



April 1, 2020

[H.I.S.] *He Is Savior, Acts 4:12

His Ministries April Newsletter, covering March 2020

We wish you a joyous Resurrection Day on April 12th. Palm Sunday this year is the 5th of April – the Day that is commemorated as the day when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey fulfilling Zechariah's prophecy he had given over 500 years before. *“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, your King is coming to you. He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.”* (Zech.9:9; see also: John 12:15.)

“Christmas is the promise but Easter is the proof.”

The message of Easter does not change, it happened once and for all, but we need to be reminded what our Lord did for us by becoming a man and dying for our sins. (Matt. 1:23; John 1:1, 14; 3:16; Hebr. 10:10) This is the time of the year to really wake up and recognize His great love for us. Even nature wakes up and that too brings us hope and beauty to show God's love in real time. Let's be willing to share the gospel with all who might not have received Him, so that they too can become one of His children. (John 1:12-13.)

Easter is celebrated on the first Sunday, after the first full moon, after the spring equinox. (Therefore, it is held on a Sunday on varying dates between March 22 and April 25.) To all genuine believers in Christ the issue is not as much of the date as it is of the fact that **HE IS ALIVE AND COMING AGAIN, SOON.**

The word "Easter" appears in the *King James Version*, in the Book of Acts (Acts 12:4). The Greek word is *pascha*, meaning Passover, and is so corrected in most modern renderings. [The word "*Easter*" has its roots in pagan practices, as do many of our other strange and peculiar Easter traditions *like rabbits that lay eggs*. We, as believers in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, do not take part in those traditions, but instead we share the message of His life for us, and focus on *“God who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”* (John 3:16.) The message of Easter is that *Jesus Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose again on the third day.* (1 Cor. 15:1-4.) We learn from Exodus 12:2-6 that the Passover lamb had to be selected 4 days before Passover when it would be killed. *Jesus is our Passover Lamb who takes away the sins of the world.* (John 1:29.) You may recall that people many times had wanted to declare Jesus as their *Messiah-King*, but He had always before said, *“My time has not yet come”* – and then, on the 10th of Nisan, 32 A.D., the day we call *Palm Sunday*, He arranged it to take place. (Luke 19:28-35.) That day was 4 days before the Passover, the day of selecting the Passover Lamb. That day He allowed Himself to be presented as King Messiah. The whole multitude began to rejoice and praise God, saying *“Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord”*, fulfilling Ps. 118:26. (Luke 19:36-40.) When the Pharisees rebuked Him for allowing them to praise Him, He said, *“If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out”*. This was the exact day prophesied in Dan. 9:24-26, when the Messiah will be presented, and then *“cut off, but not for himself, but for His people”*.

The Gospels tell us HIS Story. The Gospels are the historical record of His ministry among His own people, Israel, for the gospel was **“to the Jew first”** (Rom. 1:16). **“He came to His own, and His own received Him not.”** (John 1:11.) Many Christians know quite well about what He had said and the miracles He had performed, but not many seem to know Him personally nor much about his humiliation and sufferings during His last days in Jerusalem, orchestrated by Israel’s religious leaders. Let’s look at them a little closer and see what His last week was like:

Before His crucifixion Jesus endured six trials. He was put through these trials by *Israel’s religious leaders*. After Judas’ betrayal of Him he was first taken before **the High Priest Annas** (John 18:12-14) and after that before the **Roman appointed high priest, Caiaphas**, son-in-law of Annas (John 18:19-24), and after that He was taken before **the Sanhedrin (the highest ruling body and court of justice among the Jewish people during the time of Jesus)**, (Matt. 27:1-2). After these **Jewish Trials** He was taken to **Roman Trials** before **Pilate** (John 18:28-38) and then before **Herod** (Luke 23:6-11) and again before **Pilate** (John 18:39 – 19:16).

Jesus’ trials, according to the Jewish Law, were all illegal:

