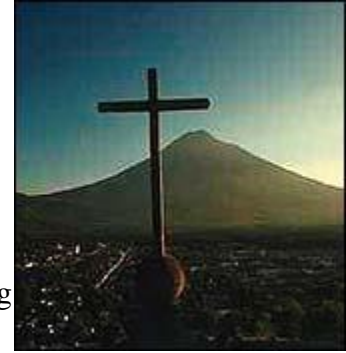


## The Amazing Story

This is a story about Easter that I would like to share with you by Dr. Ralph F. Wilson. He titled it the Amazing Story, I agree it is an amazing story but it's much more. I would call it **the Most Important Change the World has ever Experienced.**



If you ask children what Easter is about, they'd probably say something about the Easter bunny. It's a well-known story, cute and harmless but not very compelling.

But the story of the Easter bunny tends to displace a much more compelling Story. A true Story. An Amazing Story that I'd like to tell you right now in a few words.

The Amazing Story concerns a man, a carpenter who lived 2,000 years ago in an obscure Roman province in a town called Nazareth. At age 30, the Man hung up his leather carpenter's apron and began to speak publically up and down the countryside.

Religious leaders were ambivalent at best. Most felt deeply threatened, because this ex-carpenter taught in huge outdoor meetings with compelling authority -- and he healed people. Not just colds and fevers, but crippled limbs and blind eyes. On two occasions, he even brought people back from the dead.

The religious leaders saw their orderly world spinning out of their control. And so they determined to eliminate the Man. They infiltrated his inner circle so they could grab him away from public view. And once in custody, they engineered a trial behind closed doors, and then put huge political pressure on the Roman governor to execute him immediately. Within 12 hours of his arrest, the Man hung on a cross. Six hours later he was dead -- seemingly a martyr to a glorious but hopeless cause.

But there's more. The Man did not resist his arrest and crucifixion -- in fact, he had predicted it to his followers again and again. And he taught that his death would have incredible meaning -- that he would give his life as a ransom for many. That is, his death would pay the ransom price for a multitude of people who were enslaved by their own sins -- and set them free. That's what he said. And on that cross he prayed for his crucifiers -- certainly enslaved in *their* sins -- "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they're doing." And he died. A Roman centurion who saw him die said, "Surely, this man was the Son of God."

He died on a Friday at just about three in the afternoon. By dusk he had been buried by a rich follower in a tomb hollowed out of solid rock, a tomb protected by a huge stone that rolled into place along a channel in the rock, then clunk! The tomb was secure. Friday night and all day Saturday his cold body lay there.

But Sunday morning, the Sunday we call Easter, some women had come to complete the hasty burial and they found the stone rolled back and the tomb empty. An angel appeared to them saying, "He is not here, he has risen." This, too, the Man, Jesus, had foretold to his followers.

Over the next 40 days, he appeared to his disciples and others, to even 500 at one time. And then he left planet earth promising to return. His Spirit was poured out on his followers a few days later. Within a single generation his followers travelled with the Amazing Story to all of the known world. Our world has never been the same. Because where people believe the Story, they find forgiveness and freedom and meaning. They receive the Spirit of God themselves and they began to love.

The Story we tell is a life-transforming Story. If we would tell it to our children and grandchildren, they would find that it is much more compelling than any Easter bunny tale. Tell the Amazing Story. It changes lives.

This coming weekend we are having our annual Easter Festival. We have invited friends and relatives that do not attend our church. We will have food, live music, games, fellowship and the annual Easter egg hunt for the kiddos.

Take this opportunity to tell someone about the real story of Easter. God may have sent them to you, giving you the opportunity to spread the good news of Jesus. The story above is simple and easy to understand, use it if you like it may help get the point across to bring a lost sinner to Jesus.

God be with you on your journey;

Rob