are one of them because I recognize your voice.” Peter cursed and swore, “I don’t know who you are talking about.”

Cock crow #2: And Peter heard a cock crow again. And right then Peter remembered Jesus saying, “Before you hear a cock crow two times, you will deny me three times.” And Peter wept.

Mathew reads: Some people standing nearby said, “You are one of them. We can tell by the sound of your voice.” Peter cursed and swore, “I don’t know the man.”

Cock crow #1: And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the words of Jesus, “Before the cock crow, you will deny me three times.” And Peter wept bitterly.

What stands out to me are not the differences. Different people hear different stories differently. Different people see different things in different ways. People remember differently. Perhaps God prompts one person differently than another.

What stands out to me are these statements of denying to know Jesus:

“No, I am not.”
“I don’t know what you are saying.”
“I don’t know what you are talking about.”
“I don’t know who you are talking about.”
“I don’t know the man.”
“I do not know Jesus.”

I don’t “know” Jesus. I don’t “know” the man. But I want to. I believe in him. I believe what others say about him that did know him. I believe what I’ve read. When faced with life’s challenges, I have wondered about Jesus. I’ve wandered away from him. I’ve wavered. I’ve wanted desperately to believe again. I’ve wept. And in his mercy, he’s lit the fire of desire to believe back in my soul. I can feel it. So, I believe.

Believe Easter

The Cross of Jesus

It is the day of his crucifixion.

Mathew, John, Luke, and Mark each wrote about that day. Each wrote about some things, and some wrote about other things. Each wrote that Jesus was crucified. Each wrote about Jesus' garment. But only Mark and Mathew wrote about the earthquake. And only Mathew wrote about other people being resurrected when Jesus died.

HE WAS CRUCIFIED

John 18 Where they crucified him,
Luke 33 And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him,
Mark 24 And when they had crucified him,
Mark 25 And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.
Mathew 35 And they crucified him,

HE FORGAVE THEM

Luke 34 Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

HIS GARMENT

John 23 Then the soldiers...took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.
John 24 They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be:
Mark 24 ...they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take.
Mathew 35 ...they...parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled...They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.
Luke 34 And they parted his draiment, and cast lots.

THEIR SIGN

John 19 And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.
John 20 This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.
John 21 Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews.
John 22 Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.
Luke 38 And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.
Mark 26 And the superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS.
Mathew 37 And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

THEIR WORDS

Luke 35 And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.
Luke 37 And saying, If thou be the King of the Jews, save thyself.
Mark 29 And they that passed by railled on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days,
Mark 30 Save thyself, and come down from the cross.
Mark 31 Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save.
Mark 32 Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him.
Mathew 39 And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads,
Mathew 40 And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.
Mathew 42 He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.
Mathew 43 He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

HIS MOTHER

John 25 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.
John 26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!
John 27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.
Luke 49 And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.
Mark 40 There were also women looking on far off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome;

HIS THIRST

John 28 After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.
John 29 Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with avinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth.
Luke 36 And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar,
Mark 36 And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink,
Mathew 48 And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink.

THE OTHER TWO

- Luke 33 they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.
Luke 39 And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.
Luke 40 But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?
Luke 41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.
Luke 42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.
Luke 43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.
Mark 27 And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left.
Mark 28 And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.
Mathew 38 Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left.
Mathew 44 The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

HIS LAST WORDS

- Luke 46 And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit:
Mark 34 Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, aEloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?
Mark 37 And Jesus cried with a loud voice,
Mathew 46 Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, aMy God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?
Mathew 50 Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice,

ELIAS

- Mark 35 And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elias.
Mark 36 Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down.
Mathew 47 Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias.
Mathew 49 The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.

DARKNESS

- Luke 44 And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.
Luke 45 And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.
Mark 33 And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.
Mathew 45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

HE DIED

- John 30 ...he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.
Luke 46 ...and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.
Mark 37 And Jesus...gave up the ghost.
Mathew 50 Jesus yielded up the ghost.

EARTHQUAKE

- Mark 38 And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.
Mathew 51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;

OTHERS RESURRECTED

- Mathew 52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,
Mathew 53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

THEIR PIERCED HIM

- John 31 ...besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.
John 32 Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.
John 33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:
John 36 For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.
John 34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.
John 37 And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

THEIR TESTIMONY

- John 35 And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.
Luke 47 Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man.
Luke 48 And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned.
Mark 39 And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.
Mathew 54 Now when the centurion...saw the earthquake...they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.

