

PART 76: "THE ROMAN COHORT", 15:16-21.

#1. Roman soldiery, agent of the state power, took charge of Jesus, the Son of God. #2. The Lord's physicality and His mental state were to be subject to mistreatment and humiliation. A pre-crucifixion ritual. #3. Those brutal men cared nothing for the suffering of another. #4. In the "palace (that is the Praetorium)", (v.16) stood a man with the power to resist, if He so chose, and could have destroyed them all. But He chose otherwise. The man under such vile treatment, held in His hands the eternal destiny of the entire human race, from the beginning of time to its termination. #5. What composure and courage were His! "They dressed Him up in purple, and after twisting a crown of thorns, they put it on Him", v.17. A higher authority and reality was watching all of that and still remained silent. #6. The real "...King of the Jews!" (v.18) and the true Lord of Lords, mocked in perverted entertainment as He still is today, by some. They should beware! #7. "They kept beating His head with a reed...spitting on Him...kneeling and bowing before Him", v.19. Obscenity that it was, the Lord's suffering was not meaningless, being part of a very much larger purpose; as is that of our own. #8. Satiated by their derision, they "...put His own garments on Him. And they led Him out to crucify Him", v.20. At that point, with no reprieve appearing, His coming death took center; it was all too real. #9. A hideous death, forced on the Lord by hideous men with hideous motives, backed by the Jewish hierarchy with equally hideous intentions. #10. The Lion of Judah, the Word of God would surrender His life on the cross; it could not be taken from Him. "...Simon of Cyrene..." in attendance upon Jesus, as are we all.

PART 77: TWO PLANES OF PERCEPTION, 15:22-41. #1. One of the two perceptions of what was happening, was limited, one-dimensional, temporal and wrong. #2. To the Romans, Jesus was the subject of political execution. So, they took the Lord to "...Golgotha...Place of the Skull", v.22. "And they crucified Him..." at "...the third hour..."v.24, 25. The worldly plane of perception usually proves dangerous to people of faith. #3. "The inscription..." read "...THE KING OF THE JEWS", v.26. True but mocked. #4. Passersby insulted the Lord and ridiculed Him, v.29, 30. "...the chief priests..." and "the scribes...", (v.31), full of intense hate, heaped the Lord's own words against Him, v.31, 32. #5. Even the criminals who were dying with Jesus had nothing good to say about Him, v.32. #6. All of those people acknowledged no greater context than what they personally believed. Their minds were closed, dead and sclerotic; subject to no correction. #7. Then, there was the perception one may call, beyond time. That vantage point recognized the higher order reality of supernatural contraction. Everything about what was happening was coming to fruition in terms of the relation between God the Father and Jesus, the Son of God! #8. This was a SPIRITUAL CIRCUMSTANCE! God's perception was made known. (a)"...darkness fell over the whole land...", v.33. Three hours of enforced meteorology overtook the sky. No coincidence allowed. Events, veiled in darkness. (b)"At the ninth hour..." Jesus exclaimed, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?", v.34. The penalty for sins of the world came due! (c)Jesus "...uttered a loud cry and breathed His last", v.37. Mission accomplished. (d)The temple veil was ripped in two by the hands of God, v.38. (e)For some reason a "...centurion..." joined the eternal point of view. "...Truly this man was the Son of God!", v.39. #9. Supernatural

contraction brought into the world a range of symbolism and meaning beyond their apprehension! People can do many stupid things in that condition.

