



Glory to God! Christ is Risen!

Psalms 24:10: (NASB) *Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory.*

It was a long time ago - about 2000 years when he came. The world was going on just as before when he began preaching at age 30. He died young, at age 33½, unjustly crucified for deeds he did not commit. He had no family, he personally wrote no books or lessons to be handed down through the ages, yet his life and his death are the most celebrated in all of history. Why? Because he changed human destiny! How could the change have been good, for 2,000 years later the world seems worse off than ever! His actions and teachings in those short 3½ years of preaching were only the beginning, for he started a new cycle in human history, the results of which will be clearly seen and understood in due time. For now, let's just take some time and honor the life, death and resurrection of Jesus - the son of God and the Savior of men!



"For God So Loved the World," Instrumental from the movie, *The Gospel of John*

Part One of our Story: Ages of Preparation

Any truly effective plan requires truly effective planning, especially if the plan is designed to be eternal. God, in His foresight, knew the value of choice, the value of consequences and the value of experience. God created us in His image and did so for the purpose of having an earthly family that would forever live in unity and perfection. His plan was for this unity and perfection to be the heartfelt choice of the human race; so he gave us choice, consequences and experience so that we might unequivocally learn and choose His way in the end.

Let's take a look at the ages-long preparation and thought of God's glorious plan:

1 Peter 1:17-21: (NASB) ¹⁷...conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; ¹⁸knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, ¹⁹but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. ²⁰For he was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you ²¹who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

So the preparation began even before earthly civilization began.

The preparation continued with the very first people - they were given choices.

Genesis 3:9-12: (NASB) ⁹Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, Where are you? ¹⁰He said, I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself. ¹¹And He said, Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat? ¹²The man said, The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate.

With their choices they were given consequences:

Genesis 3:13-15: (NASB) ¹³Then the LORD God said to the woman, What is this you have done? And the woman said, The serpent deceived me, and I ate. ¹⁴The LORD God said to the



serpent, Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, and dust you will eat all the days of your life; ¹⁵And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.

So God's ages-long preparation included a prophecy of hope - even with the first sin!

Time passed and God's favor would find Abraham. He would prove himself to be a dramatic example of choosing God first.

This time the consequences for such an action were a blessing and a promise:

Genesis 22:15-18: (NASB) *¹⁵Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, ¹⁶and said, By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. ¹⁸In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.*

Time and favor would pass from Father Abraham to son Isaac to grandson Jacob as God prepared a generational trust in His Name and His will. Now God's preparation would focus on a nation, born of Jacob.

This nation of Israel would need a law to guide them:

Galatians 3:19: (NASB) *Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made.*

The Law was there so sin could be identified - until the promised seed would come. Moses was there so the people could choose to understand God through him, and yet as great a leader as Moses was, he too was but another step in the ages-long preparation of God's plan.

Moses himself said:

Deuteronomy 18:17-19: (NASB) *¹⁷The LORD said to me, They have spoken well. ¹⁸I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. ¹⁹It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.*

Moses even knew that he was to be a forerunner of one much greater than himself. Just as Moses was the forerunner of Christ, the Law was the forerunner of faith. God's ages-long preparation gave ample time for learning, observing and for experiencing the long road back to their Creator.

Galatians 3:22-26: (NASB) *²²But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. ²³But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. ²⁴Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. ²⁵But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. ²⁶For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.*



With the Law as a tutor in place, God's ages-long preparation would continue, now adding a deeper dimension of prophecy regarding the redemption to come.

Acts 3:18-19: (NASB) ¹⁸But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. ¹⁹Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;

Some of these prophecies would detail another forerunner of Christ - the one who would prepare the people for their Messiah:

Isaiah 40:3-5: (NASB) ³A voice is calling, clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴Let every valley be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; And let the rough ground become a plain, and the rugged terrain a broad valley; ⁵Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all flesh will see it together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

This prophet would be the first sent in over 400 years. John's message would lead to Christ.



"The Voice of One Crying," Robin Mark

John 1:25-29: (NASB) ²⁵They asked him... Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet? ²⁶John answered them saying, I baptize in water, but among you stands one whom you do not know. ²⁷It is he who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie... ²⁹The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

So we can see that God, in His eternal foresight and wisdom, meticulously prepared for the Messiah to come at just the right time to bring the planned redemption of the human race.

