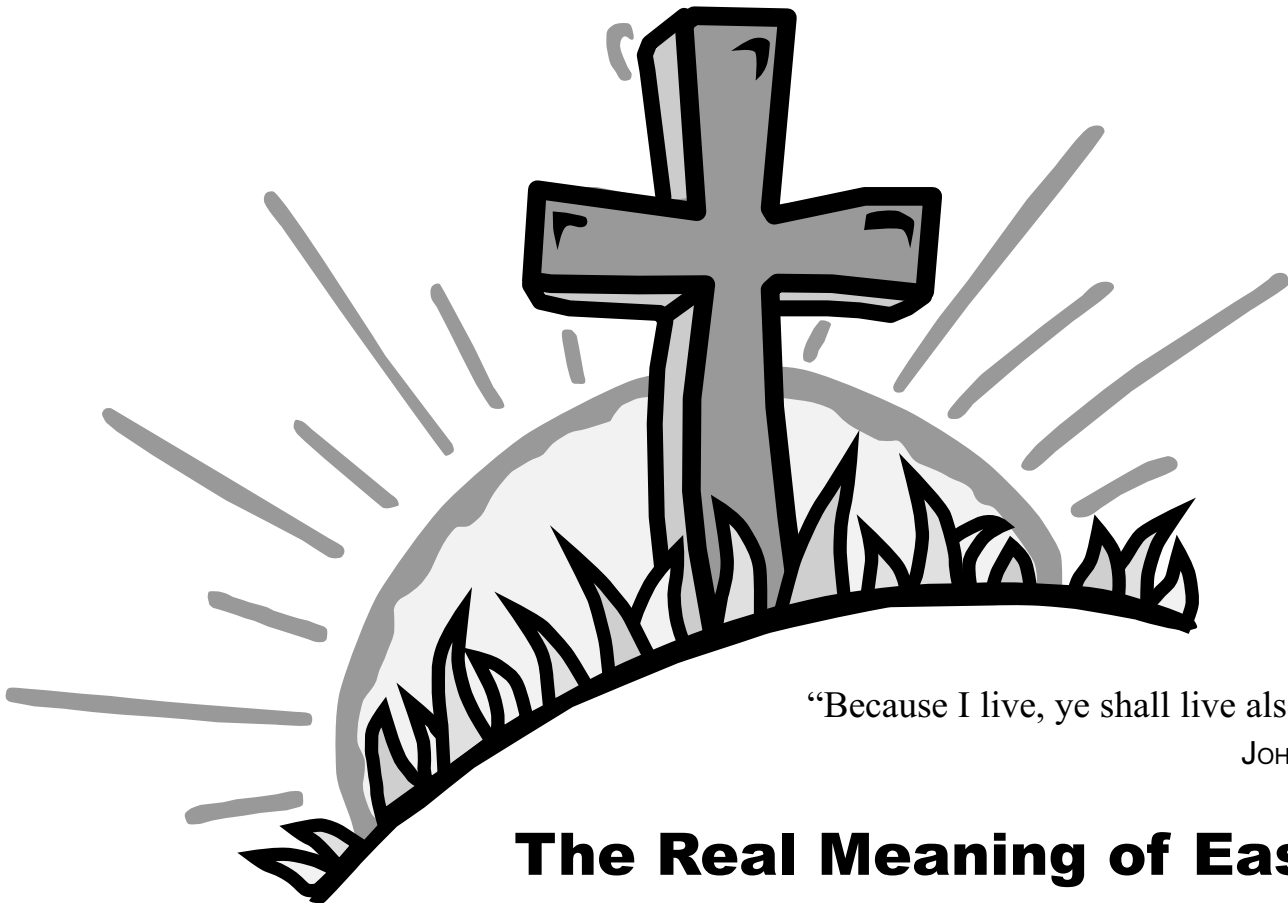


# GIFT GIVERS

Agape International Ministries



April 1999



“Because I live, ye shall live also.”

JOHN 15:19

## The Real Meaning of Easter

To many, Easter means painted eggs, chocolate bunnies, and perhaps, new clothes. For some, going to church on Easter Sunday is required, just for tradition’s sake, of course. After all, who wants to be different from the rest of the pack. Others, however, know the holiday for what it really is – the celebration of the most significant event in all of man’s history.

That history goes back to God’s creation of the world. At that time, all living creatures except man were made to instinctively follow their Creator’s designs for existence. Man alone was given free will because God wanted self-directed devotion and service from him. Unfortunately, man misused this unique power, and thereby brought rebellion (sin) into the world.

