

EASTER

The Rest of the Story

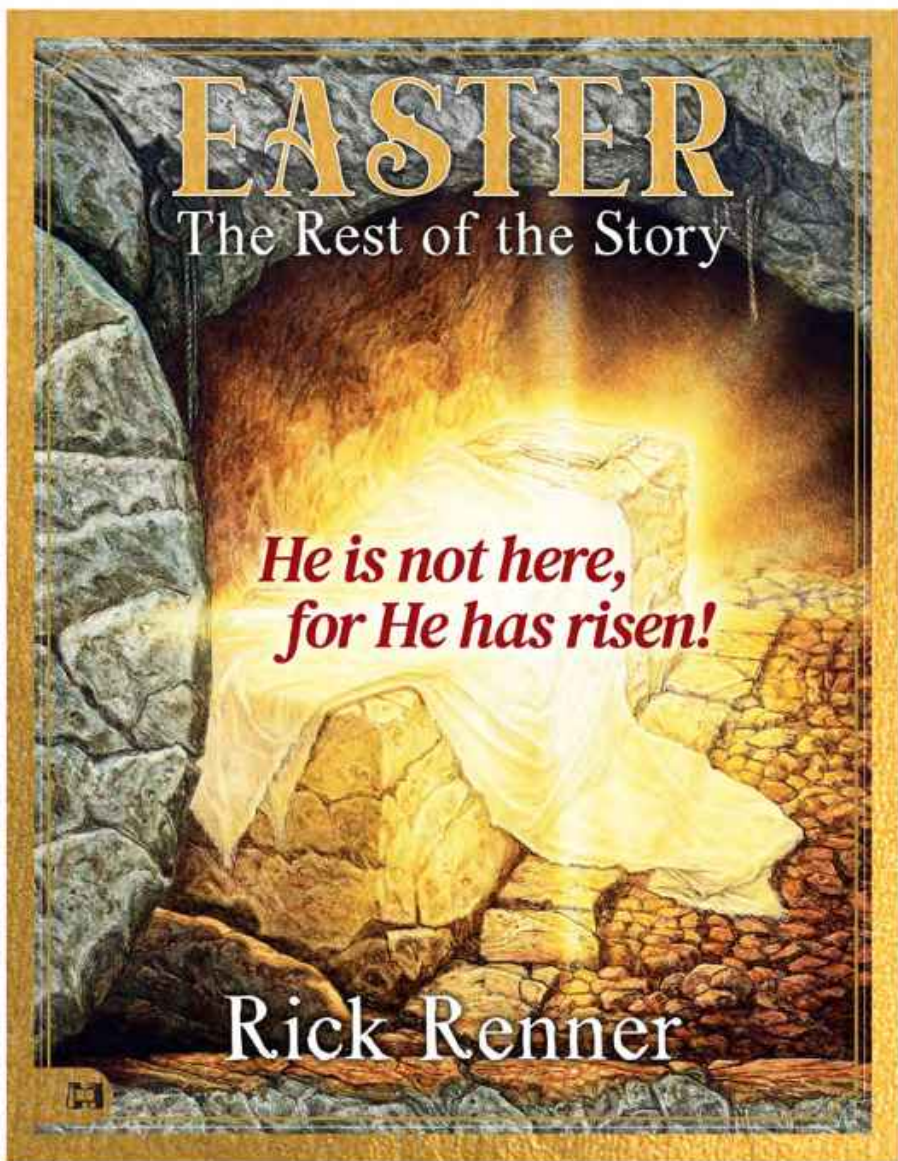
*He is not here,
for He has risen!*

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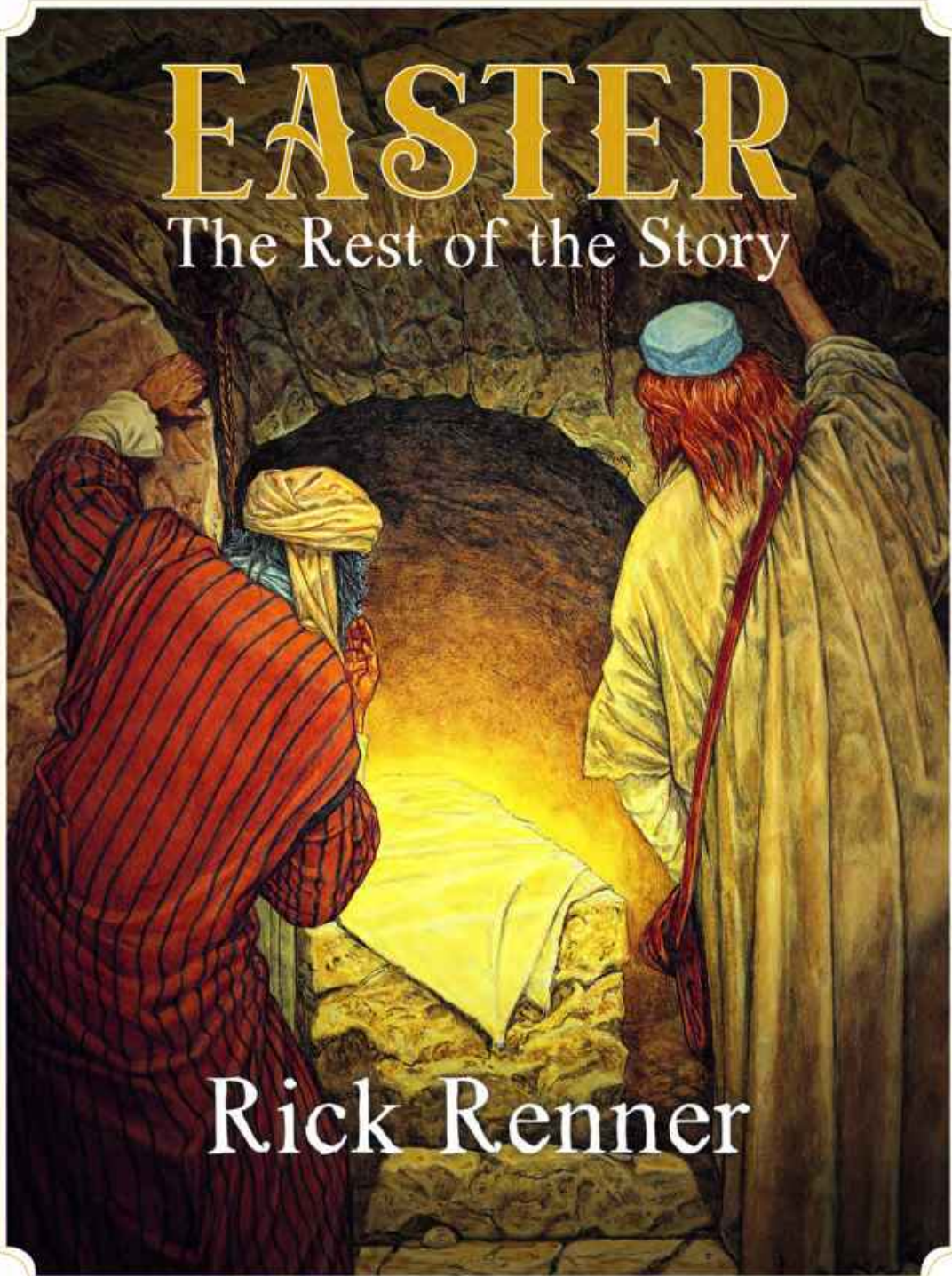
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EASTER

