1. HE IS RISEN! Mt 28:6

That was the 1st declaration of the resurrection of Christ by the angel on that 1st Easter morning

During the Easter week, 100s of millions of people around the world celebrate the death and resurrection of Christ

**2)** The meaning of Christ’s death- and the power of His resurrection- are the foundation of our Christian faith!

1 Cor. 15:14, 17, & 20 tell us: If Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty… And if Christ is not risen, your faith *is in vain*; you are still in your sins! But now Christ is risen from the dead, *and* has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

**3)** The Day Christ was crucified on the cross was a Passover- the holy day the Jews celebrated every year- the day of their rescue from slavery by the blood of a lamb protecting them from death. In Egypt, during Moses’ time, the death of the lambs had saved the Jews

**4)** But when John the Baptist announced the mission of the Jesus, he said that Jesus was the Lamb of God who had come to take away the sin of the world, for everyone who would believe!

**5)** Before the Passover, the Jews selected a lamb without spot or blemish- the lamb was inspected very carefully! Lambs were killed as innocent victims, to take the judgment & punishment of those who were sinners…

**6)** Before the death of Christ, He was inspected by Pontius Pilate and King Herod, who both found Him innocent, Lk.23:13-15 Then Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, said to them, "You have brought this Man to me, as one who misleads the people. And indeed, having examined *Him* in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things of which you accuse Him.”

 - Jesus was the sinless one… Pontius Pilate said, “I find no sin in him”(priests were jealous of Him)

 - King Herod found no sin…

 - Muhammed, the founder of Islam, wrote in the Koran that Jesus Christ was sinless (and

 Muhammed prayed in the Koran for his own sins to be forgiven- who is the greater prophet-

 the Sinless One, or the sinner?)

**7)** The Sinless Christ took our sins: “God made Christ, who knew no sin, to become sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” -2 Cor.5:21

**8)** As Christ had the sins of the world placed upon Him, He cried out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Even the sun became dark and refused to shine when Christ became sin for us on the cross!

Have you ever had the burden of a person’s sins put upon you, when you were in prayer? But Jesus took all the sins of ALL men for ALL time upon Himself on the cross… the punishment has been paid for sin!

**9)** While Jesus was dying, multitudes of Jews were coming into Jerusalem to attend the Passover- many of them passing by Christ on the cross

**10)** At 3:00 when the multitudes of Jews were worshipping at the great Temple- the High Priest was getting ready to kill the sacrificial lamb- this is when Jesus died!

**11)** But when Christ died, there was an earthquake, and the veil in the temple was torn apart from the top to the bottom! (sacrifice stopped? Lamb escaped??)

**12)** Christ had died as the sinless Lamb to complete all sacrifice, and open the way into the true Holy of Holies- the way into heaven!

**13)** The Veil in Temple was torn in two! It was a SIX INCH THICK CURTAIN- and would take 12 oxen to rip it apart – and it was torn from TOP to bottom! ALL THE PRIESTS KNEW ABOUT THE VEIL BEING TORN- THE WAY INTO THE HOLY OF HOLIES BEING OPENED- THAT IS WHY MANY OF THEM SOON BELIEVED IN JESUS! “And the number of the disciples multiplied, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith” –Acts 6:7

AFTER CHRIST’S DEATH, WHAT HAPPENED TO JESUS?

**14)** Before going to heaven, Christ first had a work to complete- in Hell! But before going to heaven, Christ first had a work to complete- in Hell!

Therefore He says: "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVITY CAPTIVE, AND GAVE GIFTS TO MEN."

(Now this, "HE ASCENDED"—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?) – Eph.4:8-9

**15)** Christ descended into hell-not as a captive- but to set the captives free!

“I lay down my life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me…I have the power to lay it down and I have power to take it again.” –John 10:17-18

 **16)** For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison… 1 Pet.3:18-19

**17)** Proclaiming His victory, Jesus arose with the keys of death and hell!

When the Apostle John met the risen Christ, He declared I am He the lives, and was dead, and am alive forever, and have the keys of Hell and of death!

**18)** We all have a cross to carry- and we all have victories & future rewards that we can enter into!

**19)** Pontius Pilate had a guard of Roman soldiers secure the tomb with a seal of the Roman Empire (High Priest had requested the guards!) MORE PROOF OF THE RESURRECTION! VERY PUBLIC- BEFORE GOVERNOR & KING- ROMAN LAW-

**20)** ROMAN SEAL –the Authority of Rome was committed to stop the resurrection of Christ! (EXPLAIN THE SEAL: if anyone broke the seal, it was an automatic death punishment- and the Roman soldiers who did not fight to the death to defend the Roman seal, would themselves be killed for not being faithful to their duty, if the seal was broken!)

**21)** But on that Easter morning, a shining angel rolled away the stone and declared, “He is not here, for He has risen! Roman soldiers- would be killed for not guarding the tomb, fighting until they died! WHAT COULD STOP THEM? (Read about the angel…)

**22)** The Tomb was empty- except for Jesus’ burial clothes (EXPLAIN ABOUT THE WRAPPED LINEN SHEET W/ SPICES- LIKE A HARD COCOON)

**23)** Another thing that happened when Christ ascended from dead and led the captives free: many other dead saints from around Jerusalem were also raised from the grave! “And the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints were raised, and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they appeared to many.” Mt.27:53

**24)** The Risen Christ showed Himself many times to His disciples for 40 days

- Over 500 disciples saw the resurrected Christ, 1 Cor. 15:6

**25)** Jesus invited doubting Thomas to stick his fingers in the nail holes- and Thomas doubted no longer!

**26)** All the apostles – except John- died for their faith in the resurrected Christ!

 THOMAS… PETER… JOHN, the “Honorary Martyr”

This was another proof of the resurrection of Christ- these men had been fearful, hiding, denying Christ- until the resurrection! IF THE RESURRECTION WAS ONLY A STORY, A LIE- THEY WOULD NOT ALL TRIUMPHANTLY SUFFER & DIE FOR IT!

**27)** Death could not stop Christ- and death cannot stop His disciples!

 \* MARTYRS KILLED BY ROMANS- MANY MORE TURNED TO CHRIST!

 \* “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church” –Tertullian

 \* JAPANESE EMPEROR- had 11,111 heads of the Christians cut off and taken very far away-

 because the followers of Jesus said they would also rise from the dead, and the emperor wanted

 them to be headless if they would try to come back!

 \* WYCLIFFE- Translated Bible, spread the word: His bones were burned and thrown in a river- the

 Catholic Church said that would be the end of the heretic and his work- but his followers said that

 his ashes were carried down to the ocean, to spread around the world- and so his message and

 work would fill he earth! (Wycliffe Bible Translators are one of the world’s largest missionary

 organizations)

 \* Down thru history, many people have tried to deny or stop the cross & the resurrection:

 In the last few years, the Chinese Government has pulled down the crosses on thousands of

 churches- martyred more Christians- they fear the growing Church!

**28)** 40 days after His resurrection, Christ ascended back to heaven

**29)** There was a great celebration when their victorious King returned home! PS. 24:7-10

**30)** Daniel 7:13-14 tells us of when Christ returned to the Father, to receive His eternal kingdom

**31)** Christ now reigns in His heavenly kingdom until the time of his soon return

**32)** Welcoming home each of His faithful servants!

**33)** HE IS RISEN!