

Easter: true or false? 20th April 2025

A sermon given on Easter Sunday 20th April 2025 at St Michael's Church, Sandhurst

Readings: 1 Corinthians 15:19-26; Luke 24:1-12 and 36-48

Quick Quiz: True or False?

Are these statements true or false (answers below)?

1. The meat traditionally eaten on Easter Sunday is roast lamb
2. Over 80 million boxed Easter eggs are sold in the UK each year.
3. The tallest chocolate Easter egg was taller than a giraffe and heavier than an elephant.
4. The first chocolate egg made in the UK was produced by Cadbury's.
5. Easter is all about chocolate eggs and the Easter Bunny.

Answers:

1. True 2; True 3; True¹; 4. False (it was made by Fry's)

How important are the answers to these questions? I'd suggest only the last one(what Easter is really all about) is really important. And an even more important question is whether Jesus Christ really did rise from the dead. As St Paul

¹ The tallest chocolate Easter Egg was 10.39 m high and weighed 7,200 kg. It was made in Italy in 2011 (Source: www.guinnessworldrecords.com) (An adult male giraffe measures up to 5.7 m high. An adult male African elephant weighs up to 6,900 kg) (Source:Wikipedia)

wrote, “If Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain”².

Why does it matter?

Let me give you three reasons why it is important whether the Resurrection of Jesus is true or false:

1. *The Resurrection shows that Jesus really was the Messiah, the Son of God.* Jesus was not just a good man who was a tragic victim of injustice. He was who he said he was, fulfilling the plan of God to save the world. God vindicated his Son by raising him from the dead.
2. *It shows that God accepted Jesus’ sacrifice for our sins.* St Paul wrote “If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins”³. What happens to you when you die? The book of Hebrews says “it is appointed for mortals to die once, and after that the judgement”⁴. St Paul wrote in Romans, “The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”⁵ All of us will be accountable to God for the good and bad we have done in our lives, and none of us will get into heaven on our own merits. In dying on the Cross, Jesus took the punishment for the sins of the whole world. He was the sacrificial Lamb of God, who atoned for us. Just as at the first Passover the blood of the lamb on the doorposts meant that those in

² 1 Corinthians 15:14 (NRSV)

³ 1 Corinthians 15:17 (NRSV)

⁴ Hebrews 9:27 (NRSV)

⁵ Romans 6:23 (NRSV)

the house did not die⁶, so Jesus' blood was shed to save us from eternal death.

3. *The risen Jesus offers us eternal life*, instead of oblivion or condemnation. Many people believe that death is the end – you have no eternal soul and when your body dies, your consciousness ceases to exist. But those who trust in Jesus can be confident of our future beyond death. In looking through the contents of a memory stick this morning, I was surprised to find video clips which my wife took of the burial of my mother 18 months ago. My mother's funeral was a joyful affair. She knew where she was going, and most of us in the family were also sure that she was with Jesus, sharing a beautiful and glorious eternity with him. Because Jesus rose from the dead, we can be sure that his promise to take us to be with him⁷ is trustworthy.

How can you know it is true?

There are several ways you can be sure something is true.

- Other people have told you, and you trust them
- You've investigated the facts for yourself, you've done the research
- You know it's true from personal experience.

The same principles apply to the Resurrection of Jesus:

⁶ Exodus 12:22-23

⁷ John 14:2-3

- Other people have told you, and you trust them. We are here this morning because someone we trusted told us about Jesus – maybe a parent, grandparent or a friend
- It's in the Bible, based on eye-witness accounts – in 1 Cor 15:3-8, which was written in 55 AD, no more than 25 years after the events, Paul describes several eye-witness accounts, which include 500 people at one time.
- You've investigated it for yourself. You can read the Bible's accounts, and books that weigh the evidence, or attend a course, such as the *Start* course we run.
- You've met Jesus in some real way. We're unlikely to have an encounter with Jesus in the flesh, but if we trustingly invite him to be our Lord and Saviour and to live with us and in us, then by growing close to him in prayer, worship and service we will come to experience his presence, his love and his guidance. And we can then share our experience with others, so that they too can come to know Jesus.

Conclusion

The Resurrection of Jesus isn't just a nice story from 2000 years ago. It affects the way we think about:

- Jesus – who he was, and what he achieved.
- our relationship with God – our sins are forgiven through the sacrifice of Jesus and we need not fear judgement.
- Our future destiny – we can be sure of a place in heaven.

It matters, and it is true. Happy Easter!