



REPENT AUSTRALIA

*"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."
2 Chronicles 7:14*

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HOW COULD JESUS DIE FOR ME?

An Easter Message

We have just celebrated Easter, also known as Passover by Christians. It has been a season of Easter bunnies, chocolate eggs, hot cross buns and holidays. But of course these are just the trimmings. The centrepiece of Easter (Passover) is the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. For no fact is more central to the Christian Gospel than **that Christ died for our sins, was resurrected and is now seated at the right hand of God interceding for us as our Great High Priest.** Yet nothing it seems is more difficult for the modern mind to accept. How could it make any difference here in the 21st century that a young Hebrew was executed in the first century in Palestine? The question is not, "Is Christianity true?" but rather, "What difference does it make?" In fact, do I need anyone to die for me? Because people today lack any awareness of sin they see no need for forgiveness. Nevertheless a sense of guilt does gnaw away at many a troubled soul, upsetting the emotions and causing much conflict within. But if we are to cope with life this guilt has to be dealt with. **Sin is a disease which, like cancer, eats away at the vitals of one's personality.** The outlook is grim indeed for both the individual and society at large unless we find a way to control it. And that is why we need a **Redeemer**, someone who has paid the penalty for our sin.

The Physical Agony

When Jesus died on the cross He suffered just as any man; He endured all the physical agony of crucifixion just as we would. His mortal body succumbed just as any mortal body would. He was a human being dying in place of other human beings. Nevertheless He *could* have escaped that awful death had He chose to, previously making it clear to His disciples that He would be mocked, spat upon and shamefully treated...that they would scourge and kill Him and on the third day He would rise from the dead. Yet, knowing it was God's plan for Him to die in Jerusalem, He set His face as a flint towards His destiny on Calvary...as the sin bearer of the world. In fact, the Scriptures tell us that Jesus was the **"Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."** From the very beginning God knew it would be necessary for Christ to die so that man's sin could be forgiven. As someone has said, "There was a cross in the heart of God before there was one planted on the green hill outside Jerusalem."

Holiness Demands Justice

According to the Scriptures, "God so loved the world He gave His only Son." Why then was His sacrifice necessary if God did so loved the world? Why not just forgive and forget and let bygones be bygones? Well it's not quite that simple. As the Bible states, **"The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ the Lord."** God's holiness demands justice---so Christ the sinless One died for us. He paid the supreme penalty that we might live. The Bible makes it clear that sins can only be forgiven on the grounds of shed blood... **"without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sins"** (a life for a life). And whoever accepts this sacrifice for themselves *shall not perish but have eternal life.* This is the amazing promise that the Lord God Almighty makes to you and me, so why do we regard it so lightly and brush it off as of little importance?

A Giant Bronze Cross

On the south coast of China overlooking the harbour of Macao, Portuguese settlers built a massive cathedral. But a typhoon some centuries ago brought it down in ruins, except for the front wall. High on top of that jutting wall stood a giant bronze cross. In 1825, Sir John Bowring was shipwrecked in the vicinity. Clinging to some wreckage he at last caught sight of the giant cross, which led him to safety. Later on, he wrote the words of a hymn which has been sung by millions: *In the cross of Christ I glory, Towering o'er the wrecks of time; All the light of sacred story, Gathers round its head sublime.*" He also wrote: *"When the woes of life o'ertake me, Hopes deceive and fears annoy, Never shall the cross forsake me; Lo it glows with peace and joy."* Sir John Bowring's faith in the Christ who died on the cross, like that of millions of others down through the centuries, gave him the strength and assurance to further proclaim: *Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure, By the cross are sanctified; Peace is there that knows no measure, Joys that through all time abide.*" That testimony could also be yours.

Christ's Sacrifice

Ponder for a moment on Christ's sacrifice. Firstly He was savagely scourged with 39 stripes. Then a crown of long, vicious thorns was roughly thrust on His head so that trickles of blood ran down His face and beard. At Calvary spikes were driven into His hands and feet. His bones were out of joint and His chest caved in through the agonising process of crucifixion. Yet though He suffered so, He nevertheless implored, *"Father, forgive them for they know not what they do"* Moreover, because He bore the sins of all mankind, His Father, the God of All Holiness, turned His face away and Jesus cried out in anguish, *"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"* It broke His heart! God gave His best, His Son, His perfect sacrifice for you and me. What great love! He lay down His life for both friends and foes alike. But, *"because He humbled Himself and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross, God has highly exalted Him and given Him a Name which is above every name, and at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow in heaven and on earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord"*. Jesus died 2000 years ago, but His sacrifice is enduring in its effects until the end of the age. *"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being made holy."*

The Prophet Isaiah

Long ago the prophet Isaiah gave this word to his people: *"Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins are like scarlet they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool."* That is God's offer to you this Easter. However, if you choose to ignore or reject His life-giving provision for your eternal salvation how shall you escape the judgment of God? He challenges you to recognise that without Him you will stand before the Judge of All the Earth entirely dependent on your own righteousness which the Bible calls *"as filth rags"*. If you honour the sacrifice of Jesus, coming in full repentance and a desire to follow Him the Father will forgive your sins and give you eternal life. So now do you understand how Jesus could die for you? If you really do, what is your response to Him?

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank You for being the Rock of Ages, the King of Glory who came to this earth 2000 years ago to pay the price of our salvation on Calvary's cross, knowing that ultimately You would sit in glory at the Father's right hand. We thank You for conquering death and rising victorious from the grave, the first-fruits of all who have died in You. As we have borne the image of the man of dust (Adam) we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man. Our body is sown a natural body, but it is raised a spiritual body---for flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. We thank You, Lord, for sending Your blessed Holy Spirit to help us complete the work You began on earth to lead men and women into the truth and put their faith in You. May Australia indeed become the Great Southland of the Holy Spirit and Your heavenly glory be upon us, transforming both high and low across the nation as You prepare us to receive **Jesus Christ** as our coming King . We prayerfully ask this in His precious name as we eagerly await His return. Maranatha, come, Lord Jesus, come. Amen and Amen.

R.A: Led by our Lord Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit to glorify the Fatherhood of God with the Brotherhood of Man; in love and in faithfulness to bring glory and honour to His holy name.

REJOICE IN COVENANT PRAYERS FULLY IN THE HOLY SPIRIT DAILY FOR AUSTRALIA'S REVIVAL.