

**Topical Message**  
**There Was a Need for Christ's Sacrifice**  
**Pastor Leitu**

KAPONO: Would you join me in a word of prayer? Lord, we come before You this morning, Lord, with our hearts humble, recognizing and declaring who You are, Lord, giving You all the praise and glory, all of our worship this morning.

Lord, would You clear our minds, clear our hearts, clear our emotions from our body, Lord, that we may be able to focus in on what it is that You have for us in Your word this morning? May Your word live and breathe in us, that all that we say and do, Lord, would just point to You.

So thank You for Your word, Lord. Would You be with Pastor Leitu this morning? Give him strength, courage, and a boldness that can only come from You through Your Holy Spirit as he delivers the word this morning. Speak to us. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

PASTOR LEITU: Aloha.

[ Congregation says, "Aloha!" ]

You may be seated. I want to welcome all of you here in the sanctuary and you online. Pastor JD is still on vacation, so keep him in prayer that the Lord would keep His hedge of protection over him, and also bless his wife, Kellie, with healing.

We have two services on Sundays, 8:30 and 10:45. Our 8:30 service is the Prophecy Update, when Pastor JD returns. In our 10:45 service, we're going through the New Testament. We have our midweek study on Thursdays at 7:00 p.m., and we're going through the Old Testament. We're in the *Book of Daniel*. We come together for all church prayer. We gather on the first Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m., here in the sanctuary.

Tomorrow, Monday, May 27, 2024, is Memorial Day. In remembrance of our fallen heroes, this Memorial Day weekend, I want to honor them by asking us to remember their service and their sacrifice.

Freedom doesn't come easy, and many have given their lives so that our nation can remain free. I pray for the comfort of Jesus Christ for you, and you online, who have lost loved ones. I pray your Memorial Day weekend will be blessed with peace. In gratitude, let us remember our heroes who have shaped this great nation of ours.

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Last week we saw Paul answer some absurd questions, remarks that the Pharisees and unbelievers made. Aren't you Jews sinners by abandoning the religion you grew up with, Judaism? Isn't Jesus leading people into sin by their deserting the Law of Moses? The answer to both questions is a resounding no.

This week we'll look at the remainder of *Galatians Chapter 2*, and I've titled this message, 'There Was a Need for Christ's Sacrifice.' Before we start, let us pray.

Father in heaven, we come before You to thank You for Your word, Lord. We love Your word, Lord. It teaches us and instructs us. It's Your love letter to us, Your kids. So I come before You to thank You, Lord, that You always give us eyes to see and ears to hear that which You desire to speak to us through Your word. So Lord, we thank You for Your word. Lead and guide us today and teach us.

For Pastor JD and Kellie, Lord, we pray for your hedge of protection over them; for Kellie, for healing, Lord; and for the families who have lost loved ones, Lord, in service to this country, for Your blessings on them today of peace and comfort. And I pray these things in Jesus' name, Amen.

We've been so conditioned in this world to believe that nothing is free. You have to give to get. And so it is with religion. There are so many religions we know of and so many that we don't, religions with beliefs that oppose each other, oppose each other's doctrines.

Who's telling the truth? How was the world created? How can we trust? Who can we trust to tell the truth about the afterlife and what will happen to us when we die? All religions of the world rely on works and keeping of laws and rituals to get to heaven or what Buddhism and Hinduism call nirvana. Then there's reincarnation, returning to the Earth as another being.

As I shared last week, Christianity stands alone. Christianity is a true love relationship with the true and living God. It's not a religion based on obedience to laws, traditions, and customs. It's a connection and a bonding with God. Love is the anchor, the bonding glue that holds and lasts forever.

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Before we gave our lives to Jesus, we always worried about death. We thought about it a lot, actually. Now that we know Jesus and have surrendered to Him, we're now His friends. We're now friends of God. The Holy Spirit came in and dwelt in us and we knew it.

