

GOD'S
PRECIOUS
TRUTHS
ABOUT HIS
SON

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Volume 2

JESUS

The hymn, "O How I Love Jesus", expresses the feelings of many when it says, "There is a name I love to hear, I love to sing its worth. It sounds like music in mine ear, the sweetest Name on earth." Please consider the following truths about that wonderful name, JESUS.

JESUS . . .

Name given Him by God, the Father. "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21) "And, behold, thou shall conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus." (Luke 1:31)

The name "Jesus" comes from the name, Joshua, which means "Saviour". How interesting that God gave Him the name, Jesus, (Saviour) which described the work He came to perform.

JESUS . . .

The Name that is above all other names. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." (Philippians 2:9)

Since God the Father, has placed such esteem upon the Name of Jesus, shouldn't man do the same? It is a name to be held in reverence as we honor Him for who He is as well as what He has done.

JESUS . . .

The Name through which man is saved or converted. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Romans 10:9,10,13) "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Romans 3:24)

Although many call upon various names religiously, the Bible is clear to show that access to God and forgiveness of sins comes only through the Name of His Son, Jesus. No other name brings man into the presence of God.

JESUS . . .

The Name to which every knee shall bow. "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." (Philippians 2:10)

Man has a nature that rebels against God and righteousness, thinking that he is sufficient in himself. God's Word declares that one day everyone will kneel before Jesus giving Him the reverence which He, as God's only begotten Son, deserves.

JESUS . . .

The Name that every tongue shall confess. "And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:11)

The name, Jesus, is so often blasphemed by being used in vain (cursing) but the Bible declares that every tongue will confess that He is truly God, giving honor to His Name.

JESUS . . .

The Name used as we pray to the Father. "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." (John 14:13)

Jesus is the only One through whom God blesses and answers prayer. Others may be held in high esteem by man, but God does not work as man does. The Name of Jesus, only, opens the treasures of Heaven to man.

JESUS . . .

Died that He might bring man to God. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." (I Peter 3:18)

The main message of God's Word is that Christ came to earth to die in sinful man's place, so that man might receive Christ as Saviour and be brought into a right relationship with God and then into His presence. *"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved."* (John 3:17)

JESUS . . .

Raised by the Father to manifest his approval of JESUS' VICARIOUS work on behalf of sinful man. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him." (Acts 5:31,32)

The fact that God raised Jesus from the dead testifies to the truth that God accepted Jesus' work on the cross as full payment for the sins of man. Therefore, God justifies man (declares man righteous) when He receives Jesus as his personal Saviour from sin.

Is it any wonder that JESUS is the greatest Name we know? I pray that you have or will call upon the Name of JESUS for salvation, use it regularly in prayer, hold it in reverence and share it with others.

JESUS! No, there is no other name like it!

SCRIPTURAL WITNESSES TO CHRIST'S IDENTITY

Often in life we are asked to provide proof of our identity. When people seek information concerning us it usually involves our date of birth, place of birth and where we presently live. The Bible, God's Word, gives us that information concerning the Lord Jesus Christ.

Consider the following scriptural witnesses concerning Jesus:

The witness of John the Baptist, *"And John bare record saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God."* (John 1:32, 34)

The works of Christ, *"But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me."* (John 5:36)

The witnesses of the Father by the angel....

At His birth, *"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."* (Luke 2:10-11)

At His baptism, *"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him. And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."* (Matthew 3:16-17)

At His transfiguration, *"While he yet spake, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."* (Matthew 17:5)

The witness of the Old Testament, *"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."*
(John 5:39)

The witness of the Holy Spirit, *"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:"*
(John 15:26)

The witness of the believers, *"And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."* (John 15:27)

The witness of the Apostle Peter, *"And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."*
(Matthew 16:16)

The witness of the Lord, Himself, *"Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come and whither I go."* (John 8:14)

The witness of evil spirits, *"And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?"* (Matthew 8:28-29)

In conclusion, according to scripture a person could be put to death at the witness of two or more persons. With all of the witness from both heaven and earth concerning the identity of Jesus Christ many still doubt and disbelieve the truths relating to Him as the Saviour of the world and very God.

There are those who see Jesus only as another Jewish young man. *"Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother*

called Mary? And his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?' (Matthew 13:55) There are others who see Him as a teacher. "The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." (John 3:2) There are some who see Him as a prophet. "The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet." (John 4:19).

However, Jesus is who the Bible identifies Him to be. I trust that you believe that He is not only all that the scriptures claim Him to be, but most importantly that you have believed in Him to be your personal Saviour.

