



March 1, 2024

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

## HIS Ministries March 2024 Newsletter, covering January and February 2024

We are now entering the most Holy Time of the year on our calendar, for both Jews and Christians. Timing and what actually happened in Israel during this time of the year almost 2000 years ago, took place *“according to the scriptures”* and on God’s timing that is prophetic and exact.

The Jewish calendar counts 30 days for a month and 360 days for a year. The first month of the year in the Jewish calendar is Nisan. In our Western calendar that time is in March and April.

Passover is celebrated on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan when *all able-bodied* Jewish men were to be in Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. Jesus also was on His way to Jerusalem. On Friday, six days before Passover (that day in our calendar is 22<sup>nd</sup> of March) He arrived in Bethany to spend the Sabbath with His friend Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha. (See: John 12:1-3.) Everything was to take place *“according to the scriptures”*. Palm Sunday, the 10<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, was a set day when all Passover lambs were to be brought to Jerusalem for inspection by the priests, and then 4 days later, on Passover, be killed as a sin offering. (Exodus 12:1-6.) Therefore Jesus had to be in Jerusalem on that day, for He is *“the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”* (John 1:29.) [Thus Jesus’ final week of ministry on planet earth began on that day that was Palm Sunday, the 6<sup>th</sup> of April, 32 A.D.] That day was exactly 173 880 days after King Artaxerxes Longimanus had given the command (March 445 B.C.; see Nehemiah 2:1-8, 17-18) *“to restore and build Jerusalem”, and the day when the Messiah is presented to Israel.* (Dan. 9:25-27) *That day was Jesus’ presentation day as Meshiach Nagid, Messiah the King! (Nagid was also used of King Saul.)*

[Sir Robert Anderson, the Director of Scotland Yard, and a famous Mathematician, had, in 1894, made calculations based on the Ancient 360-day calendar, and figured out that from the 14<sup>th</sup> of March, 445 B.C. to the 6<sup>th</sup> of April, 32 A.D. was exactly 173 880 days, and that day was Palm Sunday, the 10<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, 32 A.D.!] That was the very day when Jesus’ Passion Week began! He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, fulfilling what Prophet Zechariah had written 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.) *“Jesus rode down to Jerusalem on a hill surrounded by 250 thousand Passover lambs driven there to be examined by priests (Exodus 12:1-6), and 4 days later killed as Passover lambs.”* (As reported by Josephus, a famous Jewish historian.) When the Chief Priests, Scribes and Pharisees saw the multitudes of people coming to meet Jesus, *singing Hosanna*, [which means, *“save now we pray”*], they angrily told Jesus, *“rebuke your disciples”*, and Jesus said to them, *“I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stone would immediately cry out.”* Jesus, seeing the city, *“wept over it saying, If you had known, especially in this your day, the things that make your peace, but now they are hidden from your eyes.”* (Luke 19:41-42.) The Chief Priests, Scribes and Pharisees then they took counsel together to figure out how they could get Jesus killed - and not only Jesus, but also Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead, for because of Lazarus, many of the Jews believed in Jesus. (John 12:9-19.) [Many of the chief priests were

*Sadducees*, and they did not believe in the resurrection, and for that reason they wanted to get rid of Lazarus also.] **These Jewish leaders were angry and beside themselves as they were plotting their murderous plans to get Jesus.** (Mark 14:1-2.)

[Now, during the 4 days before Passover, *Jesus went to the temple and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple. He overturned the tables of the moneychangers. He healed the blind and the lame that came to Him. He cursed the fig tree that had leaves but no fruit on it, which is that they had a show of religion, but no fruit from it.* (Matt. 21:12-19.) And when His disciples pointed out the magnificence of the Temple, Jesus commented that it will be destroyed and that **“no stone will be left there upon another”** (Matt. 24:1-2) and also said that **He will raise it up again in three days.** They didn’t understand until after His resurrection that He had meant that **His body will be raised from the dead in 3 days.**

[When the Chief Priests and Sadducees had asked Jesus to give them a sign if He indeed was who He said He is, Jesus had told to them, **“no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. And He left them and departed.”** (Matt.16:4.) **What is the “sign of Jonah?” It is Resurrection!**]

[The story of Jonah in the OT is a short one – only 2 pages, explaining how God had sent the Prophet Jonah to go and preach repentance to the city of Nineveh, the capitol of Israel’s main enemy, Assyria. Jonah hated the Assyrians and he also knew that his God was forgiving and merciful, and he feared that they would repent and then God will forgive and save them. Rather than going about 500 miles East to Nineveh, Jonah took a ship that went to Tarshish, 2000 miles West! A huge storm arose, and Jonah was thrown overboard. But God had prepared a fish that swallowed Jonah, and while still alive in the fish’s belly, Jonah prayed. 3 days and 3 nights later, the great fish vomited Jonah alive onto dry land. Now Jonah obeyed God, and though reluctantly, he preached to Nineveh. The people repented and God saved them and their city. Therefore Jesus was saying that even after He will be put to death, 3 days and 3 nights later He will rise from the dead as was Jonah.]

