

## *“Leaping like calves”*

**THIS MORNING**, all around the world, people are celebrating the remarkable, amazing, awe-inspiring, miraculous RESURRECTION.

**Matthew 28:1-10**

**All these centuries later, this is a well-known event.**

If it were the only thing we had ever heard about Christ, and if we believe it actually happened, we would consider it **REMARKABLE**.

IN FACT:

**THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST**

### 1) **is the most significant event in human history.**

But just like his crucifixion three days before, the more we know of what had gone on before it actually happened, the **more important** we would see it is, and the **more meaningful** it would be to us.

So let's take a very large step back. **Genesis 1:1** In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

We can think of this mind-boggling reality as CONSTRUCTING A MAGNIFICENT THEATRE.

**John Calvin:** “The whole world is a theatre for the display of the divine goodness, wisdom, justice, and power...”

[Commentary on Psalms] A magnificent theatre! Like the **PANTAGES THEATRE**.

~ **Opened in 1920**, a combination vaudeville / motion picture theatre → largest in Canada and elegant!

~ In **1930** the Pantages Theatre was renamed **The Imperial**: exclusively a cinema.

~ In **1989**, the “new” Pantages Theatre **reopened** → **The Phantom of the Opera**. → A GREAT THEATRE

DESIGNED FOR A GREAT PLAY. SO THEN... **WHAT'S PLAYING? What's on stage in THIS theatre?**

**William Shakespeare:** “All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players. They have their exits and their entrances...” [As You Like It]

[Just one show. Like growing up in Brockville. Like the first ten years of the “new” Pantages Theatre.]

SO **WHAT'S PLAYING? What's on stage?** Just one show: **THE HISTORY OF THE HUMAN RACE**.

The play that the theatre was built for. Everything we know about the Universe, AND everything we know about the life, death, resurrection of Jesus Christ → **A GREAT THEATRE DESIGNED AND BUILT FOR A GREAT PLAY**

And we **LIVE** in this **GREAT THEATRE!** This magnificent, awe-inspiring theatre. **“Oh! Wow! Look at the ceiling!”**

**Isaiah 40:26** Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name, by the greatness of his might, and because he is strong in power not one is missing. 100s of billions of galaxies, each with 100s of billions of stars ...

**And God calls them all by name! And none of them is missing!**

What a theatre!!! **Magnificent. Awe-inspiring, and MEANINGFUL!**

**Genesis 1:14-16** And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. **And let them be for signs** ...

**SIGNS OF WHAT?** **Psalms 19:1-4** The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

**A SPECTACULAR THEATRE FOR A SPECTACULAR PLAY.**

AND what is MOST SPECTACULAR OF ALL: **God HIMSELF**, the Author of the story, the Architect and Builder of the theatre **WROTE HIMSELF INTO THE PLAY**, not a cameo role (as Peter Jackson did), but as **THE MAIN CHARACTER**.

**AND THE DETAILS** of this role that the Author wrote for himself had been **PREDICTED**. BY THE PROPHETS. For centuries. Some of the predictions were designed **INTO THE THEATRE ITSELF**, with this play in mind.

Back to Genesis 1. **Genesis 1:14-16** And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. **And let them be for signs**... And it was so. And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day... This **“GREATER LIGHT”**: an **especially meaningful** sign. Back to Psalm 19.

**Psalms 19:1-6** The heavens declare the glory of God ... In them he has set a tent for **the sun**, which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and, like a strong man, **runs its course with joy**. Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat.

**The Sun is placed as a sign.** On the ceiling of the theatre. In the sky. And the **RISING OF THE SUN** is itself a sign. e.g. In the **LAST PROPHECY** of the **LAST O.T. PROPHET**:

**Malachi 4:2** But for you who fear my name, **the sun of righteousness** shall rise...

**THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST**

### 2) **is history's greatest display of God's righteousness.**

**What the sun signifies: what is true of Christ** → **what its rising signifies: what is true of Christ's resurrection.**

**1 Corinthians 15:17-20, 25,26** And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.

[i.e. our unrighteousness] Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those

who have fallen asleep ... For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Compare **Romans 4:25** ...delivered up for our trespasses and **raised for our justification**.

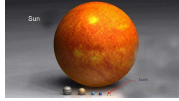
**DEF'N:** Justification is God, as the Judge of the human race, declaring that we who are not right with him are now considered to be right with him, on the basis of Christ's righteousness. **2 Corinthians 5:21** For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

As it was written in the Old Testament, in this case 400 years before Christ suffered and died.

