

Why the Church Desperately Needs to Recapture the Spirit of Declaration Day

On July 4, we celebrate the signing of the Declaration of Independence and call it Independence Day. Actually, our Independence came seven years later, in 1783. On July 4, 1776, we made a declaration of our basic principles, and so the holiday should really be called Declaration Day.

Our Founding Fathers declared first of all that all men were created equal. This powerful statement acknowledges that we are created by God, and that all else comes from Him. It was God who created us equal, with no preference for ancestry, skin color, gender or other distinction. The founders actually echoed the biblical statement that, in Christ, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, and there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28).

Second, they declared that it was God who endowed us with inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. No one can take our life, because "God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (1 John 5:11b). In the same way, it is the Spirit of the Lord who gives us freedom (2 Cor 3:17b), not to indulge ourselves, but to serve others in love (Gal. 6:13). The Lord gives us the choice of which path to follow in pursuit of happiness (Deut. 30:19), but He guides us to happiness by showing us that life, prosperity and honor come from pursuit of righteousness and love (Prov. 21:21).

In the many years since 1776, our nation has struggled to live up to the principles declared by our Founding Fathers. The stain of slavery and racism, denying God's declaration of

equality, has only now begun to disappear from society. Yet, in modern times, many have forgotten that our rights come from God, denying Him and looking to the state as our source of rights and happiness. Even the right to life has been subverted to a false freedom to serve ourselves. We stand in grave danger of losing the God-given rights and freedoms declared so eloquently in 1776.

It' time to turn things around. Let us start with ourselves and join the Founding Fathers in their declaration:

- God created us, and everything comes from Him.
- God created us equal, to be one in Christ.
- God has given us the right to life through Christ.
- God has given us freedom in order to serve others.
- God has given us the right to pursue genuine happiness through righteousness and love.

Let us pray that the church will recapture the Spirit of Declaration Day and pass it on to a nation desperately in need of real equality, life, liberty and happiness.

Ron Allen is a Christian businessman, CPA and author who serves in local, national and international ministries, spreading a message of reconciliation to God, to men and between believers. He is founder of the International Star Bible Society, telling how the heavens declare the glory of God; the Emancipation Network, which helps people escape from financial bondage; and co-founder with his wife, Pat, of Corporate Prayer Resources, dedicated to helping intercessors.

Summer Solstice: Once a Godly Sign, Now a Demonic Bondage

This week on June 21, the summer begins on the summer solstice.

Astronomically, the summer solstice is the day when the sun reaches its highest point in the sky over the northern hemisphere. It is also the longest day of the year. The opposite solstice, the winter solstice, is the day when the sun is lowest in the heavens and the night is longest. The other seasonal markers, the spring and fall equinoxes, occur when the sun is at midpoint, and day and night are of equal length.

These important calendar dates are important in God's religious calendar. The first three Hebrew feasts, pointing to Christ's death and resurrection, occur near the spring equinox, while the last three feasts, picturing the second coming of Christ, occur near the fall equinox. The spring and winter are associated with the appearance of Christ in Hosea 6:3, and the story of Christ's Advent begins with the conception of John the Baptist, which is believed to have occurred near the winter solstice in 7 B.C. Summer is associated with the Second Coming of Christ, as we are told that the summer is near when the fig tree (Israel) comes to life (Matt 24:32). You may have a free download of our book *The Stars of His Coming* at for more information.

Sadly, these important spiritual times were hijacked by the ancient followers of the religion of the false messiah, the pagans. The winter solstice came to symbolize the birth of the false messiah, and structures like New Grange in Ireland are aligned with the sun on the winter solstice. Pagans celebrated the spring equinox as the beginning of the year, as it was in God's calendar, and celebrated the harvest at the fall

equinox. The summer solstice, when the sun is highest, marked the power of their pagan false messiahs, and temples like Stonehenge were aligned with the sun on the summer solstice.