[On Wednesday (17<sup>th</sup> of Nisan) **Jesus sent Peter and John to go and prepare the Passover meal for them for that evening.** (Luke 22:8; Matt 26:17-25.) Judas Iscariot, whom the devil had already convinced to betray Jesus, went to the Chief Priests and Scribes and asked, **“What will you give me if I deliver Him to you? And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. So from this time he sought opportunity to betray Him.”** (Matt. 26:14-15.)]

That evening all twelve of them gathered for their last Passover meal together. We see how concerned Jesus was for His disciples, but not for His suffering and death that was at the door. He taught them by example (John 13:5-17), showing that they, as His own, ought to be loving and humble servants of God. The lowest task of a servant in that culture was washing of feet of others. Peter severely objected to Jesus washing his feet, and asked Him to wash his hands and head also. Jesus answered that **“they were already clean”** (i.e. saved) **“but not all of you.”** (13:10-11.) Jesus was referring to Judas, who never was truly saved. By this Jesus was also saying that **after we have been cleaned** (saved from sin), **we only need daily cleansing from sin’s pollution**, and that cleansing now comes by **“washing of the water by the word”** (Eph. 5:26.) Reading of John Chapter 13, we see Jesus’ *broken heart and troubled spirit* as He continued to teach them (and even now teaches all of us) and all *who are His own.* (13:21-26.) Jesus said to them, **“one of you will betray Me.”** They were perplexed about that and wondered who it was that could do that! (13:21-26.) Then Jesus gave Judas a piece of bread (representing His body that will be broken for them (and for us). **“Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him (Judas). Then Jesus said to him, ‘What you do, do it quickly. But no one at the table knew for what reason He said this to him... Having received the piece of bread, he (Judas) then went out immediately. And it was night.”** (13:27-30.) [It is always **“night”** “when we willingly sin and turn away from our loving Lord Jesus.] [We find it revealing that Judas left before they drank from the cup, representing the blood of Jesus that will be shed for remission of sins of all who repent.]

**After the Passover Supper they sang a hymn and went to the Mount of Olives.** (Mark 14:26.)

Jesus went there often to pray and they also met many times with Him there, thus Judas also knew the Garden of Gethsemane well. Judas led the Chief Priests and Pharisees and the detachment of Roman

troops (who came there with lanterns, weapons and torches) to arrest Jesus. (John 18:1-3.) They came seeking **the Light of the world with lanterns!** Jesus asked them, **“Whom are you seeking?”** They answered Him, **“Jesus of Nazareth.”** (John 18:4-6.) When Jesus answered, **“I AM (He), they drew back and fell to the ground** (and Judas who betrayed Him also stood with them). [**I AM** is one of the names of God, YHVH, (Jehovah) in the Old Testament. **They understood that He meant that HE IS GOD, and fear fell on them all.]** **“Then the detachment of the troops and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year.”** (18:12-14.) They took Him to **all-night trials** (which were illegal) to be tried in a **religious trial before Annas, the High Priest** (18:12-14, 19-23) and then **Annas sent Him bound** (18:24) to the Roman appointed **High Priest, Caiaphas** (his son-in-law), in order to prove Jesus guilty of blasphemy and heresy. (Because the Jews were under Roman rule, they had to work through Roman courts to secure the guilty verdict necessary for the death penalty that **they wanted**.) Then Jesus was taken to a **“civil trial”** to be tried before Roman authorities (first to Pilate, then to Herod, and again to Pilate) to prove that He was an enemy of Caesar and thus deserved death by crucifixion. Pilate said to the Jews that he found no fault in Jesus, but they insisted that He was guilty. Pilate, even after a long all-night session of questioning Him, did not find Him guilty, for Jesus did not even try to defend Himself. [He could not, for He was standing there **accused in our place**, and we all are guilty.] Pilate told to the Jews: **“You take Him and crucify Him for I find no fault in Him.”** (19:6.) Pilate had tried to get Jesus to say that He was the King, and when He did not answer, Pilate angrily said, **“Are you not speaking to me? Don’t you know that I have power to crucify you or release you? Jesus answered, ‘You could have no power at all against Me, unless it was given to you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.’** (19:10-11.) [Who then had the greater sin in this matter? Was it Caiaphas the High Priest or Judas the betrayer, or the Jews and their leaders in general, for the Jews had the Scriptures that predicted the coming Messiah? **However, the Jews should have known better!**] From that point on, Pilate sought to release Jesus, but Jews said to him, **“If you let this man go, you are not Caesar’s friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar.”** (John 19:12.) Actually Pilate made six attempts to release Jesus during this trial. He said to the Jews, **“You take Him and judge Him according to your law. Therefore the Jews said to him, it is not lawful for us to put anyone to death.”** (18:31.) He also had said, **“...I find no fault in Him at all.”** (18:38b) He wanted to release Him! (18:39.) He tried to satisfy **the Jews by scourging Jesus instead.** (19:1.) Pilate even appealed to their pity on Jesus and said to them, **“Behold the man”** (19:5), and later, **“Behold your King!”** (19:14.) But he likely said all this because he was angry at the Jews for **making him condemn Jesus whom he had pronounced innocent!** **Then they led Him to be crucified** (John 19:16; Isa. 53:7) - **it was the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan! And it was Thursday!** **... But Sunday is coming...”three days and three nights”** takes us to Sunday morning!

