

Passover 2018

April 1

1 Cor 15:1-8

- 1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;
- 2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.
- 3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;
- 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:
- 5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:
- 6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.
- 7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.
- 8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. KJV

This, of course, is Passover Sunday, the day that many call 'Easter.' And, today, we celebrate the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Of course, those who love Him celebrate it every day and gather to celebrate it together every Sunday.

Some 1985 years ago (give or take) this week, possibly on a Wednesday evening, after He had spent a long and quite agonizing time in prayer, a young Jewish man was arrested by Jewish authorities, very late at night, in a garden which was a short distance outside the Eastern Gate of Jerusalem.

His friends who had accompanied Him to the garden for prayer at first put up a resistance but then fled when the young Jew asked them to stop. One of those in the arresting party was wounded, his ear had been severed by a sword in the brief skirmish. The Man being arrested healed the injury, replacing the man's ear, and then surrendered Himself without resistance to those who had come to take Him.

Through the rest of the evening and the very early morning of the next day the Man was put on trial by the Jewish authorities and extensively questioned. While being questioned He was treated very badly and abused, in violation of the Jews' own laws. Though He answered very little and no reputable witnesses could be found against Him, the court (having already determined to do so) found Him guilty and worthy of death. But the Roman government ruled Israel in those days and had forbidden the Jews to execute anyone without an examination before the Roman Procurator, a man by the name of Pilate.

So, off He was carried to Pilate, probably sometime just after sunrise. The Roman listened as the Jews accused the Man and then questioned Him himself, to little avail, ultimately determining that there was no crime committed worthy of death. But, during the questioning, Pilate discovered that the Man lived in the district of Galilee where another Roman official, a man by the name of Herod, was the ruler. Herod happened to be in Jerusalem visiting on that day,

probably to celebrate Passover, so Pilate sent the Man to Herod's quarters for examination. After another futile questioning session in which the Man refused to answer questions, Herod and his soldiers mocked Him and sent Him back to Pilate.

In a quandary and not wanting to execute an innocent man, Pilate had Him committed to a squad of soldiers to be beaten. After the brutal beating the soldiers extended the cruelty by making a skull cap of thorns for Him and mockingly bowed to Him as if they were honoring a king. Pilate then had Him brought out to public display along with a notable criminal named Barabbas. It was the custom of the Roman ruler to release a Jewish prisoner in honor of their Passover but, today, he offered the assembled crowd a choice, the Man Who had been brought to him that morning or the criminal, a man with a very violent history. The crowd, being swayed by the same Jewish rulers who had brought the Young Man to Pilate, cried out for the release of Barabbas and the crucifixion of the Other.

As much as he possibly could, Pilate distanced himself from the whole affair, even having a bowl of water brought so that he could ritually wash his hands in public to signify his disapproval, that this was a miscarriage of justice. But it was he who had to give the order for his men to take that falsely accused Soul and crucify Him. Now, the Roman cross was a very cruel way to die and intentionally so. Men sometimes lasted for days in agony before they ultimately died, but this Man only hung on the cross for a few hours (6) before passing away. The crucifixion began about 9 in the morning and by 3 in the afternoon He was gone. He said some very interesting things as He hung there. He prayed for God to forgive those who mocked Him, promised heaven to one of the criminals crucified with Him, and cried out to God, calling Him 'Father.' After one last cry He died peacefully, surprising the soldiers who were in charge of the crucifixion and profoundly affecting their senior commander, a Centurion.

And... so... another Jew joined the thousands of other Jews who had already been crucified by the Romans and would be crucified by them in the years to come. Seemingly the most unusual thing about this event was that two very rich and influential Jews asked for and received permission to take His body down from the cross, which they properly did, and prepared Him for burial as if He had been a Man of wealth. They laid Him in an unused tomb belonging to one of them.

Night fell. Jesus of Nazareth was dead, and His story was over. At least that is what everyone, including most of His disciples, thought. For three nights the tomb lay silent with a portion of the Jewish Temple Guard standing watch.

If this had been the end of the story, the world would be a very different place than it is today.

- There never would have been a Christian Church.
- The Roman Empire would never have recognized the Christian religion because it never would have existed.
- The European pagan barbarians would never have been Christianized.
- There never would have been a United States of America founded upon Christian principles.
- Who knows what the world would look like today?

But... on Sunday morning... just as the day began to dawn, some of the women who had believed

on and followed Jesus came to the tomb to finalize the burial process. They may not have been aware of how thorough a job Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus had done. To their surprise they found the tomb empty, the body of Jesus gone, and the stone that had been used to cover the entrance of the little cave rolled away.

