

HAPPY EASTER

Love and light to all of you from all of us on this Easter! We hope the joy and peace of the season will inspire you and bring renewal to your heart and home.

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Blessings to you and your family at Easter

May the spirit of renewal bring you hope, renewal, health, happiness and the best of everything!

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Jesus Before Pilate

11 Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "You have said so," Jesus replied.

12 When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer.

13 Then Pilate asked him, "Don't you have the testimony they are bringing against you?"

14 But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—for the great amazement of the governor.

15 Now it was the governor's custom at the festival to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd.

16 At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus Barabbas.

17 So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you: Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?"

18 For he knew it was out of self-interest that they had handed Jesus over to him.

19 "What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" Pilate asked. They all answered, "Crucify him!"

20 "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!"

- Matthew 27: 11-18; 22-23

May the true spirit of the Easter season fill you with renewed faith, hope and love!

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The Crucifixion of Jesus

21 As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross.

22 They came to a place called Golgotha (which means "The place of the skull").

23 There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall, but after testing it, he refused to drink it.

24 Then they fast-crucified him; they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

25 And sitting down, they kept watch over him there.

26 Above his head they placed the written charge against him: "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

27 Two robbers were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left.

28 Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!"

29 In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders jeered at him: "Let him save himself, if he is the Son of God!"

30 They said, "Let him save himself, if he is the Son of God!"

31 In the same way the robbers who were crucified with him also hurled insults at him.

The Death of Jesus

32 From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land.

33 About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?")

34 When some of those standing there heard this, they said, "He's calling Elijah."

35 Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink.

36 He refused to drink.

37 Then one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and a flow of blood and serum came out.

38 He who saw this has testified so that you may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows what he says, because he saw it.

39 The soldiers did not expect this, so they did not do it to anyone else.

40 The soldiers who were crucified with Jesus also hurled insults at him.

41 Just as the soldiers were dividing his clothes among them, they noticed that there were four pieces and no loincloth.

42 So they decided to throw dice for them to see whose it would be.

43 This happened to fulfill what the Scripture had said: "They divided my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment."

44 When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Truly he was the Son of God!"

45 Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. Following them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

- Matthew 27: 11-18; 22-31



Jesus Has Risen

1 After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

2 There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it.

3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow.

4 The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

5 The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay."

6 Then he went quickly and told his disciples: "He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him." Now I have told you.

8 So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

9 Suddenly Jesus met them: "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him.

10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

The Guards' Report

11 While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened.

12 When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, telling them, "You are to say, 'The disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.'"

13 If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble."

the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day.

The Great Commission

14 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.

15 When they saw him, they worshiped him, but some doubted.

16 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 17 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 18 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

- Matthew 28: 1-10