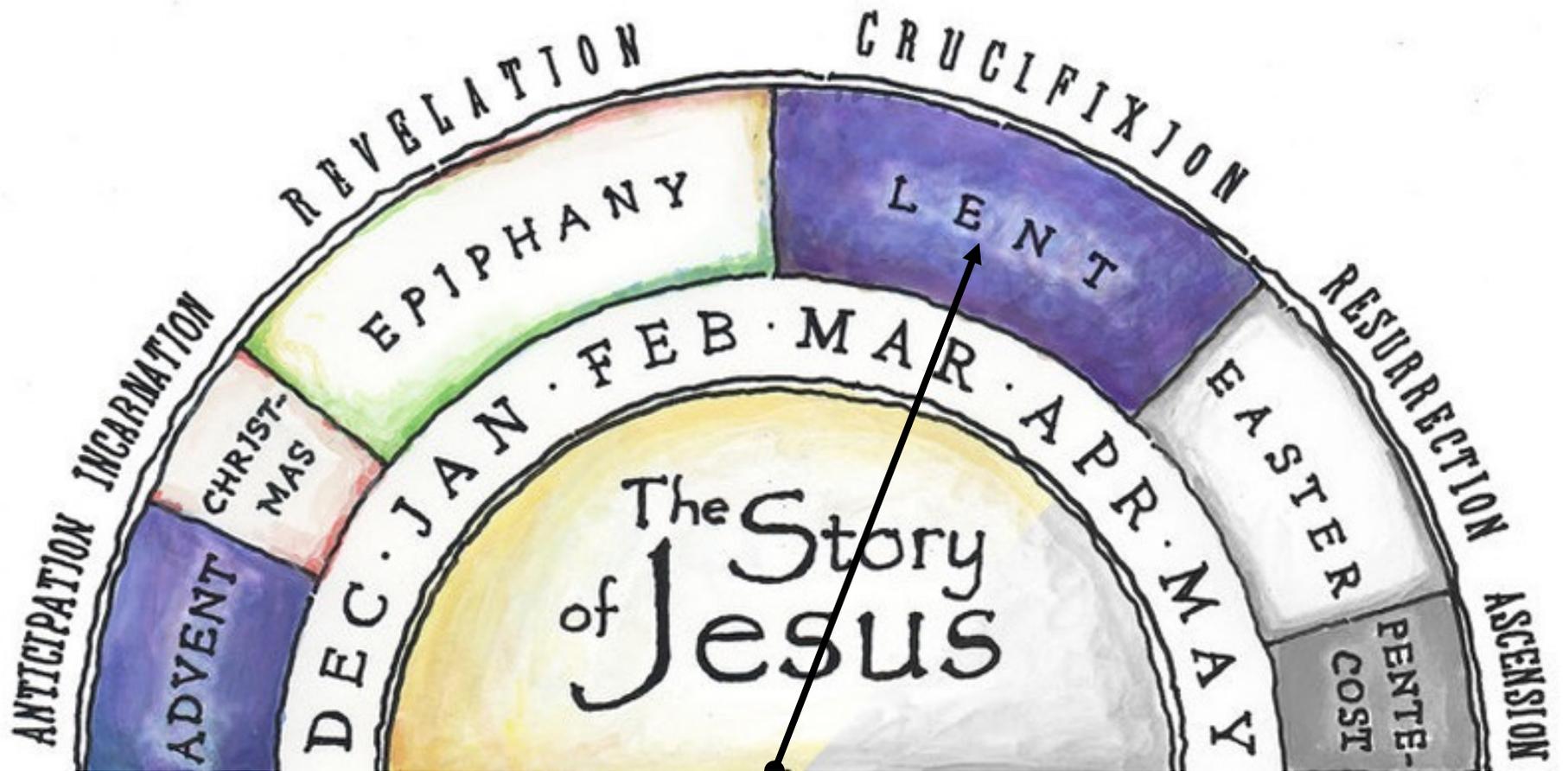


God of wilderness and water, your Son  
was baptized and tempted as we are.  
Guide us through this season,  
that we may not avoid struggle,  
but open ourselves to blessing,  
through the cleansing depths of repentance  
and the heaven-rending words of the Spirit.  
Amen.

**Opening Prayer**

A decorative banner at the bottom of the page features a dark background with white geometric patterns, including a grid and a circular motif. Overlaid on this are several hands in various colors (red, blue, green, purple) reaching out or holding each other, symbolizing unity and prayer.

# CHURCH CALENDAR



*You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life **as a ransom** for many.”*

