

Pentwater Bible Church

*Resurrection Day
March 27, 2016*



The Crucifixion by Matthias Grunewald Cir 1510-15

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Resurrection Sunday 2016

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The Church is a group of people who have suffered in this life, but have been redeemed. We know where we are going when we leave this earth. Deaths, divorce, financial issues, health problems and more have altered our lives. Unfortunately it is the condition of the world into which we have been born. No matter how much difficulty we experience in this world the God of the universe has suffered more than we can imagine correcting it. It is helpful that we take this time to reflect on what God has done for us and how He suffered in doing so. He created us in His image. In doing so we have emotions and experience pain just like God does. His are on a magnitude much greater than ours though.

Sometime in the past the anointed Cherub Lucifer tried to usurp God's authority while his domain was in Heaven. In doing so he brought corruption into Heaven. The Bible states that the heavens themselves needed cleansing by the blood of Christ (Hebrews 9: 23-26). God judged him and cast him out of the Throne Room. In doing so Satan drew a third of the angels in Heaven that were foolish enough to make the choice to follow him thereby sealing their doom (Revelation 12: 4). Lucifer then became the adversary (Hebrew Satan) and entered the Garden of Eden to corrupt our first parents bringing the sin he had into the world. God judged him and all that he had corrupted. At that time God announced to him that He would bring a redeemer (the seed of the woman) into the world to correct these environments, which Satan had polluted (Genesis 3:15).

God set up His own plan to redeem the world by bearing the grief and sorrow in a way that allowed Him to provide the redemption of mankind by taking the God imposed penalty for sin upon Himself. In doing so He would have to suffer more than He had as of yet and again a level of suffering we cannot imagine. God prophesied to Isaiah in the eighth century B.C. that He who suffered much grief over mankind would come to the earth to provide redemption for mankind.

Isaiah 53: 1-12

¹Who hath believed our message? and to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been revealed? ²For he grew up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. ³He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised; and we esteemed him not ⁴Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. ⁵But 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. ⁶All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. ⁷He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. ⁸By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who among them considered that he was cut

off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due? ⁹And they made his grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in his death; although he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. ¹⁰Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand. ¹¹He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by the knowledge of himself shall my righteous servant justify many; and he shall bear their iniquities. ¹²Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors: yet he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors (ASV 1901).

Jehovah God sent Himself a suffering servant in the body of a man to atone for the sins of the world. His suffering reached a level of pain before and during the crucifixion that we cannot imagine. Daniel writing in the late sixth century B.C. received a prophecy from the angel Gabriel about the death of Christ.

Daniel 9: 25-26a

²⁵Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. ^{26a} And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: (KJV).

Gabriel speaking to Daniel regarding the timing of Christ's appearance on the earth gives him the timetable for it. He concludes this part of the longer prophecy by saying that the Anointed One, The Prince shall be cut-off (killed) but not for himself. This prophecy gives us assurance that God was going to suffer a murder of Himself so we could be redeemed.

The night of what we call the last supper Christ gathered His apostles into an upper room to tell them many things about His need to be sacrificed. That was on Thursday before the Passover. It was customary to sing Psalms 113-118 at the close of the meal before Passover. Psalm 118 describes how God guides the righteous through distress and the impending death. Jesus asked the Father to have this obligation pass from Him if possible. Jesus was saying in effect, "Father, if there is any other way by which sinners can be saved than by My going to the cross, reveal that way now! But in all of this, I want it known that I desire nothing contrary to Your will." He then went to Gethsemane with Peter, James and John.

The name Gethsemane means "oil press," which suggests that the place Jesus went to pray was going to provide him with an excruciating and crushing spiritual experience. Both Luke and John mention this as a customary meeting place for Jesus and His disciples (Luke 22:39; John 18:2). He had told them about the suffering he would endure but they did not understand. Luke 12: 50 states, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished"

He was experiencing a sorrow over the spiritual heaviness He sensed that when He said to the apostles, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch

with me (Matthew 26: 38b KJV). His suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane was the culmination of all the suffering He experienced in His ministry beginning with Satan's temptation in the wilderness up to the point of the actual crucifixion and His separation from God (forsaken).