The same thing happened to the Galatian believers. They knew without a doubt that heaven would be their eternal home. They knew it because God promised it in His Word. They knew it because Paul explained the truth of the Scriptures to them.

And Paul will continue to share the truth to us here today. I'll start with *Galatians 2:19*, and I'll read *verse 18* for context. **"For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God."**

The New Living Translation reads this way: **"Rather, I am a sinner if I rebuild the old system of law I already tore down. For when I tried to keep the law, it condemned me. So I died to the law. I stopped trying to meet all its requirements so that I might live for God."**

As a Pharisee in Judaism, I can imagine Paul being someone who strived to get ahead. The word "strive" means to make a great effort to achieve and attain something. Paul had the potential in Judaism to become a high priest. He had a zeal for God and worked hard in his calling. He was bold and he possessed a bright mind that was gifted to him by God.

When Paul converted, the Holy Spirit came inside. Over time, he learned to depend on the Holy Spirit's promptings. In the past, he always tried to do things his way. Through trials, he's learned to look to God's Spirit, to show him The Way.

I want to encourage us in our walk with the Lord, follow the Holy Spirit's lead, and don't get in His way. I'm guilty of trying to do things my way, and I have the scars to prove it. I mean, it's been painful lessons as a Christian, but I've grown through them.

Paul the Apostle is free of the guilt that Judaism continually pummeled in his mind. He's now free to honor and truly worship and serve God. In *verse 19*, Paul recalls his frustration in trying to keep the Mosaic law. It only brought chaos and anxiety. There was no joy as a religious leader, as a Pharisee.

Before his salvation, he was an enemy of the cross. When Jesus came on the scene, Paul sprang into action to battle these Christians. In his zeal, he would even hunt, persecute and

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even put believers to death. It must have hurt his heart, sending his fellow Jews to their deaths. He loved his nation of Israel, and he loved its people. But his zeal for religion, again, his zeal for religion blinded him to God's heart.

So when Paul converted, he stopped trying to follow all of its laws and traditions. He basically died to Judaism; Judaism no longer had a stranglehold on his life. No longer was guilt and condemnation tormenting him. He freely loved and he served God for the rest of his life.

He knows that the Lord Jesus' sacrifice completely removed all of his transgressions. The joy and freedom from condemnation was immeasurable for Paul. The word "joy" has a special meaning in Christianity. Happiness only lasts for a moment, and then it's gone.

The phrase "joy of the Lord" is a bond with Jesus that's immovable. Joy doesn't change with your circumstances. Joy continues and is steadfast, whether we're happy or not. Our joy remains, as we can be happy for one moment, and then suddenly, like Job, tragedy can strike.

We know that Job knew the joy of the Lord because he loved God. We know that God was pleased with him because he was a man of integrity and honor. So the Lord allowed Satan to test him, but he couldn't lay a finger on Job.

Life was good for Job, then suddenly, in an instant, he lost all his children and all his possessions. Though tragedy struck, Job never abandoned God. His wife told him to curse God and die. His friends accused him of sin as a reason for his calamity. They insisted that Job was hiding a certain sin from them.

We read in *Job Chapter 1 of the Book of Job, verses 21 and 22*, **"He said, 'I came naked from my mother's womb, and I will be naked when I leave. The Lord gave me what I had, and the Lord has taken it away. Praise the name of the Lord!' In all of this, Job did not sin by blaming God."**

No matter what those around him said, Job never lost his faith or his joy in the Lord. His friends and even his wife could not recognize the spiritual attack that Job was experiencing. Job didn't know that God, who loved and trusted his character, had allowed Satan to buffet him. God proved to Satan that this man, Job, was unwavering.

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Job's wife was probably someone that God was trying to reach. Her words **"Curse God"** clearly testified that she didn't know God. True believers would never curse God. In all of this, Job didn't sin by blaming God. The joy of the Lord remained steadfast.