The Rest of the Story



Rick Renner

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Easter — The Rest of the Story

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DEDICATION



When I was growing up, I deeply loved Easter, as my parents and church used it as a holiday to teach us about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. I am eternally thankful to my parents, to my pastor, and to the Sunday School teachers who passionately ensured that we understood the real message of Easter. For this reason, I dedicate this book to those who influenced my life when I was young and helped me grow in my understanding of these events that contributed to my salvation.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



In each of my books, I take time to acknowledge those who contributed in some way to what I have written.

As in my book on Christmas, I feel the need to begin my acknowledgments by thanking my parents, Ronald and Erlita Renner, for rearing me to love Jesus, the Bible, and the local church — and for making Easter a special event in our family when we were children. I am also thankful to my pastor when I was growing up — Rev. Robert Post, who is in Heaven today — and to the Sunday School teachers who in my younger years helped me understand the many facets of Christ’s Passion, Jesus’ last days and moments on the earth. They instilled a deep love in my young heart for the Easter story, and for all this, I will be eternally grateful.

I wish to also express my thanks to my wife Denise, to our sons Paul, Philip, and Joel and our daughters-in-law Polina, Ella, and Olya, and to our grandchildren William, Anya, Cohen, Abby, Mia, Mika, Daniel, and Mark. In the Renner household as Denise and I raised our family, we joyfully anticipated this precious holiday each year, and it remains an important holiday for us. Just as the Easter story has deeply impacted us, I pray this book will become an instrument you can use to share this marvelous story with members of your own family and with your friends.

When we opted to illustrate my Christmas book with original artwork, I prayed for God to lead me to the right illustrator, and He led me to Lev Kaplan, a Russian-Jew from the former Soviet Union, who has illustrated many books for authors. His work on the Christmas book was so fabulous that I invited him to join me again to create historically accurate illustrations about the various aspects of Christ’s Passion. As always, his work is marvelous, and I am sure readers will reap the benefits of his talent as the art captured in this book helps them “see” the story come to life before their eyes.

EASTER — The Rest of the Story

It requires many minds, eyes, and hands to produce a book of this caliber, and this includes those who edit the manuscript to make it shine. For this reason, I wish to express my appreciation to Becky Gilbert, the chief editor at RENNER Ministries, who reads and edits every word of my books with spiritual sensitivity. I also wish to express my gratitude to Becky’s team on this project that included Roni Bagby, Kalea Ellison, Kaitlyn Hong, Pamela Page, and Beth Parker. In addition, Lisa Simpson meticulously laid out the pages in this book to make sure it was produced beautifully for my readers — and Lisa Moore created the beautiful cover for the book. I also wish to express my appreciation to Maxim Myasnikov, my assistant in Moscow, who faithfully assists me in my research of the Greek words that are used in all my books.

But Jesus is the center of this story, and I wish to express my eternal gratitude to Him for giving His life as a ransom for many. If He had not surrendered His life as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, there would be no Easter story. He changed the course of human history and the hearts of an innumerable company of believers worldwide with His selfless act of coming to the earth and taking His place on the Cross as the Lamb of God.

Not only did Jesus die in our place, but He was gloriously resurrected. With no resurrection, the Gospel would be incomplete — but Jesus indeed rose again “on the third day” and eventually ascended to Heaven to take His seat at the Father’s right hand where He ever lives to intercede for us as the Head of the Church. He *was* and *is* our hope for Heaven and our reconciliation with God the Father. And He *is* and *forever will be* exalted as Lord of all!

INTRODUCTION

THE STORY BEHIND THE STORY

When I think of Easter, my mind goes to my childhood, when we woke up every Easter morning to a full basket of special gifts that my parents left next to our bedsides. Then we'd all get into the car and go to church. My sisters were dressed specially for the event, and my parents dressed me — little Ricky — up in black slacks, a white shirt, and a black bow tie. I still have one photo of my sisters and me standing together for a photo all dressed up for Easter day, and that photo is very precious to me. My parents made us understand that Easter, and commemorating the Cross and the Resurrection, was one of the most important events in our lives!

