

## Jesus IS Risen!

**Mark 16:6: (KJV) *And (the Angel) said unto them, Be not (afraid): Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.***



There have been many world changing events in human history. The printing press made knowledge accessible to the masses. The light bulb literally illuminated man's course and fed an industrial revolution which brought previously unthinkable invention and convenience to many. Penicillin protected life in a new way. These events, and many others, changed man's course and significantly altered their respected scope. Yet, they were still limited and even restricted in who and what they could reach throughout history, as they could only reach a limited amount of people currently living or yet to be born. There was only one event at any time in all of history that would alter man's DESTINY - all of man's destiny, from Adam and on through all of the civilizations ever experienced, on an eternal scale. That event was the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ! It is that event that we celebrate today...



It is a known fact that oil and water do not mix. When experienced together they in some ways can represent inherent contradiction. Such was the mixture of events that last night before Jesus was to experience the crushing torture, torment and trial, and then absorb the agony of crucifixion. These events would produce some of the most tenderly expressed teachings of his life and at the same time these events would give seed to the cruelest betrayal of his life.

The scene was in the upper room. Jesus' time left with his beloved disciples was now down to a precious few hours. He knew that they would not understand what was about to take place and he sought to protect them by teaching them the most important lessons of their lives through his words and his example.

**John 13:2-20: (NASB) *<sup>2</sup>During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray him, <sup>3</sup>Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come forth from God and was going back to God, <sup>4</sup>got up from supper, and laid aside his garments; and taking a towel, he girded himself. <sup>5</sup>Then he poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded...<sup>12</sup>So when he had washed their feet, and taken his garments and reclined at the table again, he said to them, Do you know what I have done to you? <sup>13</sup>You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. <sup>14</sup>If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. <sup>15</sup>For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.***

*You also should do as I did to you...*The lesson was profound! True greatness would be found in those who would be always willing to serve as the least among them, for this would give evidence of the spirit of Christ, the spirit of giving without condition.

*<sup>17</sup>If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. <sup>18</sup>I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I have chosen; but it is that the Scripture may be fulfilled; He who eats my bread has lifted up his heel against me. <sup>19</sup>From now on I am telling you before it comes to pass, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am he.*

In the midst of this life-altering lesson of serving one another, Jesus now quotes an Old Testament prophecy of betrayal and that of the worst kind - a friend - a true friend who becomes an enemy.

John 13:21: (NASB) *When Jesus had said this, he became troubled in spirit, and testified and said, Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray me.*

Mark 14:19-20: (NASB) *<sup>19</sup>They began to be grieved and to say to him one by one, Surely not I? <sup>20</sup>And he said to them, It is one of the twelve, one who dips with me in the bowl.*

Luke 22:21: (NASB) *...behold, the hand of the one betraying me is with mine on the table.*

Confusion struck the disciples, for what Jesus was saying surely could not have been what he meant! They needed to know his meaning, and they needed to know now.

John 13:22-26: (NASB) *<sup>22</sup>The disciples began looking at one another, at a loss to know of which one He was speaking. <sup>23</sup>There was reclining on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. <sup>24</sup>So Simon Peter gestured to him, and said to him, Tell us who it is of whom he is speaking. <sup>25</sup>He, leaning back thus on Jesus' bosom, said to him, Lord, who is it? <sup>26</sup>Jesus then answered, That is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him. So when he had dipped the morsel, he took and gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.*

Matthew 26:25: (NASB) *And Judas, who was betraying him, said, Surely it is not I, Rabbi? Jesus said to him, You have said it yourself.*

John 13:27-31: (NASB) *<sup>27</sup>After the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Therefore Jesus said to him, What you do, do quickly...<sup>30</sup>So after receiving the morsel he went out immediately; and it was night. <sup>31</sup>Therefore when he had gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him;*

So Judas went out into the night. Jesus, having now revealed his betrayer, could have become despondent, for he had lost a friend to evil. His response though, was yet another lesson, for Jesus did not focus on the pain of betrayal. Rather he focused on the power of another prophecy being fulfilled, all to the glory of God!

After the Memorial meal together, they went out into the night and were on their way to the Garden of Gethsemane. On their way, they may have passed through a vineyard and Jesus perhaps paused there to use this moment for their last life-altering lesson before the dark night of his trial.

**Imagine Jesus in the vineyard with his disciples, standing by a grapevine and teaching them:**

John 15:1-4: (NASB) *<sup>1</sup>I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. <sup>2</sup>Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit.*

The “taking away” in this verse is actually much better translated, *to take up or lift up*. This is a much more sensible translation when you understand how a vinedresser treats those branches that are not bearing fruit.



