



# *Journey To Advent*

*A 4 Week  
Devotional*

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*Presented by: Killeen First Church of the Nazarene*

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12/2/2013

## **In the Beginning**

*Genesis 1:1 - In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*

The journey to Advent did not begin with Joseph and Mary's first steps out of Nazareth, nor did it begin with an angel's promise to a young girl. Instead it began at the dawn of time when God spoke into existence everything that is, and everything that is to come.

*John 1:1 tells us "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." and John 1:14 says "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."*

Christ was not a pinch hitter or an emergency recruit. He was there at the dawn of the time. Looking down, He saw the sea upon which he would one day walk as a man, the mountain where He would deliver His best known sermon, the hill upon which He would be crucified. Through time and space He saw the fall of mankind coming, the price of redemption that would be demanded of Him and yet He still smiled and said that it was good.

Why would He choose to do that? Why would Jesus give up the perfection of heaven to endure the sorrow of hell? It's simple really.

In the beginning, Jesus looked down and He saw.....you.

12/3/2013

## **Losing our Way**

*Genesis 2:16 And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."*

GPS is an amazing technology. No longer does one have to labor over an atlas with a ruler and calculator to see how long a trip will take, or what the shortest route will be. Now a little box triangulates its position and does all the work for you.

But imagine what would happen if the satellites were re-programmed to give a false position? Your GPS device would still be giving you directions. It would continue to guide you on your journey; but as the trip went on, you would constantly be moving further and further away from your destination.

No matter how many times you reprogrammed the device, no matter how much money you invested in a top of the line unit, you could never get where you wanted to be because the signal it relied on had been forever altered.

That is the effect of sin on our lives. It feeds us false data. We see that we are moving, we think we are progressing, but ultimately we discover that we are moving further and further away from God. It brings us to places we don't want to go. It makes us into people we don't want to be.

Ultimately, we realize that we are powerless to overcome it. We realize that the price of sin truly is death. We realized that we need someone to go where we cannot go, to do what we cannot do. We realize need a Savior.

12/4/2013

## The Greatest Loss

*Genes 3:23 So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. 24 After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.*

It is difficult to imagine the loss felt by Adam and Eve the day they left the garden. The weight of guilt and shame must have been overwhelming. Moving into a world of unknown dangers, having to struggle to survive for the first time in their lives, looking around and seeing a harsh landscape rather than a lush garden must have all been overwhelming for them.

Yet of all the things that were lost that day, none would have been so hard to bear as losing the daily presence of God.

Imagine what that must have been like for them! Could you fathom spending all of your life dwelling with God, basking in His glory, surrounded by the perfection of His creation only to be sent away from Him?

It is unbearable to even comprehend.

God would have been justified in ending the Bible there. He would have had every right to simply walk away and be done. But the introduction of sin did not end God's plan for us. In fact, what was intended for evil, God would use to bring about good.

As they stepped out into a world of uncertainty, doubt and fear, Adam and Eve stepped towards God's redemption. Each step away from Eden brought them one step closer to Advent.

12/5/2013

## **The Love of One**

*Genesis 6:5 - The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. 6 The Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled...8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.*

When we read this, it is hard to imagine the world Noah lived in; a world where nothing but evil existed in the hearts of men.

It's hard that is until we look around us, and see what the world has now become.

Values seem to be an ancient relic. Boundaries are being pushed and broken at every turn. Sometimes it seems like there is no hope left in the world. I imagine Noah felt the same way.

Yet somehow, when the world was crumbling down around him, Noah found the strength to stand firm. He commanded the attention of God. By the faith of one man, humanity was spared the ultimate judgment.

After Noah and his family left the ark, a new covenant was begun. Rather than promising to send a flood along whenever we start getting out of control, God instead moved another direction. With the seal of the rainbow, He pointed us forward to a time when one would be sent who could overcome the power of sin; when one would be sent who could redeem the hearts of men; when one would be sent whose redemption would be attained not through escape, but through surrender.

12/6/2013

## The Lamb

*Exodus 12: 13 - The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.*

There are few passages which inspire both awe and fear of God more than that of The Passover. On the surface, it was the final plague sent to secure Israel's release from captivity. But if we dig a little deeper, it reveals to us a foreshadowing of things to come.

One of the most striking elements of The Passover is that judgment was not reserved solely for the Egyptians. Instead, judgment was passed against ALL of those in the land of Egypt, including the Israelites.

