

AUSTRALIAN



insights

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CHRIS LITTLECHILD
CEO Insight For Living
Australia

Dear Reader, I hope you enjoy this issue of our Insights magazine. We have worked hard to provide you with a range of thoughtful articles we hope will inspire and challenge you to grow deeper in your knowledge and faith of our Lord and Master—Jesus Christ. If you have any stories about your life or experiences you think might be of interest and value to our Christian readers, please feel free to send them in to our head office.

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How does the death of Jesus SAVE ME?

by CHARLES R. SWINDOLL

Question:

I've been told that Jesus died for my sins. What does that mean exactly? How could the death of Jesus help me get to heaven? What does the death of Christ save me from?

Answer:

One way to understand the meaning of the death of Jesus is to imagine a courtroom scene in which we are on trial for our sins and God is the judge. Our sins against God are capital crimes. God Himself is our judge, and according to divine law our crimes deserve the death penalty. Death, in a spiritual sense, means eternal separation from God in unending torment. That's a very serious judgment.

By shedding His blood on the cross, Jesus took the punishment we deserve and offered us His righteousness. When we trust Christ for our salvation, essentially we are making a trade. By faith, we trade our sin and its accompanying death penalty for His righteousness and life. In theological terms, this is called "substitutionary atonement." Christ died on the cross as our substitute. Without Him, we would suffer the death penalty for our own sins. Here are a few verses that explain this concept:

He [God] made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.
(2 Corinthians 5:21)

And while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. (1 Peter 2:23-24) ...continued page 4

Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.

(Isaiah 53:4-5)

The writer to the Hebrews puts it this way: ***“And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness”*** (Hebrews 9:22). For God to forgive our sins, His judgment had to be satisfied and that required the shedding of blood.

Some object, “Shedding blood seems so barbaric. Is it really necessary? Why doesn’t God simply forgive us?” Because God is holy, He must judge sin. Would a just and righteous judge let evil go unpunished? At the cross, God poured out His judgment on His Son, satisfying His wrath and making it possible for Him to forgive us. That’s why Jesus shed His blood for your sins, my sins, and the sins of the whole world.

At what moment during the crucifixion ordeal did God pour out His judgment on His precious Son? Many theologians believe it was toward the end of the three-hour period of darkness when Jesus cried out:

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34).

By taking upon Himself the sins of the world, Jesus removed Himself from God’s holy presence, and God, in turn, removed Himself from His Son. It was a temporary but excruciating separation, for at that moment, the Son of God became Father-forsaken.

God unleashed His wrath on His Son so that

we might be spared that awful fate. This is the central message of the cross and the reason for our hope: God forsook His Son so that He might never forsake us. God assures us,

“I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.” (Hebrews 13:5).

Isn’t that a wonderful promise? Have you placed your trust in Jesus Christ as the substitute for your sin? Do you believe that Jesus died for you in order to give you eternal life and that He rose from the dead victorious over sin? If not, we encourage you to receive Jesus as your Saviour right now. You can express your desire in a prayer like this:

Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner. I believe You died for my sins and rose again. I trust in You as my Savior now. Forgive me of my sins, and make me into the kind of person You would have me to be. Thank You for your gift of eternal life. Amen.

If you truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you have eternal life. You can rest in that truth. The apostle John has written:

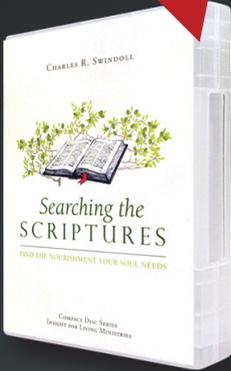
“And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life”

(1 John 5:11-12).

When you have the Son of God, the Lord Jesus, you have eternal life. If you’ve prayed this prayer and you wish to find out more about knowing God and His plan for you in the Bible, contact us at Insight for Living Ministries. You can speak to our pastor on staff by calling 1300 467 444. ■

Charles R. Swindoll serves as the senior pastor-teacher of Stonebriar Community Church in Frisco, Texas.

