

THIS IS THE DAY WHICH THE LORD HATH MADE!

In Psalm 118:24 the Bible says, "This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." This is a beautiful verse that has often been used on Sunday mornings in churches across the land when the congregation is greeted. It is not unusual for someone to announce, "Good morning, everyone! This is the day which the Lord hath made, so let's all stand and sing..." Perhaps at Vacation Bible School, the host or hostess will greet the children with a buoyant, "Good morning, boys and girls! This is Monday, the day which the Lord hath made!" Then every following day afterwards, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday the children are informed that each of those days is the day the Lord hath made. In a very real sense, every day is the day the Lord hath made, but not in the strict interpretive, contextual biblical sense in the way it is used in Psalm 118. It does not say, every day or any day is the day the Lord hath made. It says this is the day which the Lord hath made. What day could it have been? It was a great day when God created man and woman on the sixth day of God's magnificent creative day, but that is not the day of our text. It was a great day when Moses and the children of Israel crossed the Red Sea, but that is not the day of our text. What a day when God answered Elijah by fire! What a day when David killed Goliath! What wonderful days in the life of our Lord, the day He was born, His baptism, His transfiguration, when He raised Lazarus from the dead, His resurrection and a day we, who know Christ, look forward to: the day He returns for us! These are all great days, but this is not the day Psalm 118 refers to. What is the day?

The 118th Psalm was a Passover psalm. It was sung every year at the annual Passover. Every year Passover lambs were slain, then it was repeated all over again the next year, so every Passover could not be the day, year after year. It is one day separated from all other days in eternity. It is the one day the Passover prophesied about. It is Calvary. This is the day Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture. You might want to ask, "But isn't the resurrection the greatest day of all days?" I would answer that by saying, it is not unusual for God to live. He does that all the time. It is, however, unusual for God to die and that is what Jesus did for us on Calvary--He died for us! Calvary is the day which the LORD hath made! It is:

I. A DAY OF SOVEREIGN DESIGN

A. God authorized the day.

Some see the death of Christ on the cross as something He was avoiding or a secondary thought since the Kingdom was not accepted by the Jewish people. Not so! God's plan all along was that He knew He would be rejected, but the

rejection itself would be the path to the cross that would not only encompass the believing Jew, but the believing Gentile and the entire believing world. Christ had us in mind not only before we were born, but before the foundation of the world. I Peter 1:20 says, "Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." Hebrews 9:26 coincides with this by saying, "For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

B. God anticipated man's need.

President Franklin Roosevelt saw a need in man and believed he needed a "New Deal." President Johnson believed man needed a "New Society." Politicians, kings and kingmakers have missed it. What man basically needs is the forgiveness of sins. And this only comes through the cross! We give thanks to God, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:13,14).

C. God outlined every detail.

As we examine the over three hundred verses from the Old Testament that tell in detail of Christ's coming, we realize the cross is no accident. Psalm 22, written over 1,000 years before Christ walked on this earth, goes into the details of Christ on the cross. Isaiah 50:6; 52:14 and Isaiah 53 (written over 700 years before Christ was born) give infallible evidence that God was in control and the cross was providential destiny.

II. A DAY OF THE SAVIOR'S DOING

The word "marvelous" is "pala'" in the Hebrew language which means things too high. It is as though the Psalmist is saying, "this is so good, I cannot properly express just how good it is." The death of Christ is marvelous!

A. It is marvelous because salvation is by grace.

We did not, nor do we now deserve what Christ did on the cross for us. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (II Corinthians 8:9).

B. It is marvelous because it is forever.

Jesus said, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever" (John 14:16). "That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:7). God has forever plans for us.

C. It is marvelous because it is life changing.

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (II Corinthians 5:17). I Corinthians 6, gives a list of the deeds of the unrighteous people who will not inherit the kingdom of God. The apostle Paul said, “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” The cross changes lives for good and permanently.

III. A DAY OF THE SAINT’S DELIGHT

Psalm 118:24c says, “...We will rejoice and be glad in it.”

A. The meaning of “rejoices.”

The Hebrew word for “rejoice” is “gheel.” This word means to leap for joy; to spin with excitement. There is an unabashed celebration that seems almost out of place since the direct reference is to the cross of Christ. We shall see in just a moment why and how we can rejoice.

B. Who is included in the rejoicing?

The word “we” means all saved people. We saved ones are told to rejoice. It is not God’s will for only some people in the family of God to be blessed. It is God’s will for all of us to be joyful. The Bible says, “Let the saints be joyful in glory.” “Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous...” (Psalm 97:12).

C. The command to rejoice is unambiguous.

God wants all excuses for not rejoicing to put away. That’s why He says, “In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (I Thessalonians 5:18). “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice” (Philippians 4:4).

D. The basis of our rejoicing.

We should rejoice because all our troubles are temporary as II Corinthians 4:17-18 tells us: “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.” Romans 8:18 says, “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” Many times, even this knowledge of the temporariness of our troubles is not enough to give us comfort and activate our rejoicing, but the Bible says in Psalm 118:24c that, “...we will rejoice and be glad in it.” “It” is the cross! We are actually to be glad in the cross. This is the crux of all our joy. Because of the cross we have forgiveness of sins, a home in heaven, a Christian home on earth, a church in which to attend and serve, answers to prayer, a Bible full of answers and the privilege to be part of the family of God. When all on

earth seems to take our joy away, we should look back to the cross and become thankful. This will do more for you than you can possibly anticipate. Our source of joy is Christ and His cross! “For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (II Corinthians 5:14, 15).

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.