

GROWING IN GRACE LETTERS! – Calling saints in Christ, (in our homes and with one another in Church), to walk in the Steps of Jesus! (1 Peter 2:15-25) Edited by James Bell, a servant of Jesus Christ!

3 26 2026 V1n46 THE CRUCIFIED, RISEN CHRIST and God-ordained Responses in His Steps!

The observance of Easter is so powerful that even sincere Christians can get highly offended **when anyone points out the Bible truth that Easter is in no way connected to Jesus Christ, His life, His death or His resurrection; and that New Testament Christians did not observe it.**

Easter is so powerful that preachers will stand in pulpits, read Bible texts which plainly and only speak about the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, and then they proclaim, “I have just read in your hearing the Biblical account of the events of Easter!” Nothing could be further from the truth; and they know it; but they dare not offend religious tradition!

Easter is so powerful that IF Sunday, April 5, 2026, pastors from ‘Bible-believing’ churches dared to LEAVE OUT EASTER and simply proclaim the Bible truth about the death and resurrection of Jesus— many such pastors would be scolded, warned, or fired.

Easter is so powerful that Christians who embrace the important doctrine of ‘**Sola Scriptura**’ ... will take a break from ‘Sola Scriptura’ rather than embrace and practice Biblical truth on this subject. **[Sola Scriptura:** “...The Word of God,

as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only infallible rule of faith and practice." (Charles Hodge)]

REFRESHINGLY, we turn to the Holy Word of God and find that the New Testament era Christians 'made much of' the birth, the life, the suffering, the death and resurrection of Jesus. However, they did not set up or keep our beloved holiday traditions. NOR did they did not try to overcome pagan culture by attempting to marry and mix that culture with genuine Christianity.

THEREFORE, without the mixture and distractions of man's religious traditions — LET US FOCUS and BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD IN THE SINNER'S PLACE:

1. "Surely He [JESUS CHRIST] hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted" (Isa. 53:4). **2.** "But He [JESUS CHRIST] was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:5). **3.** "The LORD hath laid on Him [JESUS CHRIST] the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6). **4.** "When thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin" (Isa. 53:10). **5.** "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34). **6.** "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). **7.** "For He [GOD] hath made him [JESUS CHRIST] to be sin for us, who knew no sin;

that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21). **8.** "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. 3:13). **9.** "That He [JESUS CHRIST] by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9). **10.** "[JESUS CHRIST] Who His own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness" (1 Peter 2:24). **11.** "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" (1 Peter 3:18).

AS TO THE CRUCIFIXION?

BEWARE OF THE THEORIES OF MEN: The Ransom theory: This theory holds that the price that Jesus paid was made to Satan. This theory wrongly claims that we are to be ransomed from Satan. Joel Osteen and various Charasmatics teach that Jesus, (at his death), went to hell and battled satan in hell for 3 days, finally winning salvation for sinners.

However, the PLAIN BIBLICAL truth is that we have broken God's law. **It is GOD whom we have offended.** It is God's justice which must be honored. Furthermore, there are no references in the Bible that we were ransomed from the devil. **Instead,** the sacrifice was made to God. Eph. 5:2; "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, **an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.**"

The Moral Influence View, The Governmental Theory,

The Example Theory: These say things like, God did not need a payment for breaking his law and that the death of Christ was an example of how much God loved us ... that God did not have to require a payment for sinners and that God could have forgiven people simply by choosing to do so, without any payment of penalty ... that Christ's death on the cross was an example of how we should trust God completely, even to the point of death.

The problem is that none of these, take into account PLAIN Scriptures which speak of Jesus dying for our sins! Gal. 1:4,

"who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father." **1 Cor. 15:3**, "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." **1 Pet. 3:18**, "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit." **Eph. 5:2**, "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma."

***** Vicarious Atonement / Penal Substitution!** In opposition to the various humanistic views, THE view which lines up with the Word of God is the one known as **"Vicarious Atonement."** The word "vicarious" means substitute. Christ was a substitute for others in that He took the place of hell-

deserving sinners and suffered the punishment they/we were due. **We see vicarious sacrifice in the Old Testament: Genesis 22:13**, "Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son." **Notice that** the ram was offered in place of Isaac. This was a substitutionary sacrifice which is exactly what "vicarious" means.

Further, we see a prophecy of the atoning work of Christ in Isaiah. (Notice the substitutionary language in the following verses) Isaiah 53:4-6, "Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him and by His scourging we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way, and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." (We left God's paths to follow our own; yet God laid on Jesus our guilt. JESUS was and is our substitute.)

The New Testament is equally plain: 2 Cor. 5:21, "He [GOD] made Him [JESUS] who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

Rom. 4:5, "He [JESUS] who was delivered up because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification."

NOTE: Just as the RAM was offered as a substitute for Isaac, Christ He took our place and bore our sins in his body on the

cross (**1 Pet. 2:24**) and made propitiation for our sins. **Rom. 3:25**, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood." **1 John 2:2**, "...and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." **1 John 4:10**, "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

The word propitiation "properly signifies the removal of wrath by the offering of a gift." The wrath of God is due to the legal requirements of punishing the sinner. The sinner is someone who has broken the law of God. Sin is breaking the law of God. When a law is broken, a punishment is incurred. When a person is sentenced to time in prison, this is done based upon the requirements of the law. Likewise, the sentence upon the one who breaks the law of God is death. We were legally guilty before God because we broke his law.