According to *The Secrets of the Vine*, by Bruce Wilkinson, page 34: "New branches have a natural tendency to trail down and grow along the ground. But they don't bear fruit down there. When branches grow along the ground the leaves get coated in dust. When it rains they get muddied and mildewed. The branch becomes sick and useless. ... These branches are much too valuable to cut off. We go through the vineyard with a bucket of water looking for these branches. We lift them up and wash them off. Then we wrap them around the trellis or tie them up. Pretty soon they're thriving."

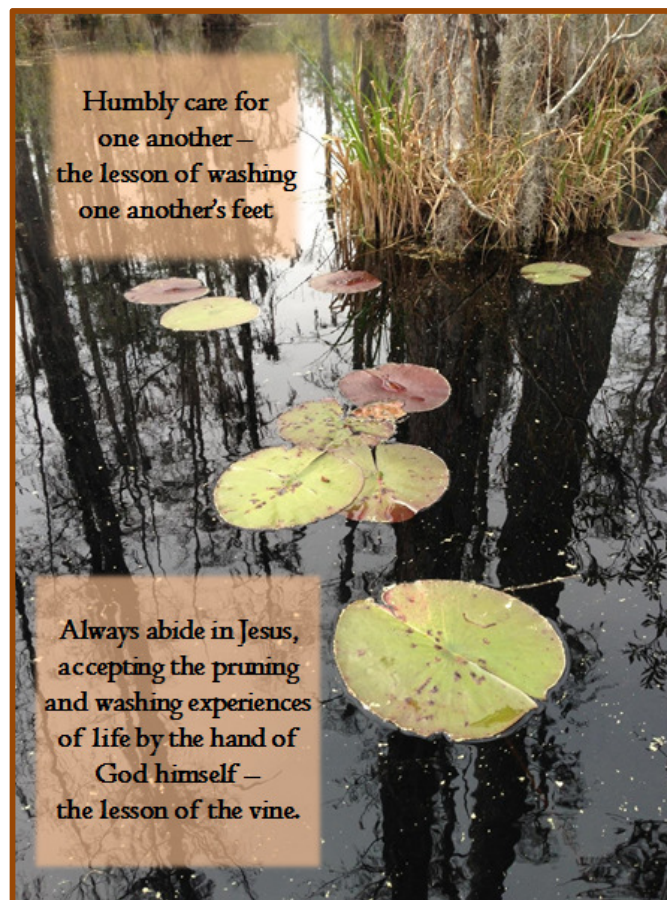
<sup>3</sup>You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup>Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in me.

John 15:8-10: (NASB) <sup>8</sup>my Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples. <sup>9</sup>Just as the Father has loved me, I have also loved you; abide in my love. <sup>10</sup>If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love; just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love.

*The Secrets of the Vine*, by Bruce Wilkinson, page 71: ...The vine's ability to produce growth increases each year, but without intensive pruning the plant weakens and its crop diminishes. Mature branches must be pruned hard to achieve maximum yield.

This was the lesson of the vine.

Jesus would now lead his followers to the Garden of Gethsemane. They had been given two simple, life-changing lessons to prepare for trial:



Now, for a time, darkness would swallow them...

## Chapter Two: Alone in the Darkness



When facing extreme stress in our lives, we all have favorite places or circumstances that we seek to help us find strength and peace. Jesus was no different. The Garden of Gethsemane was such a place for him, as it offered an ancient beauty and rustic presence in which to deeply communicate with his heavenly father. So they went to the Garden. Jesus, knowing that he would soon be taken prisoner wanted to be in this place of peace, with his most beloved friends at his side...



**Matthew 26:37-42:** (NKJV) *...and he began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed.<sup>38</sup> Then he said to them, my soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with me.<sup>39</sup> He 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.<sup>40</sup> Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to*

*Peter, What! Could you not watch with me one hour?<sup>41</sup> Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.<sup>42</sup> Again, 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 rose 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.

Each time he prayed, he became more focused.

**Luke 22:43-44:** (NRSV) *<sup>43</sup>Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave him strength. <sup>44</sup>In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground.*

Every part of Jesus was engaged in this - his final prayer as a free man. Every part of him strained and struggled and every part of him, in the end, did acquiesce; *nevertheless, not my will, but thy will be done...*

*<sup>43</sup> Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. <sup>44</sup> So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. <sup>45</sup> Then 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. <sup>46</sup> Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.*

A crowd with torches, swords and armor approached. It was led by an unarmed man, an unarmed and *familiar* man...

Luke 22:47-48: (NRSV) <sup>47</sup>...Judas approached Jesus to kiss him; <sup>48</sup>but Jesus said to him, Judas, is it with a kiss that you are betraying the Son of Man?

John 18:3-11: (NRSV) <sup>3</sup>So 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. ...he asked them, Whom are you looking for? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. <sup>8</sup>Jesus answered, I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go. <sup>9</sup>This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken, “I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me.”