It was then, in the midst of judgment and impending death, that God provided a way of redemption: the blood of an unblemished lamb.

In this passage, God shows us not only how He is going to redeem Israel from Egypt but also how He is going to redeem us from our sin.

We too stand in judgment. We too are facing death. Yet, by the blood of The Lamb, we too are redeemed.

For Israel, The Passover marked the beginning of their journey out of Egypt. For us, it was an invaluable step on the journey to Advent.

12/7/2013

## The Law

*Exodus 20:20 - Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin."*

An entire nation had just been liberated from slavery. God had performed His most visible miracles in all of scripture in a very short period of time right before the Israelite's very eyes. From plagues, to pillars of fire, to parted seas, God had proven that He was faithful to His people and that their deliverance could only be attributed to Him.

Yet it was not enough to deliver the people of Israel from their physical suffering. It was not enough to answer their cries for freedom and hope. It was not enough to prove His Sovereignty beyond any shadow of a doubt. It was not enough to simply relocate His people.

The goal of the Exodus was not deliverance. It was redemption.

As God began to give Moses the Ten Commandments and the rest of the Law, He did for us what we could not do for ourselves. By providing us with His standards, God allowed us to see in ourselves the true depth of our sin. He allowed us to see how far we are from where He requires us to be. He exposed sin for what it is; a divide between God and man that we alone cannot overcome.

The law, for the first time in human history, caused us to see our need for a savior.



12/9/2013

## Standing in the Gap

*Judges 3:9 - When the sons of Israel cried to the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer for the sons of Israel to deliver them, Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.*

Reading though the Old Testament and seeing the cycle of sin that Israel seemed chronically stuck in, it is natural to wonder why they were not more faithful. They had seen amazing miracles of God. They had seen Him deliver them from captivity, lead them into the promise land, deliver countless victories and drive out all who opposed them.

Yet, time and time again, the Israelites turned from Him. They forgot the things that God had done, and simply brushed Him aside and moved on.

The God of the universe, the God of their nation, the only true and living God, became seen as their parents' God, then their grandparents' God. Until ultimately, one day, He was little more than a relic of a long-dead generation.

Yet God's plan for mankind did not end with the Exodus or the settlement of the Promised Land. While man has a very narrow vision that always curves inward, God works and moves with eternal vision. He was not willing to walk away, to turn aside, or to abandon His people.

Beginning in the book of Judges, God begins to rise up men and women to stand in the gap. As generations would come and go, these people of God would continue to steer Israel back to Him, to call on the people to consecrate themselves to Him and to prepare for one who would come to bridge the gap for eternity.

12/10/2013

## **A Prelude to a King**

*1 Samuel 3:11 - The Lord said to Samuel, "Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle.*

A transition was about to take place. The way in which God related to His people and they to Him was going to be forever altered. The days of the judges were at an end and the age of the kings was about to dawn.

It was not what God wanted for Israel. He warned the people through Samuel that a king would bring to them a new level of oppression and difficulties. Yet, he knew that the people would choose to have an earthy ruler. More than anything, God knew something the people had yet to discover. Faith is difficult, but flesh is easy.

Our default programming is to embrace the physical. When we begin to fall away in our relationship with God, we fall back into our old habits. When we are not living to please Him, we live to please ourselves. When we are not consciously focused on Him, we focus on us.

Israel wanted a king because they thought it would make things easy, but in the end, it was a decision that would nearly destroy them.

Yet even in this disobedience, God would still move. He would still carry out His plan of redemption. He would still overcome the shortcomings of his people. And ultimately, He would bring His people one step closer to Advent with a young boy...a shepherd named David.

12/11/2013

## **A Journey to Bethlehem**

*1 Samuel 16:11-13 - And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are these all the children?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, and behold, he is tending the sheep." Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here." 12 So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance. And the Lord said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he." 13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward.*

I imagine if young David were put on a ballot today, few would vote for him. He didn't come from the right type of family, he had no military qualifications, he wasn't an ambassador or a diplomat and he was more interested in hanging out with sheep than he was with kings. He would be labeled as too young, too inexperienced, unqualified and uneducated.

Yet this is just the type of person God chose to replace Saul. This is the man who would slay a giant, return the ark, defeat countless enemies and be called a man after God's own heart.

But he would not be perfect. Though he strived to serve God, inevitably David would fall short. God's plan would still require something more.

