

EASTER MORNING SURPRISE

April 2025

What happened on that first Easter morning was a surprise to many persons. I and few others also had a great surprise on Easter morning of 1980. We will discuss the first ones in this message and my experience in another one.

ca. 30 A.D

The Jewish priests had offered their sacrificial lambs to God on Passover. However, they were oblivious to the fact that while they were offering their sacrifices to cover the sins of the people for another year, the ultimate Passover lamb was being crucified on a cross to remit the sins of all humanity once and for all. After Jesus gave up his spirit, they figured that would be the last time they would have to listen to Him. They could now return to their comfortable religious rituals. But they were in for a big surprise, as were many others the following Sunday morning.

The following accounts come from four different writers who report various details. Some only mention certain witnesses while others mention additional ones. However, there are no contradictions, but merely various highlights of that special morning. The following message is based on those reports from **Matthew** 27:54-66; 28:1-15, **Mark** 15:37-47, 16:1-13, **Luke** 23:50-56, 24:1-40, **John** 19:38-42, 20:1-19.

The Women Jesus had many women followers from Galilee that supported His ministry (Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna and others - Luke 8:1-3). Those and others such as Mary the mother of Joseph and James and Salome were there at the crucifixion. John, who was later known as the apostle of love, was the only disciple of the original 12 to watch Jesus on the cross. The others had fled in fear. John would later write '**perfect love casts out fear**'. John's love for Jesus was greater than his fear of man. He believed that he was loved by Jesus - John 21:20

Some of the women saw Joseph of Arimathea wrap the body of Jesus and place it into the tomb and then roll the great stone over the entrance. (It was rolled in a groove which was slightly depressed at the center at the tomb entry point, so it would be challenging to remove. One 2nd century document says it would take 20 men to move it away from the entrance.)

The next day the Jewish leaders requested that the Romans guard the tomb so that the Christ followers could not come and steal the body and then say that He had risen from the dead, just as He had predicted. The Romans sent a guard (anywhere from 10-30 soldiers) and placed a rope across the entrance which was sealed at both ends with the signet ring stamp of the emperor. The Roman soldiers would be put to death if they failed in their guard duties (which happened when Peter got out of prison - Acts 12:5-11, 18-19; as angels had come in answer to the prayers of the Christians.)

Mary Magdalene, the other Mary and Salome bought spices and fragrant oils to anoint the body of Jesus, although on the way they wondered how they would roll the stone away (not even knowing that the impregnable Roman seal had been affixed and a Roman guard placed the previous day.

'Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb **when the sun had risen**'. - Mark 16:2

- **Surprised women when the Son had risen!** Two angels invited them into the empty tomb to see where Jesus had lay. Jesus met them as they went back and they worshiped Him and held His feet, although He told them not to cling to Him for he had not yet returned to His father in Heaven. He told them to **'rejoice'** and go tell His disciples
- **Surprised Roman soldiers.....** There was an earthquake and angels rolled the stone away. They collapsed from the power effect.
- **Surprised Religious leaders**They had called Jesus a 'deceiver', but now they became the deceivers as they bribed the soldiers to say that the disciples had stolen the body. The chief priests plan backfired big time. By making the tomb even more secure it made the resurrection of Jesus even more incredible. Only God could have done it!
- **Surprised disciples** They had been mourning the death of Jesus and were in a state of discouragement and fear. They did not believe the testimony of the women, but John and Peter ran to check out the tomb. In John's account he mentioned that he outran Peter to get there! John was younger :) Jesus later makes a 'surprise' visit to them in Jerusalem.
- **Surprised Cleopas** He and another friend were discussing the events of the week when Jesus came besides them. They did not recognize him during the 7 mile journey back to Jerusalem. They recognized Him as they ate together and Jesus gave thanks, broke bread and gave it to them - Luke 24:13-37
- **Surprised devil** Satan and demonic powers were the most surprised by Jesus' resurrection. Wisdom comes from God's Spirit and Satan has none.
1 Corinthians 2 ESV

6Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. **7**But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. **8None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9**But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"—

10these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. **11**For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also **no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.**

Jesus was not surprised He had predicted His death, burial and resurrection. Matthew 20:17-20. At the last supper they had sung a hymn - Matthew 26:30. it included the words of Psalm 118.

Continue below

The stone the builders **rejected** has become the capstone; the Lord has done this and it is **marvelous** in our eyes. This is the day the Lord has made; Let us **rejoice** and be glad in it. - Psalm 118:22-24

The crucifixion of Jesus was a day that the Lord had prepared long before that. In the natural it was a brutal day, but in light of the resurrection, we can now see that it was a marvelous day for the awesome sacrifice that Jesus suffered for all of mankind. **"For the joy set before Him He endured the cross."** - Hebrews 12:2 After his resurrection, he told his disciples to **rejoice!** They did and we can too!

Earth's darkest day and earth's brightest day are three days apart. - E. Stanley Jones

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- Does the term Easter come from pagan sources?
- Was Jesus crucified on Friday?
- creation.com/easter (informative site for such questions)