The agony itself that He experienced is described; *He began to be sorrowful, and very heavy*. The pain or torment that he was experiencing was coming from within; he troubled Himself (John 11: 33). The words used are very emphatically stated; he began *to be sorrowful, and be in a vaieenechem type pain*. Luke 22: 44 tells us that Jesus' sorrow was so strong His pores secreted a substance like blood.¹ He probably was experiencing the condition described in the medical dictionary as Hematidrosis, which is the excretion of blood or blood pigment in the sweat. It may occur when a person is suffering extreme levels of stress, for example, facing his or her own death. Leonardo da Vinci described a soldier who sweated blood before battle, and when men were unexpectedly given a death sentence. The degree of sorrow signifies such a sorrow as a weight of lead upon his spirits. Now was fulfilled, the Messianic Psalm 22:14, where it is stated, *I am poured out like water, my heart is like wax, it is melted*.

But what was the cause of all this? What was it that put him into his agony? There are two realms of life pictured in the suffering He experienced in the garden.

1. He met with the powers of darkness which He described (Luke 22:53); *This is your hour, and the power of darkness*: and he spoke of it just before (John 14:30, 31); *"The prince of this world cometh. I see him marshaling his forces, and preparing for a general assault; but he has nothing in me therefore his attempts, though fierce, will be fruitless: but as the Father gave me commandment, so I do*; however it be, I must have a struggle with him, the field must be fairly fought; and therefore *arise, let us go hence*, let us hasten to the field of battle, and meet the enemy.' Now is the close engagement in single combat like between Michael and the dragon, hand to hand; *now is the judgment of this world*; the great cause is now to be determined, and the decisive battle fought, in which the *prince of this world*, will certainly be beaten and *cast out*, (John 12:31). Christ, when he wrought salvation for us is described like a champion taking the field, (Isaiah 59:16–18). Now the serpent makes his fiercest onset on the seed of the woman, and directs his sting, the sting of death, to his very heart *and the wound is mortal*.
2. He was now *bearing the iniquities*, which the Father laid upon him, and, by his sorrow and obedience he accommodated himself to his undertaking. The sufferings he was laying upon Himself were for *our* sins; they were all made to press upon him, and He knew it. As we are obliged to be sorry for our particular sins, so was He grieved for the sins of us all. He knew how malignant the sins were that were laid upon him, how provoking to God, how ruining to man; and these being all set upon Him to bear. He was *sorrowful and very heavy*.

Satan tried all he could to prevent Christ's crucifixion. The death He experienced cleansed the heavenly tabernacle (Hebrews 9: 23-26), which Lucifer polluted with his sin and fall,

¹ Holoubek, JE, "Blood, sweat and fear, A classification of Hematidrosis." *Journal of Medicine* 1996, 27 (3–4): 115–33. PMID 8982961

as well as providing for the salvation of all who would believe the gospel of Christ (II Corinthians 5: 21). It is these sorrows we must try and realize as we struggle with our limited understanding of the workings of God. He did it for us and we are most blessed. When we consider our own travail on this earth remember His sacrifice and sorrow. He did it for us so we could give Him our burdens, which He willingly took upon Himself.

Matthew 11: 28-30

²⁸ Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light (KJV).

On Easter we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus the Christ from the dead. In the resurrection we see that Jehovah God sent Himself, a suffering servant (Isaiah 49-57), in the body of a man to atone for the sins of the world. His suffering reached a level of pain before and during the crucifixion that we cannot imagine as He bore the sins of the world and the cosmic realm as well. Jesus provided for the salvation of all who would believe the gospel of Christ (II Corinthians 5: 21). Paul describes a situation that still exists today, doubt about the resurrection.

I Corinthians 15: 12-20a

¹² Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. ¹⁴ And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. ¹⁵ Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. ¹⁶ For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. ¹⁷ And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! ¹⁸ Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. ²⁰ But now Christ is risen from the dead (NKJV).