HOLY  
BIBLE

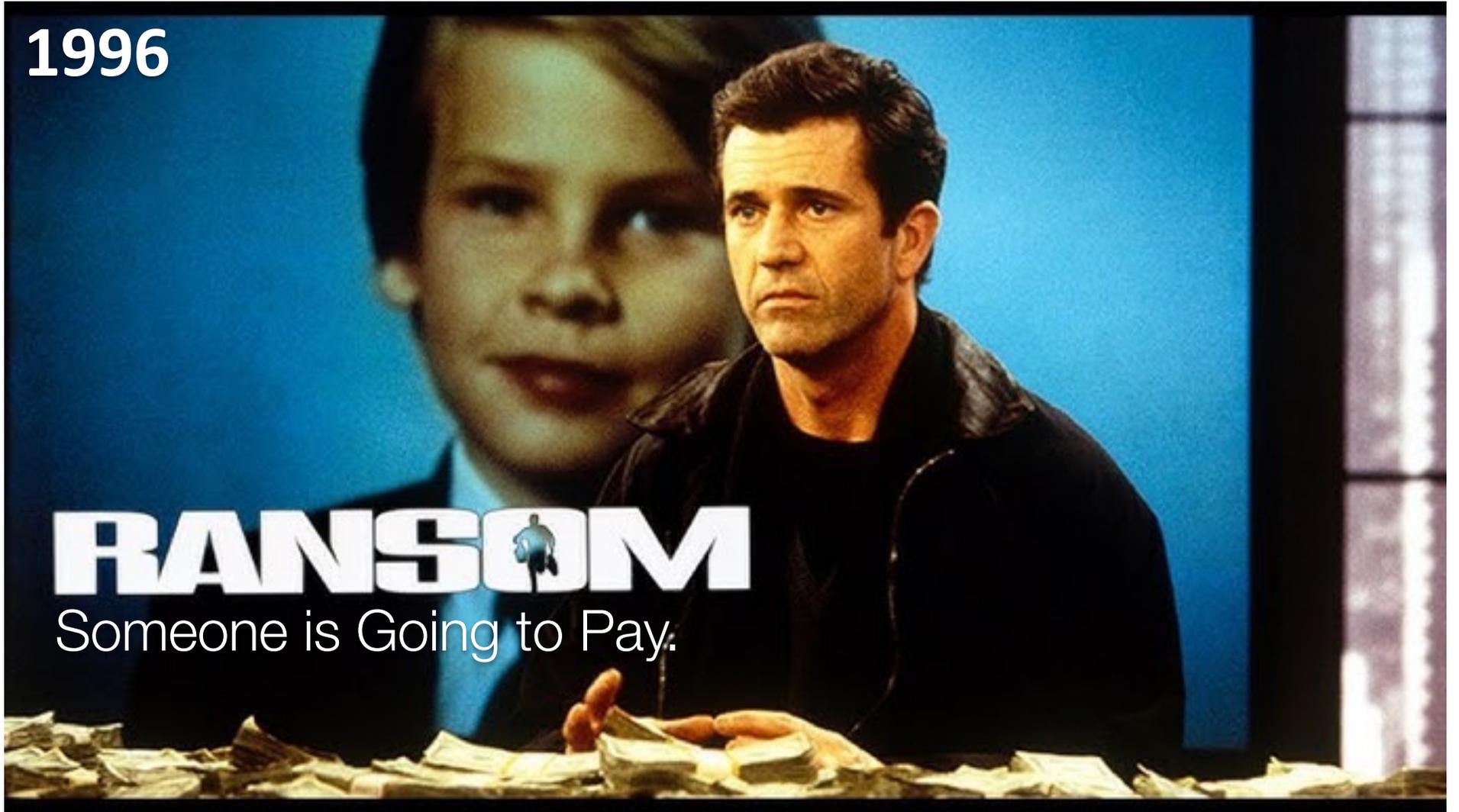
MARK

10:42-45

1996

# RANSOM

Someone is Going to Pay.



# RANSOM STORIES

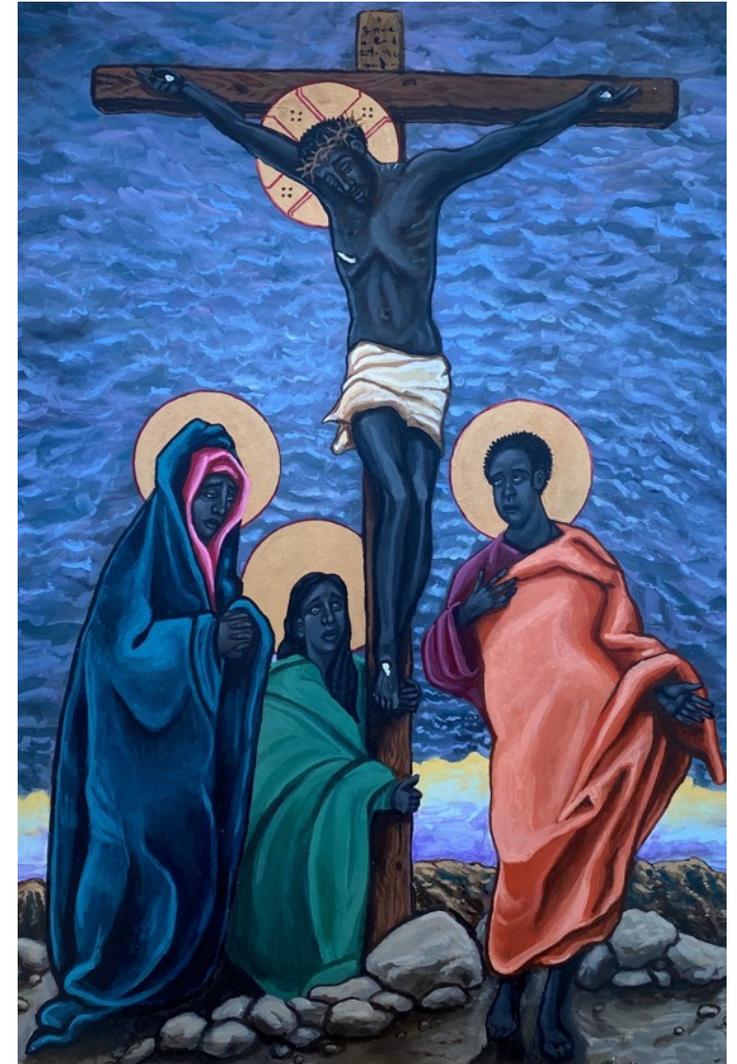
- Someone takes someone or something of value
- A ransom payment is demanded in order to get them/it back
- Ethical questions are raised against momentary emotion...
- Eventually, the ransom is paid, or it isn't...



# RANSOM and CHRISTIANITY

*For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life **as a ransom** for many.”*

- Who took what, and by what means?
- To whom is the ransom paid, and by what means?