I also vividly remember lying on the floor in front of our black and white television in our home in the days preceding Easter to watch specially aired Easter-themed movies that were broadcast nationally back in those days. I don't intend to sound like I'm writing movie reviews, but I was deeply impacted by several Easter-themed movies that were released to the public. Perhaps you saw those same movies and were as impacted by them as I was at a young age. These blockbuster films and TV dramas were aired at a time in the past when people were honoring of religious holidays and religious-based films.

Among these films was *The Robe*, an epic biblical drama produced in 1953 by *20th Century Fox* that tells the story of a Roman military tribune who commanded the unit responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus and who “won” the robe of Jesus at His crucifixion and became a Christian. I was born in 1958, so by the time I came along this film was already five years old, but it still reigned as the top Easter-related film until 1961 when the movie *King of Kings* was released to the public.

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The epic film *King of Kings* was a religious film released by *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, and it was broadcast annually for many years on national television during the days leading up to Easter in commemoration of Christ's birth, death, and resurrection. Even as a four-year-old child, I sat with a frozen gaze at the black-and-white TV screen in our home as I watched every scene of Christ's Passion that was so vividly portrayed in that movie. Although I was so young at the time, that movie dramatically gripped my heart, and as I watched it, I felt profound thankfulness that Jesus died for me as the Lamb of God and that His glorious resurrection followed the horrific event of His death on the Cross.

But also in 1961, another Easter-themed blockbuster film was released that was called *Barabbas*. It was a religious epic film released in the U.S. by *Columbia Pictures* based on the story of Barabbas, the criminal who was released at the time of Christ's crucifixion. The movie included highly acclaimed scenes of a battle of gladiators in a mock-up of the Roman Colosseum and a crucifixion scene that was actually shot during a real total solar eclipse. In the movie, Pontius Pilate offers to release either Jesus of Nazareth or Barabbas, and the crowd chooses Barabbas, while Jesus is condemned to death.

The next big blockbuster Easter film was *Jesus of Nazareth*, which was a 1977 biblical television drama that chronicled the birth, life, ministry, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus. That movie featured an all-star ensemble cast of renowned actors, including eight who had either won or would go on to win Academy Awards — *Anne Bancroft*, *Ernest Borgnine*, *James Earl Jones*, *Laurence Olivier*, *Christopher Plummer*, *Anthony Quinn*, *Rod Steiger*, and *Peter Ustinov*. This movie was so outstanding that it mostly replaced *King of Kings* as the drama that aired nationally every year at the time of Easter.

Then came the movie *JESUS* (also known as *The Jesus Film*), which was a 1979 biblical drama primarily based on the Gospel of Luke as the main basis for the story. The movie was shot on location in Israel and was financed primarily by Campus Crusade for Christ. The film was used

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worldwide for evangelism purposes, and untold thousands of people came to Christ as a result.

Finally came Mel Gibson's magnificent 2004 film called *The Passion of the Christ*, which is an epic biblical drama that depicts the Passion of Jesus largely according to the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The film is a depiction of the last 12 hours in the life of Jesus. It begins in the Garden of Olives (Gethsemane), where Jesus had gone to pray after what we know as the Last Supper. It portrays His betrayal by Judas Iscariot, His arrest, His abuse by religious leaders, His trial before Pontius Pilate, His appearance before Herod Antipas, His return to Pilate for His final sentencing, and then His scourging and crucifixion. It is unquestionably the most dramatic film ever produced on the Passion of Christ's final hours. This epic film was shown in theaters around the world, and people worldwide were deeply affected by it as they felt as if Christ had really been crucified before them.

All these films affected me deeply along with millions of others who viewed them. Yet as I studied the story of Christ's final hours in-depth, I realized there was much more to the story than I had ever been told. The deeper I dove into the original text of the New Testament and into the story of Christ's final hours — including into historical records of these events — I felt the need to share with my readers “the rest of the story” that they may have never heard so that their appreciation for Christ's death, burial, and resurrection would be even greater.

The illustrations in my book on *Christmas — The Rest of the Story* were warm, beautiful, and almost magical. But as we worked on the illustrations for this book, we were confronted by the fact that there is nothing warm about this dramatic story. Indeed, this story confronts each of us with the agony Christ experienced on our behalf in His final hours. In keeping with the truth of these events, the illustrator and I worked meticulously to ensure both the text and the artwork reflected the ugly but powerful truth about the final hours before the Cross and Christ's resurrection.

EASTER — The Rest of the Story

When Isaiah wrote of Christ's death, he said, "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, he *was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:3-5. But notice in verse 3, Isaiah said, "... We hid as it were our faces from him."

There is nothing pleasant about looking at the sufferings that Christ endured. At the showing of the film *The Passion of the Christ*, which graphically portrayed Christ's suffering, I couldn't help but notice as people literally hid their faces because they felt it too unbearable to look upon the sufferings of Jesus that were so vividly depicted on the movie screen in front of them, they fulfilled this verse. Each time they hid their faces, they fulfilled Isaiah's words in Isaiah 53:3. When you look at the illustrations that accompany the text in this book, you may also not find it pleasant, but it is vitally important that we understand the price that Jesus paid for our redemption.

When the apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians, he reminded them that when he preached Christ's crucifixion to them, his preaching about the Cross and what Christ endured was so graphic that they actually felt as if before their own eyes "*Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth and crucified*" among them (*see* Galatians 3:1). In the same way, my prayer is that this book and the illustrations in it will help you to visually see and grasp the price Jesus paid for our redemption. But you will find the images to be bloody, because it was indeed a bloody event when the Son of God was scourged for our healing, pierced for our wholeness, and sacrificed as the Lamb of God for our salvation.