So this is what betrayal looks like: lanterns, torches, weapons and a contingent of chief priests and Pharisees, all to apprehend a man who never even used a sword or a spear and whose life was spent healing, teaching and encouraging the masses. Even so, Jesus was willing to be taken...

<sup>10</sup>Then 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. <sup>11</sup>Jesus 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) <sup>51</sup>...No more of this! And he touched his ear and healed him. <sup>52</sup>Then 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? <sup>53</sup>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!

We as humans always seem to resort to our true selves, especially when pressure is applied to our lives. For the Pharisees, “true self” was here reflected in illegal actions in the dark of night. For Judas, true self was to do whatever was necessary for the sake of gain. For Peter, it was to leap into action. For Jesus, true self was to restore order, to acquiesce to the Father's will and to heal, even if that healing was for the benefit of an enemy.

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. They kept their distance as they could not settle for just hiding as the others had done. Once they got to the palace of the high priest, John had to arrange for Peter's entrance with the woman by the gate. It would have been shortly after midnight, and this would be this first phase of the religious trial to which Jesus was subjected.

John 18:19-24: (NASB) <sup>19</sup>The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples, and about his teaching. <sup>20</sup>Jesus answered him, I have spoken openly to the world; I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and I spoke nothing in secret...<sup>22</sup>When he had said this, one of the officers standing nearby struck Jesus, saying, Is that the way you answer the high priest? <sup>23</sup>Jesus answered him, If I have spoken wrongly, testify of the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike me? <sup>24</sup>So Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

Mark 14:54: (NASB) Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the officers and warming himself at the fire.

Now phase two of Jesus' religious trial would begin, somewhere around one or two in the morning. This was clearly illegal, as the Sanhedrin were never to meet before daybreak.

They gathered witnesses against Jesus, but as with all acts of darkness, these witnesses were false and did not agree. Finally the high priest asked him, Art

*thou the Christ, the son of the Blessed?*

**Jesus answered:**

**Mark 14:62-64:** (NASB) <sup>62</sup>...I am; and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven. <sup>63</sup>Tearing his clothes, the high priest said, What further need do we have of witnesses? <sup>64</sup>You have heard the blasphemy; how does it seem to you? And they all condemned him to be deserving of death.

While this was going on inside, another drama of darkness was unfolding outside where Peter and others were warming themselves by a fire.

**John 18:13-27:** (NRSV) and **Luke 22:54-65:** (ASV) <sup>56</sup>And 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. <sup>57</sup>But 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, perhaps feeling a bit more self-conscious than before. He watched from a distance as Jesus was being questioned about his teachings...

<sup>25</sup>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 his master?

<sup>59</sup>And after the space of about one hour <sup>26</sup>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. <sup>60</sup>But Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. <sup>61</sup>And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how that he said unto him, Before the cock crew this day thou shalt deny me thrice. <sup>62</sup>And 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.

And Jesus knew.

Jesus saw him deny.

He heard him deny and now it was too late.

All that was left for Peter was the bitterness of the tears of regret.

It was just too late...

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

Jesus would now go into the third stage of his religious trial, this time before the Sanhedrin. There would be more questions and more doubting, and Jesus again told them he was the Son of God.