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**CHUCK SWINDOLL'S
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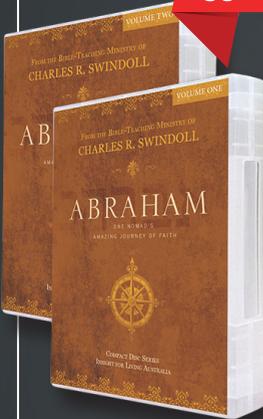
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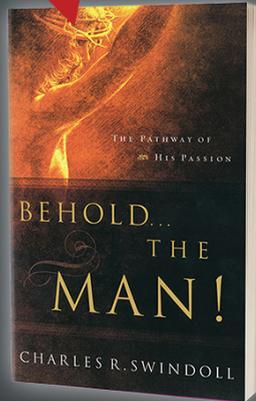
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THE MOST

Glorious

BY CHARLES W. SWINDOLL

Easter represents the most glorious truth. The salvation of the human race. A time when the perfect Son of God died, was buried and rose again!!!

Christ's resurrection broke the hold of sin-death. He conquered death and now reigns victoriously over all His creation.

"But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!)"

(Eph. 2:4-5 NLT)

This truth is the most significant and vital of messages. So how do we share this message, especially in today's world which rapidly is turning its face away from God and the truth of His Word?

Salvation is God's work, He is the one who provides salvation through faith in His Son-

Jesus Christ. However, we have the wonderful responsibility as followers of Christ to proclaim and declare the "way of salvation". Gently and with much grace we need to be praying for our non-believing friends and family, seeking opportunity to share God's love.

We need to gently confront the weighty matters of life and eternity. Every human being is created in the image of God, therefore, we all await an eternal destiny. This destiny is either one of a glorious eternal life or a place of immense torment separated from God.

Our sin is what separates us from a holy God. Nothing of our own goodness, or merit can earn salvation. Salvation is a gift of God's grace.

This message is difficult and people are offended whenever we talk about sin and its consequences. Because sin has been normalised, truth is now fluid, and when sin



Truth

by NATHAN POTTS

is exposed the reaction normally is, "don't judge me". However, we need to gently remind people that God is the righteous judge. He is the creator and we are the creature. He is the potter, we are the clay.

We do not judge, but we point people to the fact that one day they will be accountable for their actions, and thoughts and above all their response to the claims of Christ. Lovingly implore them to repent, and call upon the name of the Lord. Encourage them to place their faith and trust in Jesus, for he is the one that promises,

"that if you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved"

(Rom. 10:9 NLT)

In our gospel presentation always highlight the depth and breadth of God's gracious love and mercy. The exclusivity of salvation in Christ alone - he is the only one who has con-

quered death - He is the way the truth and life and no one, absolutely no one, inherits eternal life apart from faith and belief in Christ.

The Christian life is a life that is to be lived to the fullest, with the apprehension that suffering and trials, along with blessing and triumphs, will accompany the believer. When we place our faith and trust in Christ, our salvation is assured. Nothing can separate us from Christ's love. Suffering will not, persecution will not, hunger and poverty will not, danger and wars will not!

Nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus. This is the wonderful good news of Easter, this is the powerful message of salvation. We have the privilege and responsibility. ■

Nathan Potts serves as the senior pastor of Insight for Living Australia.

At the zenith of His career, Jesus pulled away to the secluded area of Caesarea Philippi. On His mind was a crucial question for His disciples—and for us as well. Travel back with me to the scene as it unfolds.

The surroundings are impressive. Flowing springs. Lush gardens. Monuments and temples dedicated to the worship of the Greek god Pan line the pathways. A massive, white marble temple to Caesar looms tall. Perhaps standing in the midst of the monuments and the buildings and the shrines and the temples built to the gods, Jesus leans forward and says rather quietly to a small handful of men—knowing there was not one monument built in His honor, not one building erected to His glory—***“Who do the people say that the Son of Man is?”*** (Matthew 16:13).