Seeing this, God immediately levied the sentence of everlasting death upon man, but at the same time promised him a Way of escape, a Redeemer. For Christians, Jesus is that Redeemer. We believe that He died on the cross as a substitute for man, but then came back to life. His victory over death guarantees eternal life to all believers. This is the foundation of our faith, and the real meaning of Easter.

— WADE DAVID



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Phone: 512-AMERICA  
FAX: 512-263-1962

E-mail: aim@aim4jesus.org  
URL: www.aim4jesus.org

P.O. Box 90248  
Austin, TX 78709-0248  
USA

P.O. Box 1896, Belize City  
BELIZE, Central America

### PUBLICATION STAFF

**Dave Austin**  
*Executive Editor*

**Wade David**  
*Editor-in-Chief*

**Glenn Haecker**  
*Graphics / Production*

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**Editors' Note:** Views and opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent those of the publishers, the editors, or other staff members. All Scripture references are from the King James Version (KJV), unless otherwise noted.

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

JOHN 15:13

## What Easter Can Mean to You

“Love.” What an easy word to say, yet what a difficult concept to define. What is love, really? According to the dictionary, it’s “attraction, affection, and attachment,” but these words merely hint at its true meaning. Yes, love involves feelings, but there’s more to it than that, much more. To discover the true meaning of love, we must turn to Scripture.

According to Jesus, love is a command: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” (Matthew 22:37-40)

In John 3:16, we are told, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” “Herein is love,” adds 1 John 4:10-11, “not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.”

1 John 4:16 reveals that “God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” Verse 19 brings it all together: “We love him, because he first loved us.” In short, we were created by love so that we may love and be loved in return. That’s what love is.

John 15:13 states, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends,” and that’s precisely what Jesus did for us almost 2,000 years ago, on the cross of Calvary. With His death on that cross, Jesus Christ suffered the pain and punishment for the debt we owe God because of sin, a debt so great that we could never pay it ourselves (1 Peter 2:24).

Have you settled your debt with God? If not, you can do so, right now, simply by admitting your debt (confessing), turning away from sin (repenting), and accepting (believing in) Christ’s sacrifice on your behalf. Once you do, you’ll experience the Lord’s *pure* love as the peace which surpasses all understanding (Philippians 4:7) comes over you. You will then be a new creation: “Therefore, if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

This is what Easter can mean to you.

— WADE DAVID



# Easter in Scripture

The word *Easter* does not properly occur in the Bible, even though the King James Version uses it to translate *pesah*, the Passover festival, in Acts 12:4. A later revision of the KJV, the Revised Version (British and American), correctly uses the word *Passover*.

The English word comes from the Anglo-Saxon *Eastre* or *Estera*, a goddess to whom sacrifices were offered in April, around the same time of the year as the Jewish Passover. The Jewish Christians in the early church continued to celebrate the Passover, just as Jesus did, regarding Him as the true paschal lamb. As Christianity spread, rather than replacing the pagan festival in cultures where it had been practiced for centuries, the observance of Passover began to be mingled with it. That's how pagan fertility symbols came to be associated with Easter, shifting attention away from the true meaning of this special season. In an effort to distance themselves from this errant history and to return the focus to Jesus, some Christians are now referring to Easter as Resurrection Sunday.

Centuries of tradition have a tendency to blur the facts. That's why it can be very refreshing to read the first-hand account of those who witnessed the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord. For this reason, considerable space in this issue has been devoted to the Biblical account of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. We hope you enjoy the composite narrative, **He Is Risen**, beginning on the next page. Whatever you choose to call Easter, we can all rejoice together that God's plan of redemption was fulfilled in the life, death, and resurrection of our Savior, Jesus, the Christ!

— GLENN HAECKER

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## Time to Plant Your Garden

It's time to plant your garden. As you plant, you may find the following rules helpful for your garden planning.

*PLANT* three rows of squash:

Squash gossip.  
Squash criticism.  
Squash indifference.

*NO GARDEN* is complete without turnips:

Turn up for church, prayer service, and Bible study.  
Turn up with a smile, even when things are difficult.  
Turn up with determination to do your best for God's cause.

*PLANT* three rows of peas:

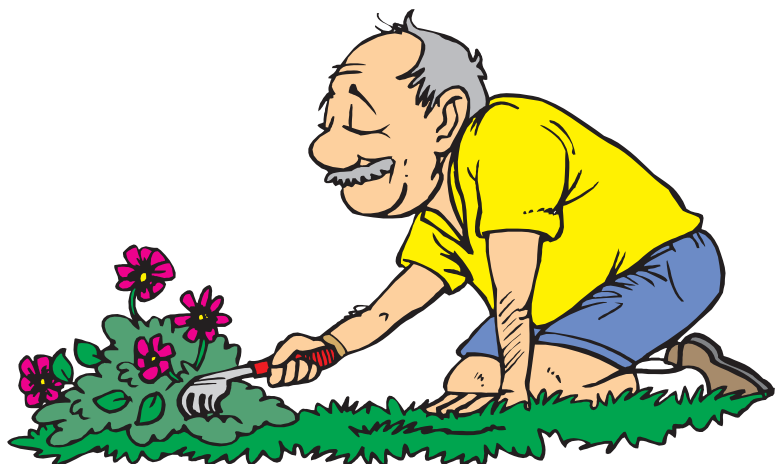
Purity  
Patience  
Perseverance

After planting, may you "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 3:18)