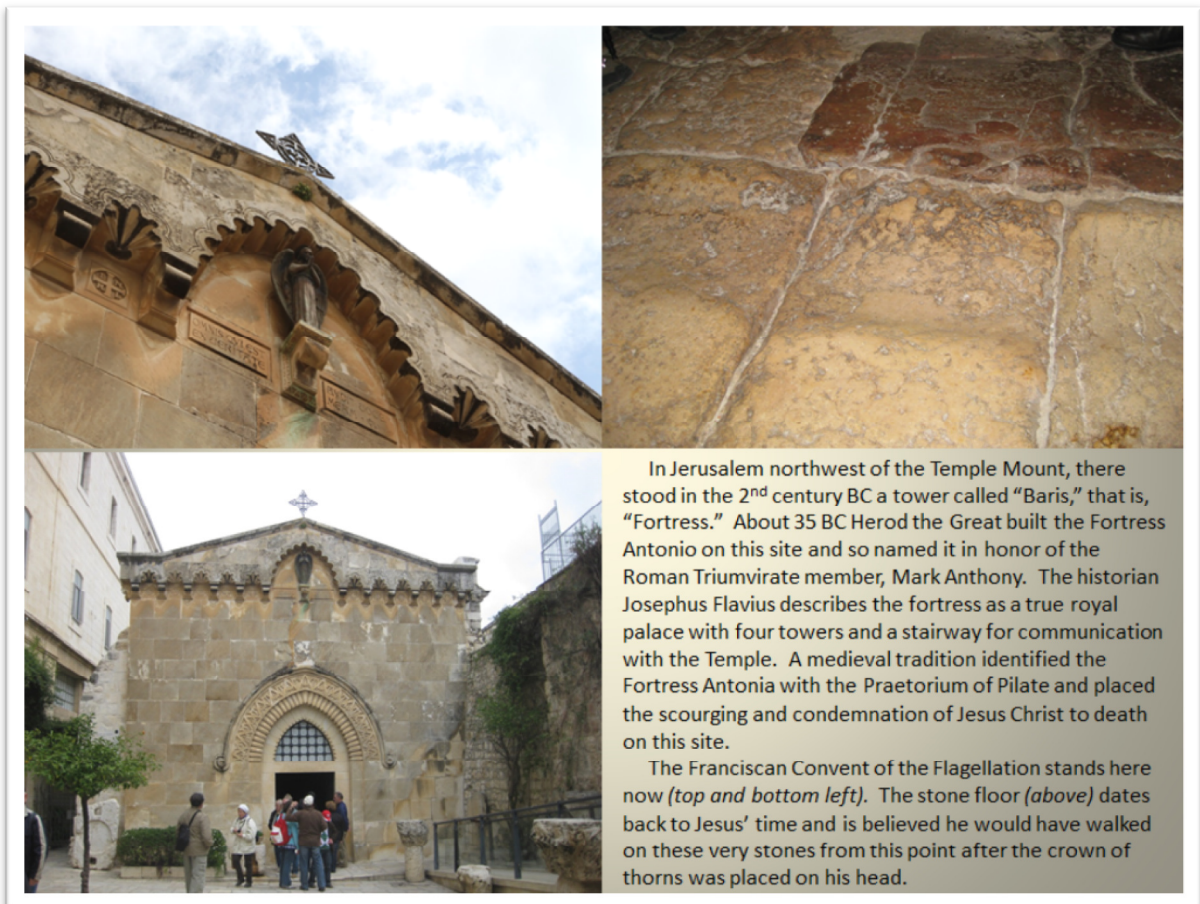
They then held consultation. They bound him and led him away to be delivered to Pilate. So, even now in the light of day, the works of darkness continued their evil progress...

### Chapter Three: Freedom's Price



When human life is on the line, we often see those few special individuals rise to the top and do extraordinary things in its defense. We call them heroes. 2,000 years ago, Jesus was THE hero, for he not only endured and overcame evil plotting, lies and betrayal; he endured and overcame pain, torture, humiliation and crucifixion - all without sin and all done to pay the price - the required price of redemption for the entire human race. Freedom's price was high and Jesus paid it all!

**John 18:28-30:** (NASB) <sup>28</sup>Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas into the Praetorium, and it was early; and they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium so that they would not be defiled, but might eat the Passover. <sup>29</sup>Therefore Pilate went out to them and said, What accusation do you bring against this man? <sup>30</sup>They answered and said to him, If this man were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered him to you.



So Pilate questions Jesus and sees a problem...there is no fault with this man! If that wasn't enough, it was obvious that the high priests had a vendetta against him, so simply releasing Jesus would not do either. Pilate reacted as any good politician - he sought the path of least resistance - and sent Jesus over to Herod, who questioned him, mocked him, arrayed him in a gorgeous robe and sent him again to Pilate.

**Luke 23:13-15:** (NASB) <sup>13</sup>Pilate summoned the chief priests and the rulers and the people, <sup>14</sup>and said to them, You brought this man to me as one who incites the people to rebellion, and behold, having examined him before you, I have found no guilt in this man regarding the charges which you make against him. <sup>15</sup>No, nor has Herod, for he sent him back to us; and behold, nothing deserving death has been done by him.

Pilate sought to release Jesus, but the crowd clamored for Barabbas. Pilate had one more option...



**John 19:1-6:** (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Pilate then took Jesus and scourged him. <sup>2</sup>And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and put a purple robe on him; <sup>3</sup>and they began to come up to him and say, Hail, King of the Jews! and to give him slaps in the face. <sup>4</sup>Pilate came out again and said to them, Behold, I am bringing him out to you so that you may know that I find no guilt in him. <sup>5</sup>Jesus then came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, Behold, the Man! <sup>6</sup>So when the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out saying, Crucify him, crucify him! Pilate said to them, Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him.

The Jews dug their heels in! They would not and could not allow Jesus to be released, so their boldness with Pilate increased as they shouted out their allegiance to Roman authority.

**Pilate became more afraid, again questioned Jesus and again brought him out before the people:**

**John 19:14-15:** (NASB) <sup>14</sup>Now it was the day of preparation for the Passover; it was about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, Behold, your King! <sup>15</sup>So they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him! Pilate said to them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. **Matthew 27:24:** (NASB) <sup>24</sup>When Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a riot was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, saying, I am innocent of this man's blood; see to that yourselves.

