Last week at our General Council in Orlando, former U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft led us for a solid hour in music and scripture reading having to do with this glorious verse:

Isaiah 9:6

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Mr. Ashcroft’s teaching was highlighted with appropriate great classic hymns about Jesus. The thousands gathered there were deeply moved by the Word of God and the historic songs of faith that spotlighted our Lord Jesus.

Isaiah 9:6 foretells the birth of the Messiah, Jesus Christ (see also Isaiah 7:14 -

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Jesus’ birth would be at a definite time and place in history and this Messianic Son would be born in a unique and marvelous way. Isaiah records five names that would characterize His function as Messiah: (1) WONDERFUL. The Messiah would Himself be a supernatural wonder. (2) COUNSELOR. The Messiah would be the incarnation of perfect wisdom and have the words of eternal life. As Counselor He would disclose the perfect plan of salvation. (3) MIGHTY GOD. In the Messiah all the fullness of the Deity would exist in bodily form. (4) EVERLASTING FATHER. He not only would come to reveal the heavenly Father, but He Himself would act toward His people eternally as a compassionate father who loves, protects and supplies the needs of the children. (5) PRINCE OF PEACE. His rule would bring peace with God for humankind through deliverance from sin and death.

JESUS’ LAST NAME WAS NOT CHRIST - CHRIST MEANT ANOINTED ONE, OR JESUS, THE ANOINTED ONE. Anointed for what, to be the Messiah. Technically,
Jesus’ full name would have been Jesus ben Joseph (Jesus son of Joseph) yet that would not be theologically correct, for Joseph was not His father; God was. Jesus was the literal Son of God.

MESSIAH is a word that means “Deliverer” or “Anointed One” to bring about peace to the world. One of the reasons many are confused about Jesus as Messiah is because He came to die for the sins of the world. Christians believe what is written throughout Scripture that Jesus will return one day (who knows what that day will be?) To rule all nations.

THE DEATH OF THE PHYSICAL JESUS ON THE CROSS

The main concepts about Jesus we must remember is that it’s not the healings or even the teachings that represent why He came to this earth. He came to die. But He also came to be resurrected from that death and then to ascend back to the Father in Glory. Tonight we primary consider THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST. Both the Old (Hebrew) Testament and the New Testament inform us of the details of His death on the cross.

Isaiah 53:1-12

Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? [2] For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. [3] He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

[4] Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. [5] But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. [6] All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. [7] He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. [8] He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. [9] And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

[10] Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. [11] He shall see of the travail
of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. [12] Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

John 19:16-30

Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away. [17] And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: [18] Where they crucified him, and two others with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

[19] And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. [20] This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. [21] Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. [22] Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.

[23] Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. [24] They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.

[25] Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. [26] When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! [27] Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

[28] After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. [29] Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. [30] When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

Jesus came to this world KNOWING that He would suffer and die. His passion did not come upon Him unavoidably or unawares, but because it resulted from a definite choice on His part when He could have avoided it had He wished. A waggle from His little finger from the cross could have blackened the skies with millions of angels to remove Him from the Cross and wipe Rome out of existence. His terrible death was of His own choosing and was absolutely vital for our eternal salvation.
Jesus’ Death Was Prophesied In The Hebrew Scriptures (the Old Testament)

Theologians teach that Bible students can trace a “scarlet cord” through the Bible.

- In Genesis we have the sacrifice of Abel: Genesis 4:4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: Abel’s offering to God the blood sacrifice of a Lamb pre-shadowed God’s giving His perfect Lamb.

- In Genesis we also have the great saga of Abraham about to offer his son Isaac on the altar on Mt. Moriah (which is Calvary, by the way): Genesis 22:13 And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. God gave Abraham a substitute offering rather than his own son; however, on Calvary, there was no substitute for God’s own Son Jesus.