The journey was not yet complete, but the world was a step closer to the Messiah. Samuel journeyed to Bethlehem to anoint a shepherd as king. Generations later, shepherds would journey to Bethlehem to welcome a new King.

12/12/13

## **A Giant Problem**

*1 Samuel 17:45-47 - Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. This day the Lord will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you."*

As a child, the story of David and Goliath was my favorite story in the entire Bible. There is something epic and awe inspiring about it. The arrogant and defiant giant standing on one side, scoffing at this impudent young kid with a sling shot, and the small, bold and courageous boy standing on the other, is a scene that is simply mesmerizing.

I can just see all of the Israelites hiding and watching. If they were hopeless before, they must have been even more so now. When David loses they will be slaves. Surely he has no chance, surely there will only be one outcome, and surely they are watching their own demise. Did they pray? Did they hope against hope that some way, somehow, this kid could actually defeat the giant? Did they play out scenarios hoping that the giant might trip, or drop his spear?

Did they know what they were about to see? Did they understand when Goliath fell that they were seeing physically what one day Christ would do spiritually?

Could they have known that this young boy would one day pave the way for their true King?

12/13/2013

## **Break Down**

*Psalm 51:10-12 - Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation And sustain me with a willing spirit.*

It is hard to imagine the anguish David felt when he penned these words. All of his victories, all of his triumphs, all of the miracles God had done in his life were suddenly negated by his affair with Bethsheba and the murder of Uriah.

David was a man who leaned on God, who sought strength from Him, who knew the scriptures. David had lived in victory, had been delivered from enemies, he had even danced with unparalleled joy before The Lord. Yet now, in this moment, he was crushed by the consuming defeat of sin.

In this passage of Psalm 51, David cries out to God for mercy. He longs in his heart for the relationship to be restored. Suddenly, through the revelation of the prophet Nathan, David sees his sin as God sees it.

It is so easy to convince ourselves that we are some somehow justified in our sin; that we really aren't as bad as "those other people". Yet God is calling out to us. His Spirit is seeking to reveal the truth of what sin does to us. He is longing for us to cry out to him "Create in me a clean heart, O God!"

And because of Christ, we live in the hope of 1 John 1:19. *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

12/14/2013

## Road Signs

*Isaiah 7:14 - Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.*

On the list of Bible bad guys, King Ahaz certainly ranks near the top. He desecrated the temple, led the nation into idolatry, and even sacrificed his own son to an idol god.

Ahaz was so reprehensible that upon his death, the nation of Israel refused to place his body in the tomb of the kings.

Of all the possible people in scriptures, Ahaz certainly seems the most unlikely to receive a message about the coming Messiah; particularly one that today is so well known, that a Christmas play isn't quite complete unless it is quoted.

And yet, this was the man to whom it was directed. God offered to grant Ahaz any sign in order to prove that He alone was God. Yet, Ahaz refused. And so in Isaiah chapter seven, verse fourteen, God promises He will give His own sign; one which fulfills the promise to David, and to nation of Israel that a Messiah will come.

Like billboards along a highway that alert us to what is ahead, God shines a light upon what is to come. A future when a child will be born to redeem the world from the judgment of sin.

He promised to send one who was not another earthly king, not a temple priest, not a warrior. Instead, God would send one who would be called Immanuel, or literally "God with us".



12/16/2013

## Exiled

*Daniel 1:1-4a - In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. 2 The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand...3 Then the king ordered Ashpenaz ...to bring in some of the sons of Israel, including some of the royal family and of the nobles, 4 youths in whom was no defect, who were good-looking, showing intelligence in every branch of wisdom, endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge, and who had ability for serving in the king's court;*

Despite God's warning, the people insisted on a king. Though things began well, they ended in disaster. Generation after generation began to fall further and further away from God. Idolatry and infighting soon began to permeate the people and they were eventually split into two separate kingdoms.

In the New Testament, Jesus would warn that a house divided against itself would not stand. These were not idol words or intellectual doublespeak, but a reminder of Israel's own history.

The splitting of the nation, and the distractions of paganism eventually led to their inevitable conclusion: The Exile. Suddenly the Promised Land was occupied, and the people were enslaved.

Though The Exile would eventually end, the nation would never be the same. It would be a nation that was conquered by the Greeks; a nation occupied by the Romans; a nation where, for the first time, a Saviour could be crucified.

