

My favorite part of the Passover Seder comes in our Litany of GRACE after the Passover Meal. Beginning with Creation of ALL the Heavens and the Earth, calling HUMANITY to be Caretaker and Steward WITH GOD, all the people respond THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN ENOUGH! Then the ARK of the FLOOD GOD Providing for us as a Remnant, THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN ENOUGH! ABRAHAM, ISAAC, JACOB and JOSEPH, eventually MOSES and FREEDOM, to which all the people are to say "THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN ENOUGH!" The Prophet Isiah prophesied that the reason GOD chose ISRAEL was so that all the World would hear and witness, through this remnant, and CHOOSE to COME to GOD's HOLY MOUNTAIN. "That SHOULD HAVE BEEN ENOUGH!" Yet, GOD went further, becoming ONE WITH US, Certainly that SHOULD HAVE BEEN ENOUGH!" However, as described here by SIMON PETER, people killed him by hanging him on the Cross and burying his death. BUT GOD RAISED HIM UP on this 3<sup>rd</sup> Day! "WHEN MAY IT EVER BE ENOUGH?"

You know the old old story, Early in the morning, before the sun had begun to rise, some women of our company went to his tomb with spices, oils and flowers, in order to mourn and pray. That was Mary the Mother, Mary of Magdelene, and the OTHER MARY, not that one the other Mary. After which Jesus began to appear to all who had known and loved him.

This Easter Morning, this Day of Resurrection, I want to lift up for us three vitally important elements, which often are overlooked. According to the CREEDS, Jesus died and was buried, descended into Hell, the 3<sup>rd</sup> DAY he was raised up from DEATH to LIFE by GOD.

FIRST, that Jesus truly did die, was buried and descended to Hell.

Why, insofar as Jesus was PURE, SINLESS, GOD in HUMAN-FORM did he go to Hell?

It is not about what was theorized by Dante in The Inferno of the Middle Ages that there are NINE stages of Hell: Limbo, Lust, Gluttony, Greed, Wrath, Heresy, Violence, Purgatory and ISOLATION.

Judaism did not have a place for Heaven or for Hell.

In

Creation GOD breathes GOD's own spirit into us as LIFE, so when we die, what happens is that that Spirit that was us returns to be part of GOD. If there is a Hell it is to be separate for all eternity from GOD.

The Greeks and Romans, of the culture of Jesus of Nazareth, understood that throughout MORTAL HISTORY, ALL Persons had died been buried and gone to HELL because SALVATION had not come!

When Jesus the SAVIOR died and was buried, he went to Hell to rescue all those who had already died. Abraham, Isaac, Miriam, Moses, Aaron, Aristotle and Plato, etc. The LORD suffered DEATH, in order that this life and death would not be all that there is, WHICH SHOULD HAVE BEEN ENOUGH, AND ALSO he became the PIONEER & PERFECTOR of our SALVATION. We do not discuss Salvation much today. SALVATION is not limited to the moment you accept JESUS, SALVATION is an eternal State of Being where we are in full Communion, in full relationship with GOD, as we were CREATED TO BE IN THE BEGINNING.

SECOND, the language is very simple, but Jesus did not RESURRECT HIMSELF. Part of the Mystery is that GOD who is the CREATOR, is also known to us as The REDEEMER. GOD raised Jesus from DEATH to LIFE. There is an earthshattering shift, between the Old Testament and the New, between Judaism and Christianity, because the CORE belief of JUDAISM is that THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE; While Christianity holds belief in the TRINITY, which is not 3 GODS, but a Mystery. One of the earliest controversies of CHRISTIANITY was MARCIONISM. Just as there were Pharisees who believed you had to be Circumcised and Kosher in order to be saved, Marcion believed that after the resurrection, Christianity had no need for the Old Testament or Judaism. At that time there was belief that the Human Soul was located not in the Brain or in the Heart, the Mind was the location for thought, the Heart for Love; the location of the Soul was believed to be in the Belly. After defending his beliefs before the Council, Marcion went out into the Marketplace, and there his belly burst open with snakes.

So the 1<sup>st</sup> is that the Savior needed to SAVE BOTH the LIVING by enduring and overcoming DEATH, and the SAVIOR needed as PIONEER & PERFECTOR of CREATION to RESURRECTING THE DEAD.

2<sup>nd</sup>, that JESUS did not save himself, GOD raised him up from Death to life.

THIRD, is as PETER NAMES in this Affirmation that GOD SHOWS NO PARTIALITY. When Jesus returned from HELL with all the souls who had died from the beginning of CREATION, our LORD & SAVIOR did not differentiate between those we love, those we like, and those we want retribution and revenge upon. GOD is about FORGIVENESS and UNCONDITIONAL LOVE.

There is a story I told when I first came to our CHURCH, about when I was first EXAMINED for ORDINATION. In order to become Ordained as a Pastor, first you need to graduate from College; then be approved by your Presbytery to go to Seminary, which is a 3 year degree in Theology, the Bible and Church History; you must pass all six Written Ordination Exams similar to the Bar, or Medical Boards; after which you need to find a Church who want you to serve as their pastor; THAT SHOULD BE ENOUGH SHOULDn't IT?

Finally, there is an Examination for Ordination which is an Oral Exam before your Presbytery, on whatever they wish to ask of you. Mine, went for over an hour and a half. At the end of which, one man asked: "SIR, If there were an Island of people who had never heard the name of GOD, and a Tsunami came and wiped them from the face of the earth, would they be admitted to Heaven?"

I thought for a long moment before responding: "I am thankful that there is a GOD and I am not GOD. While it is a mystery to me, I believe GOD loved the world so much as to give us GOD's only begotten Son. knowing full well the dangers of the Human Will, that we would and did kill him, YET even that did not cause us to be separate from GOD's LOVE. On the basis of that love, I believe that GOD would not condemn a people for never having heard the name of GOD, that TRULY GOD SHOWS NO PARTIALITY, ACCEPTING FROM EVERY NATION THOSE WHO FEAR HIM AND DO WHAT IS RIGHT." There was a hush in the Sanctuary as I was led out of the Presbytery. During the next 30 minutes, I could hear heated debate. After which the doors were opened and I was escorted in to the singing of the GLORIA PATRI. I asked whether I had answered correctly, and was told "We do not know, the Presbytery was divided, but following your testimony we decided to trust GOD.