In modern times, the believers in the New Age or godhood religion (i.e. we are all gods), have latched onto the Pagan calendar in an attempt to get in touch with the spirits behind Paganism. They have also tried to revitalize the ancient Pagan sites with their New Age religion. They can be seen at Stonehenge, New Grange, Chitzen Itza, Angkor Wat, Chaco Canyon and other sites, trying to bring back the demon spirits that dominated these civilizations. And, of course, the high holy day for many is the summer solstice.

As Christians, we need to pray for those poor New Age souls who are falling into demonic bondage. We also need to remember that dates like the summer solstice were created by God for His glory, and we can celebrate them as part of God's prophetic calendar.

Yes, the summer is near, and we should be telling folks the real meaning: The return of Christ is near. {eoa}

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Harbinger of Destruction? US Experiences Record-Breaking Rainfall This Year

Record rains and associated climate concerns are big news today. We thought it would be a good time to bring in some historical perspective from Brian Fagan's classic book, *The Little Ice Age*.

Just last week, writers Jacob Bunge and Kirk Maltais reported in *The Wall Street Journal* that the last 12-month period was the wettest on record in the Continental U.S. As a result of the soggy ground, Farmers may not be able to plant millions of acres with corn.

Politicians point to global warming, but we suggest you turn to the second chapter of Mr. Fagan's book, entitled "The Great Famine." In the year 1315, the Little Ice Age began with years of record rainfall in Europe, drowning the crops and leading to famine. The rain signaled the arrival of global cooling, which ended a prosperous period when the climate was warm as today, known as the Medieval Warm Period. The Little Ice Age continued for 500 years until the modern warming began in the 1800s.

Next turn to Chapter 7, "The War Against Glaciers," where you will learn how a decrease in solar energy produced the coldest portion of the Little Ice Age, from 1645 to 1715. English astronomer E.W. Maunder noticed that the sun was virtually free of reported sunspots during this period, an indication of reduced solar output. This 70-year reduction in sunspot activity and the resulting period of extreme cold climate were given the name Maunder Minimum.

Beginning in 2017, astronomers began warning about the possible return of the Maunder Minimum. It seems that sunspot

activity in the last half of the 20th century had reached the highest levels in 400 years of observations, perhaps acting as the major cause of global warming. Then, beginning with the 11-year sunspot cycle of 2009, there was a drastic decline in the sunspots, leading to the warning of a return of the Maunder Minimum. Even so, astronomers were careful not to be attacked as Global Warming “deniers,” limiting their comments to solar weather.

Now, in the July 2019 issue of *Astronomy* magazine, astronomer Bob Berman has bravely connected the dots. He asked if the decline in sunspots could “herald the start of another lifetime-long sunspot absence that would cool the earth at the best possible time by mitigating anthropogenic climate and ocean warming.”

Fagan published *The Little Ice Age* in the year 2000 and could not have known about the solar output declines beginning in 2009. In his final chapter, he discussed the increased solar and human activity he blamed for global warming. Yet he also warned us that climate changes can occur rapidly, bringing unsettled weather patterns. He closed by saying “we would be wise to learn from the climate lessons of history.”

Yes, we would be wise to learn from history, but we would be wiser to understand that only God controls the climate, and only He knows what tomorrow will bring. It is also wisdom to know that He uses the forces of nature to send judgment and get our attention (see Job 37:6-13).

Let us humbly seek His face and pray to be spared from the fears of global warming and the famines of global cooling. Let us also pray that our politicians would acknowledge the uncertainty of future climate and not pursue policies that will destroy the freedom and prosperity of Americans.

“Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and He relents

from punishing” (Joel 2:13b) {eoa}

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30 Years Later, What Christians Should Know About China's Horrific Tiananmen Square Massacre

Thirty years ago, on the night of June 3, 1989, the Chinese Communist Party murdered thousands of democracy demonstrators in Tiananmen Square. It is an event that resonates even today and should be remembered.

