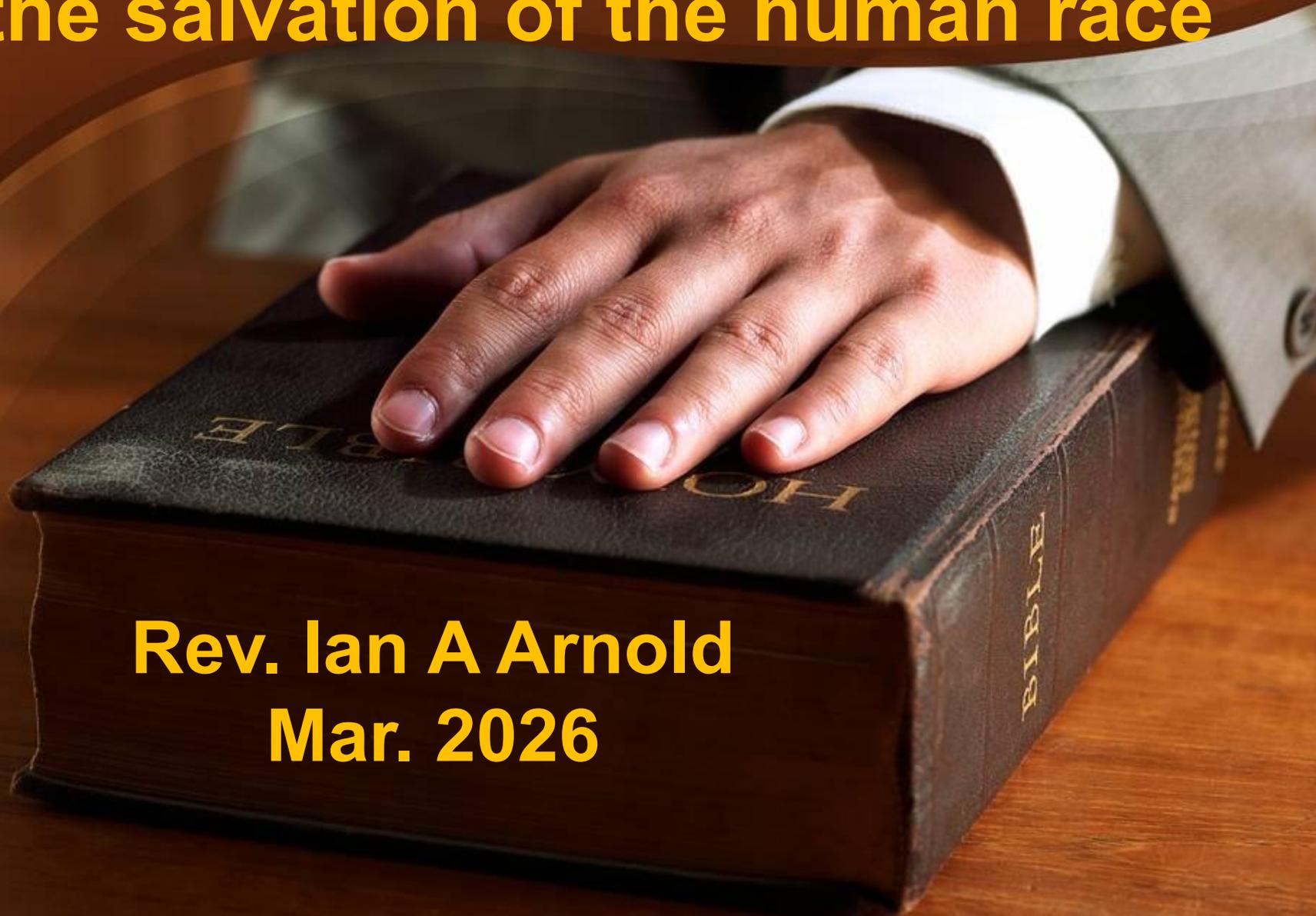


**Jesus's total commitment to His goal  
for the salvation of the human race**



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Please read first:

**“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to myself.” (John 12:32)**



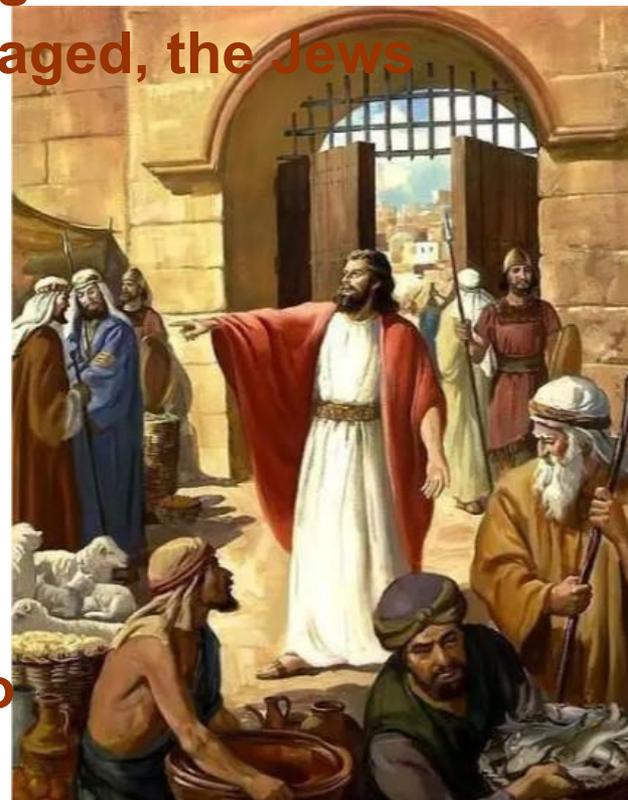


**It is truly remarkable that from the age of twelve, if not from before then, Jesus was aware, not just of the purpose of His work in this world, but that it would culminate in His rejection and crucifixion. At the very least, and as a child, He would have known this as a possibility.**

**We know from the things Jesus said, now recorded for us in the Gospels, that this awareness clearly became a certainty by the time He began His public ministry.**



Intriguingly, in John's Gospel we read that very early on, maybe only weeks into His public ministry that Jesus went into the Temple in Jerusalem where He "found those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables." (John 2:14, 15) Enraged, the Jews challenged His authority to do such a thing, and they asked Him. 'What sign do you show to us, since you do these things?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' " They thought He was referring to the actual, physical temple. But



Several times, subsequently, Jesus tried to alert His disciples to what He then knew was the inevitability of His being killed, followed by His resurrection. Well into the latter part of His three-year public ministry, “From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.” (Matthew 16:21). Misplaced as Peter’s concern was, he took Jesus aside, “and began to rebuke Him, saying, ‘Far be it from you, Lord; this shall not happen to you.’ “ (Matthew 16:22).



**However, Jesus persisted, and what seems to have been quite soon afterward, “They departed from there and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know it. For He taught His disciples and said to them, ‘The Son of Man is being delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day. But they did not understand this saying, and were afraid to ask Him.’” (Mark 9:30-32)**



**The trouble was that the disciples were blinded by a mind-set which they shared amongst themselves, and along with religious people more generally, that the kingdom Jesus spoke about was of this world. The disciples even saw themselves occupying important and influential positions in that kingdom, disputing among themselves who would be the greatest.” (Mark 9:34). As Jesus made His way to Jerusalem for the last time the mother of James and John said to Him, “Grant that my two sons may sit one on your right hand and the other on your left, in Your kingdom. (Matthew 20:21). This is, again, evidence which shows that even those closest to Jesus were thinking of a kingdom He would establish in this world.**



So, how did Jesus know, becoming certain of that He would be killed and that He would be raised afterwards?

It can seem as if Jesus was all the time focused on His death and resurrection, but we need to be careful here. **What Jesus was forever focused on, and what meant more than anything else to Him, was the salvation of the human race.** And He accepted that, to achieve the salvation of the human race, it would provoke opposition and hatred towards Him culminating in His crucifixion and resurrection. From very early in His ministry “the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him.” (John 5:16). But this was never going to frighten Him or deter Him. Things were at such a critical balance at that time. Had God not intervened by becoming incarnate in Jesus the human race as a whole would have been overwhelmed by sin and evil.