He is posing an opinion-poll question about Himself. “What’s the buzz?” He asks. According to verse 14, the disciples respond spontaneously, “Some say John the Baptist.” Now remember, John’s dead. He’s been beheaded by Herod Antipas. Some people are saying that Jesus is John the Baptist raised from the dead. That’s why He has miraculous powers. The disciples continue, “Some say . . . Elijah.” Elijah had ministered hundreds of years earlier. For centuries the Jews viewed Elijah as the prince of the prophets who would be the forerunner, but not the Messiah. And a third answer comes: “Some say . . . Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.” British scholar Alfred Plummer describes these on-the-street opinions as “wild and fluctuating guesses.”¹ But they all boil down to this: “He’s a man.”

Then Jesus narrows His gaze and personalizes the question for His men: “But who do you say that I am?” (16:15, emphasis added). In Matthew’s original text, Jesus emphasizes

“you”—and it’s plural. He’s asking each man who they think He is.

I don’t know how much time passes between verses 15 and 16, but Peter can’t stand the silence any longer. And even though the question was addressed to the group, Peter speaks for all of them. That’s like Peter, isn’t it? I love his answer.

“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (16:16).

We have at times laughed at Simon Peter. But here’s a moment when we must salute him. He’s never had a greater moment than this. Christ is the flesh-and-bone God, not a fixed-in-stone god. And notice the definite articles. This isn’t a generalized series of wild guesses. This isn’t public opinion talking here. This is a specific answer about the Messiah, the Son of the living God.

Can you picture the scene? Peter didn’t always get it right, but he nailed it this time! How great is that! Now imagine for a moment that Jesus turns His gaze from Peter and the disciples . . . to you. He has a question for you also: “Who am I to you?” He asks.

There can be no greater question you could answer. “Who is Jesus Christ to you?” Your reply must be, “The Son of the living God, my Saviour, and my God.”

Who else could He be? There is no one else qualified to grant forgiveness but Jesus. There is no one other than Christ who will stay closer to you when everyone or everything is stripped from you. There is no one else who can turn your bitterness into relief or turn your grief into joy. There is no one else you can trust with your deepest and most scandalous secret, only Jesus. Only He can relieve the abuse. Only He can erase the

Jesus has a Question for You

by CHARLES R. SWINDOLL

bitterness and remove the scars. All other counselors and friends can simply put arms around you, weep with you, and point you to Him. But only He can change you!

And that's just what He can do in this life. When you've taken your last breath and you step into eternity, having answered Jesus's question with faith, there is not a soul who

has ever lived who will be by your side but Jesus. He alone is qualified to escort you from the grave to glory. He alone is God.

Jesus has a question for you. Aren't you glad you have the answer? ■

Charles R. Swindoll serves as the senior pastor-teacher of Stonebriar Community Church in Frisco, Texas.

On the day Jesus was crucified, a sinister darkness blotted out the sun and smothered Jerusalem under a blanket of evil. It would have appeared to anyone seeing through eyes of flesh that the darkness, the devil, and death had defeated the Son of God once and for all.

I will admit to you that those three Ds lie at the root of almost every worry I suffer. I worry about death—in particular, the death of the people I love. I worry about darkness, both literal and figurative. I worry about what the devil is up to.

Demons, darkness, and death . . . all three worked diligently throughout the ministry of Jesus to bring about this long and anguishing day. But what no one could see was that the Messiah's death would strike at the very heart of evil.

Three days after Jesus was placed in the grave, on Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene and a group of women converged on the tomb. As they approached, they saw that the giant stone had been tossed aside. Mary Magdalene

Not to Worry . . . He's Risen!

by CHARLES R. SWINDOLL



immediately ran to tell Peter and John: “They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him” (John 20:2). While Mary Magdalene was away, the other women took a closer look. The grave was gaping open. The grave wrappings lay there, still together and intact, but empty. The body was gone. They stood dumbstruck for several moments, until they realized that two angels appeared behind them. One sat on the stone while the other stood nearby. “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has been raised!” (Luke 24:5-6 NET). Rushing from the empty tomb, they encountered someone who calmed their fears. “Jesus met them, saying, ‘Greetings! . . . Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee. They will see me there’” (Matthew 28:9-10 NET).