When I was a child, one of the first Bible verses I was taught was John 3:16 and 17, which says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish,

Introduction

but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” My prayer is that as you read and view this book, every word and illustration will convey to you how vast is the love of God for you that He would send His Son to die in your place.

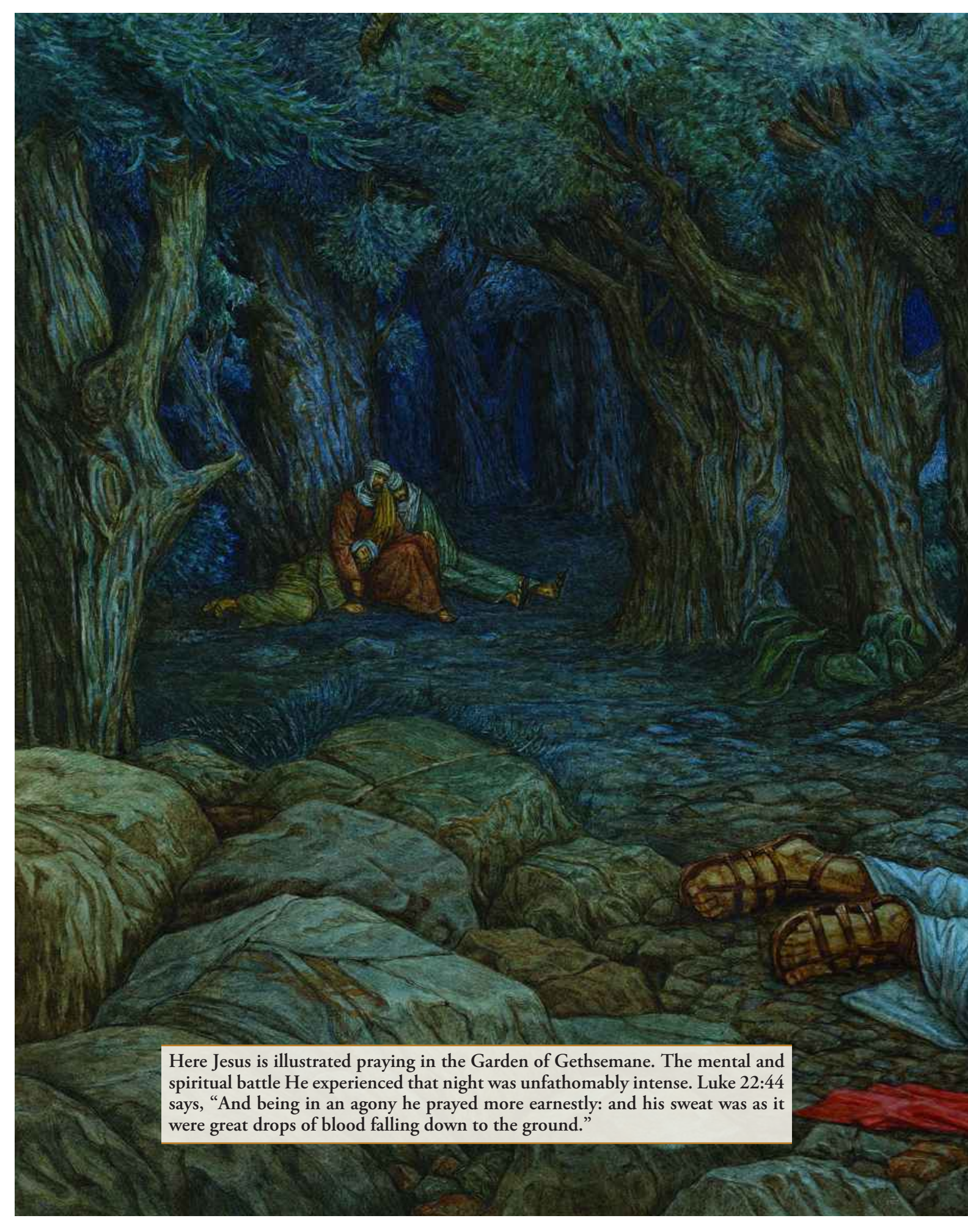
But additionally, I want you to fully understand the events that occurred at the resurrection! The apostle Paul wrote, “And if Christ be not risen, then *is* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* also vain that we would be hopeless above all other men” (*see* 1 Corinthians 15:14). But then he continued, “But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept” (1 Corinthians 15:20). Christ was raised as the firstfruits of Christians who had died, and His resurrection is the guarantee that we will also be raised to life when we die.

You may think this book is too graphic for children, but your children and grandchildren need to appreciate every act of Christ’s Passion and to embrace the truth that it was a demonstration of God’s love for them. Carefully walk them through each chapter — and carefully look at each illustration with them — and take time to open up a discussion about what Jesus did so they could be free and emancipated from Satan’s stronghold upon their spirits, souls, and bodies. Use this book as an opportunity to teach them and lead them into a deeper appreciation for what Jesus has done for each of them.

The Cross is where the price was paid for our redemption, and the resurrection is where death was defeated and Satan was disarmed. I urge you to pay special attention to the chapters and illustrations that focus on Christ’s resurrection from the dead, to His exaltation on High, and to His present-day High Priestly ministry that has continued uninterrupted for 2,000 years. Today He is seated alive at the Father’s right hand, where He ever lives to make intercession for you and me!

