

loyal one would not remain in the grave. (Psalm 16:10; Acts 13:35) He slept in death for parts of three days, and then Jehovah God resurrected him to life as a mighty spirit being.—1 Peter 3:18.

¹⁶ At his death, Jesus surrendered his human life for all time. Upon being raised to life in heaven, he became a life-giving spirit. Moreover, when Jesus ascended to the holiest place in the universe, he was reunited with his dear Father and formally presented to Him the value of his perfect human life. (Hebrews 9:23-28) The value of that precious life could then be applied in behalf of obedient mankind. What does that mean for you?

CHRIST'S RANSOM AND YOU

¹⁷ Consider three ways in which Christ's ransom sacrifice benefits you even now. First, it brings *forgiveness of sins*. Through faith in the shed blood of Jesus, we have "the release by ransom," yes, "the forgiveness of our trespasses." (Ephesians 1:7) So even if we have committed a serious sin, we can ask God for forgiveness in Jesus' name. If we are truly repentant, Jehovah applies to us the value of his Son's ransom sacrifice. God forgives us, granting us the blessing of a good conscience, instead of exacting the penalty of death that we incur by sinning.—Acts 3:19; 1 Peter 3:21.

¹⁸ Second, Christ's ransom sacrifice provides the basis of our *hope for the future*. In vision, the apostle John saw that "a great crowd, which no man was able to number" would survive the coming cataclysmic end of this system of things. Why will they survive when God destroys so many others? **An angel told John that the great crowd had**

16. What did Jesus do upon returning to heaven?

17. How can we avail ourselves of forgiveness on the basis of Christ's ransom sacrifice?

18. In what way does Jesus' sacrifice provide us with hope?

"washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," Jesus Christ. (Revelation 7:9, 14) As long as we exercise faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ and live in harmony with divine requirements, we will be clean in God's sight and will have the hope of everlasting life.

¹⁹ Third, the ransom sacrifice is the ultimate *proof of Jehovah's love*. Christ's death embodied the two greatest acts of love in the history of the universe: (1) God's love in sending his Son to die in our behalf; (2) Jesus' love in willingly offering himself as a ransom. (John 15:13; Romans 5:8) If we truly exercise faith, this love applies to each and every one of us. The apostle Paul said: "The Son of God . . . loved me and handed himself over for me."—Galatians 2:20; Hebrews 2:9; 1 John 4:9, 10.

²⁰ Therefore, let us show our gratitude for the love displayed by God and Christ by exercising faith in Jesus' ransom sacrifice. Doing so leads to everlasting life. (John 3:36) Yet, our salvation is not the most important reason for Jesus' life and death on earth. No, his primary concern was an even greater issue, a universal one. As we shall see in the next chapter, that issue touches all of us because it shows why God has allowed wickedness and suffering to persist so long in this world.

19. How does Christ's sacrifice prove that he and his Father love you?

20. Why should we exercise faith in Jesus' ransom sacrifice?

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Why did Jesus have to die to save mankind?

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How was the ransom paid?

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In what ways do you benefit from the ransom?