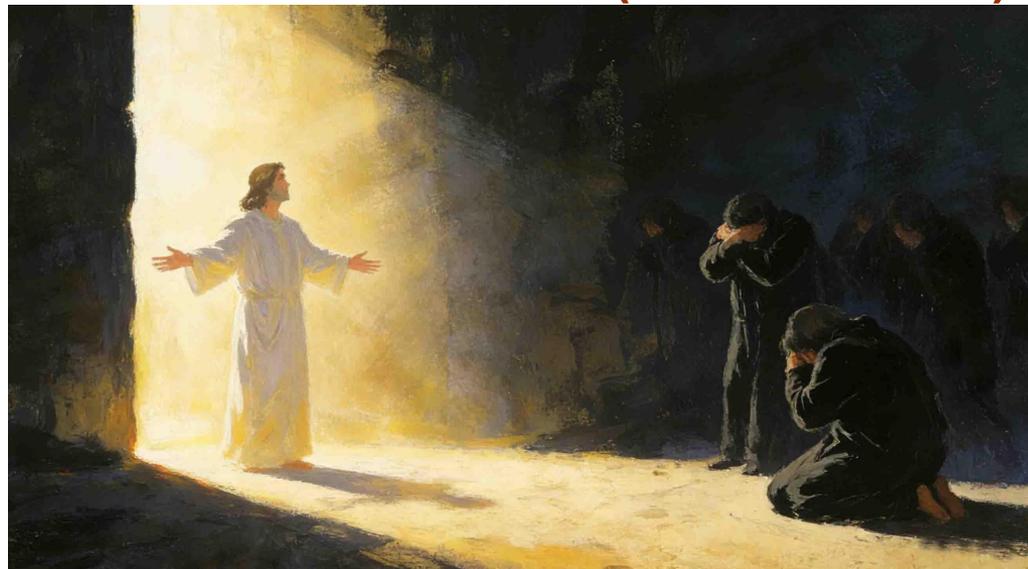


No one, either before then or since, knew the Old Testament Scriptures as well as Jesus. It was His great love to learn the Scriptures. **And from the light that was in mostly within Him He was quickly able to recognize that His life as the Messiah was all foreshadowed there.** And amongst all that was foreshadowed was the inevitability of His being killed, followed by His resurrection. He could see in the Scriptures what the scribes and Pharisees should have been able to see but couldn't. "You search the Scriptures", Jesus said to the Jews, "for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of me. But you are not willing to come to me that you may have life. I do not receive honour from men. But I know that you do not have the love of God in you." (John 5:39-42)



**It was true then, and it is true now, that if love for the Lord is not in our hearts we cannot understand the Scriptures or hear the Lord speaking to us through them.**

**Here again is what Jesus said,. “And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practising evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.” (John 3:19-21)**



## **Jesus and the support of the angels which became an obstacle for Him.**

**After the devil left Jesus, having severely tempted Him in the wilderness at the beginning of His public ministry, “angels”, we read, “came and ministered to Him.” (Matthew 4:11) Clearly, however, and towards the end, almost certainly when He was being scourged and beaten at the time of His arrest and trial, their help and support became a hindrance. So astonishing is this that we straightaway want to know why.**



There can be no doubt that the angels will have been profoundly anguished by what was being done to Jesus. But their response came from their own despair, concern and limited understanding and not from a realization that He must go forward against this last, brutal, attack and onslaught from hell. The devil, which is hell, made one last mighty effort to derail Jesus from His goal. Understandably, the angels would have been horrified at the suffering He would undergo. But their concern, though well meant, was misplaced and **Jesus had to resolutely fight against this.**



From the Writings we read, “The truth that the Lord at length fought with actual angels, indeed with the whole angelic heaven, is a heavenly secret which has not been disclosed until now.” And this passage continues, “in order that the Lord might bring the whole of heaven into proper heavenly order, He even allowed angels into Himself to tempt Him, who, insofar as they acted from their proprium, did not do so from good and truth.” (“Arcana Caelestia” 4295:2 & 3). Thinking about this teaching it gives new meaning to what we read in the prophecy of Isaiah: “He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; therefore His own arm brought salvation for Him; and His own righteousness sustained Him. For He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on His head; He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing and was clad with zeal as a cloak.” (Chapter 59: 16-17)