THE CARE GIVERS

- Mark 41 (Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him;) and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem.

I leave this writing exhausted. There are versus I read and feel sorrowful for how I and how all of us treated and treat Jesus...given how he treated and treats us. "He Forgave Them." Only Luke mentions this. But all of scripture, every book, every verse, every letter tells me He forgives me as I bear my cross, because of His Cross. Believe Easter

He Lives

Easter. The day Jesus lives after dying, the day he rises from the grave, the day he gives life after death to each of us, freely.

John wrote 56 verses to describe Easter, the day of Jesus' resurrection. Luke wrote 53 verses. Mathew and Mark each told their story of that day in only 20 verses. The main reason Luke's version is longer is that he uses 20 verses to write about the 2 disciples walking to Emaus. Mathew and Mark don't mention this. John's version is longer because he is the only one who wrote about Jesus' second and third appearances to the disciples in Tiberias. And the only one to write about Thomas doubting.

Here is a version combining all into one story.

Jesus died on the cross. He was buried in a tomb. The tomb was covered with a rock. It was early Sunday morning. The sun was just rising. The tomb was in the dark of the early morning shadows. Mary and several other women were walking to the tomb. They could not yet see the rock. Earlier they had seen Jesus' dead body in the tomb. They knew he was in the tomb. They knew how his body was wrapped and how it was laid. They knew there was a rock covering the tomb. They planned to roll away the rock so they could anoint Jesus' dead body with spices. They even asked each other who they would get to roll away the heavy rock.

Mary knew nothing about the word "resurrection." Nor did the disciples. Earlier in his time with them Jesus said he would rise again. But they don't know what that meant. They had no idea of Jesus coming back from death. They weren't expecting him to live again. It never crossed their minds. There was no hope in their hearts nor imagination in the minds because, of course, he died and would still be dead.

As she got closer to the tomb, expecting to see the rock covering the tomb, she saw the tomb was uncovered. The rock had been moved. Earlier that morning, there was an earthquake. An angel came and moved the rock. The two men guarding the tomb saw this happen. They saw an angel appear, move the rock, and saw Jesus' body was gone. They were afraid so they played dead. After, they were afraid to tell this to their boss. So, they said that while they were sleeping the disciples came and took Jesus' body. The boss didn't want his boss to hear about this, so he paid the two guards to say nothing.

Mary was startled. She looked in the tomb and Jesus was gone. She saw the wrappings that had been on Jesus neatly stacked where he had been laying. And she saw two angels sitting there. She was afraid. The angels told Mary to not be afraid, that Jesus was alive and to go quickly and tell the disciples.

Mary and the women went to get the disciples. They found the disciples weeping and mourning the loss of Jesus. They told the disciples Jesus was not in the tomb and the disciples didn't believe them. Peter and John left with the women to go back to the tomb and see for themselves. Peter and John ran to the tomb. John got there first. He looked in and saw Jesus gone and saw the wrappings. Then Peter looked in and saw the same. Jesus was gone.

Peter and John left the tomb to go back and tell the disciples. Mary stayed in the garden at the tomb. She began to weep. A nearby gardener asked Mary, "Why are you weeping?" She said, "Because someone has taken Jesus, and we don't know where." She turned to look at the gardener and asked, "Do you know where he is? Sir, if you know tell me and I will get him." She turned away.

She then heard the gardener say, "Mary." She knew that voice. She had heard her name spoken in that way. She turned and the gardener was really Jesus. She replied, "Master." Jesus was risen.

"Rick." "Juma." "Fatimah." "Li." "Aleksandr." "Taro." "Hannah." "Lucas." "Sofia." "Cloe." "Pat."

Can you imagine Jesus saying your name? How that must feel? He knows you and me. He knows us better than anyone else. He understands who we are, how we are, why we are, what we've been through, what we're going through. He's known us forever. You and I supported God's plan to come to earth, have this temporal experience as a spiritual being, and have Jesus as our Savior. He came to earth to have his temporal experience as the Son of God, which culminated in taking upon himself yours and my sins, giving his life on the cross, and rising from the tomb, all that we may live again after death, eternally, with Him.

There is power in the name of Jesus. And there is power in Jesus saying your name. As the song goes, "He lives. He lives who once was dead. I know that my Redeemer lives."

Believe Easter.