JESUS IS ALWAYS ON TIME

Believers often wonder why our prayers are not answered when and how we prayed. Sometimes when we have not received an answer and are not sure of God's will, there is a tendency to become discouraged and we doubt. I pray that this passage will enlighten us to know that God is never late in answering our prayer nor is He ever wrong in His answer.

In *Isaiah 55:8, 9* the Lord says, "*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.*" This shows that neither the time nor the answer is known to the one praying. In James the Lord teaches us by the farmer's example of waiting for the crop to grow before harvest as an example of waiting on some of our prayers to be answered. On the other hand the Bible gives us examples of prayer being answered as soon as or while prayer is being prayed. For example, Elijah in *I Kings 18:37-38*, "*Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.*" Another example is the early church in *Acts 4:31*. "*And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.*" Yet it is those prayers which we haven't seen answered that bother us at times.

A great example of prayers not being answered by the Lord as we think they ought to be and when they ought to be is found in *John 11*.

Jesus receives word from Mary and Martha that their brother, Lazarus, was very ill and near death. They summonsed Jesus to come so that he would prevent him from dying. These three people knew Jesus as their Messiah and had opened their home to Him spending many hours in fellowship together. It was very evident

that this was a very special family to the Lord. However, upon receiving this serious message of great need, Jesus did not immediately go to them but remained in His present location for two additional days. It is relatively easy for us to understand how Mary and Martha must have felt as they waited two days for the Lord to answer their request. Very likely you have had a similar experience as we all have when we prayed with an urgent need which we thought should be answered immediately and yet the answer did not come as we thought it would have. I trust that we have learned and are learning that God knows best and, therefore knows what His answer is for us as well as knowing when to answer. This passage clearly shows why God does not answer according to our thinking but according to what is best for us. In considering the remainder of this chapter these truths are clearly seen.

There were certain factors that even the disciples did not understand concerning this situation and they were, (1) Jesus' statement upon receiving the request in *John 11:4*, "*When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.*" (2) His delay of two days in *John 11:6*, "*When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.*" However when it was the right time to go in answer to Mary's and Martha's request He said, *Let us go into Judea again.*" (*John 11:7*) Jesus then states His reason for going when He said ".....*Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.*" (*John 11:11b*) Jesus told the disciples that it was good even for them that He had not been in the house at the time of Lazarus' illness.

Consider what transpired in the lives of those associated with this event as Jesus shows why the answer to prayer did not come as they had prayed but came when He knew that it was the right time.

The disciples' faith would be increased. "*And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.*" (*John 11:15*) Martha and Mary

had the opportunity to express to Jesus their faith in His ability to raise Lazarus from the dead and to acknowledge their belief in Jesus as their Messiah. *"Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."* (John 11:21) Martha knew that God would answer the Lord's prayer, *"But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee."* (John 11:22) Martha then stated her faith in Christ as her Messiah and the foundation of her foundation of her belief, *Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.* (John 11:27) Many upon hearing of the Lord's presence went to meet Him also and acknowledged the same things that Martha had. Once again Mary is at the feet of Jesus.

Everyone present saw the moved and sorrowful heart of Jesus as He wept with them. *"Jesus wept."* (John 11:35) Realizing that Jesus was the perfect God-man and that He was so moved by the sorrow of those He loved that He would weep with them is one of the greatest manifestations of His love toward His own. Perhaps you have seen a pastor as he wept with those of his congregation when they were sorrowing and, of course, this is very touching. However, this was Jesus, very God, that was not ashamed to weep with those with those who were sorrowing. Jesus would later weep over the city of Jerusalem, *"And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it."* (Luke 19:41) and the lost souls there, but here it is among those that loved Him and that He loved that brought tears down His face.

Those who came to be with Mary and Martha saw the love that Jesus had for them and were moved tremendously by His compassion. *"Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! (John 11:36)* Jesus wanted the Jews to know, without doubt, His identity with God the Father and, therefore, with a loud voice He prayed, *"...Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me."* (John 11:41b, 42)

With hearts having been moved by the Lord's compassion and His identification with the Father He then fulfilled the prayer request of Martha and Mary when with His mighty power He

called for Lazarus to come forth from the tomb. *"And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go."* (John 11:43-44)

Many from this group of Jews that had joined Mary and Martha in their sorrow were so moved by the Lord's actions and mighty power to call Lazarus from the sepulcher that they, also, believed in Christ as their Messiah. *"Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on Him."* (John 11:45) We can very easily see both the acceptance and the rejection that Christ experienced and continues to experience when there were many in the same crowd that rejected Him. *"But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done."* (John 11:46) It is quite interesting how the Lord allowed the disciples to share in this miraculous event in that He told the disciples to *"loose him and let him go"*.