**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:

Here was Jesus (who owned no earthly possessions, who spent his life teaching any who would listen and reasoned with those who would not), carrying the weight of all humanity upon his worn and bloody shoulders.

Here was Jesus, abandoned, betrayed and now walking all alone.

Here was Jesus who had raised Lazarus from the dead, who healed, who walked on water and now was walking the "way of suffering" (Via Dolorosa) so he could bear the sins of those who mocked and spit at him.

Here was Jesus...





**Luke 23:26-28:** (KJV) <sup>26</sup>And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian... and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus. <sup>27</sup>And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. <sup>28</sup>But 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) <sup>19</sup>And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. <sup>20</sup>This title then read many of the Jews: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. <sup>21</sup>Then 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. <sup>22</sup>Pilate 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) <sup>39</sup>And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, <sup>40</sup>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. <sup>41</sup>Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, <sup>42</sup>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. <sup>43</sup>He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. <sup>44</sup>The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

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

**John 19:25-27:** (KJV) <sup>25</sup>Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. <sup>26</sup>When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! <sup>27</sup>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) <sup>39</sup>And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. <sup>40</sup>But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? <sup>41</sup>And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. <sup>42</sup>And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. <sup>43</sup>And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee today, shalt thou be with me in paradise.

**Mark 15:33-34:** (KJV) <sup>33</sup>And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. <sup>34</sup>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?

Here was indeed the final test. The previous night Jesus came to grips with crucifixion as a blasphemer, though it took sweating great drops of blood to get there. Now he was faced with the utter loneliness and agony of his Father’s ever present face being turned from him, for this was the last necessary darkness that he would be called upon to bear by his Father. And he bore it. He bore this burden piled upon all of the other burdens because he did not know how to *not* do his Father’s will.

Though not perceptible to any onlooker at this point, victory had been secured!

**John 19:28-30:** (KJV) <sup>28</sup>After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. <sup>35</sup>And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elias. <sup>36</sup>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 Elias will come to take him down. <sup>30</sup>When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he bowed his head, and gave up the (spirit).

Thus, the greatest human life ever lived breathed his last breath. There was no fanfare, no celebration of victory, no multitudes to console one another at his passing. Instead there had been a steady stream of mockers and revilers and darkness, hours of darkness. Yet, the victory had been won. Jesus had done precisely and perfectly what he had come to do and now, with his death, the plan of God took on an immortal life. The price had been paid and salvation could not be stopped. Life was now inevitable!



Great deeds are deserving of great rewards and often times, the greatest rewards can be expressed in the simplest terms. In this case, the great sacrifice rendered by Jesus was offered for one simple reason... love. Love of the Father, love of the fallen human race and love of the Father’s law of justice. And so Jesus’ great sacrifice, driven by his love, was responded to by the Father with the simple reward of life immortal and with it a seat at the Father’s right hand of power.

There was a sense of urgency to end the 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 that of Jesus - had the potential to cause a stir amongst the people that the Pharisees did not want to deal with. Thus the urgency to “hide the evidence” 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 in linen cloths with myrrh and aloes 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 16:1-6:** (KJV) <sup>1</sup>And 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. <sup>2</sup>And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. <sup>3</sup>And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? <sup>4</sup>And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great. <sup>5</sup>And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were afraid. <sup>6</sup>And 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 24:6-7:** (KJV) <sup>6</sup>...remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, <sup>7</sup>Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. <sup>8</sup>And they remembered his words...

**Mark 16:7:** (KJV) 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 also send a shockwave throughout the entire nation. Mary would be the first to actually speak to the risen Lord. Peter and John would soon race to the sepulchre, 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!

As we sit here 2,000 years later, it is sometimes hard to really grasp the incredible magnitude of the resurrection moment. You go to the tomb in sorrow and you walk away in a shocked joy! This truly is God's amazing grace!



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

The Resurrection truly is the fulcrum on which God's plan is balanced. Up until that moment, it looked as if the heavy strength of evil would outweigh any provision that could again balance the scale. But Jesus was faithful, justice was satisfied and for all eternity that never could and never would be undone.

## Chapter Five: Sacrifice's Compassion



Those who make the greatest sacrifices are often those who hold the greatest compassion. Their sacrifice is simply a way for their compassion to find a voice to express itself. Jesus voiced his compassion through the unmistakable clarity of the cross, but it did not end there. No, his compassion would continue to be heard in the countless lives of the countless men who have walked this earth. After his resurrection, this compassion would be shown to Peter first and foremost as an example of the deep and abiding love that drove it.

Peter's last communication with Jesus before his crucifixion was not verbal. In a way that seems fitting considering Peter's action-oriented character and it certainly did not diminish the power of the interchange - remember this?