— SUBMITTED BY BRIAN MALZKUHN

*PLANT* six rows of lettuce:

Let us be unselfish and loyal.  
Let us be faithful to duty.  
Let us search the Scriptures.  
Let us not be weary in well-doing.  
Let us be obedient in all things.  
Let us love one another.



# He Is Risen!

The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ was foretold throughout the Old Testament as well as being repeatedly foreshadowed in the New Testament by our Lord Himself. Here in composite form is the original Easter story, as recorded in the words of the King James Version of the gospels. The narrative picks up where the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, who after being forced to preside over what he knows to be a mock trial, is being urged to crucify our Lord.

## *The Crucifixion*

Pilate saith unto them, "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?"

They all say unto him, "Let him be crucified."

And the governor said, "Why, what evil hath he done?"

But they cried out the more, saying, "Let him be crucified."



When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person. See ye to it."

Then answered all the people and said, "His blood be on us and on our children."

And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death. And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

And sitting down they watched him there; and set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us." But the other, answering, rebuked him. And he said unto Jesus, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." And Jesus said unto him, "Verily I say unto thee: To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, "Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross."

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" That is to say, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, "It is finished." And he bowed his head and gave up the ghost.

## *The Burial*

When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple. He went to Pilate, and begged the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he laid it in his own new tomb which he had hewn out in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.

Now the next day, that followed the day of



the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, "Sir, we remember that the deceiver said, while he was yet alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' Command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night and steal him away and say unto the people, 'He is risen from the dead,' so the last error shall be worse than the first."

Pilate said unto them, "Ye have a watch. Go your way; make it as sure as ye can." So they went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone and setting a watch. And the sabbath drew on...

### *The Resurrection*

In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

And the angel answered and said unto the women, "Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which 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, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you so."

And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, "All hail." And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, "Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me."

Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."





# One-Time Donations Hard at Work in CAMEM Harvest Fund

**Some people can't believe their eyes ...  
... but it's happening in spite of their amazement!**

Through the grace and power of God, CAMEM is meeting its objectives — *and then some!*

Here are three examples of how bountifully Our Lord has blessed typical one-time donations to CAMEM for the first 14 months the Harvest Fund has been operating.

	Seeker	Founding Partner V	Founding Partner IV
One-Time Donation to CAMEM Amount Placed in CHF	1,000 <b>1,000</b>	3,000 <b>1,500</b>	7,000 <b>3,500</b>
<b>LOVE-GIFT DISTRIBUTIONS</b>			
To Other Seekers	1,399	1,400	1,400
To This Seeker	1,032	2,271	7,167
Total Love-Gifts Distributed	2,431	3,671	8,567
Amount Remaining in CHF	2,852	4,365	10,186
<b>Total Gained from Original Donation</b>	<b>4,283</b>	<b>6,536</b>	<b>15,253</b>
Percent Gain Realized from Original Amount in CHF	428.3%	435.7%	435.8%

The figures in the table above clearly show the advantage of CAMEM's non-conventional handling of donations. By avoiding the traditional practice of consuming donations as soon as they are received, CAMEM is demonstrating that one-time donations can be preserved and multiplied to become continual and increasing sources of financial blessing. As God continues to provide this rich harvest, CAMEM chooses to share it with God's children.

**▶ CAMEM Just Keeps Getting Better!**

**Sorry!** The Harvest Fund figure for March was not available in time to allow us to include it and still get the newsletter to you by Easter.

As usual, the monthly gain will be posted on the Net as soon as it is available. Watch for it!

**[www.camem.org](http://www.camem.org)**





In the March newsletter, we requested our readers to encourage one another by sharing uplifting blessings that they have recently experienced. Jo Ann Sawyer Roof sent an e-mail relating details of an accident that she had on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. I am passing her experience along to you, so that you can rejoice with her in her progress, and pray that the Lord would continue His work in her life.

After going over a seven-foot wall and landing head first, she recalls the ambulance attendant talking of probable paralysis as she took an incredibly painful ride to the hospital. Because of the head injury, much of the actual event and what followed are a blur, but she does vividly recall the indescribable pain that she experienced as they encouraged her to get up and walk the following day. The cause of her pain didn't surface until a month later when it was revealed that the x-rays had not shown a broken pelvis, torn ligaments, and extreme muscle damage. She was told that it would be a year before she would be walking normally and functioning as she did prior to her accident.