Matt 28:1-8

- 1 In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.
- 2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.
- 3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:
- 4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.
- 5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.
- 6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.
- 7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.
- 8 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word. KJV

Jesus would ultimately appear to all of His disciples, as many as 500 on one occasion. He spent about 40 days with them, proving that He was alive and finalizing His discipleship of them. 10 of the remaining 11 disciples/apostles and many of that group of 500 became martyrs to the Christian faith but none of them changed their story, even while being tortured.

So, what difference does it all make?

Well, maybe most importantly, the Resurrection proves that Jesus was exactly Who He said that He was and Who the apostles affirmed Him to be. This is what He had said about Himself before His death.

John 10:15-18

- 15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.
- 16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.
- 17 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

- 18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father. KJV

Never has anyone, even, in all of human history, said such a thing and then actually did what he said.

There was a famous escape artist long ago by the name of Houdini who promised his wife that he would return and speak to her after his death but although she tried everything, no real, verifiable contact was ever made. Only Jesus kept His word about what would happen after His death.

The principle must, then, be recognized that if Jesus actually was Who He said He was, the things that He taught really, really, matter.

John 14:21-25

- 21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.
- 22 Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?
- 23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.
- 24 He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.
- 25 These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. KJV

And... what He did really matters.

You see, Jesus did not just die and then rise again. He was solving a problem that only He could solve, the problem of sin.

The scriptures everywhere affirm and the apostle Paul elaborately describes the issue: man is a sinner.

Rom 3:10-18

- 10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:
- 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.
- 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.
- 13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:
- 14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:
- 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood:
- 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways:
- 17 And the way of peace have they not known:
- 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes. KJV

Because man is a sinner he is in trouble, in trouble with God, specifically God's system of Justice.

Gal 3:10

- 10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. KJV

Rom 5:12

12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: KJV

This was the problem He came to solve. But God had established a principle that made a solution almost impossible.

Ezek 18:20

20 The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. KJV

Isaiah had spoken of the remedy but he did not explain how the problem of Ezek 18:20 would be solved.

Isa 53:3-6

3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. KJV

Jesus would somehow 'bear' our iniquity, our sin. Both the Apostle Paul and the Apostle Peter essentially said the same thing.

2 Cor 5:21

21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. KJV

1 Peter 2:24

24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. KJV

But still the principle of Ezekiel 18... how is it resolved if everyone must bear his own sin? It was Paul who laid out how the problem could be solved... but it could only happen by a miracle.

1 Cor 15:22

22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. KJV

We were rendered spiritually dead by Adam's sin because we were *in him* when he rebelled against God and when God's judgment of death was executed upon him, it was also executed

upon us. The DNA that would ultimately become us was a part of his body upon whom the sentence was passed.

If our sins were somehow going to be passed onto Jesus, a similar union between us and Him would need to be created... and Paul affirm that is exactly what happened.

Gal 2:20

20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. KJV

2 Cor 5:21 (just used)

21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God *in him*. KJV

Col 2:10

10 And ye are complete *in him*, which is the head of all principality and power: KJV

Rom 8:1

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are *in Christ Jesus*, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. KJV

1 Cor 1:30

30 But of him are ye *in Christ Jesus*, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: KJV

Paul described in Rom 6 how that we are placed into Christ by an act of God so that we become actual participants in His death, burial, and resurrection.

Rom 6:3-11

3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. KJV

As we have already seen, He bore our sins in His Own body because all of those who had believed or would ultimately believe on Him were in union with Him just as they had been in

union with Adam. And just as they had received condemnation to death by their union with Adam they receive a reversal of that condemnation by their union with Christ. Reason being that the death of Christ satisfied the demands of God's Justice concerning the sins of those who were in Union with Him.

Isa 53:11

11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. KJV

Just as they received the negative effects of Adam's sin they receive the benefits of Christ's death, burial and resurrection.

Again, (3rd time) remember the benefit.

2 Cor 5:21

21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God *in him*. KJV

So, what is our duty in response to such a thing done on our behalf? What would one owe for whom such a sacrifice had been made?

One's first reaction, we would think, would be "whatever He wants," right?

But... what does He want?

Matt 4:17

17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. KJV

Rom 6

11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

He would have us turn from sin in faith to Him, to live for and obey Him, always, in every thing.

What He has done really does qualify Him to make such a demand. What say you? Have you responded to Him in what He requires? If not, why not?