1. *The binding a prisoner before he was condemned was **unlawful** unless resistance was expected. Jesus did not resist, but **He was bound**.* (John 18:12, 24.)
2. *It was **illegal for judges** to participate in the arrest of the accused. **But they did!*** (John 18:3.)
3. ***No legal transactions**, including a trial, **could be conducted at night**. *It was done at night.* (John 18:28.)*
4. ***The arrest of Jesus was made through the agency of an informer and traitor** (Judas). **This was against the Jewish law.*** (Ex. 23:6-8; John 18:5.)
5. *Acquittal could be pronounced the same day, but **a guilty verdict required two persons agreeing** and that had to come on a subsequent day. **But He was pronounced guilty on that same night.*** (Matt 26:65-66.)
6. *No prisoner could be convicted **on his own evidence**. He was!* (Matt. 26:63-65.)
7. *It was the duty of a judge to see that the interest of the accused was fully protected. It was not!* (John 18:14.)
8. *Preliminary hearings before a magistrate were completely foreign to the Jewish legal system.* (John 18:3.)
9. *It was illegal to carry weapons on the feast day. **Arresting troops and officials had weapons.*** (John 18:3.)
10. ***The use of violence during the trial was unopposed by the judges, which was against the law.*** (John 18:22-23.)
11. ***The judges sought false witnesses** against Jesus. (Matt. 26:59; Mark 14:56.)*
12. *In a Jewish court the accused was to be assumed innocent until proven guilty by two or more witnesses.* (Matt. 18:63.)
13. *The Jews failed to find two witnesses agreeing against Jesus. (Mark 14:59.)*
14. *When witnesses first disagreed, the prisoner should have been released, according to their law. (Mark 14:56-59.)*
15. *The trial under Caiaphas **took place in his home rather than the council chamber** where it should have been held.* (John 18:13-16.)
16. *The Jewish Court lacked the civil authority to condemn a man to death, but it did. (John 18:31.)*
17. *It was illegal to conduct a session of court on a feast day. It was! (John 18:28.)*
18. *They rendered a guilty verdict without evidence. (John 18:30.)*
19. *The balloting was illegal. It should have been by roll with the youngest voting first. *Here it was simultaneous.* (Matt. 26:66.)*
20. *The sentence was passed in the palace of the high priest, but the law demanded that it be pronounced in the temple judgment hall, *in the hall of hewn stone.* (John 18:28.)*
21. *The high priest rends his garment. (Matt. 26:65.) (Note: Lev. 21:10 says that the high priest is not permitted to tear his official robe that he would have been required to have on to put Christ under oath.)*

Jesus’ Final Week would have been like this, based on Scriptural evidence:

Friday – Jesus came to Bethany (6 days before Passover) (John 12: 1).

Saturday - He rested the Sabbath in Bethany with His friends, Lazarus, Martha and Mary.

Sunday – He traveled to Jerusalem and made *His Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem*. *Jesus cleansed the temple and cursed a fig tree.* (Matt. 21:8-9, 12-13; 18-20; Mark 11:12-19.)

Monday - Tuesday - *The Conspirators counsel was held and the plan to kill Jesus was made...* (Matt. 26:2-5; Mark 14:1-2; Luke 22:1-6.)

Wednesday – *His Last Supper with the twelve*. After that *Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane*. *His betrayal, arrest and humiliating trials continued through the night.* (Matt. 26:17-20, 47-68; Mark 14:12-17; Luke 22:7-20.)

Thursday – *Crucifixion* (John 19:14-42; Mark 15:8-25; Luke 23:20-46.) *Passover lambs are killed. The Feast of Unleavened Bread* begins. (Lev. 23:4-8.) [*Passover lasts 7 days; the first and last days of this feast are high Sabbaths.* (Matt. 27:62; Lev. 23:6-7, 15; John 19:31.) [Note: A Jewish year includes seven high Sabbaths (Lev. 23:15) in addition to the weekly Saturday-Sabbaths.] Pilate wrote a title on the cross that said: **JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS**. And to make sure that all understood, he wrote it in three languages: Latin (official language of the Empire); Greek (common international language) and Hebrew (language of the Jews). **There they crucified the Creator and God who had become a man to pay the penalty of sin by giving His life as the perfect blood sacrifice.** (Lev. 17:11; Hebr.9:22; 1 John 1:7-9). **All that He requires of us to be forgiven and saved is that we believe WHO HE IS and what He did for us.** (John 1:1,14; 8:24; 1 Cor. 15:1-4; Eph. 2:8-9.) We, as redeemed believers in Him, **“are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all”.** (Hebr. 10:10.)

Friday – *Women prepare spices and ointments.* (Luke 23:55-56.)

Saturday – *Women rested on the Sabbath and at the end of the Sabbath (after 6:00 PM) they came to the tomb”.* (Matt. 28:1, 6.) **“He is not here, for He is risen. Come and see the place where the Lord lay.”**

Sunday – **Announcement: He is risen!!!** (Matt. 28:6; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:6-8; John 20:1-18.)

Let us share this knowledge we have of Him and bring the lost to Christ Jesus and rejoice with them here and eternally before the Lord. He is coming soon. Writing to Corinthians, **Paul warned all who had heard the message but refused to believe,** said, **“If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ let him be accursed. O’ Lord, Come!”** (1 Cor.

16:21-22.)

Happy Resurrection Day!

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We promised last month to give you some good news about Lutheran pastors and theologians in Finland. Matti Liljeqvist and Mika Ebeling are the ones I have been in contact with, and I am so encouraged. I have known Matti Liljeqvist from 1984 on. He has studied Mormonism and acquired many important LDS books to prove to **Mormons and anyone who wants to know what Mormonism is and is not.** I was able to make an addition to his sizable library of Mormonism in latter part of the 1980’s with the **26-volume Journal of Discourses** that now is very hard to find even here.