Compared to the 35 million deliberately starved to death in the 1950s and the millions killed in the Cultural Revolution of the 1970s, the number of victims of the Tiananmen Square massacre hardly registers. Yet by 1989 the Chinese Communist Party had put on a kinder, gentler face, and many expected them to begin moving toward democratic rule. But we were wrong. Instead, the winds of freedom that were blowing through the Soviet Empire terrified the rulers in Beijing. The democratic demonstrators were crushed by the Red Army in one bloody night.

The communists had survived 1989, but another terror gripped them in 1991 as they watched the American Army effortlessly destroy the best military technology in the communist block during the First Gulf War. The Red Army was no match for the Americans because, like the Russians and Iraqis, China could not match American spending on defense and technology. To compete, China had to become richer, but the communist/socialist economic system produced only poverty. The solution came from leader Deng Xiaoping, who put China on a path to adopt a modified version of the capitalist system.

First, Deng went to the Red Army and got them to agree to capitalist reforms if they got more funding. Then he went to the coastal city governors and got them to agree to fund the Red Army in exchange for supporting capitalism. Finally, Deng won support of the Communist Party by promising to use the Red Army and the increased capitalist wealth to keep the party in power. Deng redefined socialism to be any economic system that worked, in other words, capitalism, and popularized the saying "To be rich is glorious."

Deng's plan worked beyond his wildest dreams. By removing the dead hand of socialism and allowing people to own property and keep the fruits of their labor, he ignited the greatest economic boom in human history. Hundreds of millions of people have moved out of poverty and into the middle class. China has become an economic powerhouse and is the second largest economy in the world.

But as the Chinese economic miracle unfolded, the world forgot about Tiananmen Square. Once again, the world began to believe that China would move toward democracy. Once again, we were wrong.

We failed to notice the success of the rest of Deng's plan. The Red Army, enriched by its own capitalist companies and higher taxes, has built a modern air force and navy. And, embodied by its new power, the Red Army has taken over the

international waters in South China Sea, threatening its neighbors and American power in East Asia.

Thanks to China's capitalist prosperity, the Communist Party is more entrenched in power than ever. Worse, one man, XI Jinping, has succeeded in amassing power as Mao Tse Tung did. And, like Mao, he is determined to crush all other competing organizations in China. The church, which may grow from 100 million to 250 million over the next 20 years, is one of his main targets.

Some churches have been put under control of atheistic party members, and those that refuse are under attack. Thousands of churches have been closed, and over a million Christians suffered persecution last year alone. The state forbids Christian education of children, and Christian teachings are banned even in many churches. And advanced technology such as facial recognition is used to identify and persecute Christians.

Yes, sadly the Chinese Communist Party is back to Tiananmen Square-style repression.

So remember Tiananmen Square, and remember to pray for Chinese Christians like Early Rain Church pastor Wang Yi. After he and his wife were arrested, Wang Yi said "The rulers have chosen an enemy that can never be imprisoned—the soul of man. Therefore they are doomed to lose their war."

Amen. {eoa}

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A Prayer Every Pentecostal Should Pray This Sunday

This Pentecost Sunday, June 9, get up early and spend a little time with the Morning Star of Pentecost.

On Pentecost Sunday, we celebrate the birthday of the church on the Jewish Feast day of Pentecost in A.D. 30. As a Jewish feast, Pentecost looked back to the giving of the law on Mount Sinai and, as a feast of First Fruits of Harvest (Exodus 34:22), looked forward to the Church as first fruits of the saved. Pentecost for the followers of Jesus brought the Holy Spirit, which wrote the law on their hearts (Jeremiah 31:33), with 3,000 saved that day (Acts 2:41). And the sign of the Holy Spirit was speaking in tongues (Acts 2:4).

In the revelation of Jesus in the stars, which we call the Star Bible, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is represented by the constellation Aquarius ("the water bearer") The constellation pictures a man pouring water, representing the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (see John 7:37-39). Stars named Sadalsuud (the pourer out) and Sadalmalik (the record of the pouring out) confirm this understanding, while the star Meon (Urn) is always pictured as pouring out the water of the Holy Spirit.