Luke 22:60-62: (NASB) <sup>60</sup>But Peter said, Man, I do not know what you are talking about. Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed. <sup>61</sup>The Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had told him, Before a rooster crows today, you will deny me three times. <sup>62</sup>And he went out and wept bitterly.

In Peter's own mind the mark of cowardice upon his soul was indelibly written, for he had been the most forward and outspoken of all of the Master's followers and yet when it came down to the moments that truly mattered, he ran and hid like a scared rabbit. To Peter, this must have been an impossible mountain to climb, but to Jesus this was a mountain *begging* to be climbed! Until Peter could understand and accept this mountain, he went back to his old life.



John 21:2-8: (NASB) <sup>2</sup>Simon Peter, and Thomas...and Nathanael..., and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. <sup>3</sup>Simon Peter said to them, I am going fishing. They said to him, We will also come with you. They went out and got into the boat; and that night they caught nothing. <sup>4</sup>But when the day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>5</sup>So Jesus said to them, Children, you

*do not have any fish, do you? They answered him, No. <sup>6</sup>And he said to them, Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat and you will find a catch. So they cast, and then they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of fish. <sup>7</sup>Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, It is the Lord. So when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put his outer garment on..., and threw himself into the sea. <sup>8</sup>But the other disciples came in the little boat, for they were not far from the land, but about one hundred yards away, dragging the net full of fish.*

We always revert back to our truest self and for Peter that meant fishing, for he did not know how to follow the Master since his denial.

Yet, when Jesus was revealed, Peter's truest self again surfaced as he dropped his fishing work, leapt from his boat and swam to meet him...

**Once upon the shore, Peter would hear the words that would begin the true transformation of his life:**

**John 21:15-17:** (NASB) <sup>15</sup>So when they had finished breakfast, 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. He said to him, Tend my lambs. <sup>16</sup>He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love me? He said to him, Yes, Lord; you know that I love you. He said to him, Shepherd my sheep. <sup>17</sup>He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love me? Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, Do you love me? And he said to him, Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you. Jesus said to him, Tend my sheep.

This is the true forgiveness that Jesus gives us - to acknowledge the sinners' state of mind, see their repentant hearts and place responsibility in their hands. This is the personal forgiveness of the cross on our behalf. It is not merely a "forgive and forget" moment, rather it is a "forgive, trust and move forward moment!" This is the forgiveness that Jesus offers to us.

Listen to the drama of Peter's doubt turned to elation. Can we see ourselves in that same journey?



**"He's Alive," Don Francisco**

The gates and doors were barred  
And all the windows fastened down  
I spent the night in sleeplessness  
And rose at every sound  
Half in hopeless sorrow  
And half in fear the day  
Would find the soldiers breakin' through  
To drag us all away

And just before the sunrise  
I heard something at the wall  
The gate began to rattle  
And a voice began to call  
I hurried to the window  
Looked down into the street  
Expecting swords and torches  
And the sound of soldiers' feet

But there was no one there but Mary  
So I went down to let her in  
John stood there beside me  
As she told me where she'd been  
She said they might have moved Him in the night  
And none of us knows where

The stone's been rolled away  
And now His body isn't there

We both ran toward the garden  
Then John ran on ahead  
We found the stone and empty tomb  
Just the way that Mary said  
But the winding sheet they wrapped Him in  
Was just an empty shell  
And how or where they'd taken Him  
Was more than I could tell

Oh something strange had happened there  
Just what I did not know  
John believed a miracle  
But I just turned to go  
Circumstance and speculation  
Couldn't lift me very high  
'Cause I'd seen them crucify him  
Then I saw him die

Back inside the house again  
The guilt and anguish came  
Everything I'd promised Him  
Just added to my shame  
When at last it came to choices  
I denied I knew His name  
And even if He was alive  
It wouldn't be the same

But suddenly the air was filled  
With a strange and sweet perfume  
Light that came from everywhere  
Drove the shadows from the room  
And Jesus stood before me  
With his arms held open wide  
And I fell down on my knees  
And I just clung to Him and cried

Then He raised me to my feet  
And as I looked into His eyes  
The love was shining out from Him  
Like sunlight from the skies  
Guilt in my confusion  
Disappeared in sweet release  
And every fear I'd ever had  
Just melted into peace

He's alive yes He's alive  
Yes He's alive and I'm forgiven  
Heaven's gates are open wide  
He's alive yes He's alive  
Oh He's alive and I'm forgiven  
Heaven's gates are open wide  
He's alive yes He's alive  
Hallelujah He's alive  
He's alive and I'm forgiven  
Heaven's gates are open wide  
He's alive He's alive He's alive  
I believe it He's alive  
Sweet Jesus

So, Jesus showed us the way with the grandest, most outrageous gift of love imaginable so that in spite of our own smallness of heart and mind, we would be able to get it!