12/17/2013

## It's Almost Time

*Micah 5:2 But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity.”*

In the midst of one of the most chaotic and disheartening periods that Israel had experienced since the enslavement in Egypt, a message began to be delivered by the prophets.

The promise of God to bring a Messiah was drawing ever closer. A town in which David had been anointed as king would soon see the birth of the one true King.

In this verse, the most remarkable thing to me is not that Micah predicted the town the Messiah would be born in, or that he predicted the Messiah would be a ruler. What I find the most amazing is the last sentence.

*His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity.”*

Before The Exile, before the time of kings, before the time of judges, before The Exodus, before the covenant with Abraham, before the flood, before sin came into the world, before man was even created, Jesus was already prepared to go forth from Bethlehem and redeem His people.

Though we were not yet even conceived, He was not willing that we should be left lost. Micah reminds us that Advent was not an afterthought or a Hail Mary. It was a journey of love that was begun before time itself began.

12/18/13

## **Your Exit is Coming Up**

*Luke 2:26 - Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent  
18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when  
His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they  
came together she was found to be with child by the Holy  
Spirit. 19 And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and  
not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away  
secretly. 20 But when he had considered this, behold, an angel  
of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son  
of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the  
Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy  
Spirit. 21 She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name  
Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."*

The moment had arrived. It was time for Jesus to leave behind the majesty of heaven and take on the role of servant. He was not to come as a warrior, nor was He to come as a prince. His earthly family would not be elevated to a life of luxury and riches. They would not be celebrated by the religious leaders of the day or recognized for their incredible faith.

Mary, a simple girl from a tiny town, was insignificant in the eyes of Israel. She hadn't been trained by the church, ordained by the elders, sanctified by the priests, or anointed in the temple. She was neither a woman of nobility nor power, yet she carried the one trait that mattered the most.

More than any other talent, trait or possession, it remains the number one trait required by God.

Mary was obedient.

12/19/13

## **A House Restored**

*Matthew 1:18 - Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. 19 And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. 20 But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."*

For a guy whose ancestors included David and Solomon, Joseph was certainly not what one would expect.

A simple carpenter living in a tiny town on the northern edge of Israel, Joseph's world was far removed from the palaces and courtyards his forefathers had known.

Yet when you look past the dimly lit shack, the dirt covered hands and the tattered clothes, you see a family resemblance that cannot be mistaken.

When logic said that he should distance himself from Mary, God spoke and told Joseph to stay. With the boldness of a young shepherd so many generations ago, Joseph decided that he no longer cared what others thought, he was going to follow The Lord.

This descendent of the ancient kings would now be entrusted to raise the one true King, a boy he would call Jesus.

12/20/2013

## **The Return to Bethlehem**

*Luke 2:4-7 - Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, 5 in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. 6 While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.*

It is hard to imagine taking your wife on a road trip when she is 9 months pregnant. It would be even harder to imagine doing so on foot. Certainly their travels were filled with conversation about the baby. No doubt the excitement and anticipation was palpable. So too must have been the mystery.

What would this child be like? What would He do? How would they raise Him? What would God do in Him?

Passing through the hills and valleys of the Jordan, did they think back to the journey Samuel made to anoint David? Did Joseph wonder just how God was going to use this child?

One thing we can know is that beyond all other doubts, anxieties, feelings and nerves, they had one thing at their core that kept them putting one foot in front of the other...faith. It was shown when they encountered the angel and it continued to sustain them during their long journey to the World's first Advent.

12/21/2013

## Shepherds

*Luke 2:8-14 - In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. 10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; 11 for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." 13 And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 14 "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."*

Shepherds were outcasts, looked down upon by the self-righteous, and seen as a sub-class of society. Why then would the angel chose them to appear to? Why would men who, according to historian Jeremias, were not even allowed to testify in court, be entrusted with spreading the news that the Messiah had come?

I like to think the answer lies in the flock. Most of the animals raised in Bethlehem during that time were destined for the temple of Jerusalem. It was these men who cared for the very animals that the priests would offered for sacrifice. Yet though ensured the flocks were safe and the sacrifice protected, these men were considered unworthy of receiving for themselves the sacrifice the lambs represented.

I think ultimately, the shepherds heard the message first because the church had made them last.