When the women told what had happened, the disciples dismissed their story as insane, exaggerated chatter. Meanwhile, Mary Magdalene found Peter and John. At first, they, too, dismissed her story, but curiosity eventually got the better of them and they raced to the tomb.

When John arrived, he stopped at the entrance and looked inside. Peter ran straight into the tomb and was shocked by what he saw. Joining Peter inside the tomb, I like to think that John whispered, “He’s alive!” As word spread, a multitude began to assemble at a home in Jerusalem. With the doors locked tight, a familiar voice rose from the middle of the room. “‘Peace be with you.’ And when [Jesus] had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side” (John 20:19-20). And they believed.

Unfortunately, Thomas, one of the Twelve, was not there. When he arrived, everyone told him the story. Thomas wouldn’t believe the reports. “Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the

nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe” (20:25). Eight days later, Thomas found himself inside the house with the doors of the room shut tighter than before. “Peace be with you” (20:26). Again, Jesus stood in the middle of the room. “Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing” (20:27). Thomas didn’t move. He didn’t even lift a finger. He responded as only a genuine follower of Jesus can respond: “My Lord and my God!” (20:28).

The responses of the people who knew Jesus that Sunday morning parallel the reactions I encounter every day as a modern-day bearer of this good news. Some believed immediately. They were given the information, remembered what Jesus had predicted during His ministry, and accepted His resurrection as genuine. Some believed with indirect evidence. They initially doubted the notion, but when they received further information—such as seeing an empty tomb—they knew He had risen. Some believed with direct evidence. They only believed that Jesus had risen after seeing Him with their own eyes.

Demons, darkness, and death have been vanquished, yet they continue to lash out in desperate hatred against everything in God’s creation. But not to worry. . . . Jesus is alive with a new kind of life that He longs to give any and all who will believe. Are you in that company? Or, have you come to realize your need for a Savior? Good for you! The devil, darkness, and death may swagger and boast, the pangs of life will sting for a while longer, but the forces of evil are breathing their last. So there’s no need to worry. . . . He has risen! He has risen, indeed! ■

Taken from Charles R. Swindoll, “Not to Worry . . . He’s Risen!” Insights (March 2008): 1-2. Copyright © Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.

How to Cling to God ...

Step into the time tunnel with me and let's travel together back to the distant land of Uz. Wherever it was, Uz had a citizen who had everyone's respect, because he was blameless, upright, God-fearing, and clean living. He had 10 children, lots of livestock, plenty of land, numerous servants, and a substantial stack of cash. No one would deny that he was **"the greatest of all the men of the east"** (Job 1:3 NASB). He had earned that reputation through years of hard work and honest dealings. His name was Job, a synonym for integrity and godliness.

Within a matter of hours, without announcement, adversity fell upon Job like an avalanche of jagged rocks. He lost his livestock, crops, land, servants, and—if you can believe it—all 10 children. Soon thereafter he lost his health, his last human hope of earning a living. I plead with you, please stop reading. Close your eyes, set your imagination free, and identify with that good man who was crushed beneath the weight of adversity. Now turn to Job 1:21, to an entry he made in his journal soon after the rocks stopped falling. With a quivering hand and a grieving heart he wrote:

"I came naked from my mother's womb, and I will be naked when I leave. The LORD gave me what I had, and the LORD has taken it away. Praise the name of the LORD!"



Following this incredible statement, Scripture adds: ***In all of this, Job did not sin by blaming God.*** (1:22)

Right about now, I'm shaking my head. I'm asking myself, How in the world could he handle so calmly such a series of ordeals mixed with grief? Think of the aftermath: bankruptcy, pain, 10 fresh graves . . . and the loneliness of those empty rooms. Yet we read that Job worshiped God; he did not sin, nor did he blame his Maker.