Part Two of our Story: The Last Days Preparation



"Now We Are Free," from the movie, *Gladiator*

In our last segment, we looked at a 4000 year plus period of preparation that God put in place for the purpose of laying the groundwork for Messiah's sacrifice. Jesus came on the scene and at 30 years of age went to work fulfilling the task before him. 3½ years later, he had flawlessly completed the *living* sacrifice portion of the mission. Now what was left was to fulfill the *dying* part of the sacrifice mission which was necessary to pay the ransom.

We now enter into Jesus' experience on the final night of his life. How would you spend *your* time if you knew that your next experiences would be torture and death? Let's see how Jesus chose to spend his time...

Jesus' first order of business was a much needed lesson in humility for those who followed him:

John 13:3-9: (NKJV) ³Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, ⁴rose from supper and laid aside his garments, took a towel and girded himself. ⁵After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. ⁶Then he came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, Lord, are you washing my feet?



⁷Jesus answered and said to him, *What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this.* ⁸Peter said to him, You shall never wash my feet! Jesus answered him, *If I do not wash you, you have no part with me.* ⁹Simon Peter said to him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!

This simple lesson of the washing of their feet was most profound - Jesus being their leader, their teacher and mentor should have had his feet washed by somebody, yet they all deemed themselves of too high a station to perform such a task. So Jesus did it. He humbled himself to the lowest position among them to show them that they too could find the greatness of God's favor if only they would be small in their own eyes - if only they would stop worrying about what others might think - if only they would seek God's approval over the approval of men - if only they would serve one another.

After getting their attention by humbly washing their feet, Jesus next reveals his betrayer:

Matthew 26:20-22: (NKJV) ²⁰When evening had come, he sat down with the twelve. ²¹Now as they were eating, he said, *Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.* ²²And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to him, Lord, is it I?

This would have been a shocking revelation - even to the point of disbelief, so Jesus showed them:

John 13:26-31: (NKJV) ²⁶Jesus answered, *It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it.* And having dipped the bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. ²⁷Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, *What you do, do quickly.* ... ³⁰Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night. ³¹So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, *Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in him.*

Think about it - Jesus' betrayer leaves the room to betray him and his reaction is not one of hate or disappointment or frustration. No, his reaction is one of praise. NOW he could glorify God for the machinery of betrayal and death were irrevocably set on their course - and this - this is what he had come to do.

Jesus, now seeing the final stages of his life unfolding, had a choice as to what to do next. What would you or I do at such a time?

For Jesus, the choice was a simple one. He was so motivated by love that he chose to focus on giving strength to his disciples:

John 13:33-38: (NKJV) ³³Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek me; and as I said to the Jews, Where I am going, you cannot come, so now I say to you. ³⁴A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. ³⁶Simon Peter said to him, Lord, where are you going? Jesus answered him, *Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you shall follow me afterward.* ³⁷Peter said to him, Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for your sake. ³⁸Jesus answered him, *Will you lay down your life for my sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied me three times.*

Another shocking revelation that bordered on the impossible! How could Peter, the leader of the followers, Peter the outspoken one, Peter the one who even walked on water for a moment...how could he deny his Lord? Jesus told him to warn him.



Jesus told him because he knew what was at stake.

Luke 22:31-32: (NKJV) ³¹*And the Lord said, Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. ³²But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to me, strengthen your brethren.*

Jesus continues his encouragement. He now focuses on the future unity that they would all share as a result of his coming sacrifice:

John 14:1-6: (NRSV) ¹*Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. ²In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴And you know the way to the place where I am going. ⁵Thomas said to him, Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way? ⁶Jesus said to him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*



"Night Rain," Jim Brickman

As they are walking to Gethsemane, Jesus continues to prepare for his death by preparing those he loves. Thus far he has taught them an almost embarrassing lesson in humility and servitude, told them hard truths while encouraging them, and talked of their future inheritance together.

Next, he would teach them about the simplicity of living their everyday lives by abiding in him, through the tender lesson of the vine and the branches:

John 15:1-5: (NRSV) ¹*I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. ²He (lifts up) every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. ³You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.*

With this graphic lesson of how to live every day, Jesus now moves on to other trials that are upon them, but not without sharing the inspiration for victory!