Now...it’s time for you to start reading *EASTER — The Rest of the Story!*

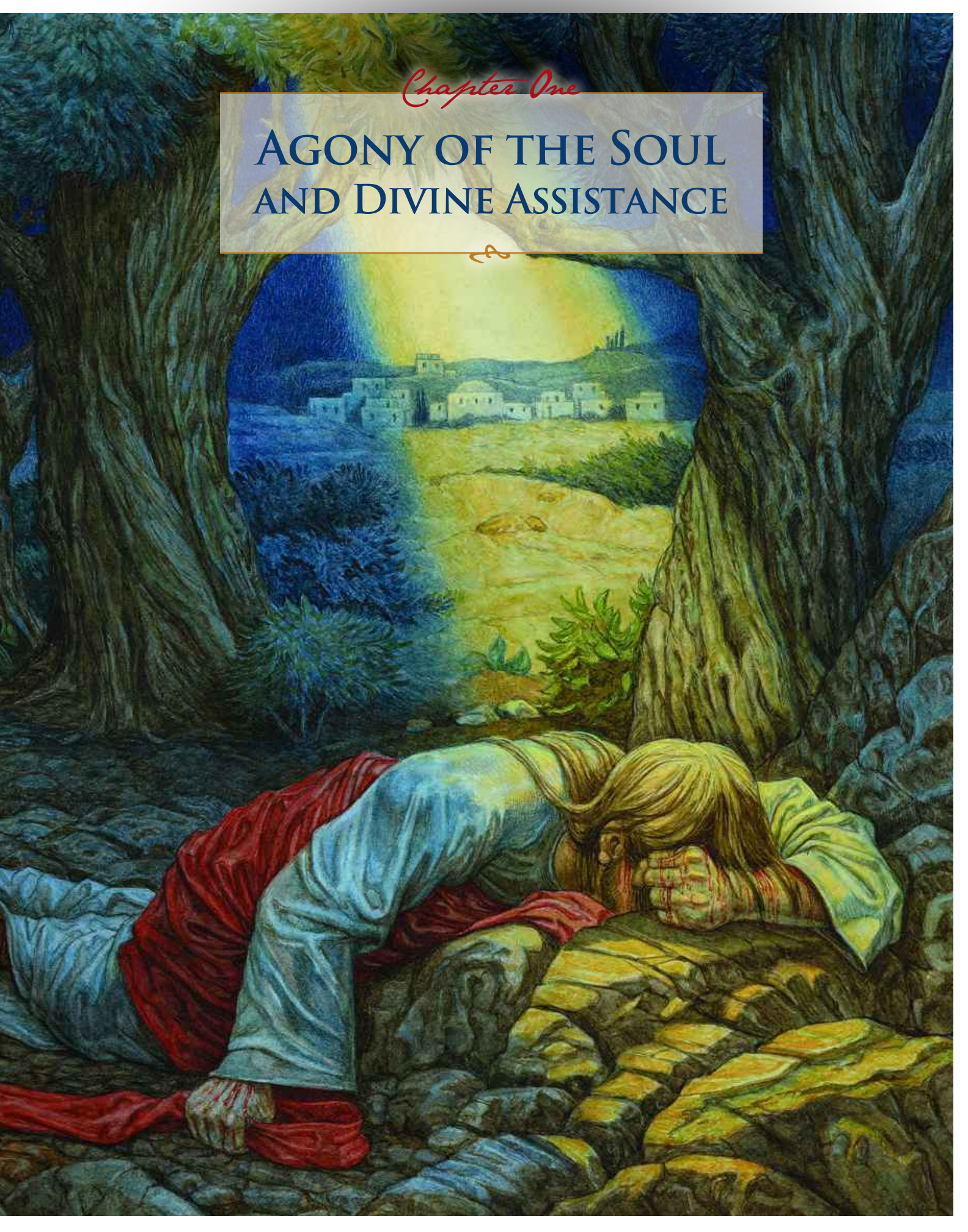
Rick Renner




Here Jesus is illustrated praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. The mental and spiritual battle He experienced that night was unfathomably intense. Luke 22:44 says, “And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”

Chapter One

AGONY OF THE SOUL
AND DIVINE ASSISTANCE





On the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, there is an ancient garden where olive trees were once grown in large numbers and olives were crushed and pressed to produce abundant amounts of olive oil. A few trees can be seen today, perhaps as a memorial to this site's dramatic past and its critical role in history. Also scattered on these slopes are ancient graves, where wealthier Jews were buried at the time of Jesus. It was in this ancient garden on the Mount of Olives that Jesus spent His last moments with His disciples and notoriously prayed in agony before being arrested and crucified (*see* Luke 22:41-44).

Today, behind an ornamented fence in this ancient olive grove — *the Garden of Gethsemane* — tourists especially notice the timeworn gnarled trunks of eight massive olive trees that some believe date back to New Testament times.

The Jewish historian Josephus recorded that many trees around the city of Jerusalem were cut down by Roman troops, who used the wood to make equipment to assist them as they besieged and plundered Jerusalem in 70 AD.¹

To determine whether the olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane dated to the time of Christ, a radiocarbon-dating test was carried out on some of the roots of these ancient trees, and the results indicated that some of the roots sampled could indeed be 2,000 years old.²

These massive olive trees could be original to the Garden at the time of Christ — or descended from those ancient trees, having evolved and survived to the present time. But it is at least possible





that some of these trees today were there at the time of Jesus' agony and are silent witnesses to the events that occurred in the Garden of Gethsemane before His crucifixion so many years ago.

Many significant events in the life of Jesus took place in the Garden of Gethsemane. It is for this reason that Christians from all over the world have been making pilgrimages to this site for some 2,000 years. Today most visitors enter the Garden of Gethsemane through an ancient stone gate and stroll curiously onto the path encircling the eight ancient olive trees that I just described to you.