In summary, consider the following events that took place because the Lord did not answer Mary's and Martha's prayer when and how they had expected. (1) Both Mary and Martha were given opportunity to express their faith in the Lord's ability and their personal faith in Him as their Messiah. (2) Both the saved and the unsaved had opportunity to observe the compassionate and mighty acts of the Lord. They saw both the compassionate tears from His eyes and the mighty power of His voice when He called Lazarus to come forth. (3) The unsaved Jews were given an opportunity to see that Jesus was truly the Messiah with some of them responding to Him as their personal Messiah. (4) The disciples' faith was greatly enhanced and they, too, should have learned that their prayers also would be answered when and how He knew best. (5) There had to have been great rejoicing in Heaven as God the Father observed the works of His Son in gathering together His bride, the church.

The powerful and reassuring truths that we learn from this true event leaves no doubt that when it comes to our Lord

answering our prayers—THAT HE IS NEVER LATE OR
WRONG IN HIS ANSWER.

JESUS SPEAKS FROM THE CROSS

We have heard and have been told of the last words of people just before they were put to death. The words of such people vary according to each person for their words manifested the thoughts and attitudes they possessed and conveyed something about the person.

As we briefly consider the seven recorded statements of Jesus hanging on the cross for six hours we can easily see and hear what is on His heart.

His Statement of Forgiveness

"Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment and cast lots." (Luke 23:34) How fitting is this statement concerning forgiveness. The purpose of His death was providing the means of forgiveness for man in order that man might go to heaven.

Jesus is asking God to forgive the people who are putting him to death—Jewish leaders, Roman politicians and soldiers and bystanders—and God answered that prayer by opening up the way of salvation even to Jesus' murderers. The Roman officer and soldiers who witnessed His crucifixion said, *"Truly this was the Son of God!"* (Matthew 27:54) Soon many priests were converted to the Christian faith (Acts 6:7). The great news is that God is merciful and anxious to forgive all who will repent and receive Christ as their Saviour.

His Statement of Love

"Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home." (John 19:27) Mary was selected by God to be the earthly mother of His Son and our Lord. The submissive spirit of Mary (Luke 1:38) resembles the submissive spirit of Jesus when He said to the Father, *"thy will be done"* (Matthew 26:42) Mary, as the Lord's mother, truly fulfilled her role as strictly as it could have been done. The Lord's public ministry began at the Wedding of Cana (John 2) with His mother being there and insisting that he make additional wine for the

wedding feast. Three years later she is at the foot of the cross, looking up to the battered, bleeding face of her Son and Saviour. With the great suffering that Jesus was enduring and all that must have been on His mind, yet He cared for this very special person in His life. His words and actions should be imitated by all children toward their mothers.

His Agony of Separation from God

"Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthey 27:46b) Jesus was not questioning God; He was quoting the first line of Psalm 22—a deep expression of the anguish he felt when He took on the sins of the world which caused Him to be separated from the Father. This is what Jesus dreaded as He prayed to God in the garden to take the cup from Him if it be possible in Matthew 26:39. The physical agony was horrible, but even worse was the spiritual separation from God. This was the first and only time that Jesus felt separated from His Father. How thankful we ought to be that He was willing to go through this agony of separation from the Father so that we as sinners could be reconciled to the Father by Him and never separated from Him.

His Statement of Promise

Jesus said to the thief next to Him on the cross, *"...Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise."* (Luke 23:43) The work that Jesus came to do in providing forgiveness and salvation for man is so wonderfully seen and heard in His words. A man dying because of his acts against society found himself hanging next to the Lord and only hours from death He saw the cruelty and heard the blasphemous words directed at Jesus but he also heard the words and saw the love of Jesus. With a repenting heart toward God and faith in Christ, he found forgiveness. This unworthy individual was assured of being with Jesus that very same day. He suffered, died and opened his eyes to see and to be with Jesus.

How wonderful it is that every Christian is given the same assurance after death. *"We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."* (II

Corinthians 5:8) "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." (Psalm 17:15)

His Statement of Physical Need

"After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst." (John 19:28) This cry from the Lord was prophesied in Psalm 69:21 and 22:15. This cry of thirst takes place during the Lord's last three hours on the cross from noon to three in the afternoon. The Lord had manifested such physical needs as found in John 4 where He asked the Samaritan woman for a drink—using it as a means of engaging her in the subject of salvation. He drank water from the well and she from the water of life.