John 16:32-33: (NRSV) ³²*The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each one to his home, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. ³³I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!*

What faith! "I have conquered the world!" So, in the midst of the uncertainty that the disciples were experiencing and with the weight of the world that Jesus was carrying upon his shoulders, Jesus took this precious time to encourage and strengthen his brethren. He spoke plainly to them of the coming tempest and told them to stand unafraid, for whatever it is that they would be faced with - he had already overcome it! He reminded them of the necessity for humility and faith. Jesus showed them the way.

Jesus' final act of preparation that night was prayer. His prayer, as recorded in John 17, is a touching look into his heart, into his love for his Father and his love for us:



Jesus Praying John 17, from the movie, *The Gospel of John*

John 18:1-2: (NRSV) ¹After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. ²Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples.

Jesus was now ready and prepared to take the next trying and difficult steps.

Part Three of our Story: Gethsemane and Darkness



Jesus' time had come - the ages-long preparations of Almighty God meshed precisely with the last hours of preparations of Jesus, and now a deep and foreboding darkness was underway.



"The Council of Elrond," from the movie, *Lord of the Rings*

Jesus and his disciples made their way to the Garden of Gethsemane, a place that Jesus often went to meditate, focus and pray:

Matthew 26-42: (NKJV) ...and he began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. ³⁸Then he said to them, *My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with me.* ³⁹He went a little farther and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, *O my Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.* ⁴⁰Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, *What! Could you not watch with me one hour?* ⁴¹*Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.* ⁴²Again, a second time, he went away and prayed, saying, *O my Father, if this cup cannot pass away from me unless I drink it, Your will be done.*



Just as a storm rises over Galilee, the storm of trial came quickly upon Jesus, as he knew that betrayal was imminent.

His instincts had led him to pray for the physical strength and the spiritual courage necessary to overcome... and pray he did, over and over and over.

Luke 22:43-44: (NRSV) ⁴³Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave him strength. ⁴⁴In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground. ⁴³Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. ⁴⁵Then he came to the disciples and said to them, *Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.* ⁴⁶*Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.*



"The Taming of Smeagol," from the movie, *Lord of the Rings*

While Jesus was yet speaking to his followers, a crowd came to the garden. This crowd was led by a trusted friend - Judas, one of his twelve closest follower, one who had been deeply involved in his teaching and who had seen many miracles:

Luke 22:47-48: (NRSV) ⁴⁷While he was still speaking, suddenly a crowd came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him; ⁴⁸but Jesus said to him, *Judas, is it with a kiss that you are betraying the Son of Man?*

John 18:3-9: (NRSV) ³So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. ⁴Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, *Whom are you looking for?* ⁵They answered, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus replied, *I am he.* Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. ⁶When Jesus said to them, *I am he*, they stepped back and fell to the ground. ⁷Again he asked them, *Whom are you looking for?* And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. ⁸Jesus answered, *I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go.* ⁹This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken, I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me.

Even now the power of God flowed through Jesus. He could have easily walked away, but he chose not to:

John 18:10 (NRSV) ¹⁰Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus. ¹¹Jesus said to Peter, *Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?*

Luke 22:51-53: (NRSV) ⁵¹But Jesus said, *No more of this!* And he touched his ear and healed him. ⁵²Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple police, and the elders who had come for him, *Have you come out with swords and clubs as if I were a bandit?* ⁵³*When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness!*

So Jesus allowed himself to be arrested as he arranged for the freedom of his disciples. The soldiers, their officer and the Jewish police bound him and took him away.



"The Flight to the Ford," from the movie, *Lord of the Rings*

Jesus was now on his way to Annas, the son-in-law of Caiaphas the high priest. Following behind in the distance were Peter and John, no doubt bewildered



and unsure. Judas - their friend Judas - betrayed him? What was going to happen? Surely this must be some kind of misunderstanding! Once they got to the courtyard of the high priest, John had to arrange for Peter's entrance with the woman by the gate.

Once inside, Peter settled by a fire with others to keep warm.

Selections from: John 18:13-26: (NRSV) and Luke 22:55-65: (ASV)

Luke 22:56,57: ⁵⁶And a certain maid seeing him as he sat in the light of the fire, and looking steadfastly upon him, said, This man also was with him. ⁵⁷But he denied, saying, Woman, I know him not.