Job would say in *Job Chapter 19:25-27*, **"But as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and He will stand upon the earth at last. And after my body has decayed, yet in my body I will see God! I will see Him for myself. Yes, I will see Him with my own eyes. I am overwhelmed at the thought!"**

So Job, the joy of the Lord was Job's strength. His joy caused him to live his life for God. No matter in the good times when his children were alive, or when he had lost everything but his nagging wife, Job —

[ Laughter]

Job never lost his joy, his confidence, or his love for God.

I pray that when adversity strikes in our lives as Christians, our joy would remain as Job's did. I don't enjoy it when trouble comes my way, but I know what God's word says. God's word says that God works all things out for the good for those who love Him.

Job was wealthy before Satan struck him. He was rich. God restored all that Job had lost: a new family and regained wealth. Again, happiness is brief, but the joy of the Lord is solid ground that will last for eternity.

So too, the joy of the Lord was Paul's strength. He lived for God, completing three missionary trips. He started churches wherever he went. He was persecuted, and pummeled with storms, and left for dead. The Lord brought him back to life. He was shipwrecked more than once. He continually battled the Judaizers, his Jewish brethren.

He wrote the *Book of Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. Finally, most believe, and so do I, he wrote the *Book of Hebrews*. Paul's Hebrew name is Saul, which means "prayed and asked for by God" — "of God." Excuse me.

God answered his parents' prayers for their son's future. To us who believe, he's a giant who's worthy of respect. His ministry and his writings taught us fundamental and critical

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doctrinal truths about God. Paul says his old ways have been crucified with Jesus. He says his life is not his own. It belongs to Christ who lives in him. He worked hard to fulfill the calling that God gave him.

Paul would say in *2 Corinthians Chapter 5:11-12*, **“Because we understand our fearful responsibility to the Lord, we work hard to persuade others. God knows we are sincere, and I hope you know this, too. Are we commending ourselves to you again? No, we are giving you a reason to be proud of us, so you can answer those who brag about having a spectacular ministry rather than having a sincere heart.”**

In his ministry, Paul served with integrity. I love that word “integrity” because just before I became a Christian, the man who led me to the Lord, I asked him how come his fellow workers weren't working as hard as he was? He said, “Leitu, it's a matter of integrity.” So I'll always remember that word. It's one of my favorites.

In his ministry, Paul served with integrity. Many did not see Christianity as a way to — many saw Christianity as a way to get rich. They didn't care for people or shepherd them. Their motivation was fame and fortune. That was not Paul's heart.

I've served with Pastor JD for 20 years now. I've seen his great love for God. I've also watched his care, his love, and his shepherding of God's people. I've also watched him fiercely protect this, the Lord's Church.

We all know he's Arab, right, his Arab ethnicity. When false teachers try to infiltrate this church, he goes off on them. I know that God has blessed this ministry because of Pastor JD's love and integrity. I pray that if you ever serve the Lord, and if you're serving Him now, that you will serve Him with all your heart and all your mind and all your soul.

In *verse 20 of Galatians Chapter 2*, in today's passage we read, **“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”**

Last week I had some technical issues with my computer before service, and it remained during service. I missed a critical point I was trying to make concerning the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. I am sorry. And so I want to cover or go over it again today in its completion.

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In *verse 20* of our study today, Paul says, **"It is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me."** He's referring to the Holy Spirit who had indwelt him.

Two weeks ago I shared about Nicodemus and his meeting with Jesus. We read it in *John Chapter 3*, and I want to revisit that discussion Jesus is explaining to Nicodemus what it means to be born-again.

In this conversation, Jesus describes the Holy Spirit as the wind. I'll start in *verse 3*. **"Jesus replied, 'I tell you the truth, unless you are born-again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.'**

**"What do you mean?" exclaimed Nicodemus. "How can an old man go back into his mother's womb and be born-again?"**

**Jesus replied, "I assure you; no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life.**

**So don't be surprised when I say, 'You must be born-again.' The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit."**

In *verse 5*, Jesus says that you won't enter heaven without being born of water and Spirit. Being born of water refers to the first birth from your mother's womb. The amniotic membrane breaks, and then the child is born.

