

## THE EASTER PARADOX

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Being an educator, I've regarded the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ with utmost respect and scrutiny, for even non-Christians the world over hail Him as the Master Teacher. One of the intriguing aspects of His brief ministry was the teaching of seeming paradoxes. For example, He taught that one must lose his life to save it; that the first shall be last, that the greatest would be the least; that he who is abased shall be exalted; and that a true leader was one who was a servant of all. A beautiful depiction of His own servant-hood was when He, the Lord of Glory, girted Himself and, on bended knee, stooped to wash His beloved disciples' feet at the last supper. This was to be His final and greatest lesson to them prior to the crucifixion. So important was this lesson that He reserved it for a special moment in time, for His very ministry which was soon to be bequeathed to His followers, would hinge upon this lesson taking root in their hearts.

Yet, the ultimate paradox was to come in just a few short hours, when He, God incarnate - the Living Word by Whom the entire universe is upheld, would willingly give His back to the smiters and His face to those who would maliciously and mockingly rip away His beard tearing facial flesh as they did so. The merciless flogging with the Roman cat-of-nine tails (flagrum), which was, in fact, many whips each knotted on the ends with sharp pieces of stone, bone, and other objects, opened His muscle tissue with razor-like exactness. The brutality and inhumanness of the event was such that it is recorded in Holy Writ that Jesus did not appear human at the end of the scourging. How ironic that that which brought near death and untold agony to Him, would bring healing to those who believe in Him, for the Bible states that by these stripes we are healed.

Imagine the sight and behold the Man that day, Who with shredded flesh set His face as a flint to feebly struggle along the blood-stained path known as the Via Dolorosa in order to keep His appointment with the purpose for which He came, Golgotha's lonely hill-the place of the skull. Surely the unseen angelic hosts watched in horror as their Creator allowed nails to pierce His hands and feet and yet never bid their intervention. It is no wonder that the sun which was "hung upon nothing" by His spoken Word in the beginning, dared not cast light upon such a spectacle. Even the earth groaned from the severe intensity of this paradox, for when He uttered, "It is finished," the planet shook violently and dead saints arose from their graves appearing to many in Jerusalem, the holy city.

How ultimately paradoxical, then that He Who knew no sin became the sin offering unto death that we might have everlasting life and the righteousness of God in Him. As we approach Easter, let us ever be mindful of the scripture found in Isaiah 55, verses 8-9: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts," and trust in the blessed assurance of a God whose ways are always right.