



FREEDOM AND A GLORIOUS FUTURE

**Grace Communion International
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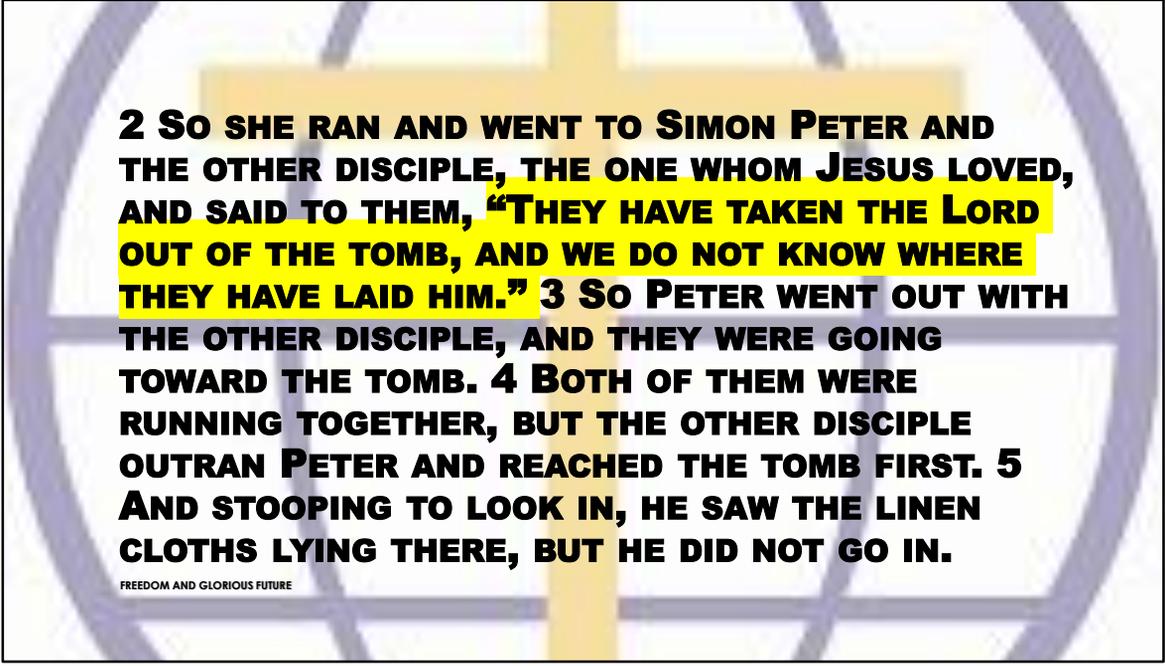
**EASTER CELEBRATION
Date: April 21, 2019**