# RANSOM IN CALVINISM

**T**otal Depravity

**U**nconditional Election

**L**imited Atonement ←

**I**rresistible Grace

**P**erseverance of the Saints

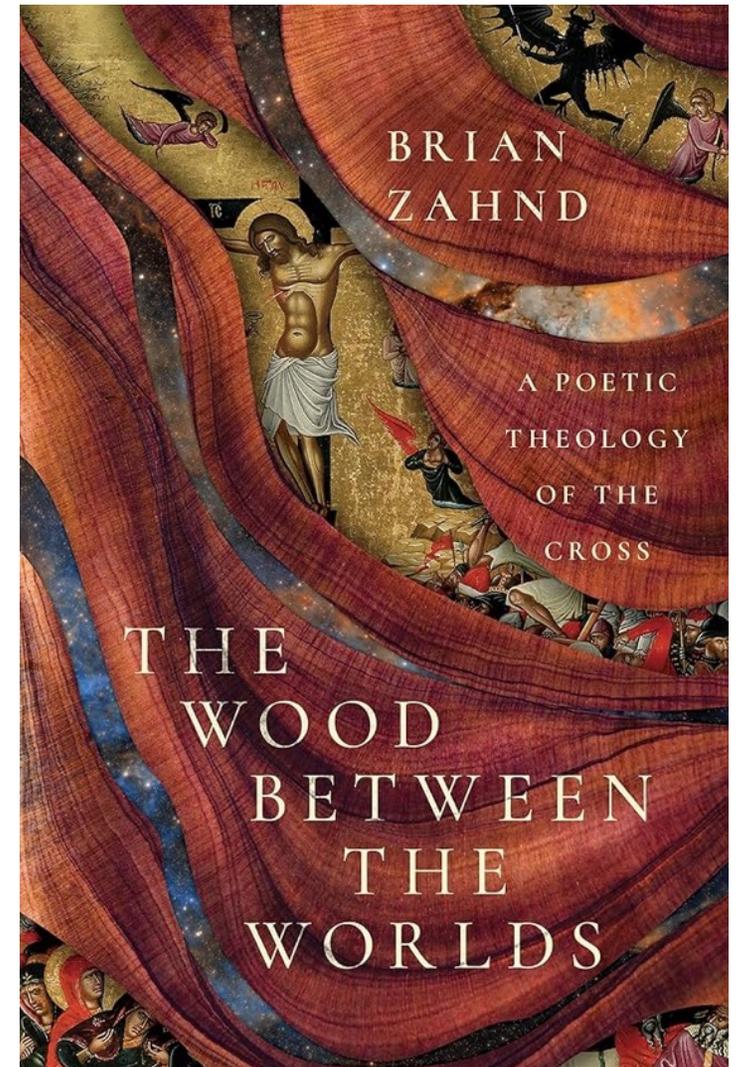


## LIMITED ATONEMENT

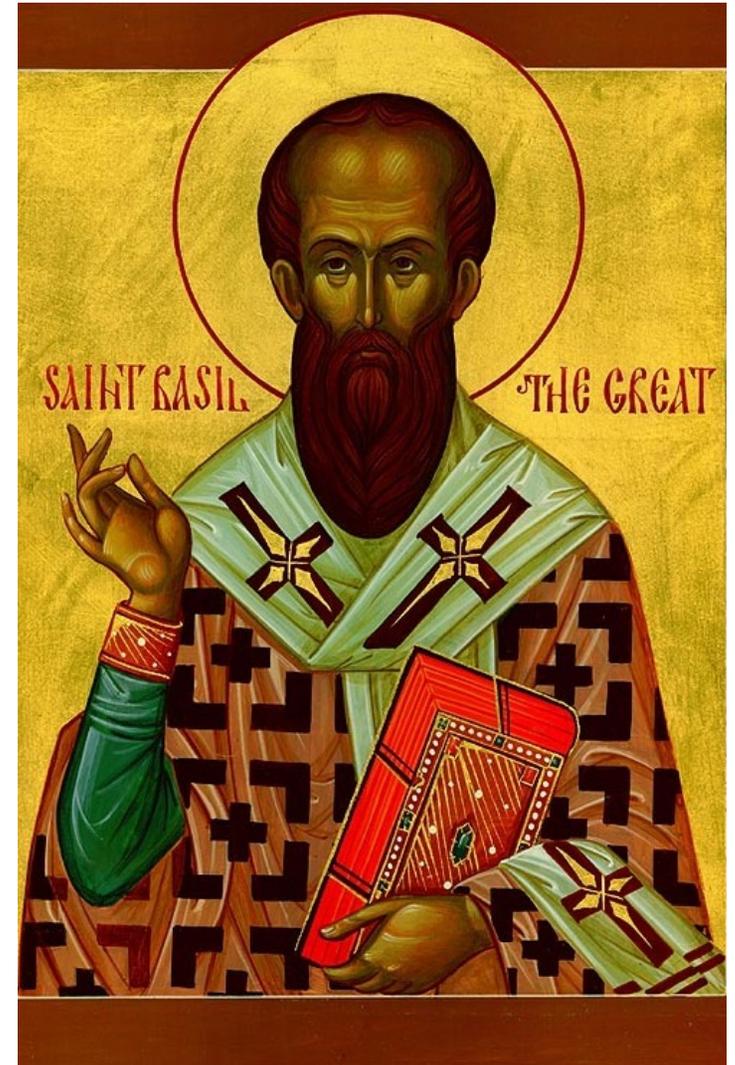
Holds that Jesus died as a ransom *to God* to pay for sin, and to secure salvation only for “the elect”; while the sacrifice had infinite *value*, it was only *effectual* to save the predetermined few chosen (elected) by God to be saved



Ransom language can be misleading for modern people if we follow Calvin's theory and imagine the death of Christ as a ransom paid to God. No!



He gave himself as a *ransom to death*, in which we were held captive, sold under sin. Descending through the Cross into hell that he might fill all things with himself...