Follow the outpoured water down to the next constellation, Pisces Austranis ("The Southern fish") for the rest of the story. We know that the fish is an ancient symbol of the believers, and the single fish of Pisces Austranis represents the Jewish believers who received the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues at Pentecost in A.D. 30. The outpoured water of Aquarius flows down to the bright star Formalhaut ("the mouth

of the Fish”) in confirmation that the Holy Spirit flowed through the mouth, as the sign of the Holy Spirit was speaking in tongues. Thus, we may call Fomalhaut the Pentecostal Star.

Fomalhaut, the morning star of Pentecost, will be visible in the Southern sky in the hours before dawn on Pentecost Sunday. An hour before sunrise, the planet Venus (the seed of woman) which represents Jesus as the Bright Morning Star, will rise to join the Morning Star of Pentecost in the sky. This reminds us that the Holy Spirit leads us to Jesus (1 Corinthians 12:3).

So get up early on Pentecost Sunday for the morning star of Pentecost and the bright morning star. Pray for a new infilling of the Holy Spirit and a deeper revelation of Jesus.
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What Jesus Would Tell Us This Memorial Day

Today on Memorial Day, the U.S. pauses to remember those who gave their all in our defense.

Warfare is one of the oldest activities of mankind. Beginning

with Nimrod in Babylon, rulers have used force of arms to subjugate their enemies and, often, their own people. The great empires of antiquity, Babylon, Egypt, Assyria, Persia, Greece and Rome rose and fell to the cadence of armies on the march. And the people suffered from the plagues of death, famine and disease that followed the armies.

Into this world of brutal warfare, God sent deliverers to His people. Abraham rescued Lot, Moses freed his people from Egypt, Joshua defeated the Canaanites and the judges fought to save the Israelites when they repented of their disastrous turns away from God. God built a great kingdom on the victories of King David, but the people repeatedly fell into sin, and many of their kings moved in the oppressive spirit of Nimrod. The horrors of warfare came upon God's rebellious people, and the Israelites became slaves in the promised land (see Neh. 9:36, 37).

Christ came into a world ruled by the sword, but He refused to build His kingdom by the sword. Instead, He established His kingdom within the hearts of believers, giving them the inner strength to overcome their real enemy, Satan. Jesus was the greatest revolutionary of all time, bringing millions out of the kingdom of darkness. Even the mighty Roman Empire finally bowed its knee and surrendered to Christ.

Alas, the plague of warfare was not eradicated even in the Christian lands. The church followed the path of Israel, falling into sinful periods and suffering divisions. New Nimrods arose, some from the church itself, to subjugate their people. And, as with Israel, God sent deliverers, some with a Bible, like St Patrick, who converted the Irish, and some with the sword, like Charles Martel, who saved Europe from an Islamic invasion.

God has also raised up deliverers for our country, whose sacrifice we remember on Memorial Day. Jesus said "Greater love has no man than this: that a man lay down his life for

his friends" (John 15:13). As the Lord commends them for their love, so should we.

Let us then pray for our defenders as we honor those who showed the greatest love by sacrificing their lives for us.
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Christians Must Do This Before America Passes the Point of No Return

The time is fast approaching when the church will need to remember the lesson of German Pastor Martin Niemoller.

Pastor Niemoller was a man of great courage who had been a submarine captain in World War I before he entered the ministry. As a minister, he spoke out against the atrocities of the Nazi regime. On March 2, 1938, he was sent to prison, where he spent the rest of the war because of his Christian beliefs.

Nevertheless, this Christian hero apologized for his delay in opposing the Nazis. Here is what he said:

First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out, because I was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out, because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out, because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak for me.

You may think that Nazi Germany is far removed from today's America, but you should think again. There are forces in America that no longer believe in individual liberty and democracy. Our freedoms are being diminished day by day, and most Christians remain silent.