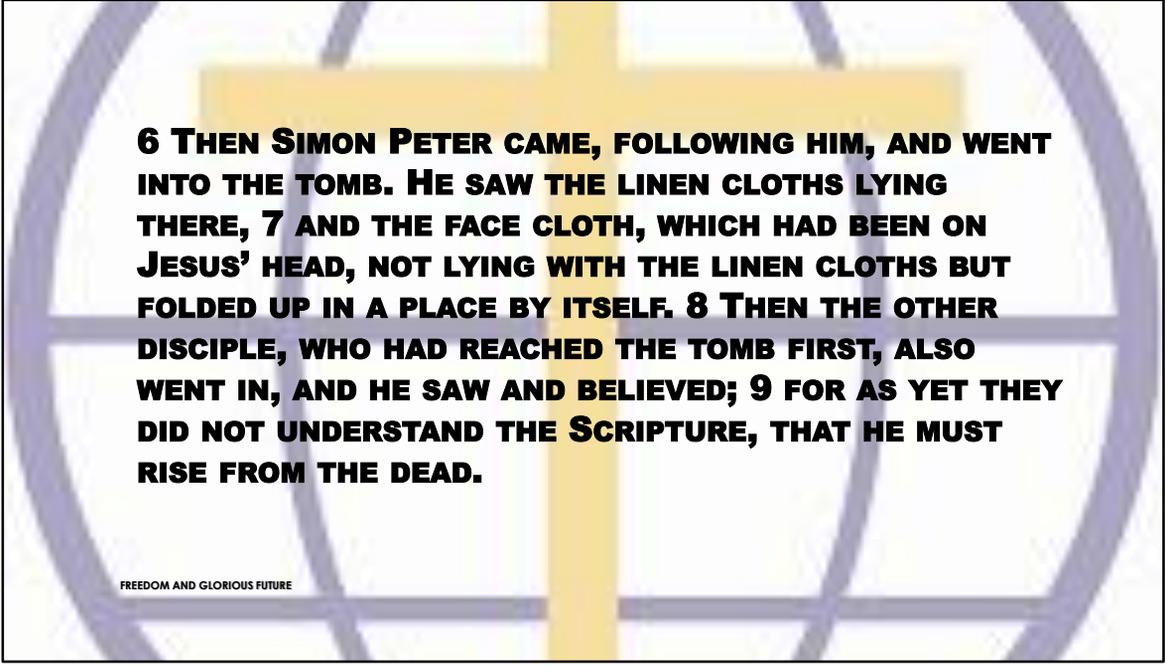
**SCRIPTURE
READING:**

**JOHN 20:1-18
(ESV)**

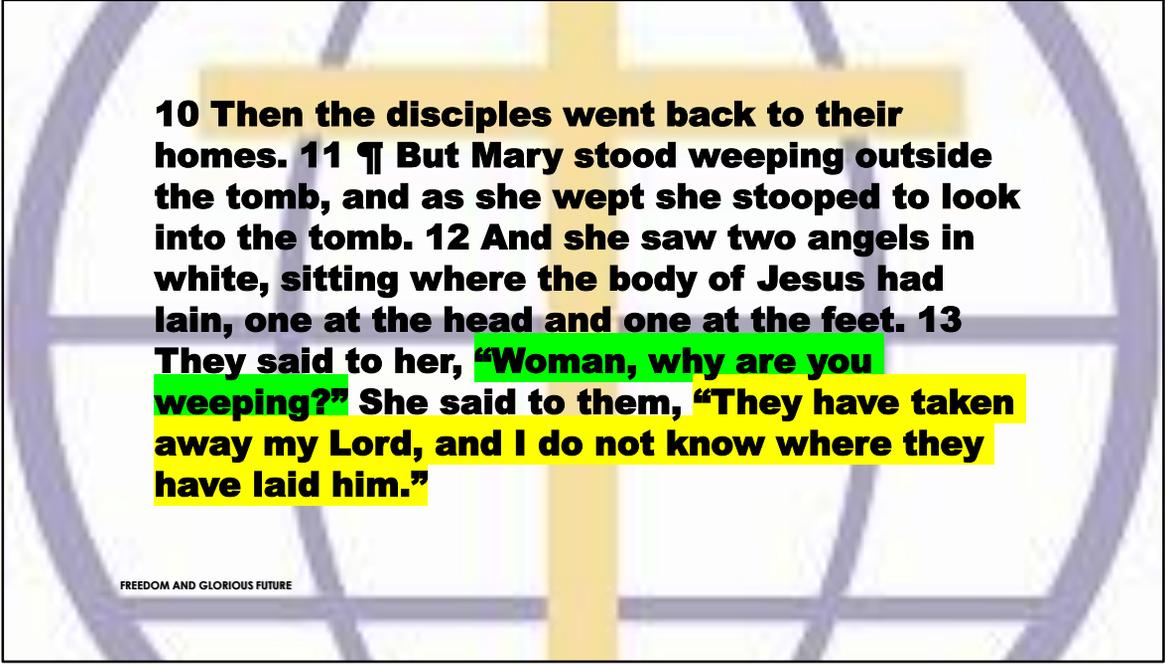
“1 ¶ NOW ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK MARY MAGDALENE CAME TO THE TOMB EARLY, WHILE IT WAS STILL DARK, AND SAW THAT THE STONE HAD BEEN TAKEN AWAY FROM THE TOMB.



2 So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." 3 So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. 4 Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in.