Finally, after they explore that fenced-off area, they make their way to the entrance of the Church of All Nations, which was constructed on the ruins of a Byzantine basilica that was originally erected there to commemorate the events that took place in the Garden of Gethsemane in Jesus' last hours.

When archaeologists discovered those Fourth-Century foundations in the 1920s along with fragments of magnificent mosaics, they began to work in conjunction with architects to construct the Church of All Nations, which was officially consecrated in April 1924.³

Inside the Church of All Nations is a centerpiece that is an exposed outcropping of rock, which is believed to be the place where Christ agonizingly prayed the night He was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane — and there is every reason to believe that it really *is* the place where Jesus sweat “great drops of blood” during that time of prayer in His last hours (*see* Luke 22:44).

Today this rock is encircled by a beautiful bronze fence designed to protect the outcropping from visitors, because for centuries, people who visited the site cut small pieces of the rock to take home as a holy relic. Therefore, much of it is now gone.





As one stands in front of that bronze fence and looks upward at the front interior of the church, he can gaze upon a wall that is elaborately covered with marvelous, brilliantly colored mosaics that breathtakingly illustrate Jesus' final hours before He was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane.



A Regular Gathering Place for Jesus and His Disciples

Just a short distance from the well-known Church of All Nations is another significant site that is pertinent to the story of Jesus, but it's one that many visitors know nothing about.

In fact, they walk right past it, not knowing how significant it is to some of the events we read about in the gospels. I'm talking about an underground grotto, where it is known that Jesus and His disciples regularly met.

Down several flights of worn stone steps, and at the end of a narrow pathway lined with stone walls on either side, is an entrance that leads to an underground grotto. Early Christian writers reported that Jesus regularly used this cave to assemble with His disciples when they visited the Garden of Gethsemane.

Because it was an underground grotto, this cave was an ideal place to gather. It was a quiet, isolated spot that provided shelter from the weather. The grotto can still be visited today, but most people who venture into the area without a guide are oblivious to it because they are so captivated by the massive ancient olive trees that surround this hidden tourist treasure.






Based on early Christian tradition, Jesus regularly gathered in that grotto with His disciples when they were in Jerusalem.⁴ It was such a common meeting place for them that when Judas Iscariot led temple police to arrest Jesus, he knew he would find Him and His followers there, because Judas had been to the grotto with Jesus and the others so many times before.

But on the night Jesus was betrayed and arrested, prior to that critical time in His last hours, the Savior felt the deep need to pray, so He left all but three of His disciples alone in the grotto and went a short distance from them to interact with the Father. It is this agonizing period of prayer that we read about in the gospels (*see* Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-46; and John 18:1) — and it occurred on the famous outcropping of rock that people still visit today in the Church of All Nations.

According to the New Testament accounts, after Jesus finished serving Communion to His disciples in the well-known Upper Room (*see* Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; and Luke 22:14-20), He led them to the Garden of Gethsemane. Knowing that the Cross and the grave lay before Him, Jesus felt the need to spend time in intercession so He might gain the strength He needed to face what would soon befall Him. Leaving most of the disciples inside the grotto, Jesus took Peter, James, and John with Him to pray (*see* Matthew 26:37; Mark 14:33).

Rarely did Jesus need His friends' assistance — most of the time, they needed *His* help. But in this intense moment, Jesus felt the need to have His three closest disciples near Him to pray with Him. He asked them to pray with Him for just one hour, but instead of faithfully praying at a moment when Jesus desperately needed their support, the three





of them kept falling asleep again and again (see Matthew 26:40-45; Mark 14:37-41).



Being in Agony, Jesus Sweat ‘Great Drops of Blood’

The mental and spiritual battle Jesus experienced that night in the Garden of Gethsemane was *unfathomably intense*. Luke 22:44 says, “And being in an *agony* he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”

I want you to especially notice the word “agony” in this verse. It comes from a form of the Greek word *agonidzo*, a word that depicts *a struggle, a fight, great exertion, or great effort*. This Greek word was used in the New Testament to convey ideas of *anguish, pain, distress, and conflict*.

But importantly, the word *agonidzo* comes from the word *agon*, which is the Greek word that depicted the *athletic conflicts and competitions* that were so strenuous in the ancient world.

The Holy Spirit intentionally used this word in these verses to help us understand the battle that Jesus experienced in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night of His betrayal. It tells us that Jesus was thrown into *a great struggle or an intense fight* that night. Knowing that the Cross and the grave were before Him, He cried out, “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me...” (Luke 22:42).

The spiritual pressure that bore down upon Jesus’ soul was so overwhelming that the Bible says it was *agonidzo*, or *an agonizing event*. In fact, the fight was so strenuous that it involved all of Jesus’



spirit, soul, and body. Indeed, He was in the greatest fight He had ever known up to that moment.

Jesus' intense level of agony is depicted in the phrase "...he prayed more *earnestly*..." (Luke 22:44). The word "earnestly" is from a Greek word that means *to be extended* or *to be stretched out*. A person in this kind of agony might drop to the ground, writhe in pain, and roll around on the ground.

This Greek word presents the picture of a person who is pushed to the limit and can't be stretched much more. Indeed, this individual is on the brink of all he can possibly endure.

In fact, Luke 22 goes on to tell us Jesus' emotional state was so intense that "...his *sweat* was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

The word "sweat" is from the Greek word *idros*, and the word "drops" is translated from a form of the Greek word *thrombos*, which is a medical word that points to *blood that is unusually thickly clotted*. But when these two words are joined, they depict a medical condition called *hematidrosis* — a real disorder that only occurs in individuals who are in a highly emotional state.⁵

In this condition, the mind, which is under such great mental and emotional pressure, sends signals of stress throughout the human body, and these signals are so strong that the body reacts as if it is under actual physical pressure.