### “Outrageous Love,” Krissy Nordhoff

When I think about the road  
 Traveled by my Savior's feet  
 When I think about the cross he bore,  
 The pain and suffering  
 And knowing where that path would lead  
 He willingly obeyed  
 He could've called 10,000 angels  
 To carry him away

Outrageous love  
 It wasn't the nails, you see  
 That held him to the tree  
 Outrageous love  
 It was more than history,  
 He was there for you and me

When I think about three whole days,  
 Not knowing what to do  
 Wondering if all the words  
 He'd spoken were still true  
 I can't imagine how the joy felt  
 When they gathered there that day  
 And they got to the tomb to see  
 The stone was rolled away

Outrageous love  
 It wasn't the nails, you see  
 That held him to the tree  
 Outrageous love  
 It was more than history,  
 He was there for you and me



### Chapter Six: Sacrifice's Results



Personal forgiveness is a most powerful experience. Properly accepted, it will change your life, it will make you better and it will provoke you to be forgiving in the same way that you are forgiven. But, personal forgiveness is only the beginning, the introduction, the prelude to what the forgiveness of the cross brought to us. You see, there are a myriad of prophecies that speak of worldwide restitution, worldwide peace and harmony - these are the *real* stories of the cross.

**Personal forgiveness is good, but these prophecies fulfilled are even better!**  
**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.*

There is a very specific context being set out here in Daniel. We have *...those kings* - what kings? The kings of the earth. We have the God of heaven setting up an indestructible kingdom that breaks the previous kingdoms in pieces, so it must be, again, here on the earth.

Jesus actually taught us to pray for this in the Lord's Prayer: *thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven.* Think about how much sense this makes: Jesus died for Adam, and therefore for us, and that means he came to restore what was lost...a perfect earth!

Colossians 1:18-20: (NRSV) <sup>18</sup>*He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything.* <sup>19</sup>*For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,* <sup>20</sup>*and 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.*

Again notice the elements here: We have Jesus and the Church, 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 true Church. The blood of the cross is about much more than *me* - it is about *us* - ALL of us!

Acts 3:20-21: (NASB) <sup>20</sup>*and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you,* <sup>21</sup>*whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.*

God through Jesus is not only reconciling all things to Himself, He is restoring all things. When you restore something, you return it to its former state. Peter here in Acts says that all of the prophets spoke of this restoration. Here are just a few:

Isaiah 51:3: (NRSV) <sup>3</sup>*For the LORD will comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places, and will make her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song.*

The perfection of Eden was lost, and Isaiah is saying that the waste places of earth will look like it? See, redemption brings restitution and restitution brings gladness, thanksgiving and song. How do we know? The prophecies tell us!

Micah 4:1-5: (KJV) <sup>1</sup>*But 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.* <sup>2</sup>*And 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 which indicates that they must go through a learning curve. They will walk in Godly paths with Israel as their example.

<sup>3</sup>*And 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.* <sup>4</sup>*But 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.* <sup>5</sup>*For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever.*

God will teach the world the ways of peace: swords to plowshares, spears to pruning hooks, no more war, rather they will all dwell in peace - each with the ability to provide for themselves and all while living under God! This is the direct result of the sacrifice of the cross - the ransom payment for Adam and his sin. This is the way God intended this world to be!