When the courts in California overruled the democratic vote against gay marriage, there was little outcry. When the government sabotaged the Defense of Marriage Act, few noticed. When Christians were fined for refusing to participate in gay marriage ceremonies, we were told that we were bigots. After the Supreme Court forced gay marriage on the nation, hundreds of florists and bakers have been attacked because of their beliefs. Now the "progressives" want our daughters to be forced to shower with boys who say they want to be girls. And abortionists are killing babies born alive. We are getting perilously close to the old Soviet Communist concept of religious "freedom," where you could have religious beliefs so long as you said nothing and did not act according to your faith.

Freedom of Speech has been under attack in the cause of "politically correct" speech. University students, who used to demonstrate for free speech, now demand censorship on college campuses. In the Citizen's United Supreme Court decision, so adamantly opposed by the "progressives," the government actually argued that they had the right to censor books and movies. Must we wait until they are burning books to arouse from our slumber?

Under the guise of fighting crime the government has passed thousands of laws which entrap innocent Americans every day. People have gone to jail for getting lost in a snowstorm on federal lands or failing to follow packaging regulations of foreign countries. The government can seize your money without proving anything and you have to hire a lawyer to get it back, except that you can't pay a lawyer because the government took your money. You can become a criminal even if you have no criminal intent, and the "progressives" fiercely resist any attempt to bring this elementary human right back into our legal system.

To top it off, we now know that government employees have been using their offices for political purposes. In 2012, the IRS and other agencies were used to hinder and attack conservative organizations. In 2016, the FBI and Justice Department used false evidence planted by the party in power to spy on the political campaign of the other party. This same information was the used to spark an internal "resistance" campaign where government employees have leaked false information and subverted the elected administration. Some want to go further and overthrow the elected president even after he was exonerated of the false charge.

You may not like President Trump or his politics. You may not have much sympathy for a business man who can't defend himself because the government took his money. You may not agree with Christians who are persecuted for their opposition to birth control, abortion or gay marriage. And you may be offended that the airways and internet are full of obnoxious political speech.

Just remember that if you are cheering for the government as it moves against the freedom of others, you are only bringing the day of destruction closer to yourself.

Stand up for freedom before there is no one left when they come for you. {eoa}

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Are We Witnessing the Greatest End-Times Miracle of God?

Next week, on May 14, we will celebrate the 71st year of Israel as an independent nation.

The rebirth of Israel after almost 2,000 years stands as an amazing fulfillment of Bible prophecy. Numerous Scriptures refer to an end-time role for the nation of Israel. Even the date of Israel's formation can be calculated from the Scripture in Revelation 11: 1, 2 which speaks of a "42-month" or 1260-year "Age of the Gentiles" to be measured from the time the Temple Mount was lost to unbelievers. From the time the Dome of the Rock was constructed on the Temple Mount, A.D. 687, until 1947, the year the U.N. voted to establish Israel, exactly 1260 years had passed.

Some thought that Jesus would return within a generation of the formation of Israel based on Luke 21:32, where Jesus said that this generation would not pass away before His prophecy of the end had happened. After the Second Coming did not happen on the 40th anniversary in 1988, some stretched the

biblical idea of a 40-year generation to 70 years. Now that 70 years has passed, it may be good to remember that a major theme of Luke 21 was the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, which began when the gates were shut against Roman general Titus on Passover of A.D. 70, exactly 40 years on the Jewish calendar after Jesus was crucified.

Let us also remember that for the Advent of Christ, the nation of Israel was reborn at the time of the Maccabees in 165 B.C., 160 years before Jesus was born and 190 years before His ministry began. A similar period for the Second Coming would span the years 2108 to 2138. Better still it is best to remember that no one knows the day or hour of Christ's return.

