

THE GREATEST CHANGE IN A SINGLE DAY

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In the early 1860s, it required 20 days for the mail to travel by Wells Fargo stagecoach from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Sacramento, California. But on a single day—April 3, 1860—the travel time for the mail was cut in half when the Pony Express made its first run. Bankers and merchants loved this new ten-day service. Yet the Pony Express enjoyed only a short, albeit glorious, career. For even as the fearless riders streaked from station to station, others steadily busied themselves stringing strands of copper—a sign of greater change coming on the horizon.

All told, the Pony Express carried 37,753 letters on 308 runs over 616,000 miles. Though historical accounts vary, a telegraph line connecting Carson City, Nevada, to St. Joseph was completed on October 20, 1861. Two days later, the Pony Express put all their ponies out to pasture. With the twist of just two wires, the world changed again in a single day.

Then on May 10, 1869, at Promontory Summit, Utah, a final spike joined the tracks of the Union Pacific Railroad and the Central Pacific Railroad. Now connecting the eastern and western United States, the first transcontinental railroad ushered the stagecoach off the stage of history.

In some of the latest winter ice storms, trees that have stood tall and strong for over a hundred years have come crashing down to the ground. In such cases as these, we clearly see that change can come quickly. The new temporarily takes the place of the old in a never-ending succession of leapfrogging.

But the greatest change in a single day cannot be called temporary. Propelled by neither twisted wire nor driven spike nor foot upon the moon, its driving force was a single stone, moved but a few feet.

This coming Sunday will be Easter. If ever a single day dramatically changed things, that displaced stone and empty tomb gave abundant testimony.

The Bible makes this brief announcement: “He is not here for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay” (Matthew 28:6). Truly, a man had come back to life, but such had happened before. But unlike His predecessors, this Man would never retreat to the company of the dead. Jesus’ resurrection blazed a trail to eternity for a vast multitude to follow.

Just like the pattern established by telegraph and railroad, change meant far more than simple facts interpreted by eyes and ears. The overriding importance of this particular event resides in things yet unseen. Things like a meaningful conclusion to life, a new body, a reunion with loved ones, a just reward for labors, a home in heaven—these are just some of the things the resurrection of Jesus Christ provides. And for each one who personally believes in Christ, the best hope of that day, change is instant—and forever.