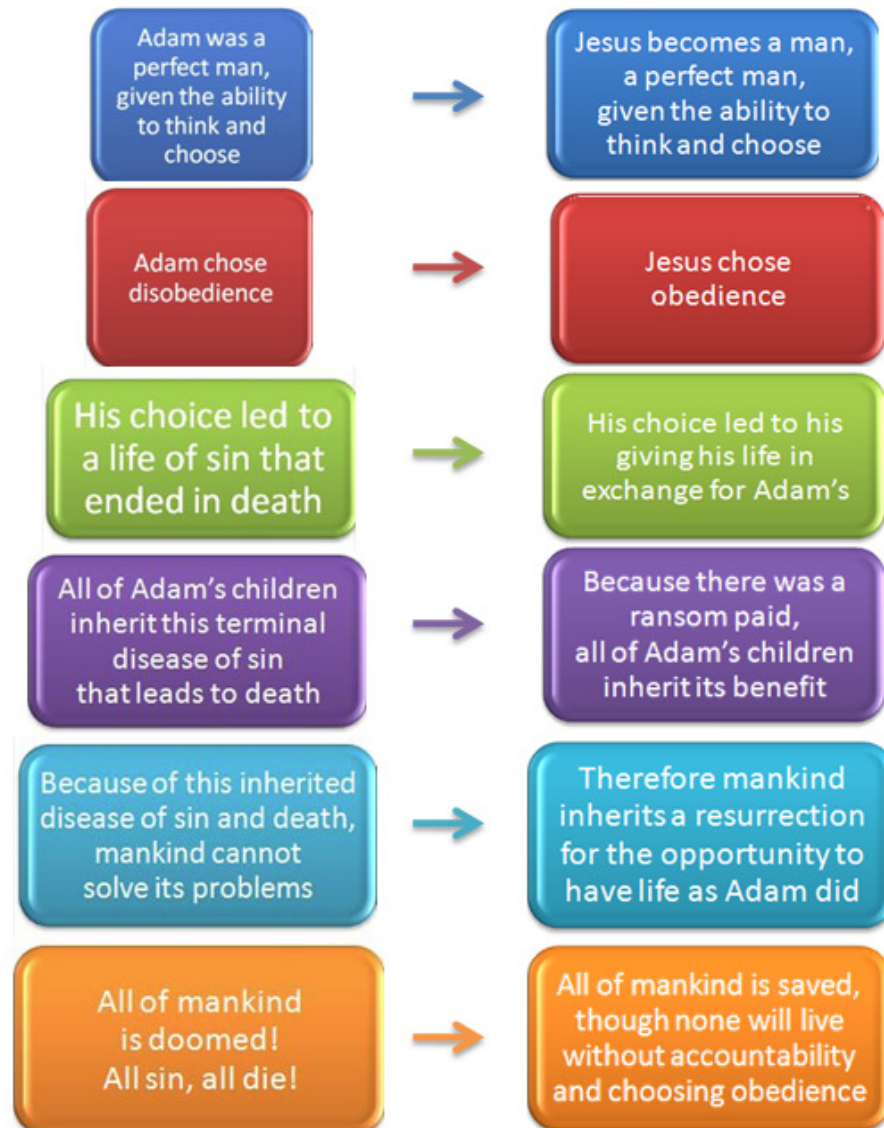
So, while those now faithful to Jesus will have an inheritance in heaven, the “everybody else” will have an inheritance on earth...*once they prove their faithfulness* to Jesus in the Judgment Day.

Praise be to God for his unspeakable gift!

**No wonder the scripture says...**

**Philippians 2:8-11:** (NASB) <sup>8</sup>*Being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. <sup>9</sup>For this reason also, God highly exalted him, and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, <sup>10</sup>so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow...<sup>11</sup>and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

What a comprehensive picture of the simple yet profound work of Jesus. Adam sinned, therefore we all sin and justice required satisfaction. Jesus came, lived perfectly, gave that life up and therefore satisfied justice. He now reigns on high and all of the world under the curse of Adam will be given a new lease on life - why? Because that is what justice demands!



**Isaiah 65:21-25:** (NRSV) <sup>21</sup>They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. <sup>22</sup>They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. <sup>23</sup>They shall not labor in vain, or bear children for calamity; for they shall be offspring blessed by the LORD-- and their descendants as well. <sup>24</sup>Before they call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear. <sup>25</sup>The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox; but the serpent--its food shall be dust! They shall not hurt or destroy on all My holy mountain, says the LORD.

This is yet another example of a clear picture of an amazing earthly setting. Building houses, planting vineyards, personal responsibility, not laboring in vain, the Almighty guiding and directing the affairs of earth. The wolf and the lamb will feed together.

Yes, the sacrifice of Jesus...that is what bought this future!

**No wonder Revelation 21:4 says:** *And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*

**Isaiah 35:5-10:** (NRSV) <sup>5</sup>Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; <sup>6</sup>then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; <sup>7</sup>the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. <sup>8</sup>A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. <sup>9</sup>No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. <sup>10</sup>And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

**Psalms 145:9-13:** (NRSV) <sup>9</sup>The LORD is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made. <sup>10</sup>All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your faithful shall bless you. <sup>11</sup>They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom, and tell of your power, <sup>12</sup>to make known to all people your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. <sup>13</sup>Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations. The LORD is faithful in all his words, and gracious in all his deeds.

## A few notes on this program:

We follow the Jewish calendar when calculating the day of the Last Supper and when Jesus hung on the cross. Today is not the actual day Jesus was raised from the tomb.

Also, you will notice we do not talk about Easter. Technically Easter is based on pagan rituals traced back to the goddess Estera, a goddess of fertility. Early Catholicism tried to combine the sacredness of Christianity with paganism in hopes of drawing Pagans to Christianity with negative results that are still felt today.

We want to make sure we are focusing on the right things. Jesus asked us at the Last Supper to *do this in remembrance of me* each year at this time - honoring the memorial of his body and blood, sacrificed for our benefit. We were told to focus on that simple ceremony so that we remember the core



value of his death and resurrection. This program is built upon that remembrance and his ransom price paid for all of mankind.

Jesus came forth from the grave, and restitution therefore is impossible to stop. Satan has been defeated! It is only a matter of time before his lease is up. God wins through the sacrifice of Jesus.

*Jesus IS Risen!  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!*