

I might say that the word "Easter" is found once in the Bible...in Acts 12: and ironically enough it is in this translation, and any Bible that has a marginal reference or footnote states that the word should have been translated Passover for in that passage it was dealing with the Jews. Easter actually was a heathen festival to the goddess Ister or Starus who was the goddess of fertility, the sign of fertility being the egg and of course the bunny. *is prolific + is also brought into the picture.* But today in the midst of all the eggs and easter bunnies and the colorful Easter attire the religious world manages to put an emphasis upon the physical sufferings of Christ, and in many cases people try to reenact the sufferings of Christ by retracing His steps. Some have gone so far as to have themselves tied or even nailed to a wooden cross in an effort to identify themselves with the sufferings of Christ. Now keep in mind Jesus Christ is the unique person of the universe. He had a unique birth. He became the unique God-Man and lived a unique life and died a unique death, but the Bible clearly teaches that the uniqueness of His death was not that of his physical suffering for many men have gone through similar experiences and thousands have died upon crosses which was Rome's method of capital punishment. The natural man however is ever prone to focus his attention upon that which he can see and to give little attention to that which he cannot see. Now Christ did suffer physically at the hands of many -- that man could see and man can understand. But that suffering did not atone for man's sin. Christ also died spiritually and suffered at the hand of God Almighty. That suffering no one can see and yet it was that suffering that took care of man's sins. Now first of all let us review the physical sufferings of Christ to catch the contrast. He was involved in about six trials which led up to his crucifixion and many painful things happened to Him. People would often bring their hands back and slug Him across the face-- sometimes with an open hand and sometimes they would punch him with their fist. They then would say, "You're a prophet, prophesy!" "Tell us who it was that smote thee." Through this type of punching the features of His face gradually diminished and Isaiah in

describing His condition said "His features were completely and totally destroyed so that He no longer <sup>Looked</sup> ~~was~~ human" - they also spit upon Him - they mocked, they laughed, they lied about Him, He was then turned over to Pilate and though Pilate said I find no Him in his efforts to pacify the jeering crowd he had Christ scourged. Now the whip usually had several tails and in those tails were metal, bone and glass, so the hide would be torn off the victim's back. Then the Romans had a custom of rubbing salt into the victim's wounds to cauterize them. This would usually bring screams from the victims - but not from our Lord, for as Isaiah declared "For as the lamb before his shearers is dumb so He (Christ) opened not His mouth." They then led Him through the streets to Golgotha and He began to stagger and a Roman centurion appointed a man from the crowd to help carry the cross. On Calvary's hill they nailed Christ to that cross. It was then dropped into a socket into the ground and one of the most painful ways to die physically is to disjoint on a cross by the weight of one's own body. But here again Isaiah said "As a lamb before his shearers is dumb so He opened not his mouth." For three hours He hung on that cross. He began to dehydrate and the accumulation of all that had taken place was beginning to take its toll. Though He had many things to say yet not once did He complain. But notice at 12 noon the scene changes. Darkness covered all the land, there was absolutely no light -- it was pitch black and no mortal eye could pierce the darkness and see that which was about to be transacted between God the Father, God the son and God the Holy Spirit. All of the human pain that He had suffered up to this point did not disturb the Lord Jesus Christ; but now, for the first time something happened which did. The moment which would procure salvation for a lost world had come! The moment which Christ dreaded to come into contact with had approached. The moment which caused Him to pray in <sup>the</sup> garden while He sweat drops of blood "Father if it be possible let this cup pass before me". The cup was the suffering as the result of identifying Himself with the sins of the world. Christ begins to scream -- My God! My God! why Thou forsaken Me!" He screamed the words which were prophetically

written by David 1000 years before! Psalms 22:1, I quote: "My God My God forsaken me! Why art Thou so far from helping me and from the words of my roaring?" Literally, screaming. These words were being screamed while they were being addressed to My God the Father, My God the Spirit "Why Hast Thou forsaken Me?" He goes on to answer it in Verse 3 "For Thou art Holy". Man because of his sin was separated from God. Jesus Christ was now <sup>coming</sup> in contact with man's sins. Thus a thrice Holy God had to turn their backs on the Lord Jesus Christ. He goes on to say "But I am a worm" - in verse 6 - and likens Himself to a worm which was crushed in a vat from which a very expensive crimson dye was extracted. Jesus Christ was identifying Himself with every sinner who ever lived and who ever would live. He was being crushed under the penalty of sin at the Hand of God. Notice how Isaiah puts it in Isaiah 53:4-6 "Surely He hath borne our grief and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem Him smitten and stricken of God and afflicted, for He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him and by His stripes 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 (Christ) the iniquities of us all. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him, He hath put Him to grief and thou shall make His soul an offering for sin." That you have in verse 10. No one could see the soul of Jesus Christ that was being crushed, poured out, as an atonement for sin. Have you ever heard someone say "How could a loving God send someone to hell?" God in His love did. He sent His son to hell. And the cross stands for the truth of the fact that the "wages of sin is death". When Jesus Christ hung upon that cross He bore the penalty that would take you and I all eternity to pay off in the lake of fire, and He is the propitiation for our sins and not for our sins only but for the sins of the whole world. Do you believe that when He screamed there upon that cross that He took care of all of your sins?

is is the great answer to man's problems. But yet man is ever prone to an effort to atone for his own sins and actually <sup>does</sup> ~~xx~~ insult to what God needs in Christ. And man is ever prone work - he works very diligent

He participates in religious rites, religious rituals, religious sacraments and endeavors on the installment plan basis to absolve himself from his sins and never realizing the fact that Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe, sin has left a crimson stain but His blood washed it white as snow." Jesus Christ died for your sins, was buried and rose again to give you the benefits of what He purchased for you. Life for the taking. "The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."