When Jesus was hung on the Cross, Pilate wrote the title - **JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS** , to be put on the Cross in the three languages spoken in the area - **Hebrew, Greek and Latin** . It was placed above His head in the center of the cross. The Chief priests of the Jews objected and wanted Pilate to change the words to read, **“He said, I am the King of the Jews.”** But Pilate refused and said, **“What I have written, I have written.”** (19:19-22.)

Before Jesus gave up His life, He commended His mother’s care to John, the beloved apostle, indicating that from that moment on John would be her son. (19:25-27.) There at the foot of the Cross stood only His beloved John and four women: 1. **Mary, the mother of Jesus**; 2. **Marys’ sister Salome, the mother of John**; 3. **Mary, the wife of Cleopas**, who was a follower and disciple of Jesus, (mentioned in Luke 24:18); and 4. **Mary Magdalene**. (John 19:25-27.) During the three hours of darkness, from noon till 3:00 PM, Jesus’ suffering for our sins was so horrendous that He cried out with a loud voice, **“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”** (Matt. 27:45-46.) Then, as a final fulfillment of Scriptures, He said, **“I thirst.”**(John 19:28, Ps. 69:21.) **And after receiving the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!”** (In Greek: *Tetelestai* = **“paid in full”**)

and ***“He gave up His spirit.”*** (John 19:30.) The moment of His death was the moment of our salvation. (John 1:12; 6:28-29; Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 10:9-10.) We have no capacity to understand why the Creator of the universe - King of Kings and the Lord of Lords - loved mankind so much that He became a man, one like us, and by His death paid the penalty of all our sin. (John 3:16.) ***“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*** (Rom. 6:23.) **That is amazing! He did all that for you and me!**

***“On the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone was taken away from the tomb. Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, ‘They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.’ Peter therefor went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying there; yet he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. For as yet they did not know the Scriptures, that He must rise again from the dead.”*** (John 20:1-9.)

**The Resurrection is the most important revelation in all the Scriptures. Without the Resurrection of Jesus, there is no salvation, and our faith would be in vain.** (1 Cor. 15:12-19.)

[When we begin reading from Luke 24 we'll find the most amazing information we have ever heard:]