The survival of Israel against overwhelming forces is one of the greatest modern miracles of God. Israel has fought wars in 1948, 1956, 1967 and 1973, and has emerged victorious every time. She has fought many smaller engagements and has endured sustained terrorist activities. The hand of God has been evident, as described by the prophet Zechariah, who speaks of Jerusalem as an "immovable rock" and a "cup that sends the surrounding peoples reeling" (Zech. 12:2-3, NIV).

Today Israel is still surrounded by its enemies. Hamas, Hezbollah, ISIS, Al Qaeda and Iran are sworn to Israel's destruction. As of now Israel's enemies are fighting among themselves, but the Islamists are still pushing for an end to their peace with Israel. For those who subscribe to a historical interpretation of Revelation, the situation is described in Rev 9:1-11, the fifth trumpet, as a 150-year war between Israel and the Arabs. We can expect not peace, but another 79 years of warfare in the Middle East.

The end will come after Israel is defeated by the Antichrist (Zech. 14:2 and Rev. 11:7). But Jerusalem will rebel against the Antichrist, and he will gather the nations to fight at Armageddon (Megiddo, in Israel) (Rev. 16:16). Then, when all seems lost, Christ will return to the Mount of Olives (Zech.

14:4 and Acts 1:11, 12) and destroy His enemies (Zech. 14:3 and Rev. 19:19-21). Only then will peace come to the Middle East and the world (Zech. 14:9 and Rev. 20:1-6).

Nevertheless, we must continue to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. When they have peace, so will we. {eoa}

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How to Pray for Victims of Sri Lanka's Church Attacks Right Now

The terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday remind us that terrorism continues to be a tactic of choice for Islamic extremists.

The terror tactic has a long and tragic history. Military historians tell us that the worst terrorist of all time was Genghis Khan, whose armies destroyed the agricultural hinterlands of their enemies, drove the peasants into the cities and then destroyed the cities without mercy. Second to the Mongolians were the Romans, who merely destroyed the cities without mercy. Modern examples abound, from the London Blitz to the 9/11 attack.

As a military tactic, however, terrorism is a double-edged sword. More often than not, it backfires on to the terrorists. Thus, the London Blitz steeled British resolve, and in the end, it was the cities of Germany that were reduced to rubble. Palestinian terrorist intifada attacks brought swift retribution and isolation behind the Israeli wall. The 9/11 perpetrators were tracked down, and their Afghan sanctuary was overrun by Americans. It turns out, according to military historians, that terrorism only works for militarily dominant powers like Genghis Khan and Rome. For weaker opponents the terror tactic only leads to destruction.

Even so, terrorists inflict much suffering from their self-destructive path. There is also a spiritual battle, as terrorists hope to paralyze their enemies with fear and goad them into overreacting in order to create more terrorists. This is truly spiritual warfare, and we must use our spiritual weapons to defeat the terror tactic of the ultimate terrorist, Satan.

We must first learn to pray blessings on our enemies. Not blessings for their violence, but blessings that their eyes be opened and that they will be satisfied with good things and desire to live in peace. Judgment still belongs to God, and it is for Him to avenge, not us. At the same time, God wants our enemies to come into His kingdom, and we must not let bitterness or unforgiveness set us against God's purposes. Instead we must deploy the powerful spiritual weapon of love to stay in step with God.

We must also turn back the spirit of fear which has been sent against us. We know from the famous Psalm 91 that our protection comes only from God, and that He will be with us in our trouble. Yet we also know that we can overcome the evil one if we do not love this life more than the next (see Rev. 12:11). Let us live fearlessly in faith as God intended, looking forward to the day when we will be called home to heaven.

Let us not forget the suffering of our brothers and sisters in Sri Lanka. Pray for pastors like Woody Blok of Overcomers Church in Sri Lanka who are working to bring help and healing to the victims and their churches. You may make a gift through Pastor Blok's ministry at .

Yes, we will mourn for the victims of these cowardly terrorist attacks and pray that God will comfort them. But we will not quit loving our enemies and living by faith.