There is a change at work among true Christian pastors in Finland! Praise the Lord for that. This gives me a reason to see why God allowed me to become a Mormon – to help many out of it and into Christ Jesus. God knows the end from beginning (Rom. 4:17b), and He saw what was ahead for me and later also for my husband, Dennis.

Pastor Mika Ebeling contacted us last fall, saying: “I am pastor in Suomen Evankelisluterilainen Kansanlähetyks (Finnish Lutheran Mission) and during our annual summer event my wife found your excellent booklet, “What is the Truth about Mormonism, What you have not been told” from the desk of ‘Operation Mobilization’. ‘Finnish Lutheran Mission’ is a revival movement inside Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. I have been a believing Christian since my childhood. I feel that God wanted me to study Mormonism maybe in order to help those who have been deceived with Mormonism. I have read through the Book of Mormon and studied the history of Mormonism a little bit. I have noticed that there are quite remarkable differences between the teachings of the Book of Mormon and the

doctrine of LDS Church..." Mika wanted to know more. Since that time we have exchanged literally dozens of emails – and we have sent him a box of important books also. He has studied and studied, and at the end of February he sent, for my review, the first part of his lecture-series (in Finnish) that he was going to give to this "revival movement group". It was very good lecture and he presented it about a month ago. He will continue with his lectures this month. I am so happy about this. Mika has lifted my spirit and I am now able to see God's hand even in "my mistake" of becoming a Mormon - for a time. Our lives have a purpose if we love God. "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God; to those who are called according to His purpose." (Romans 8:28.)

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Jan Markell, Olive Tree Ministries, wrote a great article (3/25/20) about **the on-going trials that are shaking the entire world. Please click on this site and read it. It is not long. It is worth your time.** She gives us something to think about. **Not in fear, but by thinking and reasoning from the Word of God and what He has said about the End Times.** <https://myemail.constantcontact.com/A-World-Turned-Upside-Down.html?soid=1101818841456&aid=U5y-IDT7HyM> **"Corona-virus and God's warning about pestilences and earthquakes."** (Matt.24:7) **What is God up to?** **"In three short months, just like He did with the plagues of Egypt, God has taken away everything we worship. God said, "you want to worship athletes, I will shut down the stadiums. You want to worship musicians, I will shut down Civic Centers. You want to worship actors, I will shut down theaters. You want to worship money, I will shut down the economy and collapse the stock market. You don't want to go to church and worship Me, I will make it where you can't go to church". "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 will heal their land."** (2 Chron. 7:14.) - Maybe we don't need a vaccine, but maybe we need to take this time of isolation from the distractions of the world and have a personal revival where we **focus on the ONLY thing that really matters – Jesus**, and what God might be saying to the world that has forsaken Him. (Received from Patricia Miland.)

We had a 5.7 earthquake in the morning of the 18th of March. Our entire house shook and literally swayed from side to side, yet nothing was broken, nothing even fell down. It was amazing. However, there was a **lot of damage near the epicenter**, about 15 miles North-West of us, and **downtown Salt Lake City**, to the point that the **angel Moroni on top of the Salt Lake Temple lost his trumpet**. ☺ After that there has been over 400 aftershocks, some low, some as high as 4.7.

We are so thankful for your prayers and support of us in these hard times. We feel safe and secure in the Lord and His care of us. We refuse to be concerned for He knows our needs. He has, through you, taken care of it all. (Phil. 4:6-7.) We are in the age-group that has been told to be extra careful and stay home and away from all people. Our ministry has been very busy and both of us are now involved answering Mormon-questions all day long, sometimes even to late at nights. We are thankful for that. Dennis has been working at his *home-wood-shop*, but he has not been able to go to people's homes to install what he has made for couple of weeks, and continuing, till the *coast is clear*, whenever that will be. We are doing pretty well otherwise, my back is still painful, but manageable. My cancer treatment was postponed till further notice now that hospitals are dealing with virus-patients. **All is well. We just ask that you pray for us while we do this work hoping that there will be even more with us when the Lord calls us all home.** (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 5:1-5, 9.)

Please pray for our friends who are having health problems. Please remember Judy and also for Dale and Sharon, Tom, Mary, Sandy, Al, Scott, Cynthia, Heber, Dwayne and Sharon in Florida and Yandell, our 8-year old child we support in Dominican Republic.

Please *pray for the peace of Jerusalem*, as Ps. 122:6 commands, and let us not forget *to pray for our country and our president and his administration.* (Rom. 13:1-2.) There is a lot of turmoil going on during this election time.

May the Lord bless you abundantly,
Rauni & Dennis Higley

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