The logical questions are: Why didn't he? How could he keep from it? What kept him from bitterness or even thoughts of suicide? At the risk of oversimplifying, I suggest three basic answers, which I've discovered from searching through the book that bears Job's name.

First, Job claimed God's loving sovereignty. He believed that the Lord who gave had every right to take away (1:21). In his own words, Job

...when the world caves in

by CHARLES R. SWINDOLL

stated such:

“Should we accept only good things from the hand of God and never anything bad?” (2:10)

He looked up, claiming his Lord’s right to rule over his life. Who is the fool that says God has no right to add sand to our clay or marks to our vessels or fire to His workmanship? Who dares to lift a clay fist heavenward and question the Potter’s plan? Not Job! He knew God’s sovereignty is interwoven with His love. Second, Job counted on God’s promise of resurrection. Remember his immortal words?

“I know that my Redeemer lives, and he will stand upon the earth at last. And after my body has decayed, yet in my body I will see God!” (19:25–26)

Job looked ahead, counting on his Lord’s promise to make all things bright and beautiful in the life beyond. He knew that eventually all pain, sorrow, tears, adversity, and death would be removed. Knowing that *“hope will not lead to disappointment” (Romans 5:5)*, Job endured the brokenness of today by envisioning the beauty of tomorrow.

Third, Job confessed his own lack of understanding. What a relief this brings! Job didn’t feel obligated to explain why. Listen to his honest admission:

“I know that you can do anything, and no one can stop you. . . . I was talking about things I knew nothing about, things far too wonderful for me.” (Job 42:2–3)

He looked within, confessing his inability to put it all together. He rested his adversity with God without feeling forced to answer why.

Job’s story reminds me of many Insight for Living listeners whom we hear from regularly—people who’ve endured much and write to tell us thank you for helping them build the firm, biblical foundation they needed when calamity arrived. In particular, John and Lynn Hampton come to mind. These believers survived extreme adversity by drawing strength from God’s “righteous right hand” (Isaiah 41:10 NASB). Perhaps you are beginning to get bruised by falling rocks. Maybe the avalanche has already fallen . . . maybe not. Adversity may seem 10,000 miles away, as remote as the land of Uz. That’s the way Job felt a few minutes before he lost it all.

So, review these thoughts as you turn out the lights tonight, my friend . . . just in case. God’s power in Job’s life is the same power you can draw on in your life. ■

Charles R. Swindoll serves as the senior pastor-teacher of Stonebriar Community Church in Frisco, Texas.



One dark night in a second-story room in Jerusalem, Jesus ate His “last supper” with His disciples. There, He revealed the startling truth that His death was only hours away. The eleven must have wanted to stop their ears from hearing Him say, “I’m going to leave you. I’m going back to My Father.”

Heaven, our eternal destiny, is real. It isn’t a figment of our imagination or a state of mind; it’s a reality. Heaven is a literal place that Jesus is preparing for His own. He says so in John 14:3! He says, “I will come again and receive you to Myself.” That’s a direct promise from His lips. This is also the first mention of the rapture these disciples had ever heard.

This kind of teaching must have stunned the disciples. They had anticipated the immediate establishment of Jesus’s earthly kingdom. They expected Jesus to rule as the King of kings and Lord of lords in Jerusalem before the end of their generation. They envisioned themselves as high-ranking rulers in His royal court. They thought, with great delight, that they’d witness the overthrow of Rome, Israel’s cruel oppressor.

But Christ put all of that on hold and taught them that His present spiritual kingdom would be characterized by humility and love. Shortly thereafter, Jesus went to the cross. He died and was placed in a tomb. But three days later, He emerged in bodily form from the tomb, victorious over death.

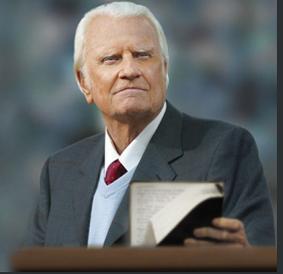
We can reveal our readiness for Christ’s return in three ways.