And, just as the terror tactic is a losing strategy for weaker opponents in the natural world, so is the terror tactic futile against the most powerful kingdom on earth, the kingdom of God. {eoa}

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7 Powerful Points Jesus Made in His Final Sermon

As Jesus hung on the cross, struggling painfully for each breath, He uttered seven short, powerful statements showing who He was and what was happening. With those statements, He encouraged those who would follow Him. It was His last sermon.

1. "Father forgive them for they do not know what they are

doing" (Luke 23:34).

Jesus is not only practicing the forgiveness He preached (Matt. 5:44), He is asserting His divinity as God who forgives sin (Ps. 103:3). Beyond that, however, He is announcing the beginning of the New Covenant under which our sins will be forgiven (Jer. 31:33, 34).

2. "I tell you the Truth, today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43).

Jesus' promise of life to the criminal on the cross tells us that He has authority over heaven (Ps. 115:16), He will conquer death (Ps. 16:10), and through Him we also will live (John 14:19). He is the priest of the New Covenant because of His indestructible life (Heb. 7: 16-17).

3. "Dear woman, here is your son ... here is your mother" (John 19:26, 27).

Jesus took time to entrust His mother into the care of the beloved disciple John, fulfilling the Scripture at Psalm 69:8 that He was estranged from His brothers and showing us that God expects us to honor our family (Mark 7:10-13). We are also reminded that Jesus was the "Seed of Woman," the Savior born to a virgin promised in Genesis 3:15.

4. "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46).

Many of those who heard Jesus, and many commentators since, have failed to understand that Jesus is quoting the Hebrew title of the 22nd Psalm. Jesus sends us to Psalm 22 to show us that 1,000 years earlier it was prophesied that Jesus would be mocked (Ps. 22:6-8) and even prophesying the very words of His mockers (Matt. 27:41-43). In one sense, He was mocking His mockers. The crucifixion is also described, as His hands and feet were pierced (Ps. 22:16), His clothes were divided by casting lots (Ps. 22:14), and it was difficult to speak (Ps. 22:15).

Yet Psalm 22 is not a picture of forsakenness or despair, but is instead a declaration of victory. God did not despise the suffering of Jesus (Ps. 22:24). Rather, God used it to purchase eternal life (Ps. 22:26) and promised that all nations will come to Jesus (Ps. 22: 27, 28). Jesus is telling us that He knew the price and gladly paid it.

5. "I am thirsty" (John 19:28).

This is another fulfillment of prophecy (Ps. 69:28), when the suffering Savior is given vinegar for His thirst. Yet in the midst of His pain and distress, Jesus used Psalm 69 to tell us that those who seek God will live (Ps. 69:12), and the God does not despise the suffering of His people (Ps. 69:33). There is also the promise that His people will rebuild Judah (Ps. 69:35, 36), an apparent reference to His promise to return.

6. "It is finished" (John 19:30).

To fully understand this statement, we believe that we need to look to the prophet Daniel. He foretold the coming of the Anointed One who would come 483 years (69 times 7) after the decree to rebuild Jerusalem (458 B.C.), or A.D. 26, and then be "cut off" in the midst of the next seven years (Dan. 9:25, 26). Jesus is telling us that He has fulfilled Daniel's prophecy to finish transgression, put an end to sin, atone for wickedness, bring eternal righteousness, seal up prophecy and anoint the Holy One (Dan. 9:24). This is the finished work of Jesus on the cross.

7. "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit" (Luke 23:46).

The last words of Jesus on the cross are taken from Psalm 31. He is telling us that we can take refuge in God (Ps. 31:1-4) and that we can trust God with our life (Ps. 31:15). Our times are in His hands (Ps. 31:19-22) and He preserves the faithful (Ps. 31:23-24).

With His last sermon, Jesus told us what He was doing even as He was doing it.

Can you join Him in saying “Father, into Your hands I commit my Spirit”? {eoa}

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