Paul's prayer for the Corinthians is real specific. Some were denying the resurrection without any evidence. They simply said, "resurrections don't occur." Unbelievers say the same thing today. They say it couldn't have happened because resurrections just don't happen. Paul goes on to say that if there are no resurrections then Christ did not rise from the dead and our only hope is to trust in the powers of this world. If that were true our faith is misplaced in a false hope of eternal life through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Therefore we would be the most miserable lot in the world because the world only offers, among other troubles death, divorce, financial hardship, health problems, wars, tyranny and strained relationships. He concludes this passage with the strong assertion that Christ *is* risen from the dead. It is a matter of historical fact. The resurrection of Christ is the only hope for the world that there is remediation for the sinful decaying and dying world we live in. There is no other way out of the decay and sin we live in. God Himself

provided the way. We only have to recognize that this really happened and accept it as fact.

Paul's also offered a prayer for the Ephesian believers, which is very specific. He asks God to bestow upon them a deeper knowledge and understanding of Christ that we today must also experience. This is not something that one can learn in a seminary or even in a Bible study or from reading devotional books. Paul's desire for them was that they would *willingly* receive from God *"the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ"* (Ephesians 1:17-23).

Specifically, Paul prays that they would know the "exceeding greatness" of the power that God wanted to demonstrate in their lives. His explanation of this power is crucial for us to realize. He called it the "power of his resurrection."

Philippians 3: 10-12

¹⁰ That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. ¹² Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own (ESV).

Was Paul uncertain of his salvation, concerned that he might not qualify for the resurrection of believers at the Rapture? Hardly! He is telling us that the Resurrection of Christ is not only a historical event that we look back to with satisfaction and joy. It is the greatest event in the history (past, present, or future) of the entire cosmos!

The greatest event that the universe has or will ever see is also one of the most difficult for most people to understand. In fact, Paul tells us that the Resurrection is the greatest display of God's power ever to be demonstrated, nor can it ever be surpassed.

Easter is the day that Jesus of Nazareth rose, in his body, from the dead. He came back from the dead in an immortal resurrected body. This was not a person being revived in the same body. His new body is one of permanence. Easter is crucial to every person of this earth because if Jesus did not rise from the dead, Christianity is false. But if He did rise from the dead, that is the single most important event in all of time. None of us can escape the power of the claim of the Resurrection. If Christ did not rise, then our own lives as Paul says will be miserable because we are still living with no hope in a sinful existence. To believe on the Lord Jesus Christ is to believe on a historically reliable event in human history. Personal commitment is the difficult issue for most people.

When Jesus died on the cross His Spirit took a path that we should understand as part of our salvation. The chart below demonstrates the six stages of His Spirit's travel before ending in Heaven.