Peter must have surprised himself. Sure, he was scared, and sure he wanted to stay as close to Jesus as possible...but deny that he knew him? How could he? Perhaps he rationalized that anonymity was necessary to stay close by. So Peter sat quietly, maybe feeling a bit more self-conscious than before. He watched from a distance as Jesus was being questioned about his teachings.

He watched and he waited:

John 18:25: Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, You are not also one of his disciples, are you? He denied it and said, I am not.

Again he denied Jesus! What was he thinking? Where was his courage? Where was the Peter who had boldly left all to follow Jesus, the Peter who would speak for his fellow disciples, the Peter who would stare fear in the face - especially when with Jesus...?

Luke 22:59: And after the space of about one hour John 18:26: One of the slaves of the high priest, confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this man also was with him; for he is a Galilean.

Luke 22:60-62: ⁶⁰But Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. ⁶¹And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how that he said unto him, Before the cock crow this day thou shalt deny me thrice. ⁶²And he went out, and wept bitterly.

All at once Peter's life had fallen to pieces, shattered upon the rocks of his own foolish pride, ground to dust by his own fear, and blown to the four corners of the earth by the winds of despair. Once not so long ago he had stood side by side with his master, willing to do anything, willing to go anywhere at Jesus' bidding. Now he could not even so much as acknowledge his discipleship. Jesus knew - Jesus saw him deny - he heard him deny - and now, now it was too late...all that was left for Peter was the bitterness of the tears of regret...it was too late...

Luke 22:63-65: ⁶³And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and beat him. ⁶⁴And they blindfolded him, and asked him, saying, Prophecy: who is he that struck thee? ⁶⁵And many other things spake they against him, reviling him.

To be mocked and beaten - this would be the order of events for the rest of this fateful night for Jesus right up until his death. He was later taken to Pilate's headquarters in the very early morning, where Pilate could find no fault with him and sought his release. The gathered crowd, led by the Pharisees, had different ideas.



Give us Barabbas! From the movie, The Gospel of John

Pilate would now have Jesus beaten again. They put a crown of thorns on his head and dressed him in a purple robe. Pilate would try to release Jesus but Jesus himself would say nothing in his own defense.

Crucify Him! From the movie, The Gospel of John

So Jesus is now on his way to crucifixion. Unjustly accused, unjustly tried and abused, he opened not his mouth in his own defense, but went quietly as a sheep to the slaughter, for his mission required it of him.

Part Four of our Story: Crucifixion



"Via Dolorosa," Sandi Patti

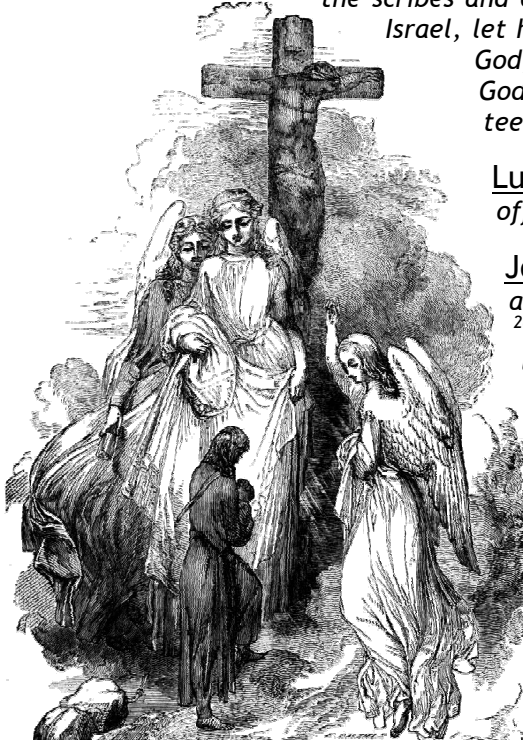
John 19:17: (KJV) *And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha:*



"Evenstar," from the movie, Lord of the Rings

Luke 23:26-28: (KJV) ²⁶And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus. ²⁷And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. ²⁸But Jesus turning unto them said, *Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.*