It was Sunday, the 17<sup>th</sup> of Nisan when a group of perplexed, devastated and saddened disciples, believers and followers of Jesus, after witnessing His crucifixion and death, were walking back home to Emmaus, and talking with each other about what some women had told them that morning saying that Jesus was alive! They could not believe that! It was then that Jesus joined them, and started walking with them, but they didn't recognize Him. He asked them, ***“What kind of conversation is that you have as you walk and are sad? Then the one of them whose name was Cleopas said, ‘Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have you not known the things which happened there in these days?’*** (They told Him about Jesus of Nazareth who, they had thought, was ***“a prophet mighty in deed and word.. and how the chief priests and rulers had condemned him to death and crucified him, but they had hoped that He was the one who would redeem Israel. And today is the third day since these things happened! And how some women have told that He has been seen alive...”*** Now Jesus, rather than saying, ***“it is me, and I am alive”***, He took them to the Scriptures, explaining what has been written about Christ. ***“And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”*** (Luke 24:25-27.) [He had indicated to them that He was going to continue and go further, but since it was late in the evening, ***they invited Him to stay with them in their home.*** We assume that ***“they” were Cleopas and his wife Mary***, who had stood with the other 3 women by Jesus' cross, and had seen Him die.] (John 19:25.) ***“As He sat at the table with them, He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.”*** (Luke 24:28-31.) [Note: the custom was that the host of a home ***“broke the bread and served their quest”***, but here it was Jesus who did it. ***When they saw His nail-scarred hands, they knew Him, and He vanished. They immediately, even though it was very late, returned to Jerusalem and found the eleven and those who were still gathered with them together, saying the Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon! And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.”*** (Read now all of Luke 24.)

[Our scriptural mentor, Dr. Chuck Missler said (commenting on the Gospel of Luke) that **the resurrection is the most essential truth for Satan to attack.** Adding, that it is also interesting to note that **even atheistic scientists have concluded (just from the law of physics and mathematics) that all life is destined for a resurrection** (CF. Frank Tipler,

**“The Physics of Immortality”.) The entire Book of Acts is on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Notice that Luke was a medical doctor and his writings in Luke’s Gospel and in Acts are more physically detailed than other NT books.**

**After His resurrection, Jesus first appeared to Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-18) and then to other women (Matt. 28:9-10) and then to several others on the Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-53), which is talked about as the “7-mile Bible-study by the Lord Jesus”. Jesus had also appeared to Simon Peter (noted in Luke 24:34) and to his brother James (1 Cor. 15:7) and to seven of His disciples at a seaside breakfast in Galilee. (John 21.)**

**We need to study the Bible, book by book, verse by verse, all in the context where information is given. When we, as students of the Word of God, commune together and reason, as Cleopas and other disciples and believers did on a Road to Emmaus (among them were perhaps Alpheus and James) then our minds and understanding will open and reveal to us how marvelous is our God. God has said it all, He has done it all. His love is amazing. We are called to witness (29 times in Acts alone). Our friend and mentor Dr. Missler, when commenting on witnessing, said, **“Witnessing is not something we do for the Lord; it is something that He does through us if we are filled with the Spirit.” To be filled with the Spirit means that we know the Lord and are born of the Spirit.** (John 1:12-13.)**

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This year both **Palm Sunday** and **Easter** celebration fall in the same week – **Palm Sunday** on 24<sup>th</sup> and **Easter** on 31<sup>st</sup> of March. We are often asked if it is proper to call this celebration **“Easter”**, for as Christians, **we celebrate that Sunday as the “Resurrection Day.”** The word **Easter** appears in the King James Version of the English Bible only once (Acts 12:4). It is actually a mistranslation or misinterpretation of the Greek word, Pascha, which means **Passover, a Jewish Feast**, which is celebrated on the first Sunday, following the full moon. **Easter** was originally a pagan festival, honoring **“Eostre”**, a **Teutonic goddess of light, spring and fertility**, celebrated around the same time as Jewish Passover commemorating freedom from Egyptian slavery. We, as Christians, do not identify or have anything to do with pagan festivals, but we perhaps need to know this if we are asked where some of these names come from and why. We also need to remember that that we do not celebrate Easter with fertility symbols of eggs and “Easter-bunnies” as unbelievers do – **we celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus that took place this same time of the year. Preaching of the Gospel of Christ is what we are commanded to do. It is teaching who Jesus is and that He died for our sins, was buried and rose again on the third day, according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:1-4.) His sacrifice brought forgiveness and eternal salvation to all who accept Him as their Savior and Lord. (John 1:12; 8:24; 14:6.)**

**As we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and our salvation through our faith in His finished work, and let us not forget that He is coming back soon. As His First coming was told in the Scriptures, so is His Second coming. Jesus said, **“Search the Scriptures for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.”** (John 5:39.) We must not be ignorant about that, or be taken by surprise, but be ready and expecting Him to come at any time. We must share the true Gospel of Christ with all who do not yet belong to Him. (1 Cor. 15:1-4.)**

**Before His Second coming, the Scriptures teach that He will come first **“in the clouds”** to take His Bride, the Church, to His Father’s House. (John 14:1-3.) He will meet us **“in the air”**. (1 Thess. 4:13-18.)**

**We will come back with Him in His Second Coming. (Rev. 19:6, 11-14; 20:4.)**

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We thank you for your prayers and for your support of our ministry. Your assistance gives us strength and determination to continue our ministry-work we really love. Dennis is still working in his carpentry profession for our personal needs, but he also takes time to help me in answering Mormon-questions and challenges that are continually presented to us. We love questions and comments we receive and can answer, and we are very glad to hear that many of you share our newsletters with others that like to be helped on how to present the truth to their LDS friends also.