As we read in the Writings: “By His own power the



## Jesus and the example He gave us

We often talk about Jesus and the example He is for us. This teaching we have just been listening to highlights His example of unwavering commitment to a goal and **our need for determination not to side-tracked or to weaken in our pursuit of Godly goals**. We can never have the strength of character or the unflinching resolve that Jesus had, but here we are being challenged to think carefully about our own irresolution and failures to “endure to the end”. (See Matthew 10:22 and 24:13)



## **Drawing all peoples to Himself**

**Jesus said, “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to myself.”**

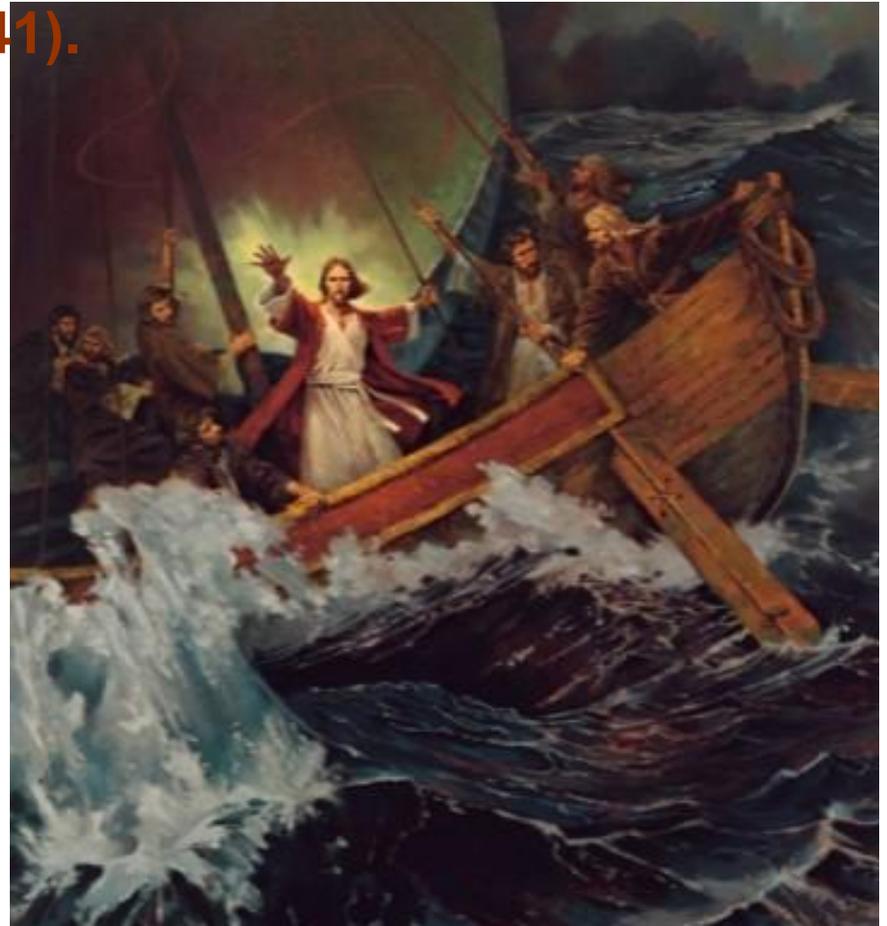
**From a first reading here we might think Jesus was talking about the ground we walk on and Him being lifted on high, His crucifixion and subsequent resurrection. And this is so. The following verse reads, “This He said, signifying by what death He would die.” But there is a richness of deeper meaning here which we can easily not see.**



Jesus was also talking here about conquering and rising above what had darkened the minds of people and which had blocked the light of heaven reaching through to them on earth. Successfully coming through countless temptation battles, Jesus rose above the falsities and misinterpretations by means of which the religious authorities had made the Word of God of no effect, and the worldly loves through which the devil sought to control the human race and to control us, today. When things were at their darkest and most dire He rose above any inclination to save Himself. There surely will have been times when He was tempted to retaliate, but He rose above any such inclinations. He will have seen wealth and splendour but He rose above any inclination to covetousness. He was aware of, and talked about, how the scribes and Pharisees loved being saluted in public places and always expected the chief places at religious festivals (Mark 12L:38 & 39), **but He totally rose above such things. And by doing so He put Himself in the position that enabled Him “to draw all people to Himself.”**