- ***First, we walk by faith, not by what we see.***
- ***Second, we live in peace, not panic, with regard to the future.***
- ***Third, we rely on our hope in God’s promise for our future.***

One day, Jesus will come back for us. If you’re spiritually ready to meet Him, the thought of His coming should be a comfort to you—bringing peace. If you’re not ready, the idea of His coming probably causes you a great deal of fear and uncertainty. The secret of eternal life is being sure you know the One who has the power to defeat the grave. His coming is sure are you? ■

A Tribute to Billy Graham

By Chuck Swindoll



IN EVERY SEASON OF HUMAN HISTORY, GOD HAS SEEN FIT TO RAISE UP A MAN TO TAKE A POWERFUL STAND FOR HIM. EVANGELIST BILLY GRAHAM HAS BEEN GOD'S MAN IN OUR GENERATION.

A man of unquenchable passion for reaching the unsaved with the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, Billy Graham was one of the most remarkable men on the planet—bold as a lion with a Bible in his hand . . . yet humble under God's mantle of service. God used this great servant's mouth to proclaim His truth to multiple millions of souls across the globe. Those who knew the evangelist best testify to his lifelong practice of walking humbly with his Lord, remaining faithful to the task before him, and living as a devoted husband to Ruth and a loving father and grandfather to his five children and grandchildren.

My life has been profoundly impacted by Billy Graham—by his lifelong dedication to God's calling on his life . . . his blameless character and honorable reputation . . . his pure love for God . . . and his straightforward, uncompromising proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. — Charles R. Swindoll

Early this morning, Billy Graham finally met face-to-face the Savior he fearlessly and tirelessly proclaimed. We will miss the man's endearing southern drawl . . . his penetrating blue eyes . . . but most of all, his commitment to keeping the gospel message clear and simple. Cynthia and I remember fondly the early days in the 1950s, before we were married, following the Houston Billy Graham Crusade, when we ministered together with a revival troupe. Cynthia played the piano, and I led the worship. All the young men on our team, me included, wore white suits and carried big red Bibles—just like the young evangelist Billy Graham.

My life has been profoundly impacted by Billy Graham—by his lifelong dedication to God's calling on his life . . . his blameless character and honorable reputation . . . his pure love for God . . . and his straightforward, uncompromising proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Today, his final words in his autobiography, *Just As I Am*, are on my mind: "I know that soon my life will be over. I thank God for it, and for all He has given me in this life. But I look forward to Heaven . . . to seeing Christ and bowing before Him in praise and gratitude for all He has done for us, and for using me on this earth by His grace—just as I am." Though he lived almost a century and walked with presidents and kings for seven decades, the most important fact about Billy Graham was that he walked with Christ—in private as well as in public—all the days of his life. Could anything better be said of any of us? He was, truly, "a prophet with honor." Well done, good and faithful servant of God. Your eternal rewards will be numerous. — Charles R. Swindoll ■



IFL Australia BROADCAST SCHEDULE

February-May 2018

FEBRUARY

BEHOLDING CHRIST ... THE SON OF GOD (JOHN 1-5) A SIGNATURE SERIES

- 23/02/2018 - "That You May Believe"
- 28/02/2018 - Prelude to Deity

MARCH

- 5/03/2018 - A Man Sent from God
- 7/03/2018 - Five Who Followed in Faith
- 12/03/2018 - Wine ... Coins ... and Signs
- 15/03/2018 - Brainstorming the New Birth

Special Broadcast Message

- 20/03/2018 - Special Broadcast with Chuck & Charlie Costa

BEHOLDING CHRIST ... THE SON OF GOD (JOHN 1-5) A SIGNATURE SERIES (continued)

- 21/03/2018 - The Preacher Who Lost His Congregation
- 23/03/2018 - Water for a Thirsty Woman

MIRACLE ANNOUNCED FROM A TOMB: "HE IS RISEN!"

- 28/03/2018 - Miracle Announced from a Tomb: "He Is Risen!"

APRIL

BEHOLDING CHRIST ... THE SON OF GOD (JOHN 1-5) A SIGNATURE SERIES (continued)

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