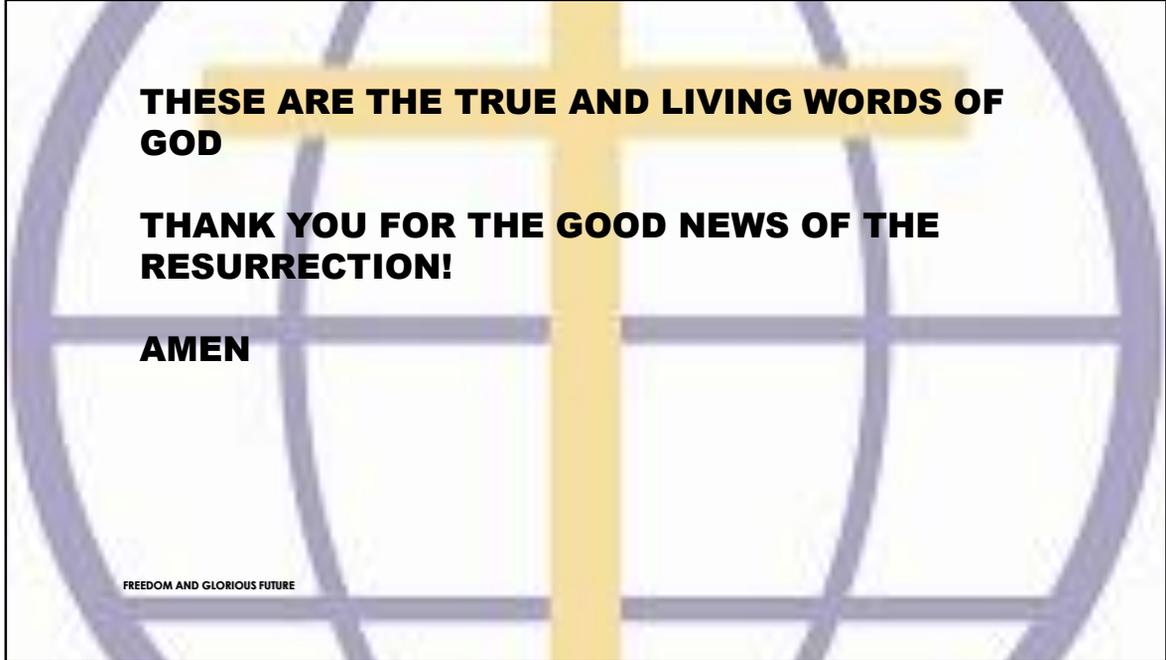
6 THEN SIMON PETER CAME, FOLLOWING HIM, AND WENT INTO THE TOMB. HE SAW THE LINEN CLOTHS LYING THERE, 7 AND THE FACE CLOTH, WHICH HAD BEEN ON JESUS' HEAD, NOT LYING WITH THE LINEN CLOTHS BUT FOLDED UP IN A PLACE BY ITSELF. 8 THEN THE OTHER DISCIPLE, WHO HAD REACHED THE TOMB FIRST, ALSO WENT IN, AND HE SAW AND BELIEVED; 9 FOR AS YET THEY DID NOT UNDERSTAND THE SCRIPTURE, THAT HE MUST RISE FROM THE DEAD.



10 Then the disciples went back to their homes. 11 ¶ But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. 12 And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. 13 They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.”

- **14 HAVING SAID THIS, SHE TURNED AROUND AND SAW JESUS STANDING, BUT SHE DID NOT KNOW THAT IT WAS JESUS. 15 JESUS SAID TO HER, "WOMAN, WHY ARE YOU WEEPING? WHOM ARE YOU SEEKING?" SUPPOSING HIM TO BE THE GARDENER, SHE SAID TO HIM, "SIR, IF YOU HAVE CARRIED HIM AWAY, TELL ME WHERE YOU HAVE LAID HIM, AND I WILL TAKE HIM AWAY." 16 JESUS SAID TO HER, "MARY." SHE TURNED AND SAID TO HIM IN ARAMAIC, "RABBONI!" (WHICH MEANS TEACHER).**

17 Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”
18 Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”—and that he had said these things to her.” (Joh 20:1-18 ESV)



How important is the resurrection?

The apostle Paul saw the death and resurrection of Jesus as of first importance!

“3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.” (1 Co 15:3-5 ESV).

The crucifixion without the resurrection would be meaningless. If Jesus had not been resurrected, we could not have salvation. Our sins would not be forgiven. We could not have the hope of eternal life.

It's important to realize that the resurrection is a fact in history.

A student at the University of Uruguay asked Josh McDowell the following question, **“Prof. McDowell, why can't you refute Christianity?”**

Dr. McDowell answered, **“For a very simple reason: I am not able to explain away an**

event in history – the resurrection of Jesus.” (*THE NEW EVIDENCE THAT DEMANDS A VERDICT, Evidence I & II, Fully Updated in One Volume to Answer Questions Challenging Christians in the 21st Century (pages- 203–204).*)

Have you ever thought that of all the belief systems in the world including such great religions as Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism only Christianity claims to have a living Savior, a Savior who has come to earth as one of us, a Savior who has defeated death through his resurrection from the physically dead. This is quite a claim is in it?