*And God placed all things  
under his feet and appointed him  
to be head over everything for  
the church, which is his body,  
the fullness of him who fills  
everything in every way.*

HOLY  
BIBLE

EPH

1:22-23

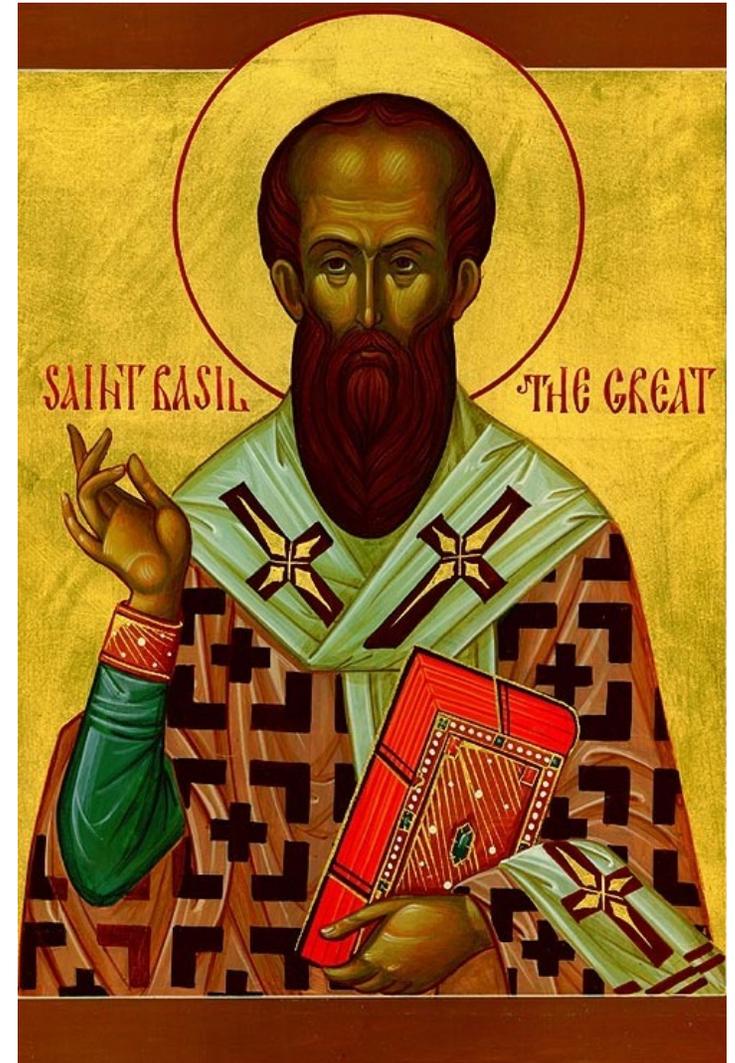
*What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.*

HOLY  
BIBLE

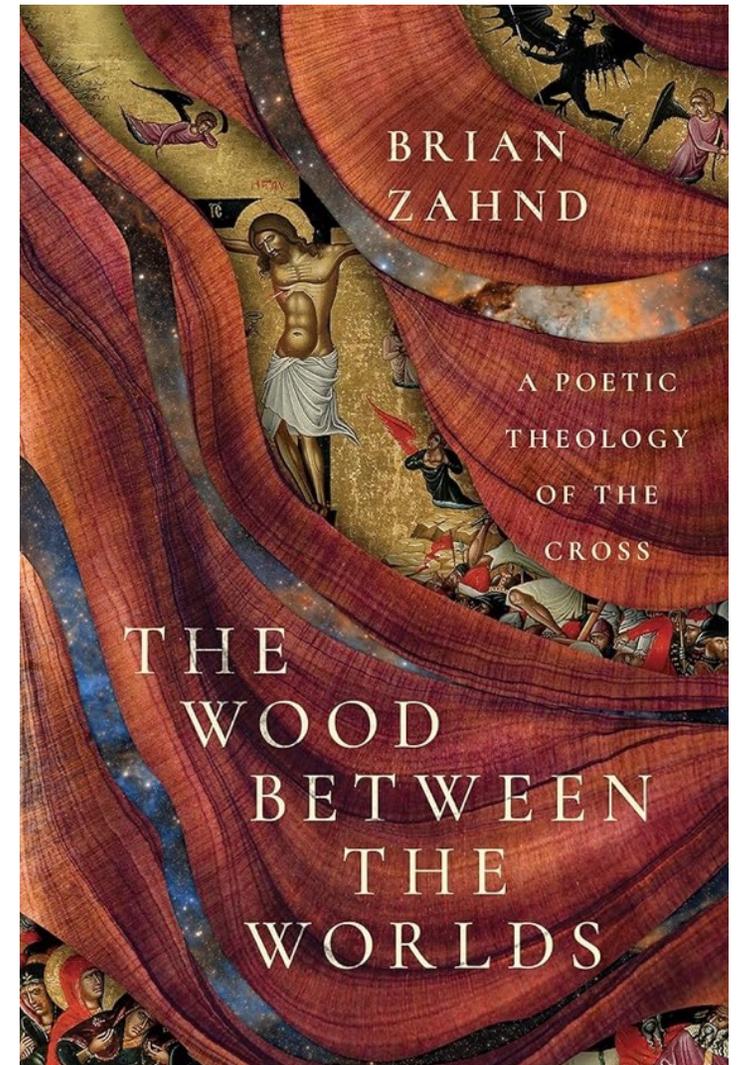
EPH

4:9-10

He gave himself as a *ransom to death*, in which we were held captive, sold under sin. Descending through the Cross into hell that he might fill all things with himself, he loosed the pangs of death. He arose on the third day, having made for all flesh a path to the resurrection from the dead.



The church fathers *always* spoke of the ransom being paid **to death**, or to the devil as a personification of death...(they spoke) of the death of Christ as a kind of trick... as the bait on the hook of divinity. Because Jesus was mortal, he could be swallowed by death, but death could not digest divinity. Once divinity swallowed death, death itself became ill and doomed to die.



