

# What Happened on *The events of Easter* That Day?

Nearly 2,000 years ago, Jesus Christ was crucified in the land now called Israel by the order of Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of the then Roman province of Judea. Jesus had been falsely accused by the Jewish high priest and other Jewish religious leaders of blasphemy. This was not a crime under Roman law, and Pilate was inclined to release Jesus. But after being reminded that leniency toward someone regarded as a troublemaker could be viewed as disloyalty to Rome, and upon hearing the clamor of a mob that called for Jesus to be crucified, Pilate bowed to the accusers' demands. Jesus' execution took place right before the Jewish holy day of Passover.



Arabic documents dating from the 10th century contain the following account, credited to the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus:

*At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus, and his conduct was good, and he was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and the*

*other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon their loyalty to him. They reported*

*that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion, and that he was alive. Accordingly they believed that he was the Messiah, concerning whom the Prophets have recounted wonders.*



**Flavius Josephus** (37?–100), Jewish historian. Joseph ben Matthias, better known as Josephus, was a Jewish historian during the first century of the Roman Empire. Born in Jerusalem, he participated unwillingly in a revolt against the Romans (66–70). He was pardoned by Emperor Vespasian and became a partisan of Rome, serving under Titus in the Roman siege of Jerusalem in 70. His *History of the Jewish War* traces Jewish history from the 2nd century BC through the end of the great revolt. *Antiquities of the Jews* traces their history from creation to the outbreak of revolt in 66. He died in Rome in about AD 100.

*Student Encyclopædia, Britannica Online for Kids, s.v. "Josephus, Flavius,"*

<http://kids.britannica.com/comptons/article-9311923/Josephus-Flavius>, accessed November 1, 2010)

Following is the account by Matthew, one of Jesus' followers, of the events following Jesus' death.

On the next day [after Jesus' crucifixion] the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.' Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first."

Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how." So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.

Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended

from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men.

But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His

disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you."





*So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word. And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus*

*met them, saying, "Rejoice!" So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to*

*Galilee, and there they will see Me."*

*Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying, "Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.' And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure." So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.*

*Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. And*

*Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father*

*and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always" (Matthew 27:62-66; 28:1-20 NKJV).*



**Read the events of the Easter story from your Bible:**

- The triumphant entry into Jerusalem: Luke 19:29-40
- Eating the Last Supper with His disciples: Luke 22:7-30
- The agony in the Garden of Gethsemane: Luke 22:39-46
- The betrayal: Luke 22:47-53
- The trials, mocking, and scourging: Luke 22:54-71; 23:1-24
- The Crucifixion: Luke 23:26-46
- The burial: Luke 23:50-53
- The Resurrection: Matthew chapter 28, Mark chapter 16, Luke chapter 24, John chapter 20



## **An Easter Prayer**

Jesus, thank You for giving Your life for the salvation of all mankind. You allowed Yourself to experience agony and death on the cross, as a sacrifice for sin. But the story didn't end there—You defeated death itself so that we don't have to fear death. You have prepared a place for us in heaven for all those who believe in You.

Thank You for Your extraordinary love that went to such great lengths for me.