



Jesus answered, "I am the way
and the truth and the life."
(John 14:6 NIV)

Dear Saints,

5th April 2015

The Christians in Iraq celebrate this time of year remembering how Jesus, our Lord and Saviour, suffered and died on the cross, as all Christians worldwide do. It is a time to comprehend **WHAT** really happened there and how a criminal, who was condemned to die on the cross to, was able to recognise **WHO** Jesus really was. Literally it was at the **VERY** last moment of his life that he confessed *"And we, indeed, justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds"* but about Jesus he added *"...but this man hath done nothing amiss"* **Lk 23:41**

After the cross there was Resurrection...and **THAT** made the confession of that Criminal so important; because there was salvation too!

That confession should be of everybody who does not know Christ, because it is the right step to take in order to receive salvation; knowing/encountering Christ means changing your life forever. That criminal recognised Jesus as **LORD...!**

What do Christians have to celebrate in Iraq right now with IS killing them?

Christians have been persecuted and killed in their houses, thousands of them driven away from the land of their forefathers and suddenly became refugees in their own land while others left the land thinking it is the only solution. But we rejoice in the Lord Jesus and thank Him because we **KNOW** that He knows how we feel because He Himself went through it too. We feel our Calling in this piece of land and believe that He is able to change our country and seeing **WHAT** He's been doing we have the assurance of a **NEW** land where the peace of Christ will be its sign. The Lord gave us a **Word** about The Feast of Resurrection, as we call it, which might sound strange to many, but we believe it is a **Word in Season**; please read it through, pray and listen to what the Lord is telling you through it.

We extend our thanks to all those who have been helping us and our Ministry and ask them to continue praying for us; we will be very glad to invite you to visit us and our other Mission House in the Land of the Chaldean. There you could hear them praying like Jesus did...in Aramaic.

Being Mocked **The Essence of Christ's Work,** **not Mohammed's**

What we saw in the Islamic demonstrations over the Danish cartoons of Mohammed was another vivid depiction of the difference between Mohammed and Jesus Christ, and what it means to follow each. Again what happened in France, Denmark and other places, like Nigeria, Kenya... etc tells us a different story. Not all Muslims approve the violence, so it is said. But a deep lesson remains: The work of Mohammed is based on being honoured and the work of Christ is based on being insulted. This produces two very different reactions to mockery. If Christ had not been insulted, there would be no salvation. This was His saving work: to be insulted and die to rescue sinners from the wrath of God. Already in the Psalms the path of mockery was promised: *"All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they shake their heads..." (Psalm 22:7). "He was despised and rejected by men . . . as one from whom men hide their faces . . . and we esteemed Him not" (Isaiah 53:3).*

When it actually happened it was worse than expected. *"They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on His head. . . . And kneeling before Him, they mocked Him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' And they spit on Him" (Matthew 27:28-30).* His response to all this was patient endurance. This was the work He came to do. *"Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth" (Isaiah 53:7).*

This was not true of Mohammed. And Muslims do not believe it is true of Jesus. All Muslims have been taught that Jesus was not crucified. One Sunni Muslim writes, "Muslims believe that Allah saved the Messiah from the ignominy of crucifixion." Another adds, "We honour more than you [Christians] do... We refuse to believe that God would permit Him to suffer death on the cross". An essential Muslim impulse is to avoid the "ignominy" of the cross. That's the most basic difference between Christ and Mohammed and between a Muslim and a follower of Christ. For Christ, enduring the mockery of the cross was the essence of His mission. And for a true follower of Christ, enduring suffering patiently for the glory of Christ is the essence of obedience. Jesus said *"Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my sake" (Matthew 5:11).* During His life on earth Jesus was called a bastard '...born of fornication...' (John 8:41), a drunkard (Matthew 11:19), a blasphemer (Matthew 26:65), a devil (Matthew 10:25); and He promised His followers the same: *"If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household" (Matthew 10:25).*

The caricature and mockery of Christ has continued to this day. Martin Scorsese portrayed Jesus in *The Last Temptation of Christ* as wracked with doubt and beset with sexual lust. Andres Serrano was funded by the National Endowment for the Arts to portray Jesus on a cross sunk in a bottle of urine. The *Da Vinci Code* portrays Jesus as a mere mortal who married and fathered children. How should His followers respond? On the one hand, we are grieved and angered. On the other hand, we identify with Christ, and embrace His suffering, and rejoice in our afflictions, and say with the apostle Paul that vengeance belongs to the Lord, let us love our enemies and win them with the gospel. If Christ did His work by being insulted, we must do ours likewise.

When Mohammed was portrayed in twelve cartoons in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*, the uproar across the Muslim world was intense and sometimes violent. Flags were burned, embassies were torched, and at least one Christian Church was stoned. The cartoonists went into hiding in fear for their lives, like Salman Rushdie before them; in France they had no chance to flee.

What does this mean?

It means that a religion with no insulted Saviour will not endure insults to win the scoffers. It means that this religion is destined to bear the impossible load of upholding the honour of one who did not die and rise again to make that possible. It means that Jesus Christ is still the only hope of peace with God and peace with man. And it means that His followers must be willing to **"...share His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death" (Philippians 3:10).**

For us Christians in Iraq and worldwide, we celebrate a RISEN Christ and not a dead 'messenger', like Mohammed. We celebrate a Lord interceding for us and are awaiting His coming, because He promised; Mohammed is buried in a grave. We celebrate Resurrection Day; because we are RAISED wit Christ----- do you understand?! Then rejoice and shout with joy: ***HE IS NOT HERE, HE IS RISEN...hallelujah!*** May the Holy Spirit help us to keep the commandments of the Lord Jesus and remind us of all what He did and said...Amen.

Yours in the Lord,

Salman