However, when Jesus was on the cross, He said "It is finished," (John 19:30). (This sixth word that Jesus spoke from the cross was a single Greek word, a legal term. ANCIENT receipts for taxes have been recovered with this word written across them, meaning "paid in full.") **This word on Jesus' lips was significant. When He said, "It is finished", He meant His redemptive work was completed. He had been made sin for HIS people (MATT. 1:21; 2 Cor. 5:21) and had suffered the penalty of God's justice which sin deserved." 1 Cor. 15:56**, "The sting of

death is sin, and the power of sin is the law." **Rom. 6:23**, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

[IN HIS GREAT LOVE, GOD THE FATHER gave His Son to death on Calvary, so that neither God's holiness nor His justice ARE compromised as He mercifully provides the free gift of salvation for sinners [His people!] ... at His own expense!] The whole atoning work

of Christ was a legal action where Jesus substituted himself for sinners and paid the legal requirement of the punishment of sin, death. **How wonderful is the Word of God in clearly revealing the Substitutionary Sacrifice of Jesus in the sinner's place! [NOTE: NO SINNER deserves, has ANY claim on the mercy, love, and grace of God. JESUS specifically paid the sin debt of all the sinners, who were given to Him by HIS FATHER: John 6:35-40; John 17....]**

TO CONTEMPLATE THE GRAND TRUTH the substitutionary, atoning sacrifice — God has given us His HOLY WORD and His HOLY SPIRIT; and He has given pastors and teachers who, who in preaching the Word of God are to **neither add nor subtract** from the Word of God. All believers are to read, study, meditate and obey the Word of God.

As we do, we will find ourselves

being called to walk a crucified life

in the steps of Jesus, by His resurrection power.

MOREOVER, instead of merely watching or listening to staged 'play acting' dramatic presentations, headlined by a pretend, 'FAKE JESUS!; —

WE ARE DAILY 'ON STAGE' and called to live a crucified and risen life, BY THE POWER of the indwelling Holy Spirit! We are called to Christ-likeness! (Romans 8:28-29) **MOREOVER, we are changed into Christ-likeness by BEHOLDING Jesus! (2 Cor 3:18)** BEHOLDING THE LAMB OF GOD, we shall become like Him!

WOW! What a GOD-honoring way to CELEBRATE the death and resurrection of Christ— BEHOLD JESUS! WORSHIP HIM AT HIS TABLE! Deepen in the experience of our own CRUCIFIXION:

1. Glorifying in the once and for all substitutionary sacrifice of Christ at Calvary. **(Gal. 2:20)** **2.** Yielding to personal crucifixion whereby we are crucified unto the world— being dead to the world's charms. **3.** Embracing the reality of the world being crucified to us— experiencing the world shutting us out because of our likeness to Christ. **(Gal. 6:14)** COMING TO HIS TABLE, WE ARE REMINDED OF THESE SACRED TRUTHS!

Therefore, BEHOLD JESUS and WALK IN HIS STEPS!

1. Walking in the steps of Jesus because that is the Real Essence of what it means to be a Genuine Christian! John 10: 27-28; 1 Peter 2:21; 1 John 2:6 **2. Walking in the steps of Jesus because** that is what God commands in His WORD! Rom. 12:19, 21; Matthew 5:44; 1 Peter 2:18-21. **3. Walking in the**

Steps of Jesus less my actions and reactions to circumstances and people CAUSE me to deny Jesus and Grieve the Holy Spirit; and rob me of a life of joy and amazing miracles! Philippians 1-4. **4. Walking in the steps of Jesus**, for God has not authorized me to take His Divine Prerogative! Romans 12:19-21; Matthew 5:44-47. **5. Walking in the Steps of Jesus**, remembering that God has personally designed my own specific paths for His glory and for my good! Rom. 8:28; Genesis 45:8; Genesis 50:19-20. **6. Walking** in the steps of Jesus, less I lose perspective! Genesis 50:19-20; Philippians 1:12-14. **7. Walking in the steps of Jesus because** LOVE is better than hate! FORGIVENESS is better than bitterness! FAITH is better than unbelief! TRUST IN GOD is better than despair! SUBMISSION/OBEDIENCE TO GOD is better than rebellion!

FROM TIME TO TIME ... and PROBABLY RIGHT NOW, FOR MANY OF US— IT IS TIME: IT IS TIME TO GO FORWARD IN THE STEPS OF JESUS!

1. I must first repent of my previous GOING MY OWN WAY, of LEANING TO MY OWN UNDERSTANDING, of DRINKING IN COUNSEL THAT HAS JUSTIFIED MY FLESH! — THEN Floodgates of MERCY and GRACE will come open! (Proverbs 28:13)

2. I MUST and I WILL announce to myself a Proclamation of Reception of my DIVINELY designed PATHS in the steps of JESUS, till I get home: Romans 8:28; 1 Peter 2:19-23.

MERCY and GRACE TO ALL IN CHRIST! James Bell

SUNDAY SERVICES: MARCH 29, 2026

[1] Sunday School at 9:30am: Nursery, Children's classes, Youth, and Adult classes.

[2] WORSHIP SERVICE at 10:45am!

EVERY SATURDAY * 8:00 AM,** — Men's Bible Study!
(Doors open by 7:30am... coffee, juice, donuts, and Hardee's Biscuits are available!) **MARCH 28 | Romans 8**

NEXT Ladies Bible Study 3/31/26 @ 11:00 AM – Read Acts 7

*****TUESDAYS: LADIES PRAYER MEETING @ 10:00am**

Young Adults ... Tuesdays at 7:15pm at Jaden and Rhi's home!

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS @ 6:30pm, MEN'S Prayer Service // YOUNG FAMILIES SERVICE

LOVE OFFERINGS UNTO THE LORD by MAIL or by ONLINE:

BY MAIL (checks), make out to Southside Baptist) — MAIL TO: Southside Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1594, Gallatin, TN 37066 /

TO GIVE via ONLINE GIVING:

<https://southsidebaptist.breezechms.com/give/online>