We also ask that you’ll pray for our dear friend Judy, who continues to have lots of pain in her ankle that makes even a little movement very difficult. She is a special soul and loved by all who know her.

Suzi’s hip replacement surgery was on 1/26/24. It was very difficult surgery and her recovery from that has been painful and slow, but she is such a brave and strong person that we are sure she will be fine – but it will take several months of physical therapy before she can function without pain. Prayer is needed also for Marlene, Harold, Bruce, Mark & Virve, Al, Sandy, Julie, Jamie, Luke, McKenzie, Aira, Heber, Sharon, Roy, Lisa and Helen. We rely in the promises that our Lord has given to us in 1 John 5:14-15. He does hear and answer every prayer as we pray according to His will.

We ask that you will continue to pray with us for those who have heard the gospel of Christ, but have not yet responded to God’s call for them for salvation. Some of them are our friends and relatives and some are our old Mormon friends we love dearly. It saddens our hearts that we will not see any of them after our life here is over unless they come to the

Lord and are saved. *"...God our Savior desires that all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus."* (1 Tim. 2:3-5.) The Lord is pleading that they would repent and let Him change their hearts and minds while there is still time. *"...times of ignorance God [has] overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent."* (Acts 17:30.)

Let all of us join together in celebrating Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ on Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> of March, 2024.

**"HE'S ALIVE, HE'S ALIVE, HE'S ALIVE AND I AM FORGIVEN, HEAVEN'S GATES ARE OPEN WIDE."**

(From a song titled, "He's Alive" by Don Francisco, recorded in the 1970's.)

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**With the Love of Jesus while waiting for His Coming,**

Rauni and Dennis

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**Addition to our regular Monthly Newsletter:** We have been asked if we have any new information about the Mormon Church, and if there is any hope for a change in their humanitarian assistance.

**Not really.** *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is one of the richest organized religions in the world, and it is growing richer and richer every year.*

**(This "News-brief" below is taken from the Salt Lake Tribune of February 17<sup>th</sup> 2024.)**

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**"Ensign Peak's Advisor's PORTFOLIO informed their overall value was \$50.5 Billion at the end of 2023.**

**[The Ensign Peak is an investment arm of the Mormon Church that claims a worldwide membership of about 17 million.]**

**This Account represents only the Utah based faith's direct holdings of US Stocks and Mutual Funds.**

**Its size has been made public via SEC reporting since late 2019 after a whistleblower alleged that the Ensign Peak's Portfolio then had reached upwards of \$100 Billion!**

**These Investments are managed from Utah's Capital for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, that jumped in value as 2023 closed, ending their year \$6.1 Billion higher than at the start of the year.**

**Ensign Peak's Real Estate holdings, including nearly 2.3 million acres in the US alone, is thought to have raised up now about \$32 Billion of the \$182 Billion in investments in 2023, a year marked by news of several major land purchases by the Church... overall Church's investment income now exceeds what it receives in tithing from their faithful members, and also receives from all other countries where tithing is reported to government authorities. (... as Canada, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Australia) that revealed that tithing participation by Latter-day Saints appears to be declining when adjusted for inflation and changes in its membership numbers. (Reports show that many people are leaving this church.)**

**The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints reported that it increased its humanitarian giving by almost twofold last year (2023) over the year before, based in part on a tally of announced aid-donations totaling upwards of 230 million. The announced last year's higher humanitarian aid resulted not from the Church itself, but from its members, who were asked to donate extra for special causes as earthquakes, tornadoes and hurricanes, happening around the nation! It also needs to be noted that the humanitarian aid mentioned in this article was not for helping thousands of local homeless people, including women and children, who live year-round without shelter on the streets of Salt Lake City, many of them within a mile or even less from the headquarters of this multi-billion dollar Church, that, instead of helping the living poor and hurting people, spends hundreds of millions of dollars every year building more and more temples for the work for the dead, rather than building houses for the homeless, and protecting freezing people from Utah's cold winter weather.**