- The Passover Lamb in Exodus is one of the premier examples of the prophecy of Jesus’ death: Exodus 12:1-10 And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, [2] This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. [3] Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: [4] And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. [5] Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: [6] And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. [7] And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. [8] And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. [9] Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. [10] And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire.

There are many more of these prophetic signs in the Old Testament, all of which point to the one great offering to be made by Christ.
We have the prophecies of the betrayal of Christ: Psalm 41:9-11  Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me. [10] But thou, O Lord, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them. [11] By this I know that thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me. The Psalmist also gave us a prophecy regarding the resurrection of Jesus: Psalm 16:8-10  I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. [9] Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. [10] For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Zechariah foretells the selling of Christ for 30 pieces of silver and the investment of that sum in a potter's field: Zech. 11:12-13 And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. [13] And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord. We thus see that the death of Christ is an important part of the teaching of the Old Testament.

Jesus’ Death Is Prominent In The New Testament

It is interesting to note that the last three days of Jesus’ earthly life and ministry occupy about 20% of the four Gospels. If all the 3 ½ years of Jesus’ public ministry had been written out as fully as the last three days, the four Gospels would be 8 ½ thousand pages long! The death of Jesus is mentioned in the New Testament over 175 times.

The Purpose Of The Incarnation Was The Crucifixion of Jesus

Remember the “incarnation” was the act of God becoming a man. It is INCARNATION, not re-incarnation. There is no such thing as re-incarnation, that is, a person coming back from death as a frog or oak tree or whatever.

Mark 10:45  For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Hebrews 2:9  But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

Hebrews 2:14  Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;
Hebrews 9:26  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.

1 John 3:5   And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him
is no sin.

Jesus was the greatest teacher of all time; but He did not come to earth primarily to teach.
He healed many of various sicknesses; but He did not come to earth only to heal.  He
lived the purest life ever; but He did not come to earth primarily to be an example.  He
came to die.  For you.  For me.

The Death Of Jesus Is Absolutely Necessary To Christianity!

Thiessen points out that Christianity is distinguished from all other religions by the
importance it assigns to the death of its Founder.  *Take away the death of Christ as
interpreted by the Scriptures, and you reduce Christianity to the level of the ethnic
religions.  Take away the Cross of Christ and we have more salvation than these other
religions.*  (Ibid / page 314)

The Death of Jesus Is Essential To Our Salvation!

You and I have no hope, no chance, of eternal life without the Cross!  John 3:14-15

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be
lifted up: [15] That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal
life.  John 12:24  Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the
ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

Here is why:  My repentance alone - or yours - is not sufficient.  A debt must be paid in
full.  God can pardon only when someone has paid the cost.  Jesus had to die if God
was both to justify the ungodly and Himself remain just:  Romans 3:25-26  [The Message]

*God sacrificed Jesus on the altar of the world to clear that world of sin.  Having faith
in him sets us in the clear.  God decided on this course of action in full view of the
public—to set the world in the clear with himself through the sacrifice of Jesus,
finally taking care of the sins he had so patiently endured. [26] This is not only clear,
but it's now—this is current history!  God sets things right. He also makes it possible
for us to live in his righteousness.*

Paul took pains to point out this truth to the Thessalonians:  Acts 17:3  *Opening and
alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and*
that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

Jesus’ Death On The Cross Is Of Paramount Interest In Heaven

In northern Israel, separating the nations of Israel, Syria and Lebanon, stands majestic Mount Hermon (10,000 ft). Much of the year it is snow-covered. This is the place of the Transfiguration of Jesus. It would be Jesus’ final time, in His earthly body, in that part of Israel before heading south to Jerusalem to die on the Cross. On that mountain, Jesus was visited by both Moses and Elijah: Luke 9:30-31 And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: [31] Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. It was the concern of Heaven that Jesus be fully divinely fortified for His mission which included not only His torturous death on the Cross, but His taking into Himself the sins of the world.