**PART 78: CIRCUMSTANCES IN CONTRACTION and PERSONAL PUBLIC COURAGE, 15:42-47.**

#1. Joseph of Arimathea put himself at some risk and he was conscious of the danger to himself. #2. "Joseph of Arimathea came, a prominent member of the Council, who himself was waiting for the kingdom of God; and he gathered up courage and went in before Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus", v.43. #3. This man became directly and immediately involved with the burial of the Lord. From the point of view of unbelievers, Joseph's interest in Jesus, even though dead, was a political statement and therefore dangerous. #4. It is apparent in the text, that nonetheless, he felt compelled to render that service to the Lord. Appearing before Pilate, personally, indicates available access to Roman headquarters. Joseph went straight to the top. #5. Pilate "...granted the body to Joseph", v.45. This man "...gathered up courage...", inferring that he had considered the danger to himself, discounted it and plunged right ahead regardless of the consciousness of what might happen. #6. Worlds in supernatural contraction require personal courage. #7. "Joseph bought a linen cloth, took Him down, wrapped Him in the linen cloth and laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb", v.46. #8. Why? Joseph, a Council member, knew the motives of that body of men. But there was something standing in priority to the Council and its powers: and that was "...the kingdom of God...". Joseph was "waiting..." for that and was prepared to serve its manifestation in time. #9. He took charge of Jesus' body; carefully resting the body in the prepared tomb. The Lord's body was important to the man from Arimathea; and God was not through with that body either. #10. Joseph "...rolled a stone against the entrance...". The next time that stone was moved it would open the door to eternal salvation for all who wanted it! This man's public courage against known dangers and risks was serving a higher purpose than he may have supposed! That stone would not be moved by human hands!

**PART 79: "WELL IN THAT GREAT GETTIN UP MORNIN": NATURE PUNCTUATED, 16:1-13.**

#1. Surrounded by material reality, rationalism interpreting its ways, experience confirming nature's overpowering reach, human beings yield to its dictates. #2. But on the resurrection morning, all was changed forever. "And he said to them, 'Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here; behold, here is the place where they laid Him'", v.6. #3. The "...young man...", confirmed that nature had been punctuated. The women who came to the tomb were "...amazed..."; and were admonished by the angel not to be amazed. Supernatural contraction had punctuated the natural! The "...extremely large..." stone at the entrance "...had been rolled away...", v.4. #4. The tomb was empty! There were no natural explanations for any of that; supernatural contraction was the only possible comprehension. #5. Punctuated nature can be disconcerting to people in dire, dangerous, disquieting conditions. The women "...went out and fled from the tomb, for

trembling and astonishment had gripped them...", v.8. #6. The rules of human lived experience had been punctuated! "Mary Magdalene" reported that Jesus had appeared to her; yet the disciples "...refused to believe it", v.11. The Lord appeared to two more disciples on the road; "...but they did not believe them either", v.13. #7. There is a kind of faith that does not punctuate the natural and that kind of faith cannot fully accept the truth of scripture nor trust in supernatural contraction. That kind of faith will fail in the face of raw circumstance. #8. "...HE IS NOT HERE..."! Satan is a liar; his mind warped. Once Jesus is dead, he thought, that is the end of it! Nature takes care of the problem he reasoned. The resurrection morning overrules the natural and becomes the source of generalization. Nothing natural is beyond the reach of supernatural contraction! WE STAKE EVERYTHING ON THAT TRUTH!

#### PART 80: SUPERNATURAL CONTRACTION: THE CREATION OF TWO POPULATIONS, 16:14-20.

#1. From the point of view of the Christ, there are two distinct world populations. These two human populations are spiritually defined. #2. "And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned", v.15, 16. #3. Here, therefore, is the chief descriptive agent between peoples; no other differences really matter. #4. The essence of mankind is their spiritual condition before God. There is the population, composed of those who have obeyed the gospel and been baptized and there is that population confirmed in their disbelief. #5. "So then when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God", v.19. #6. The frontiers that divide these populations (nations) are spiritual, revealed, propositional and comprehensive. But the seat of exact government for both are the same. Both populations are in a state of supernatural contraction and the king is the risen One, seated "at the right hand of God". #7. Time, life and history are in the hands of Jesus; He is determinant in human affairs! From the cross to the grave to the right hand of the eternal throne. #8. "Afterward...He reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him after He had risen", v.14. #9. In the disobedient population, life unfolds in one way and among that of belief, life develops according to one's faith. The resurrection is the high point of time and materiality. Response to the living Christ is the number one global issue; acknowledged or not. #10. His excellency the Christ is not going away, the gospel is not going away, the powers of supernatural contraction are not going away. So, the fact is: One must bow to the eternal throne and its imperial demands or face Him in the Judgment! The King be praised.