**On one occasion Jesus and His disciples got into a boat to cross the Sea of Galilee. Obviously tired, Jesus slept. But as He slept a wild wind blew up which threatened the boat and the lives of them all. Terrified, the disciples woke Jesus who “arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, ‘Peace, be still’. And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.” (Mark 4:35-41).**



It is a wonderful and unforgettable story and at the innermost, celestial, level of meaning it magnificently captures, and summarizes, what Jesus accomplished, not just for the disciples, but for the whole human race. Like a boisterous and wild wind everyone everywhere was being blown off course, spiritually, by the strength of ungodly and hellish influences. It was like a hurricane from the mouth of the devil. But as the result of His victories in temptations, He rebuked that wind and so made it possible for order to be restored and for people to continue their journey through life, without the fear of being overwhelmed, and to reach the distant shore of a heavenly, God-fearing and spiritual life, **if that is what they wanted and chose.**



There is a beautiful teaching in the Writings about a sphere which radiates out from the Lord and draws everyone to itself. We read, “There is in fact a sphere continuously radiated by the Lord, which raises all to heaven; this fills the whole of both the spiritual and natural worlds. It is like a strong current in the ocean which invisibly draws a ship along.” (“True Christian Religion” 652:3) This sphere has always existed, though it came to be blocked and ineffective over the centuries before God came amongst us as Jesus. Wonderfully it was renewed and greatly strengthened as the result of the Lord’s work while He was here in this world. **But we stand to one side, and are not affected by this sphere, unless we look to the Lord, believe in Him and live in accordance with His commandments.**

“And I,” Jesus said, “if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all peoples to myself.”



## **The Lord lifted up on high within each of us, individually.**

As Jesus was miraculously resurrected less than three short days following His crucifixion, so He can be resurrected and lifted on high within our own lives; and we so need to strive mightily to enable this to happen. The teaching in two short passages from the Writings makes this clear: We read, “The Lord emerges and rises again with a person when He is acknowledged. Previously He is enveloped in night because He does not appear. He rises again, we read, “with every person who is being regenerated.” (“Arcana Caelestia” 2917). And, secondly, “The Lord’s resurrection on the third morning, Mark 16:2,9; Luke 24:1; John 20:1, embodies in the particular and the specific senses the truth that **He rises daily, indeed every single moment, in the minds of regenerate persons.**” (“Arcana Caelestia” 2405)



And as He is resurrected in this way, having been in darkness and obscurity in our lives previously, He draws everything to Himself. This means **our thoughts, our desires, our hopes, our ambitions, our relationships and the view we have of ourselves, are all raised upwards, towards the Lord.** And being raised up towards Him He will bless all these things with new life from Himself, His love and wisdom flowing into and filling every aspect of our life.

**Amen**



# Readings:

John Chapter 12:27-36

Isaiah 60:1-3

Arcana Caelestia 8604:2,3

“The Lord flows in with every person through the Truth emanating from Himself. Through it He brings life to the person, for the light which comes from the Lord is Divine Truth, and is life, John1:4. This Divine Truth coming from the Lord flows into the good residing with a person, and by means of it He draws the person to Himself. For life which comes from the Lord is attractive and draws others to itself because it springs from love, and all love holds a power of attraction because of its desire to be joined to another so that they become one. **When therefore a person is governed by good, and from good is guided by truth, he or she is drawn by the Lord to Himself and joined to Him.** This is what looking



upwards towards the Lord is used to mean. The person who is not governed by good, and thus is not guided by truth from good, is also drawn by the Lord, but that person cannot be raised up, because evils and falsities (in them) are averse to Him. This is what looking downwards, or towards self and the world, is used to mean. The truth that the Lord draws a person to Himself is His own teaching in John,

“I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” (John 12:32)



THE END