The only words Jesus spoke indicating pain or discomfort was, "I thirst". It was not that He did not suffer, but only that He did not complain.

How wonderful it is to spiritually drink from the water of life never to thirst spiritually again. *"And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." (John 6:35)*

His Statement of Completion

"When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." (John 19:30) The most important work ever to be done was completed. Only Jesus knew when He had completed what the Father had given Him to do and only Christ could have accomplished what He did.

In His prayer as He entered the garden of Gethsemane He stated, *"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." (John 17:4)* Hours later, the work had been completed when He said, "...it is finished...". (John 19:30) The necessity of this fulfillment is seen in the words written by Peter. *"For Christ, also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the*

flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:" (I Peter 3:18) The finished work of Christ assures the believer of a complete and finished salvation.

Hallelujah to the Saviour who fulfilled His work and provides salvation to whosoever will come to God through Christ!

His Statement of Committal

"And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost." (Luke 23:46) The last statement of Jesus on His cross comes as His work on earth was completed. Jesus often spoke of the necessity of His doing and finishing the work which the Father had given Him to complete.

With His knowledge of the work being completed, now He is ready to return to the Father. Jesus had always been with the Father and even in His human form He was in constant fellowship with the Father with the exception of the time when God had to separate from Him in order to lay on Him the sin debt of all the world. *"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." (Isaiah 53:6) "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." (John 17:5)*

How wonderful to know that we, too, shall see Him and be with Him soon! *"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:3)*

As we have considered the words of Jesus during His six hours on the cross manifesting his feelings toward the people and other things on His mind, we learn so much about Him. His words convey His very heart.

What do you think your words would be if you were living your last hours on earth. I'm sure that the closer we are to the Lord, the more our words would be like His.

THE I AM'S OF CHRIST JESUS

Jesus used the term "I AM" concerning himself in reference to His eternity. The Jews were, as usual, questioning and refusing His identification with the Father and He uses this term describing His longevity and self-existence. *"Jesus answered, If I honor myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God: Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."* (John 8:54-58)

Upon claiming this quality and relationship to God the Father, the Jews sought to kill Him. In closing His Word, the Bible, John is led by the Holy Spirit to acknowledge this quality of Jesus three times. *"And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not: **I am** the first and the last: **I am** he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, **I am** alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.* (Revelation 1:17-18).

It is interesting as well as verifying that Jesus is the I AM and so related to the Father as God uses the same term in giving Moses instructions in delivering His people from Egyptian bondage. Moses asked God why should the people believe him. *"And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."* (Exodus 3:14)

In being the "I AM", Jesus gave us several "I AM'S" concerning himself.

1) I AM the Messiah. *"The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he."*(John 4:25-26)

2) I AM the Bread of Life. *"For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."*(John 6:33-35)

3) I AM From Above. *"And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world."*(John 8:23)

4) I AM the Eternal One. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.* (John 8:51)

5) I AM the Light of the World. *"As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."* (John 9:5)

6) I AM The Door. *"Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep."* (John 10:7)

7) I AM the Good Shepherd. *"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."* (John 10:11)

8) I AM The Son of God. *"Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest: because I said, I am the Son of God?"* (John 10:36)

9) I AM the Resurrection and Life. *"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."* (John 11:25)

10) I AM the Lord and Master. *"Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am."* (John 13:13)

11) I AM the Way, the Truth and the Life. *"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."* (John 14:6)

12) I AM the True Vine. *"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman."* (John 15:1)

13) I AM the Alpha and the Omega. *"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."* (Revelation 1:8)

14) I AM the First and the Last. *"And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last."* (Revelation 1:17)

The "I AM'S" that Jesus gives us concerning Himself are truly enough to assure man of His eternity, deity and person. *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1)* He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending saith the Lord, which is, which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." (Revelation 1:8)

"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." (Revelation 1:18) This verse powerfully describes the death, bodily resurrection and future of Jesus, the GREAT I AM.

Because Jesus is all that He claimed to be we, as Christians, are given assurance that we shall be all that He saved us to be.