Jesus confirms this in *verse 6*, as He says humans can only reproduce human life. Jesus also said in *verse 5* that you need to be born of the Spirit. He's referring to God, the Holy Spirit. Jesus affirms this biblical truth that the Holy Spirit enters a new believer.

In *verse 6*, Jesus says, **"But the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life."** In this passage, the Holy Spirit is likened to, or described as the wind.

In *verse 8*, Jesus says, **"You can hear the wind, but can't tell where it's going."**

We can't see the wind, but we can feel, and we can see its effects. We can see the effects of the wind as we watch the palm trees sway here in Hawaii. And that was for you over in Ohio.

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[ Laughter ]

We don't know where the wind is going, but we see its effects. Jesus is saying that just as we can't see the wind, so too, when a person is born-again, we can't see the Holy Spirit come inside and enter and indwell that person.

We can see the effects that the Holy Spirit makes in that person who's born-again. We can see the effects of a changed and blessed life. Alcoholics stop drinking. Drug addicts put away their drugs. New believers stop swearing. Thieves stop stealing. Husbands and wives start to treat each other with love, a love that's better than when they first met.

God can only — God not only changes you, but His promises to us are kept as He never breaks them. I want to list some of God's promises to us when the Holy Spirit comes inside and indwells a new believer.

*Titus Chapter 3:4-5* tells us, **“But when God our Savior revealed His kindness and love, He saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit.”**

The Holy Spirit will forgive and wash away your sins, and you will receive this new birth. Being born-again you'll see God as you never had before.

*2 Corinthians Chapter 5:17*. I think you notice I have this verse in every week. It's one of my favorites. **“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”**

You no longer live after the patterns of this world. Sin and its attractiveness will start to diminish in your mind. You start to hunger and thirst for God and the things of God. You'll be a new creation, loving and living and serving the Lord Jesus. The weight of guilt and sin will be gone. God then seals you.

*Ephesians Chapter 1:13-14* tells us, **“And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession— to the praise of His glory.”**



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The Holy Spirit will seal you, meaning you're under new ownership now. You know, you now belong to Jesus Christ.

As I shared last week, it's much better to be under the rulership of Jesus than that of the Devil. The Holy Spirit, because it's a guarantee, that the inheritance we'll receive will not only be a blessed life, but our ultimate destination will be heaven.

This promise is unwavering and steadfast, and it provides a firm foundation for our faith. The Holy Spirit will usher you into the presence of God. The Holy Spirit will also give you an understanding of His word, the Bible.

*2 Timothy Chapter 3:16* tells us, **“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”**

He will give you eyes to see, and ears to hear, and minds to understand His word, the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit also gives you special gifts to serve Him with. When that gift is obeyed, the Lord will send and bless others your way so that you can serve them with your gifts and your talents.

As believers in Jesus, we will never be free of sin. That can only happen when we get to heaven. We will continue this battle within ourselves. In heaven, sin cannot exist there. As Pastor Mac shared this morning, God is light. And in Him there is no darkness at all. In heaven there is no more suffering or pain, and that will last forever.

Paul the Apostle struggled with a particular sin that he wouldn't let go of or couldn't let go of. We don't know what that sin was, but it was a thorn he couldn't shake.

We see it in the *Book of Romans Chapter 7*, and I want to read *Romans Chapter 8* as well. I know it will be a blessing for us who are Christians who continue to struggle with sin.

*Romans Chapter 7* describes Paul the apostle who is already saved, he's born-again but still struggles with sin.

Starting with *verse 14*. And this is Paul the Apostle writing. **“So the trouble is not with the law, for it is spiritual and good. The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to**

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sin. I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it.

Instead, I do what I hate.