**MIB**



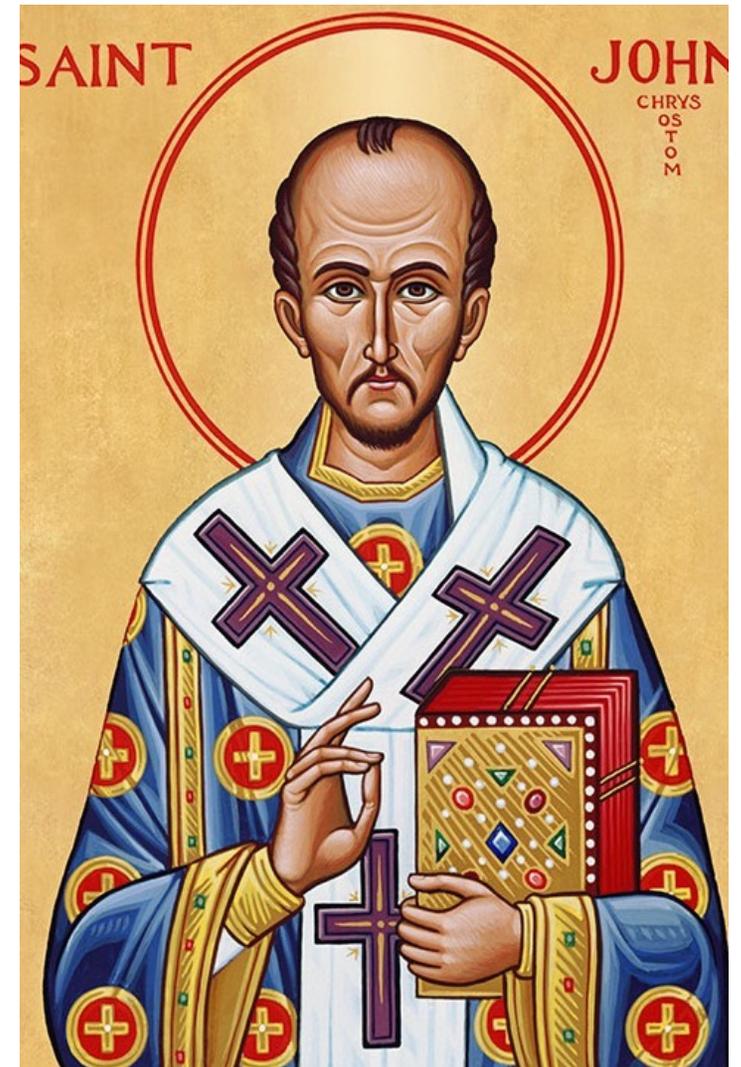
**1997**

**MIB**

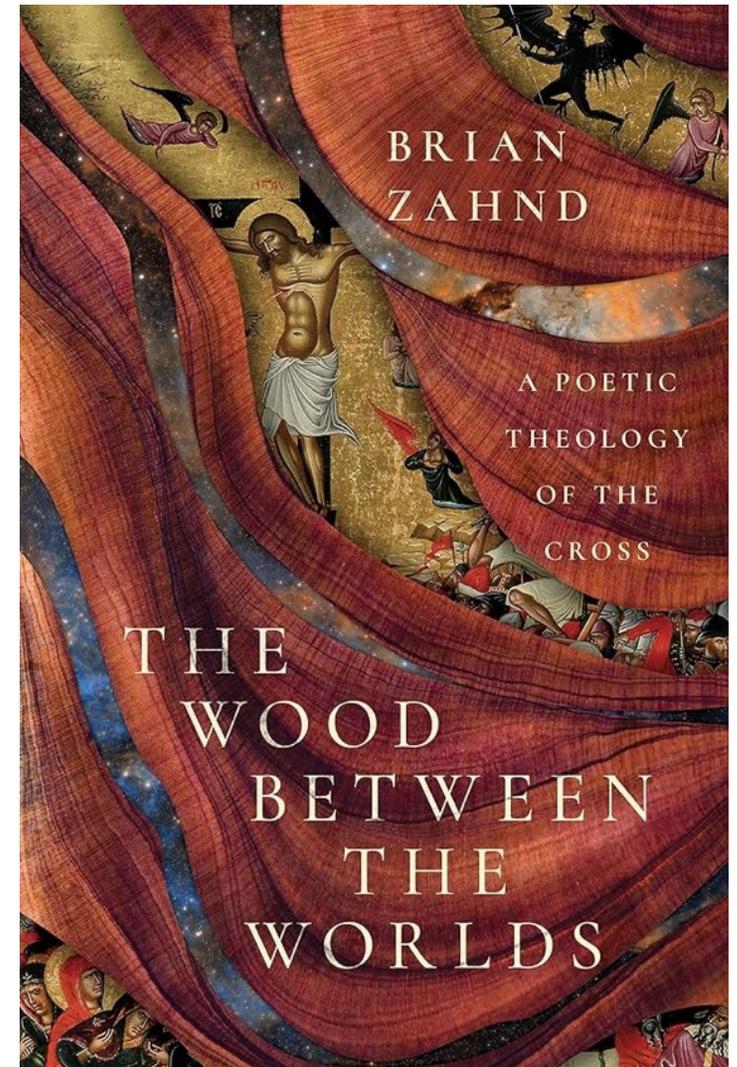


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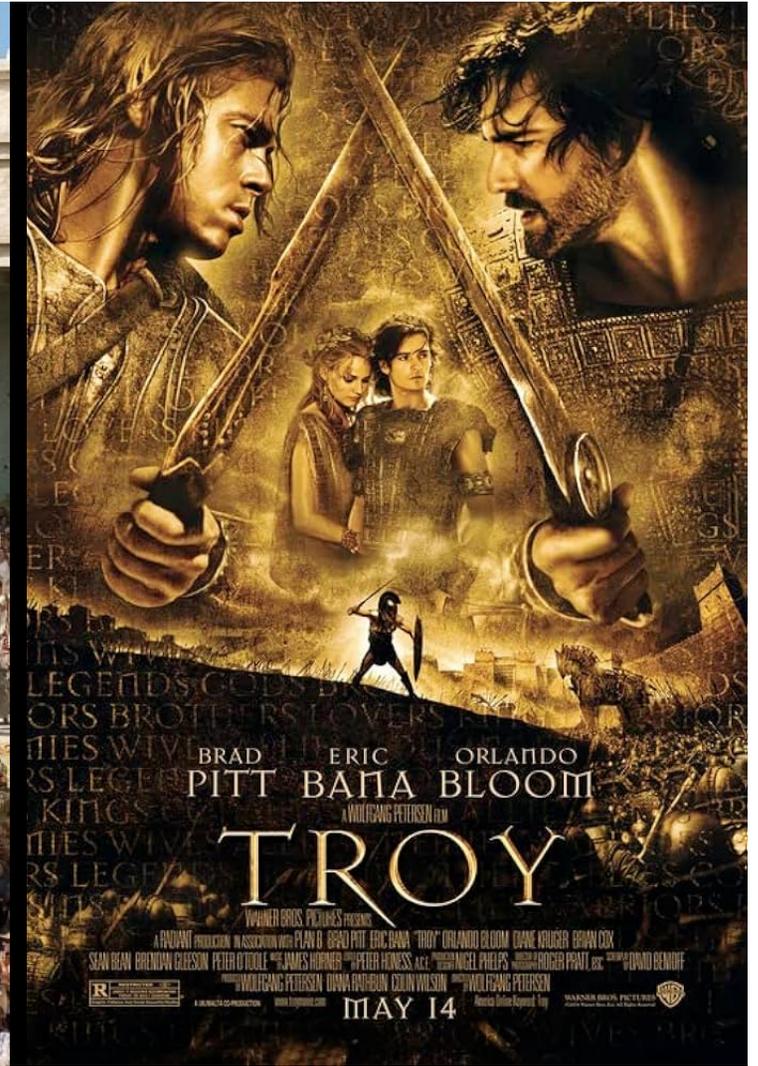
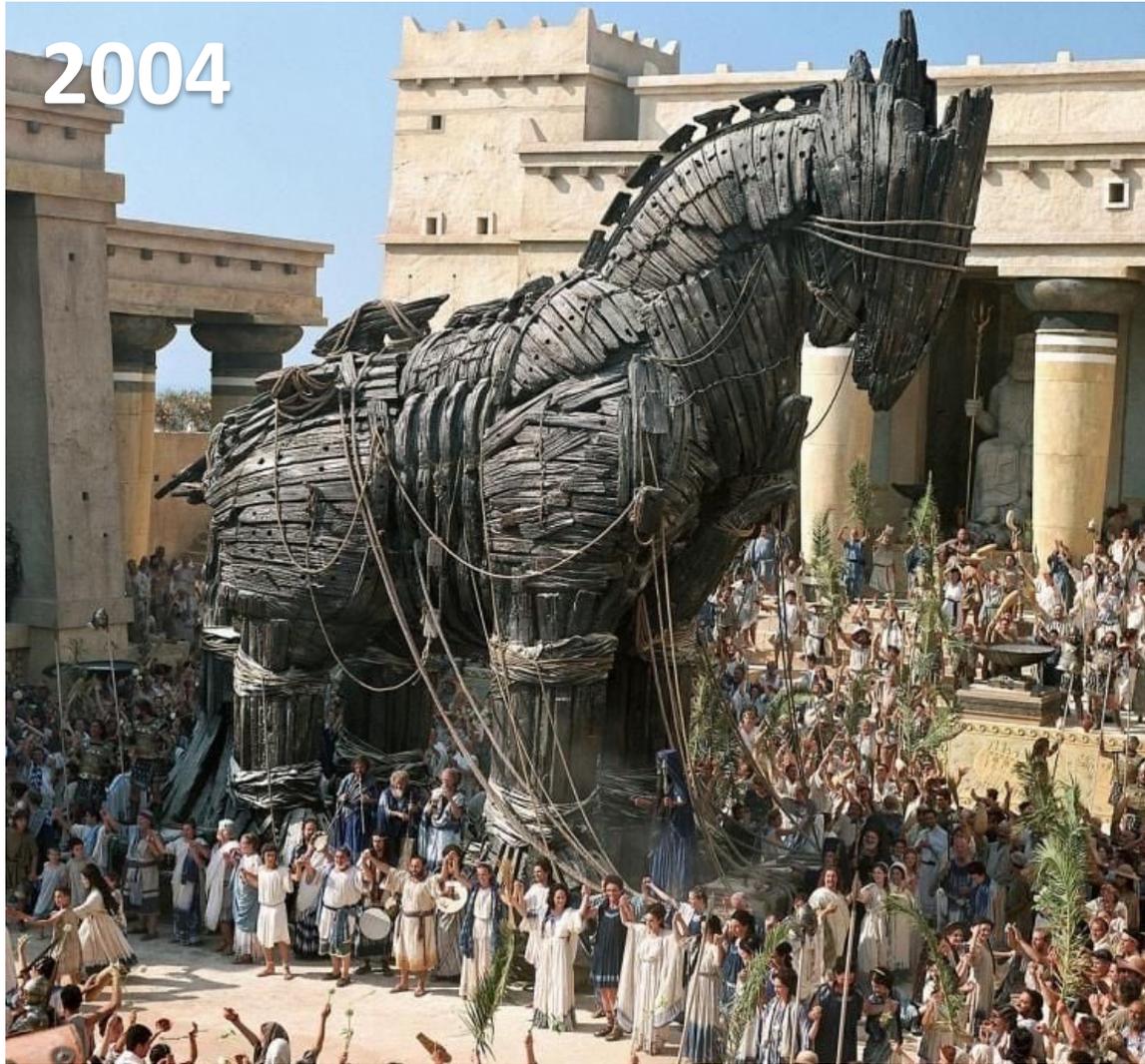
As they who take food which they are unable to retain (and) on account of that vomit up also what was before lodged in them; so also, it happened to death. That Body, which he could not digest, he received: and therefore, had to cast forth that which he had within him. Yea, he travailed in pain, whilst he held Him, and was straightened until he vomited Him up.



According to early Christian theologians, the crucifixion of Jesus Christ was a Trojan horse delivered to the devil...



