

THE SIGN OF THE RESURRECTION



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Easter is for many the happy day of celebrating the Messiah's resurrection from the dead.

During the time many call the Season of Lent, much is spoken concerning the gruesome and torturous physical death of the Son of God. And not just the suffering on the cross, but also the three days and three nights in death to pay for our sins. By considering the agony of death, men can truly appreciate the victory attained for them. It is for this reason we celebrate today.

THE RESURRECTION

This resurrection was actually a great sign. The empty tomb means that for us there is also the possibility of "life from the dead."

THE SIGN OF JONAH



The Son of God spoke clearly to those who demanded a sign:

Some of the scribes and Pharisees said, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

(Matthew 12:38-40)

When the Messiah walked the earth, He said the only sign that would be given to that evil and adulterous generation (to prove that He was who He claimed to be) would be the sign of Jonah. Just as Jonah had spent three

days and nights in the belly of the great fish, so He would spend three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Obviously, something awesome had to result from those three days and nights that would be the sign, the only authentic proof from that time onward that God had indeed sent His Son.

The startling thing about Jonah was that he emerged alive from his “tomb” with an urgent message that produced a startling effect — the dramatic repentance of the whole city of Nineveh. Would not the resurrection of Messiah from His suffering in death call for an **even more startling** effect?

What is Death?

When Messiah died, His spirit and soul left His body and descended into death. He was undergoing the “baptism” He had told His disciples about in Luke 12:50, “I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is My distress until it is accomplished!” This baptism was nothing short of His immersion into death. For it was not through the act of dying on the cross alone that He would make atonement for the sins of the whole world, but through His suffering in death on our behalf. What He suffered in those three days and three nights was the

incomprehensible agony of death. The wages of sin is **death**, not just dying. **Dying** is the transition that separates your spirit and soul (who you really are) from your body, but death is the **place** where you must go to pay the wages of your sin. Sin is not a light matter to God — especially the sins that hurt and destroy the lives of others. And death, most certainly, is not a pleasant place to go. It is a **conscious experience** in a place of torment.

Proof of the Resurrection

After the resurrection, the Son of God must have given His apostles understanding about death when He explained, from the scriptures, the things He had to suffer. Before repentance and forgiveness of sins could be proclaimed in His name, they had to understand the necessity for a ransom and the awesome price He had paid. This was the message the apostles proclaimed at that eventful first Pentecost after His resurrection. They explained to the assembled house of Israel their sins, especially the sin of rejecting and crucifying the Messiah, and how He paid **in death** (not just dying) for their sin so that they now could repent and be forgiven and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Being pierced for their guilt, three thousand responded to Peter’s proclamation.

They could not hold back. They understood their sin and they understood what this Man, whom they crucified, had done for them. He had taken their place **in death**. He was their sacrificial lamb – the Lamb of God that had borne the total weight of the sin of the whole world.

They knew that He had paid the price to buy them out of that place of torment. They knew that receiving His ransom meant that from now on their life belonged to Him. His love was communicated to them so deeply that they couldn't help but respond with the only adequate response they knew: **to surrender the rest of their lives to Him.**

After that, the story goes on to tell how that after that day none of the disciples lived for themselves any longer, but all lived for the One who died and rose again on their behalf.

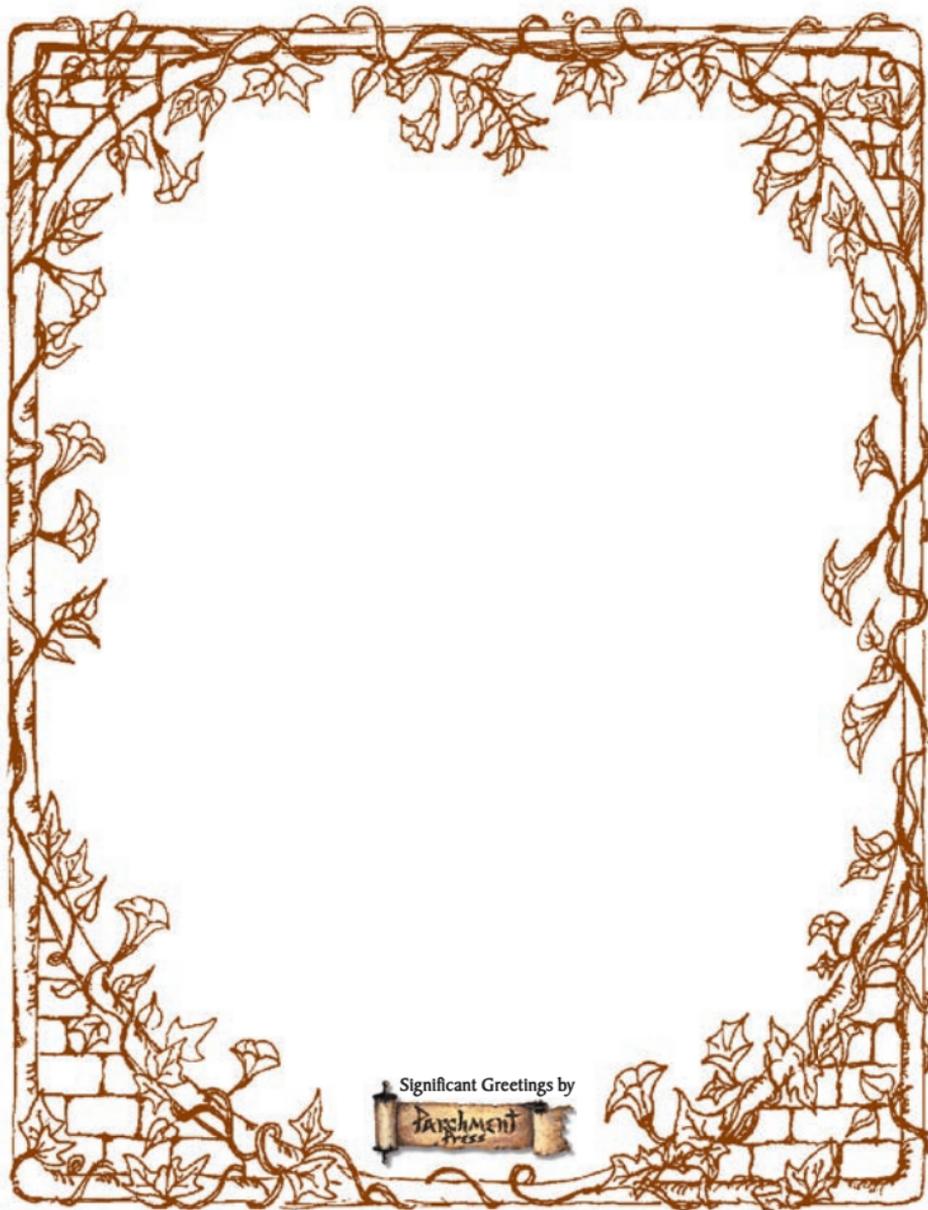
This was expressed in how they laid down their lives for each other daily, sharing all their possessions so that there were no needy among them, and taking their meals together with sincerity and gladness of heart. The unique and most amazing life of these believers in community was the startling sign that He had indeed spent three days and three nights in death.

Nobody saw Jonah in the belly of the great fish. What you could see, however, was the dramatic result of him being there. In the same way, none of the living saw Son of God in death, but we should be able to see the **startling effects** of it.

Their lives, now being lived for Him, created the vibrant community life of the first believers in Jerusalem. Those who received His passion are the indisputable sign – back then, as well as today – proving that He was who He claimed to be.

**May the
resurrection
be a sign to
us all on this
joyous day.**





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