As Wilbur Smith said, “But when he said that he himself would rise again from the dead, the third day after he was crucified, he said something that only a fool would dare say, if he expected longer the devotion of any disciples – unless he was sure he was going to rise. No founder of any world religion known to man ever dare to say a thing like that!” (Idem page 209)

The apostles had walked with Jesus for 3 1/2 years. Jesus had told him that he was going to die and be resurrected. They did not understand. As we heard in the Scripture reading, **“8 Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; 9 for as yet they did not understand the Scripture that he must rise from the dead.”** (Joh 20:8-9 ESV).

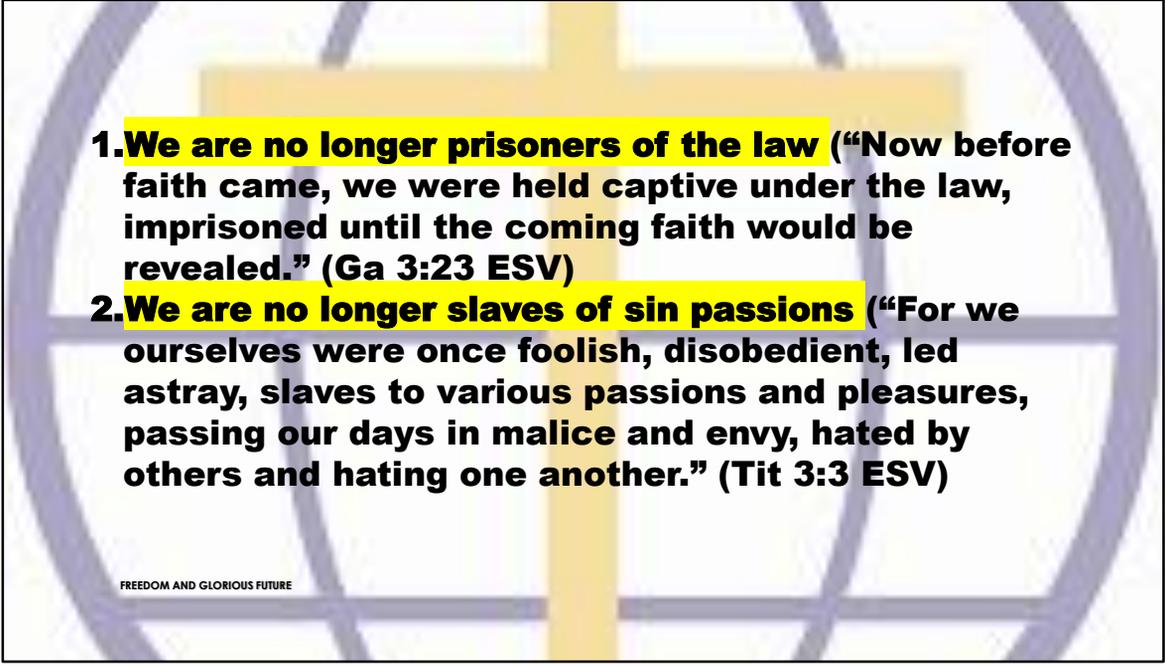
Jesus had just suffered a brutal death on the Roman cross. No one had ever survived such an ordeal. Jesus did not survive the Roman crucifixion. When he was taken off the cross, he was dead. He was dead even before the Roman soldier pierced his heart with his spear.

We can well understand that the disciples did not understand when Jesus would say that he was going to Jerusalem to suffer at the hands of the Jews and Roman government. (Matt. 20:17-19)

Can we imagine the thoughts and emotions that must have run in the mind of John when he entered the tomb with Peter and he saw that Jesus was no longer there. In fact, the linen cloth used to wrap his body was neatly folded where he had laid. **We simply read in the Scripture that when John saw, he believed (John 20:8)!** John had witnessed the crucifixion. He knew Jesus was dead. He is the only disciples who stood by Jesus during this whole ordeal. The other disciples had all deserted out of fear.

The resurrection of Jesus change the disciples lives forever. They were confident that Jesus lived. They were confident that Jesus was the source of eternal life. They became bold in proclaiming the impossible. Jesus was risen from the dead. Jesus was all that He claimed to be: the Son of Man, the Son of God.