12/23/2013

## **We Three Kings**

*Matthew 2:1-2 & 9-11- Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, 2 “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.” ... 9 After hearing the king, they went their way; and the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them until it came and stood over the place where the Child was. 10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. 11 After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.*

Mary and Joseph were not the only ones to travel to Bethlehem; others also came. Though little is known of them, we know that the Magi saw the star as a sign of the Divine.

The Magi told Herod that they were coming to worship the new king of the Jews. The fact that they did not worship Herod, the current king of the Jews is telling. They did not seek Christ for His earthly title, but they sought Him for His Heavenly origins.

The gifts they brought represented who Christ was and who He would become. Gold, a gift given to a king; incense, a gift given to God; and myrrh, an oil used in preparation for burial.

Their journey brought them from unknown lands, to a tiny town in Israel, into the very presence of the Living God.

12/24/2013

## Christmas Eve

### The Christ Candle

*John 1:1 - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. 5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.*

*John 1:35 - Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, 36 and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!"*

*Mathew 16:6 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*

*John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*

*John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.*

*John 11: 25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die.*

*Romans 5: 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

*1 John 5:11 And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.*

12/25/2013

## The New Covenant

*Matthew 26:26 - While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." 27 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; 28 for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins. 29 But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."*

The meal Jesus shared with His disciples that night was the meal eaten to remember the night of the Passover. It was a night to reflect on how God had, through the blood of a lamb, spared Israel from the judgment that had been cast on all of Egypt.

The ritual itself was highly specific. Those who partook of the Passover feast, were required to follow a regimented order and pattern of doing things. And yet, on that night, Jesus broke with the normal tradition.

The cup that Jesus passed was the third cup of the Passover, the redemption cup. In changing the ritual and establishing His New Covenant, Jesus left no doubt as to what His true missions was.

He did not come as a conqueror, an earthly king, a religious zealot or an ambitious leader. Christ came with one purpose and one only. To offer himself as the sacrifice for our sin so that He could redeem us from the judgment of sin that had already been pronounced.

The path from the manger led straight to the hill of Calvary.

12/26/2013

## **Finished**

*John 19:17 They took Jesus, therefore, and He went out, bearing His own cross, to the place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha. 18 There they crucified Him...28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, said, "I am thirsty." 29 A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop and brought it up to His mouth. 30 Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.*

For generations sin had stood between God and man. The relationship that was destroyed in Eden had never been restored.

From the promise to Abraham, to the Exodus, to the countless prophets and scribes, God was constantly working to bring us to redemption.

Christ went to the cross knowing what was on the line. He went knowing He would suffer. He went knowing that if we were to be redeemed, there was no other way. He also went knowing that He would be successful. Verse 28 tells us He knew that the job was over. He knew the price was paid. He knew Satan was defeated. He knew no further sacrifice was needed. He knew the bridge was gapped. He knew that He had won.

His final words were the most amazing, most profound and most beautiful words in all of scripture. "It is finished."  
Death, damnation, separation, guilt, shame, all of it...finished.

12/27/2013

## Redemption Reborn

*Luke 14:15 - While they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself approached and began traveling with them. 16 But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him. 17 And He said to them, "What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?" And they stood still, looking sad. 18 One of them, named Cleopas, answered and said to Him, "Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?" 19 And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, 20 and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to the sentence of death, and crucified Him. ... 25 And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" 27 Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.*

The story did not end in the tomb. Though the enemy would have him stay, though it seemed evil had won, our God could not be contained. Not death, not the grave not even the gates of Hell itself could keep our Savior at bay. Jesus is our risen King.

Imagine a God who is **THAT** powerful being willing to set it all aside just to suffer and die. Imagine a God whose plan for you goes back thousands of years to the very beginning of humanity. That is the God that wants to know you. That is the God who wants to redeem you. This is the God who wants a relationship with you. That is the God who loves you.

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## **The Journey Ends**

*Revelation 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. 12 His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. 13 He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. 15 From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. 16 And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."*

Though the season of celebrating advent has come to completion, Christ still has one final journey to make. When He returns, it will not be in a quaint and quiet town. Nor will He come as poor and lowly tradesman.

When Christ returns, it will be in a manner fitting His glory. None who see Him can oppose him. None who see him can deny who he is.

His return will be the final step in the journey of redemption that began when foundations of the world were laid.

The word tells us that God demonstrates His love for us in this: while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Don't let redemption simply pass you by. Call out to Him, and He will bring you on the Journey.