John 19:19-22: (KJV) *And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. ²⁰This title then read many of the Jews: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. ²¹Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. ²²Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.*



Mark 15:27: (KJV) *And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left.*

Matthew 27:39-44: (KJV) ³⁹*And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads,* ⁴⁰*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.* ⁴¹*Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said,* ⁴²*He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.* ⁴³*He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.* ⁴⁴*The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.*

Luke 23:36-37: (KJV) ³⁶*And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar,* ³⁷*And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.*

John 19:25-27: (KJV) ²⁵*Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.* ²⁶*When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, **Woman, behold thy son!*** ²⁷*Then saith he to the disciple, **Behold thy mother!*** And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

Luke 23:39-43: (KJV) ³⁹*And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.* ⁴⁰*But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?* ⁴¹*And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.* ⁴²*And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.* ⁴³*And Jesus said unto him, **Verily I say unto thee today, shalt thou be with me in paradise.***



Theme from the movie *The Titanic*, Instrumental

Isaiah 53:3-4: (NASB) ³*He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face he was despised, and we did not esteem him.* ⁴*Surely our griefs he himself bore, and our sorrows he carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.*

Mark 15:33-36: (KJV) John 19:28 and 30: (KJV) Luke 23:46: (KJV)

Mark 15:33-34: ³³*And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.* ³⁴*And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, **Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*** which is, being interpreted, **My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?**

John 19:28: ²⁸*After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, **I thirst.*** **Mark 15:35-36:** ³⁵*And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elijah.* ³⁶*And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.* **John 19:30:** ³⁰*When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, **It is finished,*** **Luke 23:46:** ***Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit:*** and having said thus, he bowed his head, and gave up the spirit.

Matthew 27:51 and 54: (KJV) ⁵¹*And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;* ⁵⁴*Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.*

Mark 15:40-41: (NRSV) ⁴⁰*There were also women looking on from a distance; among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome.*



⁴¹These used to follow him and provided for him when he was in Galilee; and there were many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem.

It was in this manner that Jesus the Christ was crucified and it was in this manner that Jesus the Christ did die...

Isaiah 53:6-7: (NASB) ⁶All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him. ⁷He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open his mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so he did not open his mouth.



"Jerusalem Arise - O Yah," Paul Wilbur

Part Five of our Story: Resurrection and Forgiveness

There was a sense of urgency to end this crucifixion scene. The urgency was not driven by any form of compassion or mercy, but by the fact that sundown was the beginning of both the Sabbath and the Passover, which made this particular Sabbath a higher and holier celebration than normal. With the tens of thousands of extra people in Jerusalem for the Passover, the spectacle of bodies on crosses, especially Jesus', had the potential to cause a stir amongst the people that the Pharisees did not want to deal with. Thus the urgency was only for the Pharisees' protection.





So Jesus was taken down, to be buried in a new tomb, belonging to Joseph of Arimathea. Joseph and Nicodemus respectfully wrapped the lifeless body with myrrh and aloes in linen cloths and laid it to rest. They then rolled the stone over the door... All was now quiet and the following day at the request of the Pharisees, the guards arrived, sealed the tomb and watched - lest someone should steal the body and claim resurrection.



Mark 16:1-7: (KJV) and Luke 24:6-8: (KJV) Mark 16:1-6: ¹And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. ²And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulcher at the rising of the sun. ³And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulcher? ⁴And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great. ⁵And entering into the sepulcher, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were afraid. ⁶And he saith unto them, Be not afraid: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: Why seek ye the living among the dead? **he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him...**

Luke 24:6-8: **The angel continued:**...⁶remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, ⁷Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. ⁸And they remembered his words, Mark 16:7: But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

Here was to begin a new frenzy of activity, for the resurrection of Jesus would not only energize the fragile followers he left behind, it would send a shock wave through all the nation. Mary would be the first to actually speak to the risen Lord. Peter and John would soon race to the sepulcher, only to find it empty. Now the realization of what Jesus had said all along would begin to sink in...he IS the son of God! He IS risen! He IS the long awaited Messiah!