As a result of this perceived pressure, the first and second layer of skin separate, causing a vacuum to form between them, and then thickly clotted blood seeps from this vacuum and oozes through the pores of the skin. Once the blood seeps through the pores, it mingles





with the sufferer's sweat that is pouring from his skin as a result of his intense struggle. In the end, the oozing blood and sweat mingle together in droplets, which flow from the victim's body.

The Holy Spirit included these details about Jesus' sweating blood to alert us that this was the most intense spiritual combat Jesus had ever endured up to that time. And where were His disciples? At this moment, He needed them, but they were *sleeping*.

Jesus had asked His closest disciples to pray with Him — and they couldn't even pray for one hour. But God is faithful, and He provided supernatural strength for Jesus in another way, which we will see in a few pages.

This makes me want to ask you: Have you ever felt the need for help from your friends in a difficult moment and found that your friends couldn't be counted on? Did you find them "sleeping on the job" when you felt a deep need for their help and support? Were you in a situation that caused you such intense agony that you felt you needed someone to stand with you? Are you in that kind of situation right now?

Maybe you've never sweat blood, as Jesus did, but it is likely that you have struggled in your soul at one time or another because of problems with your marriage, your children, your other relationships, your job or ministry, your health, your finances, or your concern for the well-being of others. Have you ever felt like you were constantly living in a "pressure cooker" and it nearly got the best of you?

If so, you know that continuous pressure is hard to deal with — *especially* if you have no one to lean on for strength, encouragement, and help in that moment.

If you are experiencing one of those times now, Jesus understands because He faced the same situation in the Garden of Gethsemane.





God Provided Divine Assistance

As we have seen, on the night of Jesus' betrayal, He beckoned His closest disciples — Peter, James, and John — to come away and pray with Him in those last difficult hours. But every time He went back to check on the three men, He found them sleeping.

Jesus was experiencing a great spiritual battle and extreme pressure, which is why He requested His closest disciples assist Him in prayer. But on that night, they were not found faithful. Instead, He found them sleeping on the job again and again.

When Jesus could not find anyone to faithfully stand with Him in His hour of need, God provided supernatural assistance to help Him. And that supernatural strength made up for any lack of support from Jesus' three closest disciples.

Luke 22:43 tells us that in this moment when Jesus felt a need for help and strength, "...there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him."

When Luke wrote that the angel "strengthened" Jesus, he used a form of the Greek word *enischuo*, which is a compound of the words *en* and *ischuo*. The word *en* means *in*, and the word *ischuo* is the word for *might* or *strength*.

Usually in New Testament times, the word *ischuo* was used to denote *men with great muscular abilities*, similar to bodybuilders in today's world. But when these two words *en* and *ischuo* are compounded, the new word means *to impart strength, to empower someone, to fill a person with heartiness, or to give someone renewed vitality*. A person may have been feeling exhausted and depleted, but he suddenly gets a blast of





energy so robust that he is *instantly recharged*. Now he's ready to get up, get with it, and get going again!

This means when Jesus' disciples and friends couldn't be depended upon in His hour of need, God stepped in and provided an angel who *empowered, recharged, and imparted strength* to Jesus, *renewing His vitality* with the strength He needed to victoriously face the most difficult hour in His life. After being super-charged, Jesus was ready to face the Cross. He soon awakened His disciples and said, "Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand" (Mark 14:42).

Again, let me ask you:

- Have you ever experienced a time in your life when *you* felt trapped and alone?
- Have you ever felt that your friends let you down at a time when you really needed them?
- Can you somewhat relate to Jesus' agonizing prayer over what He was facing — and facing it alone?

Maybe your friends really have fallen asleep on the job, *but God hasn't fallen asleep!* He is absolutely aware of the situation you're facing, and if necessary, He will provide supernatural assistance to recharge you and keep you moving full steam ahead.

Although you may be tempted to feel isolated and alone, if you look with the eyes of your spirit for just a moment, you'll see that you're not alone at all. God is surrounding you with the Holy Spirit's power, with angels, and with anything else you need to recharge you so you can keep going forward in faith and trust in Him.

Regardless of the battle or situation you're facing right now, just as God provided supernatural assistance for Jesus, He will provide it





for *you*. The same divine help He provided for Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane is what He offers to you. He may send an angel or another unexpected person who understands and wants to help, or He may refill you with the Holy Spirit in a way that super-charges you to face and overcome that difficult moment.

But one thing is sure: When no one else is faithful, you can be certain that God is *always* faithful and that He will see to it that you receive the strength and power you need to triumph in every circumstance.

Supernatural assistance is a part of your inheritance as a child of God in Christ, and you can lay claim to it any time you need it. All you have to do is receive it by faith and walk in obedience to what God tells you to do — and as you do, God will supernaturally empower you to victoriously tackle and overcome whatever is before you.

In the next chapter, you will be surprised to learn the vast number of soldiers that came into the Garden of Gethsemane to arrest Jesus and why they carried such deadly weapons at the moment of His arrest. You'll discover that a small army came to arrest Jesus because they had heard so many reports about His miraculous powers!