Jo Ann relates how she learned to be inventive as she faced limitations and new challenges. She was so pleased that she was not paralyzed that it gave her the strength to keep "plugging along with joyous exuberance". People around her began to question her attitude. How could she have such a bright outlook considering the apparent damage to her body and her constant pain?

At the time of the accident, she was in a musical group that was preparing for a show. She would arrive at rehearsals filled with joy as she "wobbled" in with her walking aids. Instead of being angry, she focused on the fact that she was going to walk out filled with joy that she was not paralyzed.

As she began physical therapy she was instructed that she would improve more quickly if she worked on herself. So, she went to the "Higher

Power" seeking guidance. She feels that her plea was answered as she began to envision bones, muscles, tendons, and pressure points during the night. She would manipulate these areas, thus aiding her body in its healing process. Because of the full impact to her face, she has had a severe problem with TMJ. However, she relates that she has been given clear visual images needed to get her face working properly once again.

She has had two doctors look at her point blank and tell her that she should be dead. They contend that people do not survive falls nor recover from the severity of such injuries as rapidly as she has without greater long-term damage. However, Jo Ann believes that there is a "Heavenly Being" who walked and is walking beside her. She feels that she went through this experience so that others could witness her reaction to the tragedy, and also so that she would be a more attentive listener when the Spirit speaks to her.

Her recuperation is going much faster than doctors predicted. She participated in the show that she was rehearsing, and not only sang her parts, but danced the dances as well. She concluded her e-mail with this quote: "As I walk (and fall), may I walk ever close to Thee."

We are children of a mighty, wonder-working Father who "performs wonders that cannot be fathomed, miracles that cannot be counted." (Job 5:9 NIV) He delights in the praises of His children. We would love to hear of your victories and will include them as space permits.

I am continuing to make wonderful progress from my accident and am back in the office on a limited basis. Thank you all for your love, concern, and prayers.

— *Bonnie*



# PRAISE REPORT

I have been trying to wear too many hats for too long. Praise God for people like Brother John in helping me with the Mexico project, Frank and others helping in the Belize project, Brother Wade, with the newsletter project, and Brother Glenn and Sister Nancy, who have jumped in and helped in so many areas to help take the pressure off me. Bonnie, David II, Glenn and Nancy have been such a tremendous help to me and to you, but still I pressed on too hard.

I believe very strongly in the FAVOR of GOD upon these ministries. Recently, I experienced something almost unheard of. About two weeks ago, I had a little pain in my chest. (There was a LOT going on in my life.) Basically, I ignored it, not because I think I'm untouchable by the devil, but because I firmly BELIEVE that God is not done with me yet. I went ahead and made my trip to Belize to oversee the monthly Harvest Fund distribution, all the while knowing I should get myself checked out.

When I returned from Belize on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March, the chest pain was more severe and more frequent. I felt the Holy Spirit telling me to get checked out, so I went straight to the hospital from the airport. After many tests, I was told that I had experienced a minor heart attack within the last few days, and that they were going to keep me overnight to monitor me. This was about 9 PM Tuesday night. About 1 AM Wednesday morning a cardiovascular surgeon visited me and said that they needed to check me out further. At 7:30 AM

Wednesday morning they operated and found a blockage in my right main artery. They inserted a stent, and I was out of surgery by 9 AM. Again, keep in mind, this was Wednesday morning.

Thursday morning, by 10 AM, I was screaming at them to let me go home. I left the hospital about 4 PM Thursday afternoon. If I am bragging, please forgive me, but I believe in a miracle-working God, and I believe that Jesus' healing hand was upon me. I am back at work (supposed to take a couple weeks off) this Monday morning, the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March.

I just want to thank you, my very, very close prayer partners, who knew that I was in the hospital (only two days with mild heart attack). In giving praise to our Lord for His healing and protection over me, I want the rest of you to know that when our Lord does call me home, I am ready and willing to go. The ministries of AIM and CAMEM do not depend on Dave Austin being around. I have not been involved in the day-to-day operation of these ministries for over six months now, and most of you haven't even known that I have been out of the office working on ministry projects in Belize and Mexico. I know that these ministries are of God, and are God's, and wanted to reconfirm that fact to all of you.

In closing I want to say Thank You for your daily prayers and again say.....

Keep JESUS in Your Heart.

May God Bless You and Yours,

— *Brother Dave*



**Agape International Ministries**  
P.O. Box 90248  
Austin, TX 78709-0248  
USA

**Address Service Requested**