"Messiah, Glory to God," Lorna Anderson, Paul Esswood



"Amazing Grace, My Chains are Gone," Chris Tomlin

The resurrection was truly a more remarkable event than could have ever been imagined, just as Jesus said it would be. With all of the excitement in the following days and weeks, the Apostle Peter would not be forgotten by his Lord. Jesus would pick up the pieces of Peter's shattered life, rejuvenate his faith and help him to break the chains of the darkness within him. This is amazing grace!

Redemption comes through forgiveness and forgiveness comes through grace. These are the gifts that Peter was given by Jesus, for Jesus knew his heart, Jesus knew his potential, and Jesus knew that deep within Peter lived a fearless and abiding courage. So, Peter is given a glorious redemption, and now it would be Peter's turn to rise to the challenges of leadership as he would stand upon the shoulders of his Lord.



Redemption is a powerful force!!!



"How Can I Keep From Singing," SheDaisy

John 21:15-17: Jesus said to Simon Peter, *Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?* He said to him, Yes, Lord; you know that I love you. Jesus said to him, *Feed my lambs.*

¹⁶A second time he said to him, *Simon son of John, do you love me?* He said to him, Yes, Lord; you know that I love you. Jesus said to him, *Tend my sheep.*



¹⁷He said to him the third time, *Simon son of John, do you love me?... And he said to him, Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you. Jesus said to him, Feed my sheep...*



Part Six of our Story: Redemption



"You Raise Me Up," Celtic Woman

(Source: The Life of Christ, Fenton Farrar page 656) At the moment when Christ died, nothing could have seemed more abjectly weak, more pitifully hopeless, more absolutely doomed to scorn, and extinction and despair, than the Church which he had founded. It numbered but a handful of weak followers, of which the boldest had denied his Lord with blasphemy, and the most devoted had forsaken him and fled. They were poor, they were ignorant, they were hopeless. They could not claim a single synagogue or a single sword.... How was it that these dull and ignorant men, with their cross of wood, triumphed over the deadly fascinations of sensual mythologies, conquered kings and their armies and overcame the world?

What was it that thus caused strength to be made perfect out of abject weakness? There is one, and one only possible answer—the resurrection from the dead.

What did the life, death and resurrection of Jesus really bring? We say that we have been redeemed, but what does that really mean? Well, let's look at a number of scriptures and prophecies that describe redemption to us.



"Sundial Dreams," Kevin Kearns

Colossians 1:19-20: (NRSV) ¹⁹For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

Let's notice the elements here: we have Jesus and the church, who are his "called out" ones. Then it says that God through Jesus and his sacrifice reconciled and made peace with ALL things - this is much more than the church - redemption is bigger!

1 Corinthians 15:21-22: (NRSV) ²¹For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; ²²for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ.

Here we have the solid foundation of justice as the basis for redemption. All of us were subject to death because we were born in Adam; therefore, because Jesus died for Adam - a perfect man for a perfect man - justice demands that ALL of us are subject to resurrection in Christ.



Daniel 2:44: (ASV) *And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.*

The God of heaven will set up a kingdom. Where? Well, where are "those kings?" Here on earth! Not only does this prophecy speak of the setting up of a kingdom, it speaks of a kingdom that will NEVER be destroyed! How can this be? It is all as a result of the redemption of Jesus! No wonder Jesus taught us to pray, "thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

See? Redemption brings blessing!

So what will this kingdom look like?

Micah 4:1-2: (KJV) *¹But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. ²And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.*

These are specifics about the future of earth. There will be many nations - they will ALL be seeking after God - they will walk in Godly paths with Israel as their example.

Micah 4:3-5: (KJV) *³And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. ⁴But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it. ⁵For all people will walk everyone in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever.*

God will teach the world the ways of peace: swords to plowshares, spears to pruning hooks, and no more war; rather they will all dwell in peace, each with the ability to provide for themselves and all while living under God!

So, while those faithful to Jesus now will have an inheritance in heaven, the "everybody else" (the ones who most often seem to be left behind) will have an inheritance on earth, once they prove faithful to Jesus in the Day of Judgment Day.

Praise be to God for his *unspeakable* gift!!



"All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name," Mormon Tabernacle Choir

Philippians 2:9-11: (NASB) *⁹For this reason also, God highly exalted him, and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*



This is the greatest story ever told, one that changes the course of human events for all of eternity.

Glory to God! Christ is Risen!
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!