

**Father
Forgive
Them...**

The Mystery of Easter

God is not in the business of keeping secrets from His people. The prophet Amos said it best. God will do nothing that He does not reveal to His prophets, so that they can tell God's people of His will.

Amos 3:7

Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but **he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.**

Jesus told us that the entire Bible is about Him!

John 5:39

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

The crucifixion was not a secret. It was planned before the foundation of the world. God knew that man was going to need a redeemer, before He even created him. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost planned the crucifixion before the world began.

Here is the famous passage in Isaiah.

Isaiah 53:5-12 (page 691)

Jesus' time in the tomb was prophesied. The psalmist prophesied that Jesus would not stay dead. His soul would not stay in hell and His body would not see corruption. Even His resurrection was no secret.

Psalms 16:10

For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Christ was raised by every member of the Trinity. God the Father raised His Son from the dead.

Acts 2:31-32 (page 1016)

He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. **This Jesus hath God raised up**, whereof we all are witnesses.

The Holy Ghost raised Jesus from the dead.

Romans 8:11 (page 1056)

But if the **Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead** shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Jesus raised Himself from the dead. Again, it was no secret. Jesus told His followers He would do it.

John 10:17-18 (page 999)

Therefore doth my Father love me, because **I lay down my life, that I might take it again**. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. **I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again**. This commandment have I received of my Father.

That the Gentiles would be saved by Jesus Christ was not a mystery.

Isaiah 49:6

And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: **I will also give**

thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

Even Satan's ultimate destiny of being cast out of heaven and then sent to hell was no secret.

Isaiah 14:12-15 (page 660)

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. **Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.**

The Bible even tells us where Jesus is today. He is in heaven, at the right hand of God, making intercession for us.

Romans 8:34

Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, **who is even at the**

right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Yet Jesus kept His identity a secret while He was here on earth! It would seem that Jesus' message, everywhere He went, would have been, "Tell everyone that I am here." It used to puzzle me that Jesus told people not to spread the news about who He was and the miracles He was doing.

After He healed a man of leprosy, Jesus told him to "tell no man" but to follow the Law and show himself to the priest.

Matthew 8:4

And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

Right after Peter told Jesus that He was the Christ, Jesus told His disciples not to tell anyone that He was Jesus the Christ!

Matthew 16:20-21

Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ. From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

After He was transfigured in front of Peter, James, and John, one of the most amazing things anyone could ever see, Jesus told them not to tell anyone until after He was risen from the dead!

Matthew 17:9

And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.

When Jesus healed the man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, the first thing He told everyone who saw it was that they should tell no man!

Mark 7:32-37

And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him. And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue; And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain. **And he charged them that they should tell no man:** but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it; And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

After Jesus healed a blind man, He told the man not to tell anyone in the town.

Mark 8:22-26

And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked

him if he saw ought. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking. After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly. And **he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town.**

Jesus healed great multitudes of people who followed him but then charged them that they not make Him known!

Matthew 12:13-18

Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other. Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him. **But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all; And charged them that they should not make him known:** That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I

will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.

Jesus raised a young girl from the dead and then told her parents, “tell no man what was done.”

Luke 8:49-50, 56

While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, **Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master. But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.** ⁵⁶And her parents were astonished: **but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.**

Even people who knew and believed prophecy questioned whether or not Jesus was the Christ. This time it had to do with His home town. People who knew that Christ would come out of Bethlehem apparently didn't know that Bethlehem was where Christ was born. They only knew Him as a Galilean!

John 7:40-43

Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet. **Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? So there was a division among the people because of him.**

Did you ever wonder why Jesus would tell people NOT to spread the news about Him and the miracles He was doing? I used to wonder if God, knowing how men think, would tell them NOT to do something, knowing that it would be the very thing that they WOULD do! Well, praise God that He does not think or act like we do. If He tells people NOT to do something, He means it. Here is why.

God planned that most people were to be ignorant of Jesus' identity when He was on earth!

Follow is a passage where Peter said that God had showed that Christ should suffer "by the mouth of all his prophets." Even though Christ's

death was prophesied by all of the prophets, the Holy Ghost (through Peter) said that the people acted in ignorance! How could that be?

Acts 3:13-18

The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom **ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.** But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now, **brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.**

As you might expect, there were some among the Jewish leadership who did believe (it would have been hard to ignore the miracles that were being

performed.) They did not tell anyone they believed Jesus was the Messiah because they worried more about their peers than God!

John 12:42-43

Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

What is very interesting is that Satan and his followers knew exactly who Jesus was. They had no doubts or discussions! You can see from the passages below that Satan and his followers know prophecy. They also know what, when, and where their end will be—everlasting fire.

Matthew 25:41

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into **everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:**

While He was on earth, Jesus kept telling Satan's followers to keep quiet about His identity! Jesus

told an unclean spirit to, “Hold thy peace, and come out of him.” It seems that Jesus didn’t want the unclean spirit telling everyone who Jesus was.