From Hades to Heaven

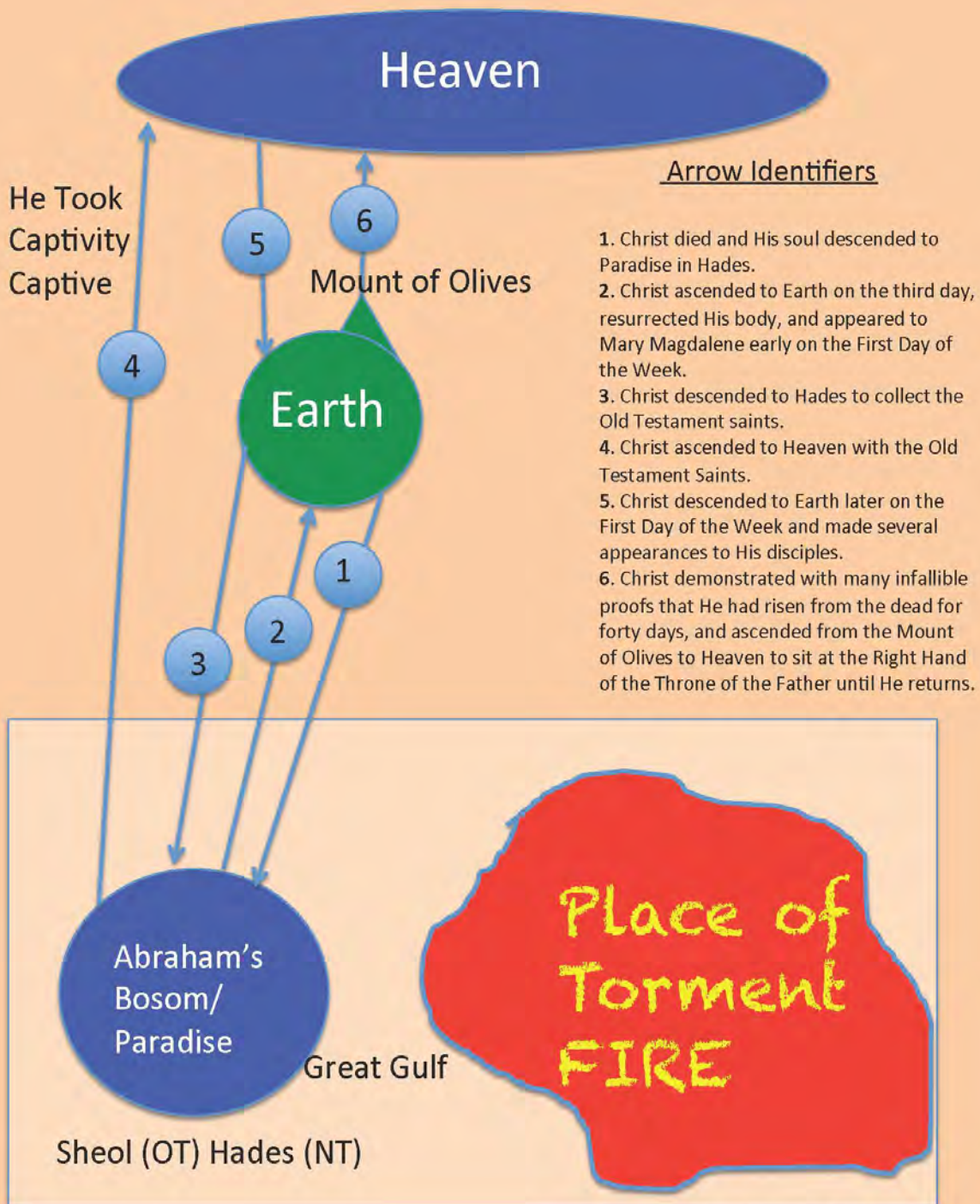


Chart Designed by Thomas McCall Th.D.

Many people refuse to believe in the resurrection exactly for the reason that if they do, it will change their lives. They do not want to stop doing what they are doing in their lives that are contrary to the teachings of Christ. So belief becomes not an issue of whether the Resurrection occurred or not. It becomes an issue of leaving the captivity of Satan and entering the deliverance of Christ. Jesus said that whomever sins is a slave to sin (John 8: 34). We think our sins are so secretive that no one knows them. When confronted with the truth of Christ many shy away from a commitment due to sin. We don't want them uncovered and go to extreme lengths to cover them even feigning unbelief in the historicity of the resurrection.

We are separated from God by our sin and we are sinners by nature. Our sin may seem like a small thing to humankind, but the God of the universe does not think so. The Bible says that God is *"of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity"* (Habakkuk 1:13). We are so imperfect and sinful that even when we try to do good works, we fail to please God. In God's sight *"we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness' are as filthy rags"* (Isaiah 64:6). The worst news for the world is that sin keeps people out of heaven. There is only eternal damnation for those who do not believe.

Revelation 21:27 is speaking of heaven when it says, *"And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie."* Even one lie would keep us from entering heaven. Most people think that if they don't believe something then it is not true. Which is in fact not true. Truth is not individually determined. There is absolute truth. Which is, something that is true in all times and in all places. The Resurrection of Christ is true and what Jesus said about the penalty for sin (eternal death) is true.

Salvation is not church membership. It is not good works. We cannot add baptism, the sacraments, confirmation, or any other good work to Christ's finished work on Calvary. *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast"* (Ephesians 2:8-9). Works cannot save us. Salvation is when one says, "I realize that none of these things can save me—but only Jesus can save me—and I take Him—and only Him—to be my personal Savior."

Through the Risen Christ we are reminded that by His death and suffering we are saved to eternal life with Him when we leave these bodies. What a wonderful blessing we have in Christ. Share it with those who do not know or believe in Him. The world still needs this message more so now than ever.