2004



2004



2005



2005



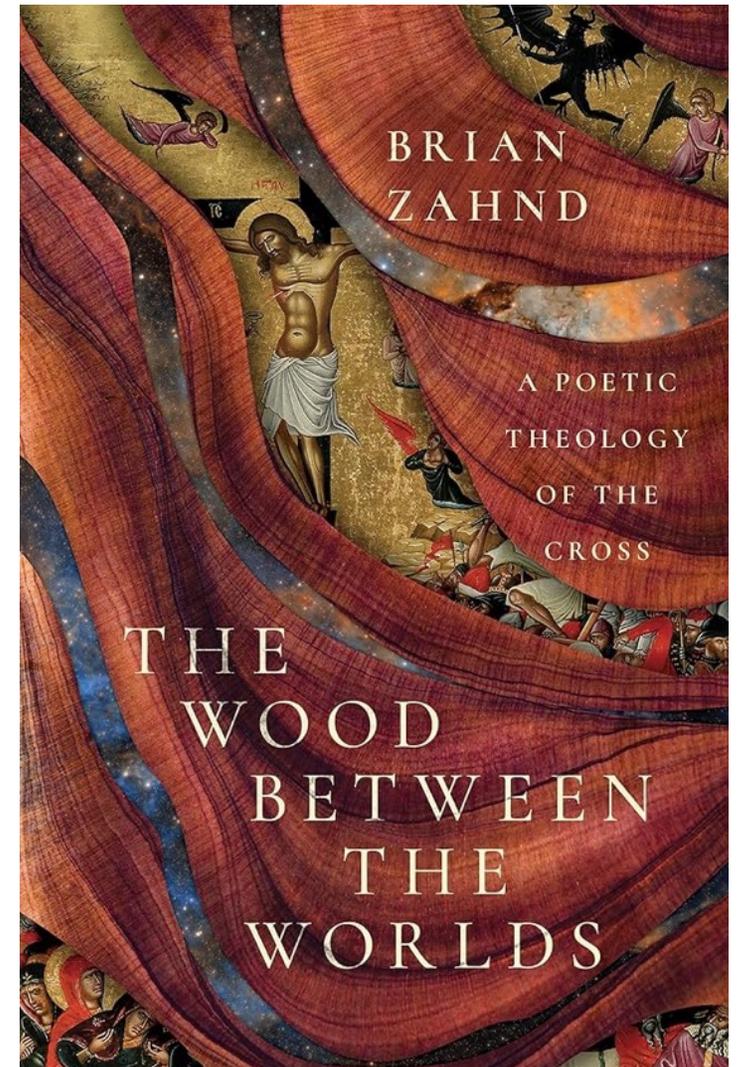
“It means,” said Aslan, “that though the Witch knew the Deep Magic, there is a magic deeper still which she did not know. Her knowledge goes back only to the dawn of time. But if she could have looked a little further back, into the stillness and the darkness before Time dawned...



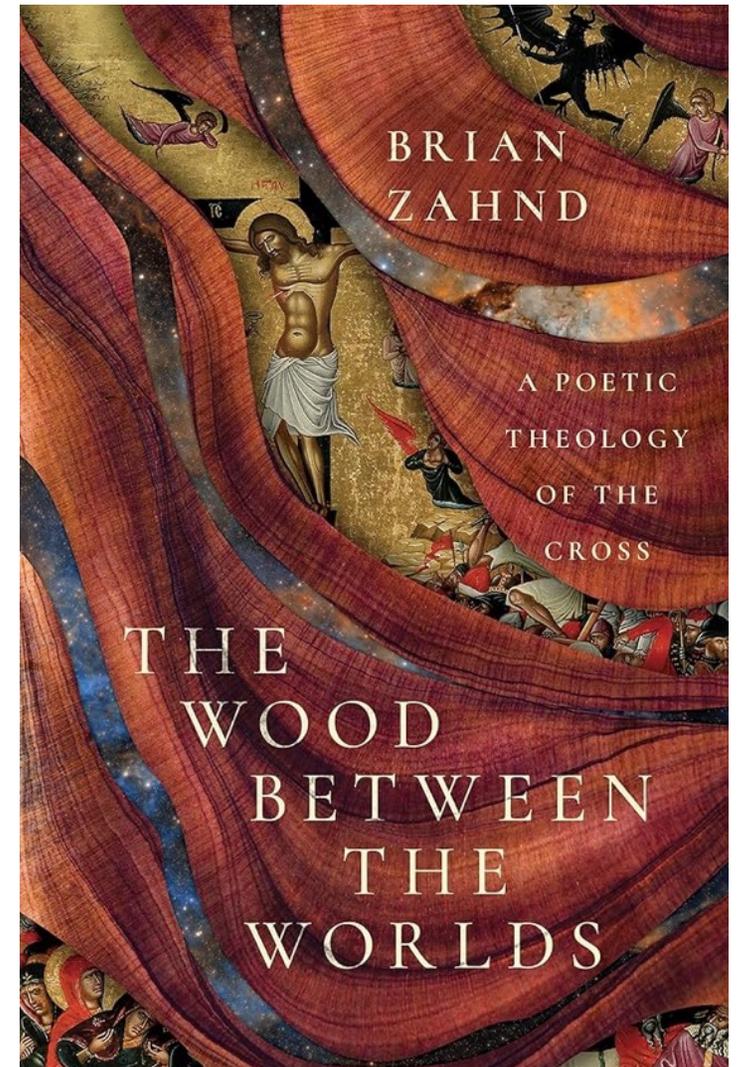
...she would have read there a different incantation. She would have known that when a willing victim who had committed no treachery was killed in a traitor's stead, the Table would crack and Death itself would start working backward."



According to early Christian theologians, the crucifixion of Jesus Christ was a Trojan horse delivered to the devil. Christ was the ransom paid to death that death never should have accepted, for in accepting the ransom of Christ it led to the demise of death and the redemption of all the captives of Hades.



There was consensus among (the early church fathers) regarding Christ's descent into Hades, that in his resurrection he raised the entire population of "dead ones" out of hell.



THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST



- Upward flowing robe



- Upward flowing robe
- Gates of Hades broken



- Upward flowing robe
- Gates of Hades broken
- Floating keys



- Upward flowing robe
- Gates of Hades broken
- Floating keys
- Death of death



- Upward flowing robe
- Gates of Hades broken
- Floating keys
- Death of death
- Adam and Eve (“humankind” and “the living”)



- Upward flowing robe
- Gates of Hades broken
- Floating keys
- Death of death
- Adam and Eve (“humankind” and “the living”)
- L: David/Solomon, John the Baptist
- R: Moses, Elijah, Abel



- Mandorla (almond) as the uncreated, eternal light of Christ



The Mandorla is progressively darker as it moves toward its center, which is Christ. If God is represented by light (this image) may seem confusing. However, those who seek God find that the more they know him, the less they comprehend him. To know God is to experience him, to walk in the darkness of his light, and enter into the mystery of his presence.

