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**"And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." 1 John 4: 21**

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**Sunday – November 25, 2018**

## **To Know Christ...**

Jesus trusted His Heavenly Father for protection concerning man's ultimate schemes and wicked plans. The Father's protection was not going to stop the difficulties, or mean there would be no physical suffering and harm to His Son. Jesus responded to His Father out of Faith. If Jesus would be neither a man of violence nor one given to deceit, the Father would ensure His Son the burial of a rich man (Isaiah 53:9 / Matthew 27:57-60). Joseph of Arimathea, a disciple of Jesus, was utilized to keep the promise (and fulfill the Scripture), but the Father was already using Joseph for more than just a rich man's new hewn out tomb. He was a man who overcame fear to honor Jesus (Mark 15:43/John 19:38), the Father was refining him.

The Jews wanted to remove all doubt in the minds of the religious that this Jesus was NOT the Christ/Messiah. The Scripture says the Passover lamb could have no broken bones (Exodus 12:46/Numbers 9:12). Jesus is God's Lamb, to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29). So since the crucifixion of Jesus took place on the day of preparation (preparing for the Sabbath day of rest), the Jews pressed Pilate to have the soldiers break the legs of the three being crucified (John 19:31). The great struggle for life in being crucified is the difficulty to breathe and take in air, let alone the agony of pain. If their legs were broken, all three would die more quickly before the end of the day, since they would not be able to push up on their nailed feet and be able to take in oxygen. And if the bones of Jesus were broken, He would not be our Passover lamb, to take away sin.

The Father had already protected His Son concerning the schemes of the envious Jews. The Jews could even quote Scripture as to why Jesus and the two thieves must die quickly (Deuteronomy 21:22-23), but God had already taken care of His Son. In the midst of all their wicked plans, when the soldiers came to Jesus, He was already dead, and they did not break any bone in His body. However, the soldier thrust a sword into Jesus' lifeless hanging body, and immediately blood and water came out (John 19:34). The Passover lamb, all bones unbroken.

Do we trust our Heavenly Father to protect us in the midst of adversity too? We have been baptized into the water, where the blood of Jesus is sprinkled on our hearts (Hebrews 10:19-22). We have been spared, but do we trust the Father to protect us? His protection does not stop difficulties from entering our lives, but we have the answer to man's wicked schemes ... FAITH in our Protector! God may even utilize other disciples to help when we are powerless (Joseph of Arimathea). In God do we Trust? (Just because it's on our coins & currency, doesn't mean it's in our hearts.) When we trust, we strive [no matter what the cost] to honor God in our thoughts, words, motives, & actions. Then we leave the rest in His hands, if we suffer, we suffer with Joy, like Jesus did (Hebrews 12:2). Jesus is the author (source of) and perfecter (gives the growth) of FAITH. Jesus knows HOW to grow our faith, using the difficulties; Jesus knows because HE is the fountain head of faith. And in having a faith like Jesus', we can have JOY in suffering & trials because they refine our faith when we trust in HIM (James 1:2-3). We also have the peace of mind that God will protect us as we are encouraged by knowing the Lord is MY PROTECTOR. Want to know the Lord's response to His righteous children? ...read Psalms 34:18-22

- Carey Terry