



...from the shores
of Galilee to
Tairawhiti* ...

What is **Easter** really about?



TAIRAWHITI: The Maori name for the Gisborne district is Tairawhiti which means
'The coast upon which the sun shines across the water.'

GISBORNE: is located on the sunny East Coast of the North Island of New Zealand.



In a 2010 research study, the Barna Group reported that 67 percent of those surveyed identified Easter as a religious holiday.

However, a shockingly fewer amount - only 42 percent of people surveyed - knew the Biblical meaning behind the Easter story.

In fact, some people gave answers like the birth of Jesus when asked to identify what Easter signified.

Today in 2021 we wonder would a survey result identify the same or not . . .

Bunny & Egg traditions...

RABBITS have been associated with springtime since ancient times. It is believed that the Anglo-Saxon Goddess of Spring, Eostre had a hare as her companion. The hare symbolises fertility and rebirth. Later Christians changed the symbol of the hare to the Easter bunny.

The tradition is that the Easter bunny leaves Easter eggs on Easter Sunday. Parents hide eggs in the garden and the children go on an egg hunt to find them.

The idea of an egg-laying rabbit was taken to America in the 1700's by German immigrants. They told their children to make 'nests' with their caps and bonnets, and if they were good the Easter bunny would leave them coloured eggs.

EGGS, in general, were a traditional symbol of fertility, and rebirth, pre-dating Christian traditions. The practice of decorating eggshell is ancient. Ostrich eggs with engraved decoration that are 60,000 years old have been found in Africa. Decorated ostrich eggs, and representations of ostrich eggs in gold and silver, were commonly placed in graves of the ancient Sumerians and Egyptians as early as 5,000 years ago.

In particular, the custom of the Easter egg originated amongst the early Christians of Mesopotamia, who stained eggs red in memory of the blood of Christ, shed at His crucifixion.

It's time to return to the roots of the Biblical story by diving into verses from the Bible that exemplify the love, passion, tragedy and meaning of the scriptural Easter passages.

While several traditional Bible verses, such as Mark 16:9 and Matthew 28, discuss the actual happenings of Easter, there is so much more within the pages of the Bible.

Each of the following Easter verses in this E-Book can help you, your family and your friends identify the great Christian theological implications of the Biblical Easter.

Hot Cross Bun traditions...

HOT CROSS BUNS with their combination of spicy, sweet and fruity flavors have long been an Easter tradition. It has therefore become traditional to eat warm 'hot cross buns' on Good Friday. The pastry cross on top of the buns symbolizes and reminds Christians of the Cross that Jesus was killed on.

Although they have been a Lenten and Good Friday tradition for centuries, Hot Cross Buns were not always associated with Christianity.

Their origins lie in pagan traditions of ancient cultures, with the cross representing the four quarters of the moon.

During early missionary efforts, the Christian church adopted the buns and re-interpreted the icing cross. In 1361, a monk named Father Thomas Rockcliffe began a tradition of giving Hot Cross Buns to the poor of St Albans on Good Friday.

In years that followed, many customs, traditions, superstitions, and claims of healing and protection from evil and were associated with the buns. Queen Elizabeth 'I' passed a law banning the consumption of Hot Cross Buns except during festivals such as Easter, Christmas and funerals.





1 Peter 1:3

- 3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

This Easter Bible verse outlines the great theological implications of Easter. For many Christians, it's not just a story about Jesus Christ rising from the dead, but about the "living hope" given to those who follow Christianity. Because Jesus Christ rose from the dead, Christians are given hope.



John 11: 25-26

- 25** Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die;
- 26** and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

*Jesus Christ called Himself
the resurrection and the life.
This Easter verse is yet another example of the
hopeful message behind the Easter story
of life and death:
In Christian theology,
Christians believe
that those
whosoever "believe" in Christ
will rise from the dead
much like Jesus did.*





© Photo: courtesy Scotty Cowan

Romans 6: 8-10:

- 8** Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.
- 9** For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.
- 10** The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

*You may have heard this Easter Bible verse,
occasionally quoted at funerals,
giving hope to those
who are afraid of death.*



Romans 10: 8-9

- 8 But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim:
- 9 If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

*this Easter Bible verse points to a
deep theological implication:*

*Not only must Christians believe in Jesus Christ,
but his resurrection that occurred
on Easter is also critical.*

*You must believe in the Easter resurrection to also
reap the benefits of Christian salvation.*



the stone
was rolled away



Acts 2: 29-32

- 29** “Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day.
- 30** But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne.
- 31** Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay.
- 32** **God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it.**

For some who doubt the Christian Biblical Easter story, this verse points to an important idea: That those who wrote about the resurrection that happened at Easter were also eyewitnesses to the various events surrounding the first Easter.





Team gisborne

PSALM 133: How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! ... for there the Lord commands His blessing even life forevermore.

JOHN 13:34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

Tairawhiti*

'The coast where the sun shines'

Thank you for taking the time to view our 'Easter-E-Book'

This Easter-E-book has been prepared as for you as a point of contact to our local: 'Team Gisborne Ministers/Pastors'

If you live in Gisborne city and have a friend or family member that attends a local Church then may we encourage you to share with them this Easter at the Church they attend... Or take a look Online at the...

www.kcn.co.nz web-page for contact and address details to find a Church in Gisborne near you.

Wherever you live - if you would like further information regarding the Easter message, can we encourage you to attend your local Christian Church.

Or contact 'Team Gisborne' Administrator: Ray Sheldrake
em: disciples@xtra.co.nz to help locate a Church near you.

@ E-Book design, photos & compilation by: www.SheldrakevisualART.com
87 Ormond Road, Gisborne. 4010 New Zealand. 21/03/2013

Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®
Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society.
Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House.