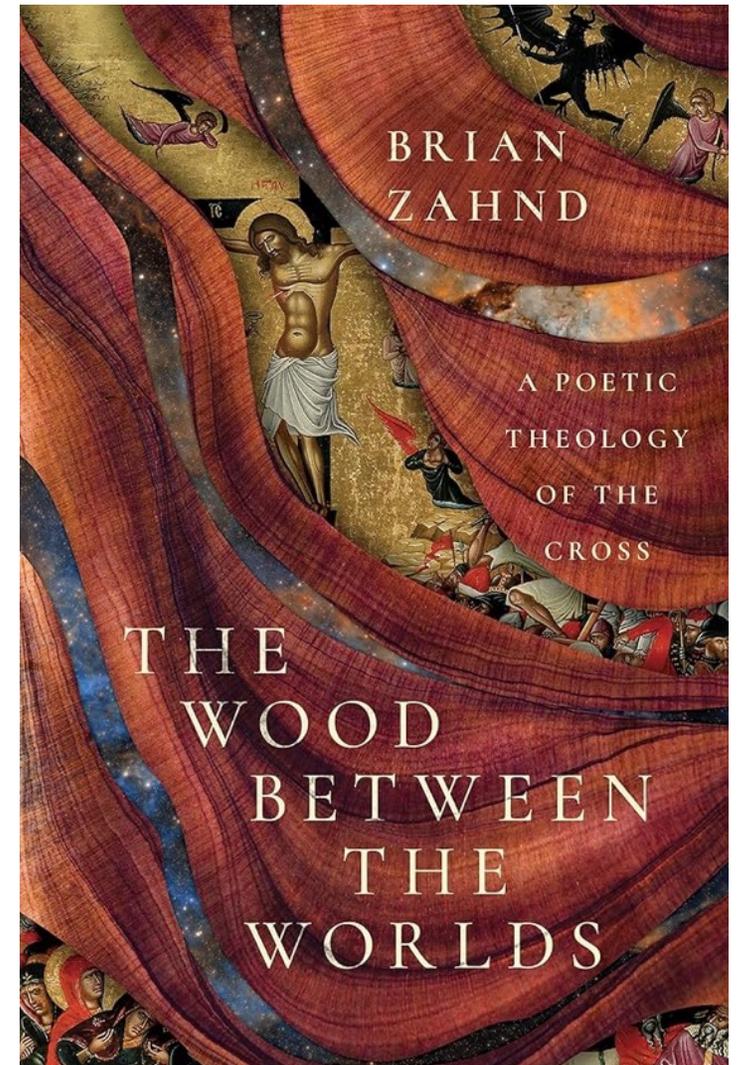


It is clear that in the first four Christian centuries there was a significant degree of common understanding (of Christ's harrowing of hell.) In particular, many Western authors shared the opinion of the Eastern fathers that all people, not only some, were saved by Christ when he descended into hell.



**HILARION**  
ALFEYEV

In his harrowing of hell, Christ has filled even death with his saving presence. Truly it can be said, *“If I make my bed in hell, behold, you are there”* (Psalm 139:8). Today, for a human being to enter into death is not to encounter death, but encounter Christ – to encounter him as both judge and savior.



For the earliest Christians, the story of salvation was entirely one of rescue, all the way through: the epic of God descending into the depths of human estrangement to release his creatures from bondage to death, penetrating even into the heart of hades to set the captives free and recall his prodigal children and restore a broken creation.



The sacrifice of Christ was not a “ransom” paid to the Father, but rather the (payment) given to purchase the release of slaves held in bondage in death’s household.



I am not I in myself alone, but only in all others. If, then, anyone is in hell, I too am partly in hell. Happily, however, if the Christian story is true, that love cannot now end in failure or tragedy. The descent into those depths – where we seek out and find those who are lost, and find our own salvation in so doing – is not a lonely act of spiritual heroism, or a futile rebellion of our finite wills against a merciless eternity.

---

DAVID BENTLEY HART

Translator of *The New Testament*

---

THAT  
ALL  
*shall be*  
SAVED

---

HEAVEN, HELL,  
& UNIVERSAL  
SALVATION

---

For the whole substance of Christian faith is the conviction that another has already and decisively gone down into that abyss for us, to set all the prisoners free, even from the chains of their own hatred and despair; and hence the love that has made all of us who we are, and that will continue throughout eternity to do so, cannot ultimately be rejected by anyone.

---

DAVID BENTLEY HART

Translator of *The New Testament*

---

THAT  
ALL  
*shall be*  
SAVED

---

HEAVEN, HELL,  
& UNIVERSAL  
SALVATION

---

Thus, all shall have their share  
in “the redeemed unity of all,  
united one with another by their  
convergence upon the One Good.”

---

DAVID BENTLEY HART

Translator of *The New Testament*

---

THAT  
ALL  
*shall be*  
SAVED

---

HEAVEN, HELL,  
& UNIVERSAL  
SALVATION

---

# RANSOM and CHRISTIANITY

- ***Who took what, and by what means?***  
Death took all of humanity captive by its sin...
- ***To whom is the ransom paid, and by what means?***  
Jesus, by his own death and resurrection, pays the ransom to death, NOT to appease God!



God of the covenant, in the glory of the cross  
your Son embraced the power of death  
and broke its hold over your people.

In this time of repentance,  
draw all people to yourself,  
that we who confess Jesus as Lord  
may put aside the deeds of death  
and accept the life of your kingdom.

Amen.

**Closing Prayer**

A decorative banner at the bottom of the page features a dark background with white line art of hands holding hearts. The hearts are colored in red, green, blue, and purple, and are arranged in a circular pattern.