

### **Be a Berean!**

*The Bereans...received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day (Acts 17:11).*

**We know God through Jesus and we know Jesus through the Bible.** That is the urgent premise behind LAC's efforts to encourage personal Bible reading and systematic Bible study. We fervently hope that you will--

1. "Stand in the Rain" with us every day as we read through the Bible in three short years. Just go to ***lockportalliance.blogspot.com***.
2. Attend one of these Bible-based classes this week—
  - "Behold"--Sunday at 9:45
  - "Having a Mary Spirit"--Sunday at 9:45
  - "Psalms for Guys"--Sunday at 9:45

Contact Franklyn Pfeil--[pfeilmail@yahoo.com](mailto:pfeilmail@yahoo.com)--with questions or comments.

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(This article is adapted from the "Stand in the Rain" teaching blog, found at [lockportalliance.blogspot.com](http://lockportalliance.blogspot.com). The scheduled reading was Isaiah 52:13--53:12.)

### **"on holy ground, on your birthday"**

Today just happens to be my wife's birthday.

Her name, officially, is Michelle. But only one person, her Mom, calls her that.

I call her "Shellster." Actually I call her "The Shellster," where 'Shellster' is her name and 'The' is her title. She is a.k.a. "The Franchise," which as a sporting term means the one player the team can't do without.

But the best thing about her is that she can do magic tricks! For example, she can just look at me and my heart does a back flip! I've watched her do that about a million times, and I still can't figure out how she does it.

Today, while we celebrate her birthday, those of us who are 'standing in the rain' can also celebrate our own!

The Bible has two notable birthdays. The **second** most notable is Christmas. (The best descriptions of that birthday can be found in the opening chapters of Matthew and Luke.)

The most notable birthday in the Bible is yours, because Jesus' deathday is your birthday. The best descriptions of your birthday can be found in Old Testament prophecies, prior to the cross!

God drew a curtain of darkness over the cross (1). That transaction was between Trinity--Father, Son, Spirit. So when we read the New Testament descriptions of the cross, we aren't able to see very much. Eyes of the flesh weren't allowed in the room when you were delivered.

But the prophetic eyes of the Spirit--who sees tomorrow more clearly than we can see yesterday--had already, in Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53, described the cross in surround sound and vivid cinematic detail.

The physical realm of God's creation is a shadow cast when God casts light on the spiritual realm. In the physical realm, every Mom could tell us that the baby is delivered through blood, travail, and pain. While all that Dads can do is watch.

Sometimes, life must spend all of itself in the giving. Way back in Genesis, on the way to Bethlehem, Rachel died giving birth to Benjamin. All that Jacob could do was watch:

*While they were still some distance from Ephrath, Rachel began to give birth and had great difficulty. And as she was having great difficulty in childbirth, the midwife said to her, "Don't be afraid, for you have another son." As she breathed her last--for she was dying--she named her son Ben-Oni. But his father named him Benjamin. So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). Over her tomb Jacob set up a pillar, and to this day that pillar marks Rachel's tomb. (Genesis 35:16-20)*

When Jesus died giving us new life, all the Father could do was watch, because *the seed of the woman* (2) had to die:

*I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.* (John 12:24)

In Isaiah 53, we are witnessing the creation of the eternal, engendered in the death of this single seed.

*Heaven and earth*, the creation described in Genesis, *will pass away* (3); but the creation wrought at the cross--the new heavens, the new earth, the new you--shall not pass away.

We stand, in Isaiah 53, at Ground Zero, where space and time intersect. In space, we stand on holy ground; in time, on your birthday.

And birthdays aren't to be sad. So Isaiah 53 doesn't leave Jesus in the grave like Jacob had to leave Rachel on the way. Isaiah 53 goes past the cross to today; then it passes today on its way to forever. The Deliverer, having delivered, sees the children, not the travail; he sees the fruit, not the labor:

*When he makes himself an offering for sin,*

*he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days;*

*the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand;*

*he shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied;*

*by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous; and he shall bear their iniquities.*

*Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors;*

*yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.* (Isaiah 53:10-12)

Now with so many birthdays to celebrate, and so many more gifts to give, I have a notion that he won't ever look back on Isaiah 53 again. There's nothing left there now. The only trace left of the seed is the fruit.

(1) Luke 23:44; (2) Genesis 3:15; (3) Matthew 24:35