We read in Scripture of the songs of the Redeemed sung in Heaven by the great hosts assembled around the throne: Rev. 5:8-10 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. [9] And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; [10] And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

Even the angels, though not in need of redemption themselves, join the musical anthem of praise and thanksgiving to Jesus: Rev. 5:11-12 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; [12] Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

If Jesus’ ultimate sacrifice at Calvary is of such importance in Heaven, then how urgent should it be to you and me temporarily on this Earth - and to get the message to everyone on the planet!

THE MEANING OF CHRIST’S DEATH

1. IT IS VICARIOUS

“Vicarious suffering” is suffering endured by one person in the stead of another. Jesus was our substitute.
Obviously Jesus did not die for His own sin for He had none: John 8:46  Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? Hebrews 4:15  For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

So, no, He did not die for His own iniquity, but for ours: Isaiah 53:5-6  But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. [6] All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. 1 Cor. 15:3  Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

2. IT WAS SATISFACTORY TO GOD

Holiness is a fundamental attribute of God. He had to be given some “satisfaction” to remove the outrage of sin.

A. Jesus’ death satisfied the JUSTICE of God.

B. It also satisfied the LAW of God. You and I could never uphold the moral laws of God, even the basic ten commandments, in our own strength. But when Jesus took our sins to the Cross, it satisfied the moral laws of God. This does NOT give us license to sin. But it delivers us to grace, not law.

C. Jesus’ death RECONCILES us to God. Our sin causes us to be enemies of God. We cannot reconcile that chasm in anything we might essay to do. But Jesus’ death became the “bridge”, so to speak, whereby we can cross over to God’s good favor once again.

D. Jesus’ death was a RANSOM. We were “kidnapped” by sin and Satan’s guiles. But Jesus paid the ransom.

Yeah paid it all / All to Him I owe
Sin had left a crimson stain / He washed it white as snow.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

Matthew 28:1-11

In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. [2] And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and
came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. [3] His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: [4] And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. [5] And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. [6] He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. [7] And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. [8] And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word. [9] And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. [10] Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me. [11] 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.

Only Christianity claims its founder died on earth and came back to life. This is not only a matter of FAITH, it is a fact of HISTORY.

The meaning of the resurrection is decided upon by historical evidence. The place is of geographical definiteness. The man who owned the tomb was a man living in the first half of the first century. The tomb was made from the rock hillside near Jerusalem. It was not composed of some mythological gossamer, or cloud dust, but is something which has geographic significance. The guards put before that tomb were not aerial beings from Mt. Olympus (Greek mythology). As a vast amount of evidence shows us, Jesus was a living person.

EVIDENCE THAT DEMANDS A VERDICT / JOSH MCDOWELL / CAMPUS CRUSADE / PAGE 192

There are deniers of the resurrection, such as Muslims, who say Jesus never died on the cross. Others subscribe to what has been termed “the swoon” theory; that is, Jesus only passed out on the cross and never really passed away. There is no question that Jesus died, nailed against that timber. The Romans were experts at death. They didn’t miss. Jesus was declared dead on the cross by those who knew what they were doing.

All of Christianity could certainly be discredited if anyone could come up with a corpse of the Savior. They cannot do so for there is no corpse. Even the guards who had been assigned to guard the tomb could not discount the resurrection. Through the next decades, many followers of Jesus were tortured and killed for their faith in the risen Lord; they could have saved their lives by a simple denial of the resurrection. However, they could not deny something that so clearly and apparently had taken place.
The resurrection of Jesus:

- Attests to the Deity of Jesus Romans 1:4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

- Assures us of God's acceptance of the price paid for our salvation Romans 4:25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

- Assures us that Jesus Christ is our ultimate and only High Priest 1 Tim. 2:5-6 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; [6] Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

THE ASCENSION OF JESUS

Acts 1:9-11 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. [10] And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; [11] Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

The bottom line is this: Jesus died, was buried, rose from the grave and is coming back.

Next week: What the Bible says about SALVATION - the absolutes you need to know about your own personal redemption!