JESUS WILL RETURN

John is led to close the book of Revelation with the words of the Lord's promise of His return and John's response. "...*Surely I come quickly, Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. (Revelation 22:20)*

One of the most comforting and encouraging passages is found in *John 14:1-6* where the Lord gives comfort, hope and assurance as He promises to return for the believers. "*And I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*" (*John 14:3*)

Consider the following aspects of the Lord's returning:

HE WILL RETURN FOR HIS BRIDE

This return is His coming for the saints before the seven years of tribulation. (*I Thessalonians 4:13-18*) The church while laboring in carrying out the Great Commission (*Matthew 28:18-20*) is at the same time spiritually looking upward for the sound of the trumpet and His coming for them. This assurance provides both comfort and hope for it is based on His Word and our faith in Him. This wonderful promise given to all believers, whether alive or having died is a powerful motive for our steadfastness in doing His will. The return of the Lord at this time is different from what is known as the second coming of the Lord in that He first comes for His bride, the Church, and calls them up, "*to meet the Lord in the air*" (*I Thessalonians 4:17*) and seven years later returns with His Church to establish His kingdom on earth, known as the millennial reign (*Revelation 19:11-16*). The Lord led Paul to write about this event and the encouragement it brings for believers as is expressed in *I Thessalonians 4:18*, "*Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*"

HE WILL RETURN TO REIGN (Millennium)

Throughout both the Old and New Testaments the scriptures teach a literal, physical (bodily), and visible return of Christ to this earth to establish His kingdom and to rule for one thousand years. The greatest theme of all Bible prophecy is the literal second coming of Christ. This was the theme of mankind's first prophecy (*Jude 14-15*), and of the last message of the Bible. (*Revelation 2:20*) However, the term "second coming" should be reserved for His final revelation at the end of the age (world).

During the millennium (Latin for "one thousand years") Satan will not be able to tempt or deceive the nations. The thrones of Revelation 20:4 represent the administration of the Messianic Kingdom. Those who John sees come to life are the Tribulation martyrs who refused to worship the Beast. They will rule the earth with Christ for a thousand years. The Lord will rule through three classes of kingdom administrators: (1) Old Testament saints who will be resurrected at this time (*Isaiah 26:19, Daniel 12:20*). (2) The apostles and the Church (*Matthew 19:28-29*). (3) The Tribulation saints (*Luke 19:12-27*). Only the believers will enter the Millennium at its beginning (*John 3:3, 5*). After the Millennial Reign Christ will deliver the Kingdom to God the Father and will be appointed Ruler forever (*I Corinthians 15:24-28*).

HE WILL RETURN TO RESURRECT

First, there is the resurrection of the saints which is called the "first resurrection" in *Revelation 20:5*. The first resurrection included in *Revelation 20:4-6* and has three principal phases:

(1) The resurrection of Christ (the first fruits *I Corinthians 15:23* and *Revelation 1:5*).

(2) The resurrection of the Church (the dead in Christ *I Corinthians 15:23*) and *I Thessalonians 4:16*).

(3) The resurrection of Old Testament and Tribulation saints (*Revelation 20:4; Isaiah 26:19* and *Daniel 12:2*).

The rest of the dead (unbelievers) will be raised in the second resurrection described in *Revelation 20:12-13*. The first

resurrection is the resurrection to life (*John 5:28-29*), whereas the second resurrection is the resurrection to death. The second resurrection is eternal punishment in the Lake of Fire (*Revelation 20:14*). Each unbeliever is judged from two sets of books. These books contain the record of every unsaved person's life and they are judged in accordance with His words (*Romans 2:6, 16*) which clearly show that each one is a guilty sinner (*Romans 3:9-19*) deserving eternal death (*Romans 3:23; 6:23*). While the Book of Life contains the names of each person who has received eternal life through faith alone (*John 20:31; I John 5:11-13*). Death and Hell are temporary hiding places of men's bodies and souls (*Luke 16:19-31*). Blessed are those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

HE WILL RETURN TO REIGN ETERNALLY

Revelation 21 and *22* describe the eternal state following the millennial reign and God's final judgment, centering in the New Jerusalem as the eternal habitation of the saved (*Hebrews 11:10; 12:22-24*). The first heaven and the first earth are replaced by a new heaven and a new earth predicted by Isaiah (*Isaiah 65:17; 66:22*). The present universe will be cleansed from all of the effects of sin (*II Peter 3:7; 10:13*). Since there will be no more sea the land space will be fully capable of handling large numbers of redeemed people from all ages. The New Jerusalem is fully described in *Revelation 21:10; 22:5*. It is a holy city totally separate from sin (*Revelation 22:15*). It is being prepared as the habitation of the Bride of Christ. The glory of God will fill the new heaven and earth and the believers will rejoice and worship Him forever.

In summary, as we think of the Lord's return let us echo the words of the Apostle John as he wrote and saw the glory of the Lord, "EVEN SO COME, LORD JESUS".

WE WOULD LOVE TO SEE YOU SOON

Sunday

9:45 a.m. Sunday School
10:45 a.m. Morning Worship
6:00 p.m. Evening Worship

Wednesday

7:30 p.m. Prayer Meeting

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