**Malachi 4:2** But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise **with healing in its wings**...

### THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

#### 3) **is humanity's greatest source of healing.**



This "**GREATER LIGHT**" is so great that its gravitational pressure [340 billion times greater than that of the Earth's] is continually crushing hydrogen into helium. ["*Nuclear fusion*"]. Every second, 700 million tons of hydrogen is crushed into 695 million tons of helium, producing 5 million tons of energy in the form of electromagnetic radiation, some of this energy makes it all the way to Earth, 93 million miles away, in eight minutes flat, as light and as heat. **AND WE WOULDN'T BE ALIVE WITHOUT IT! And this is a picture, a sign, of what Christ is able to do for us.**

**AND WE WOULDN'T BE ALIVE WITHOUT HIM!** + Preview of "*Help in High Places*"

→ This morning: "the exact healing we need" → the healing of our relationship with God. "**Our righteousness problem**" The woman who first heard of Christ's resurrection RAN, with fear and great joy: as **the sun runs its course with joy! And with fear?**

**Proverbs 14:27** The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, that one may turn away from the snares of death.

**Malachi 4:2** But for you who fear my name, **the sun** of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. This "prediction" is aimed at one particular sort of person: "**you who fear my name**" that is, those who intensely and lovingly respect God's "name."

To those people: **THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST**

#### 4) **is our greatest cause of freedom and joy.** This fear of the Lord is a matter of faith: of believing.

Not everyone does. But every morning of their lives, whether anyone notices or not, THE SUN RISES. A sign! We can fail to notice this sign for various reasons: **clouds, living at the North Pole, shift work, SNOOZE buttons.** And many people, **when they DO see the sun rise** -- perhaps even though they're awe-struck by the sight, don't understand that **it IS a sign**, OR **what** it is a sign about, and **WHO** it is a sign about.

**But whatever we make of the grandeur of a sunrise:** "WE WOULDN'T BE ALIVE WITHOUT IT!"

But the Sun is actually terrifyingly big and hot. WE WOULDN'T BE ALIVE WITH IT --- if we weren't sheltered here on Earth, by the rotation of the earth on its axis, and by the atmosphere which screens us from the full force of its beams, its rays, its "wings." If we look at this prophecy in context, we see that the topic is the distinction that God will make between those in a right relationship with him and those not. **(3:18)**

**Malachi 4:1** "For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. Like the Sun, but moreso, Christ, the Son of God, the Sun of righteousness, is THAT glorious.

**C.S.Lewis:** *Mere Christianity* When the author walks on to the stage the play is over ... For this time it will be God without disguise; something so overwhelming that it will strike either irresistible love or irresistible horror into every creature. It will be too late then to choose your side. There is no use saying you choose to lie down when it has become impossible to stand up. That will not be the time for choosing; it will be the time when we discover which side we really have chosen, whether we realised it before or not. Now, today, this moment, is our chance to choose the right side. God is holding back to give us that chance. It will not last for ever. We must take it or leave it.

We have a choice to make. A choice about the Sun. A choice that the Son can help us with. Help with the clouds. Help with our circumstances. Help with our own opposite feelings and desires.

But as every sunbather knows, if you want to be changed by the sun, you need to position yourself accordingly.

Facing the sun. **Ephesians 5:14** ... Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

Our *righteousness, healing, freedom, joy* depend on this.

**But "for those who DO fear God's name?"** They "leap like calves." "Calves from the stall."

These people leap with joy! The joy of knowing the Lord. The joy of being healed.

The joy of being set free. Free from being locked up all winter in "the stall" and "from the snares of death!"

Free from unrighteousness and the consequences of unrighteousness.

NEXT SUNDAY: April 12 **"MERCIFUL HELP"** Hebrews 2:14-18  
(The 1<sup>st</sup> in a 4-week series: "HELP IN HIGH PLACES")

## DIGGING DEEPER

What can you see in the Scriptures about God as:

- a)     “*THE ARCHITECT OF THE THEATRE*” ?  
      **Proverbs 8:22-31**  
  
      **John 1:1-3**  
  
      **Colossians 1:16-17**  
  
      **Hebrews 1:1-3**
  
- b)     GOD AS “*THE AUTHOR OF THE SCRIPT*” ?  
      **Psalm 85:10**  
  
      **Romans 11:22**
  
- c)     GOD AS “*THE DIRECTOR OF THE PLAY*” ?  
      **Proverbs 16:1,3,4,9,33**