But if I know that what I am doing is wrong, this shows that I agree that the law is good.

So I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it. And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway.

But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it. I have discovered this principle of life— that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. *[Can I get an amen?]*

*[Paul then says]* I love God's law with all my heart. But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death?

*[Verse 25]* Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature, I am a slave to sin."

Paul answers the question he asked, 'Who will free me from this sin-dominated life?' He says in *verse 25* that Jesus is the answer.

In *Chapter 8:1*, Paul writes there is no more condemnation because Jesus' sacrifice has set us free. Then Paul describes our lives as Christians led by the Holy Spirit's power beginning with *verse 1*. "So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus."

And because you belong to Him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death. The Law of Moses was unable to save us because the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent His own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body, God declared an end to sins' control over us by giving His Son as a sacrifice for our sins.

I want to encourage you as I have before in *1 John 1:9*. Again, we will all sin as Christians.

But when we confess, God forgives. Again, *1 John 1:9*. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

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Some claimed back then, and even in our day, that a belief and mindset that John lays out will only give us a license to freely sin and do what we like. We know that unbelievers don't struggle with sin. They just do it and enjoy it. And we were there. All Christians will struggle with sin.

Unfortunately as believers, that old life that we abandoned still plagues us today. But a true believer who is genuinely saved will not make sin a habitual practice in their lives. Yes, our sin still hurts our hearts, but we understand God's grace. Being born-again gives you a new heart, new mind that seeks truth and sincerity, a new heart and mind to honor, love, respect, and worship God. We're tempted by sin, but we don't run after it.

Sanctification is a big word, but its meaning is inspiring. *2 Corinthians Chapter 3:18* we see sanctification at work. It tells us **“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”**

The New Living Translation reads this way. **“For we know that when this earthly tent we live in is taken down (that is, when we die and leave this earthly body), we will have a house in heaven, an eternal body made for us by God Himself and not by human hands.**

**We grow weary in our present bodies, and we long to put on our heavenly bodies like new clothing. For we will put on heavenly bodies; we will not be spirits without bodies. While we live in these earthly bodies, we groan and sigh, but it's not that we want to die and get rid of these bodies that clothe us.**

**Rather, we want to put on our new bodies so that these dying bodies will be swallowed up by life. God himself has prepared this for us, and as a guarantee He has given us His Holy Spirit. So we are always confident, even though we know that as long as we live in these bodies we are not at home with the Lord.**

**For we live by believing and not by seeing. Yes, we are fully confident, and we would rather be away from these earthly bodies, for then we will be at home with the Lord. So whether we are here in this body or away from this body, our goal is to please Him.”**

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Finally, the last verse in *Galatians Chapter 2:21*. **"I do not treat the grace of God as meaningless. For if keeping the law could make us right with God, then there was no need for Christ to die."**

But there was a need for Jesus Christ and His sacrifice. God so loved the world, He gave His only begotten Son, so that mankind could be saved God's way: by grace and by grace alone.

I want to read *1 Corinthians Chapter 15* starting with *verse 12*. **"But tell me this— since we preach that Christ rose from the dead, why are some of you saying there will be no resurrection of the dead? For if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your faith is useless.**

**And we apostles would all be lying about God— for we have said that God raised Christ from the grave. But that can't be true if there is no resurrection of the dead. And if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised.**

**And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless, and you are still guilty of your sins. In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost!**

**And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world. But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died."**

We who have put our faith in Jesus Christ are that great harvest. We're saddened by the pain and shame that Jesus went through because of our sin, but we know that the Father's great love for us, His kids, that He gave His only begotten Son.