Mark 1:23-24

And there was in their synagogue a man with an **unclean spirit**; and he cried out, **Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.**

Remember the devils that requested Jesus allow them to go into a herd of swine when He cast them out of two men? The devils knew who Jesus was and they knew prophecy--that it was not yet time for them to be judged.

Matthew 8:28-29

And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs,

exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. **And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?**

The devils in the following passage all knew who Jesus was!

Mark 1:32-34

And at even, when the sun did set, **they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils.** And all the city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, **and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him.**

From the cross, Jesus confirmed that the people acted in ignorance—something God had planned.

Luke 23:33-34

And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, **Father, forgive them;**

for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

During His three year earthly ministry, if Jesus had identified Himself as God, there would have been little doubt as to His identity. John records what happened when the mob, led by Judas, came to arrest Jesus in the garden. When Jesus identified Himself by saying the words “I am He,” it was so powerful that they all went backward and fell to the ground.

John 18:4-6

Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. **As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.**

God told Moses back in Exodus that His name was “I AM.” Jesus simply had to say His (God’s) name and everyone had to acknowledge it!

Exodus 3:13-14

And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And **God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.**

The incident in the garden is prophetic. Paul tells us what will happen in the future. As you are well aware, not everyone today bows at Jesus' name and confesses that He is Lord. One day, everyone will bow at His name and confess that He is Lord. For many, it will be too late to be saved.

Philippians 2:9-11

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: **That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

Jesus was not crucified against His will. Jesus loved us so much that He was not only willing to die, but planned it in every detail.

1 Peter 1:18-21 (page 1135)

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with **the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.**

Revelation 13:8 (page 1159)

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of **the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.**

Another incident in the garden, when Jesus was taken for trial showed that He was in control of the entire crucifixion.

When Peter pulled a sword to try to defend Jesus, Jesus told Him that He could call 12 legions of angels to defend Him, but the crucifixion had to be fulfilled.

Matthew 26:52-54 (page 922)

Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. **Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?**

Even though he knew the prophecies, Satan was so eager to make sure Jesus was crucified that he actually entered into Judas to do it!

John 13:26-27 (page 1004)

Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. **And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.**

This is exactly what God needed. Satan would not have crucified Christ if he had known that it would result in he and his fallen angels would be out of a job—ruling in heaven!

1 Corinthians 2:6-8 (page 1065)

Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: **But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.**

After Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, God could take salvation straight to the Gentiles, which had been His plan all along! God formed a heavenly people, the Church, the Body of Christ. When Satan and his angels are cast out heaven, we, as part of The Church, the Body of Christ will be in heaven reigning with Christ for eternity!!

Revelation 12:7-9

And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and **the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.**

How great is that? Many Bible verses confirm our ultimate destiny, in heaven reigning with Christ!

Romans 16:20

And **the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

2 Timothy 2:12-13 (page 1115)

If we suffer, **we shall also reign with him:** if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

2 Corinthians 5:1-2 (page 1080)

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, **we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.** For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with **our house which is from heaven:**

Ephesians 1:3 (page 1092)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

Ephesians 2:6 (page 1093)

And hath raised us up together, and **made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:**

That is why Jesus kept His identity a secret when He was here on earth. God had always planned, before the world, to have 2 peoples, one earthly, the Jews, and one heavenly, the Church, the body of Christ. Prophecy was entirely focused on the Jews in the Old Testament—up to the crucifixion.

The mystery is that Christ's saving work on the cross saved everyone, from every time, not just

the Jews. After redeeming the Gentiles, GodHe could purify us unto Himself.

Titus 2:13-14

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that **he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.**

Ephesians 3:1-7 (page 1093)

For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that **by revelation he made known unto me the mystery;** (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; **That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ** by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God

given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

The formation of the Church, the Body of Christ was hidden from Satan and the powers of evil in the world! He would not have crucified the Lord if, by doing so, he was forming another people for God—and his replacements, to boot!!

Read the previous passage again. Because of the crucifixion, we are fellow heirs with Christ! We are part of His body! It is much more that was prophesied in Isaiah.

In Isaiah, Israel was going to be God's light to the Gentiles to bring salvation to the ends of the earth. The assumption being that the Gentiles would become a part of God's earthly people.

Isaiah 49:6

And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: **I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.**

What we have received because of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection is so much more! We are God's heavenly people. We will spend eternity in heaven reigning with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

One more thing...

After Jesus' resurrection, the Jewish leadership actually paid the soldiers guarding Jesus' tomb to say that they had fallen asleep on duty! That way they would try to make people believe that the disciples had removed Jesus' body from the tomb and the Resurrection had been a fake. Matthew says that many Jews still believe it!

Matthew 28:11-15 (page 925)

Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.