Because Jesus died and rose again from the dead, the following is true for all of us who have come to faith in Jesus.



1. We are no longer prisoners of the law (“Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed.” (Ga 3:23 ESV)

2. We are no longer slaves of sin passions (“For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.” (Tit 3:3 ESV)

FREEDOM AND GLORIOUS FUTURE

1 – We are liberated from the curse of the law. (Gal. 3:10-14). There is a curse attached to the law because breaking the law is a sin. **“For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.”** (Jas 2:10 ESV)

We now do not live under the law of the Old Testament but in grace, we live under the law of Christ (1 Corinthians 9:21, Galatians 6:2).

2 – in Christ, we are not slaves to our sinful passions anymore because, in the new life God has given us, we live to serve God. **“But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.”** (Ro 6:22 ESV).

3. We are no longer enslaved by death or fear (“14 ¶ Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.” (Heb 2:14-15 ESV)

4. We have overcome the world and the evil one (“4 For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. 5 Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1Jo 5:4-5 ESV) (also read 1Jo 2:13-14 ESV)

“And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.” (Re 12:11 ESV)

FREEDOM AND GLORIOUS FUTURE

We believe in many things in this world but what is the most important to believe that Jesus has died and rose again!

There are many facts we take for granted. Because of Galileo, we believe that the earth is round. We know that the orbits around the sun. The earth is not the centre of the universe.

We believe that Henry Ford has invented the automobile.

We believe that Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone. We haven't met any of these people. Their inventions or discoveries benefit our physical life. Even if we believe in what they have done, it does not give us a purpose to life or guide us in how to live. Believing in their discoveries as helpful as they may be, do not deliver us from our slavery to our passions. They do not satisfy our thirst for transcendence. They do not teach us why we are born. They do not give us hope beyond this life!

We know that gravity exists. We believe that food contains calories even if we don't see them. We know that salt gives a certain taste to the food.

We take these facts were granted. When we get into her car, we do not think of Henry Ford, the inventor of the first automobile. When we use the telephone, we do not think of Alexander Graham Bell. We know many of these facts are true because we have learned them somewhere.

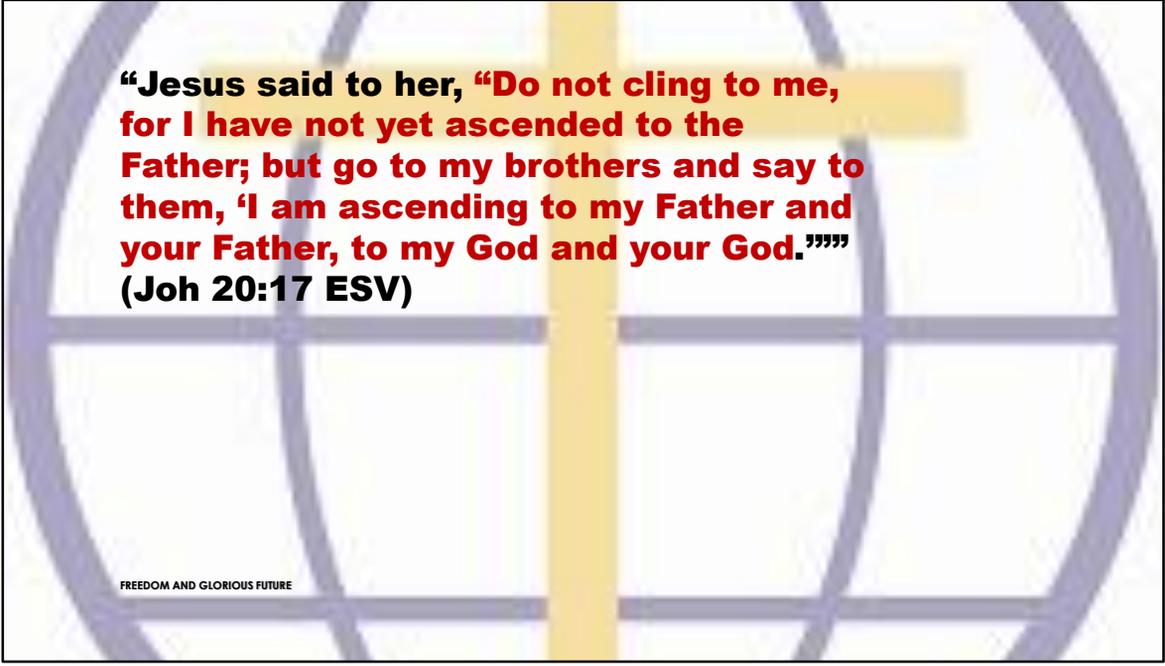
These facts are not helping us to identify who we are or how we ought to live.