Later in this same chapter of *1 Corinthians*, Paul writes in *verse 47-58*, **"Adam, the first man, was made from the dust of the earth, while Christ, a second man, came from heaven.**

**Earthly people are like the earthly man, and heavenly people are like the heavenly man.**

**Just as we are now like the earthly man, we will someday be like the heavenly man.**

**What I am saying, dear brothers and sisters, is that our physical bodies cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. These dying bodies cannot inherit what will last forever. But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed!**

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**It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed.**

**For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies. Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled: "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ."**

The first time I heard about the Rapture was when I just got saved. That 24 years ago. At first, I wasn't sure what to make of this doctrine. I've never heard it before. But today, I wholeheartedly believe in the Rapture. I know it will happen soon.

We here at Calvary Kaneohe adhere to and follow the Bible's instructions because they come from God. If a doctrine is not in the Bible, we don't practice it. The Rapture is in the Bible, and we believe it. You're not alone if you're unsure about the Rapture and the truths about this imminent biblical event.

Unbelievers have heard of the Rapture, and they mock the Bible even more. It just gives them more ammunition to bolster their foolish unbelief. There's so many Christians as well who don't believe in the Rapture. The word "rapture" is not in the Bible, but is rephrased as "caught up," "taken" and "went up."

As I have shared, Paul was a brilliant student, and he learned from Gamaliel, the best and most respected teacher and rabbi of his day. Paul was a voracious reader, and he must have had an incredible memory. He had to have been like a sponge soaking up all that he could learn.

We know the Jews were chosen by God to bring the Scriptures and also Jesus into the world. Just as God knew us before we were born, so God already knew Paul before he was born and had this plan for him: the best schools, the best teachers, an incredible mind and memory, and the boldness and zeal to carry out his calling, all choreographed and given to him by God, all to fulfill His plan to mankind before He even created the heavens and the Earth.

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As I've always shared, God is omniscient, and He knows everything. There is no time in heaven, only eternity. He created time as the starting point for the universe, and there will be an end. Everything in between He knows from start to finish. Everything outside of time is also God's realm, and heaven is part of it.

Besides *1 Corinthians Chapter 15* and *1 Thessalonians Chapter 4* is there anyone else — anywhere else in the Bible that mentions the Rapture? Is there biblical precedent for the Rapture? Yes, there is. And we see it in the Old Testament.

*Genesis Chapter 5:24.* **“And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.”**

*2 Kings Chapter 2:11-12* tells us, **“Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.”**

Both of these men were raptured. We know this fact: That every prophecy in the Bible that was foretold has come to pass with 100% accuracy. The only prophecies that haven't happened yet are the ones that are yet future. Jesus' returning is one of them.

The Apostle Peter, who was with Jesus for three years, wrote this in *2 Peter Chapter 1:20-21*. **“Above all, you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet's own understanding, or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God.”**

For us who are born-again, we've experienced God's love and His blessings. We know that without a doubt we're experiencing a true relationship with the true and living God. He changes us. He guides us, and He loves us unconditionally.

Joy and peace are part of the gifts that He imparts to us. Even in trials, we know that He has us in mind and that we're in His heart. Should we pass from this life before the Rapture, we still win as Christians. We'll be home for eternity. We'll exist in heaven without sin or pain. Lord Jesus, come quickly and take us home. Be encouraged, saints. We are almost home. Amen.

Let's stand and let's pray. Father in heaven, we come before Your throne to thank You, Lord, for Your word, for Your great and awesome love that You have for us, your kids, Lord. We're

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so blessed, Lord. For those of us who are struggling, Lord, I just come before You and just pray that whatever You're doing in their lives, Lord, that we know that all will work together for the good to those who love You and called according to Your purpose.

So I pray for those who are in that place of hurting. I pray that they would just look up and look to You and continue to be steadfast in their relationship with You and their reading of Your word, Your instruction book, Your love letter, the Bible. I come before You to pray for anyone who is here in this sanctuary, online, who does not know You, Lord, that they wouldn't wait. They would surrender their hearts to You.

There's only one or two places that will end up for eternity, Lord. The first is heaven. The second is hell. I pray for those of you who don't know Jesus. Choose heaven. Call on Jesus to save you. And I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.