The fact that Jesus is alive is much more than a yes or no on an exam. The fact that Jesus is the Son of God come down from heaven to be one of us, to die in our place, to become sin for us, to defeat sin, death and evil at their root changes everything.

What he says and what he did is of utmost importance to each and every one of us. The fact of the death and resurrection of Jesus permits us to go from death to life! (John 5:24).

At the cross and the resurrection everything was done to that we can be given the gift of eternal life. Jesus asks us to believe!

The message that Jesus sent to his disciple through Mary Magdalene is the most hopeful message ever!

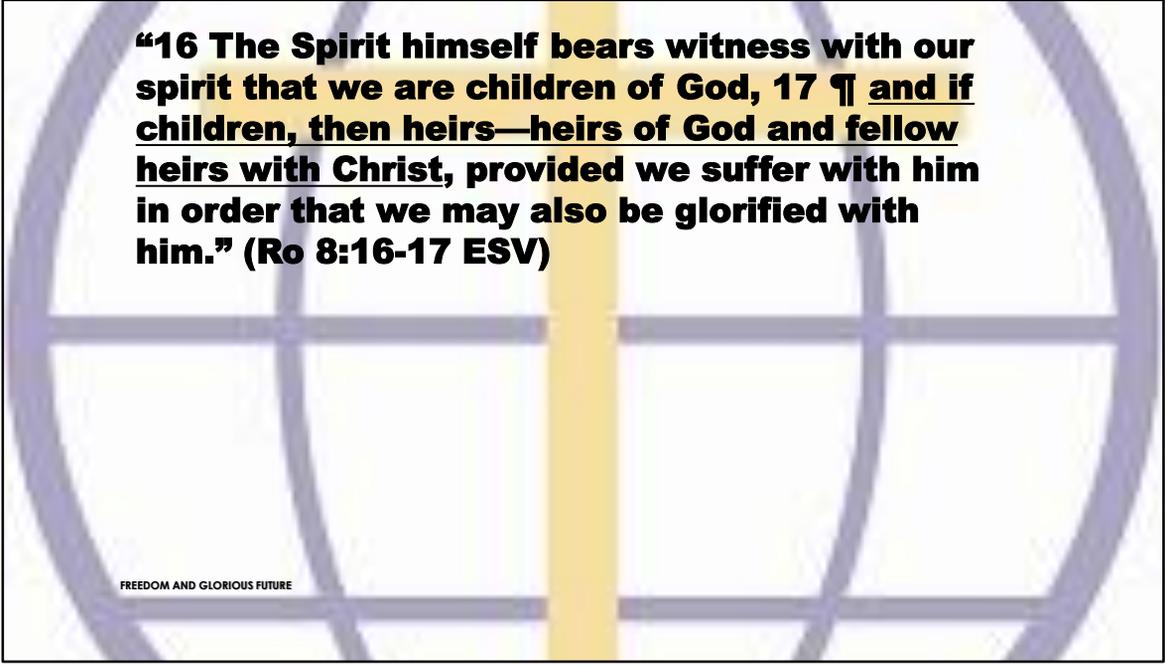


**“Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’””
(Joh 20:17 ESV)**

FREEDOM AND GLORIOUS FUTURE

Isn't this an awesome message. Jesus is including us in the relationship that He has with the Father through Him, the Man Jesus who is both God and man! The resurrected Jesus, the perfect man who came and healed our flesh is telling us that His God is our God!

We will never be God like God is God but we will be perfect man like Jesus is the perfect man in heaven. The promise of the resurrection is that we will share in God's eternal glory for all eternity! The bible tells us that we will be fellow heirs with Jesus! This is greater than we can imagine. Jesus sustains the whole universe! (Next slide)



“16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 ¶ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.” (Ro 8:16-17 ESV)

FREEDOM AND GLORIOUS FUTURE

As we continue to live in Christ, be united in Him, the future reserved for us pales into comparison the glory that awaits each and everyone of us.

Let us praise God that Jesus is victor over evil, sin and death for all of us! Let us rejoice and may God the Holy Spirit engrain this truth in our minds and hearts deeply! This is our desire!

Let us pray!