QUESTIONS TO PONDER AND DISCUSS

1. Intense emotional stress produces mental and physical distress. Jesus not only suffered on every level, He persevered through pain more difficult than you can conceive. Thus, He not only completely understands everything you could possibly go through, He empathizes with you. *Have you ever thought about that before?*
2. Jesus experienced the full range of human emotion and emotional strain, so He knows exactly what it's like to feel pressure bearing down on Him from every side. Because Jesus understands stress, He can be trusted to understand and help you no matter what you may be facing. What are the areas in your life where you are experiencing stress? *Invite Jesus into that area and trust Him to help you.*
3. Sometimes it's easier to talk with someone who has already been through what you're experiencing. But do you still hurt after talking to your parents, your friends, your spouse, or your pastor? If so, it's time for you to talk to Jesus. Even if you talk to others, *He is the Perfect One to go to about your struggles because He understands them better than anyone else.*
4. At times, circumstances arise and we feel utterly helpless. Can you remember a time when God intervened to strengthen and energize you in a seemingly impossible and difficult situation? Jesus is the same today as He was yesterday and has always been (*see Hebrews 13:8*), so remind yourself of His faithfulness, especially when you are tempted to fear that you won't make it through a challenge.



The Church of All Nations was constructed on the ruins of a Byzantine basilica that was originally erected to commemorate the events that took place in the Garden of Gethsemane in Jesus' last hours. When archaeologists discovered those Fourth-Century foundations along with fragments of magnificent mosaics, they began to work in conjunction with architects to construct the Church of All Nations, which was officially consecrated in April 1924.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Rick Renner (renner.org) holds an earned ThD (Doctor of Theology) from a prominent Russian university and is a respected Bible teacher and leader in the international Christian community. He is the author of an extensive list of books, including bestsellers *Sparkling Gems From the Greek 1* and *2*, and his accumulated titles have sold millions of copies worldwide. Rick's understanding of the Greek language and biblical history opens up the Scriptures in a unique way that enables his audience to gain wisdom and insight while learning something brand new from the Word of God.

Today Rick is the overseer of the Good News Association of Churches, founder of the Moscow Good News Church, pastor of the Internet Good News Church, founder of Media Mir, and president of the Good News Channel — the largest Russian-speaking Christian satellite network in the world, which broadcasts the Gospel 24/7 to countless viewers in more than 83 nations. He is also founder of TBV, a national channel that broadcasts to all of Russia.

Rick is the founder of RENNER Ministries in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, and host to his TV program, also seen around the world in multiple languages via television, Internet, and satellite. He leads this amazing work with Denise, his wife and lifelong ministry partner, along with their sons and committed leadership team.

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For further information
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ALL USA CORRESPONDENCE:

RENNER Ministries
1814 W. Tacoma St.
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MOSCOW OFFICE:

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Website: www.ignc.org


OXFORD OFFICE:

RENNER Ministries
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RIGA OFFICE:

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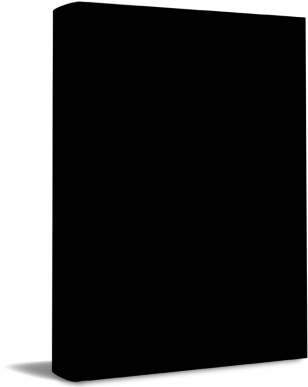
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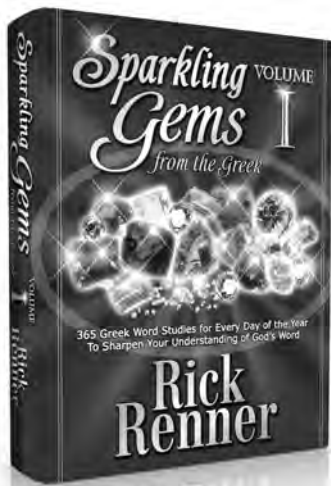
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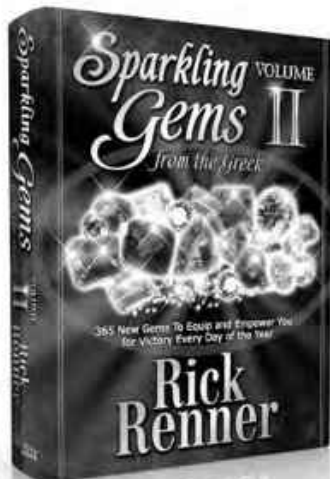
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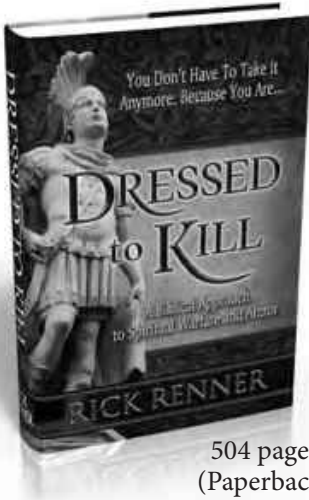
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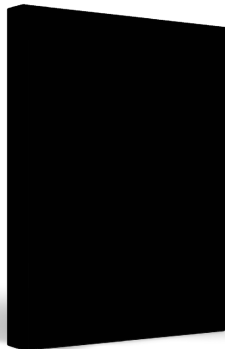
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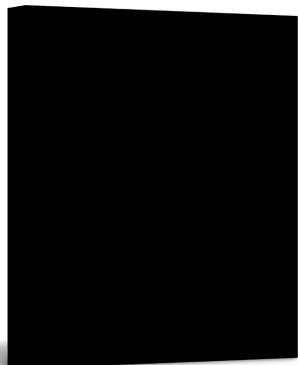
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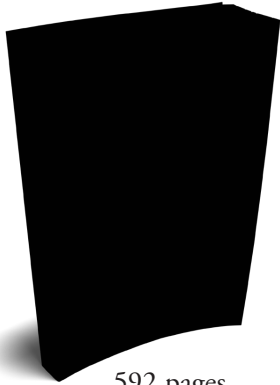
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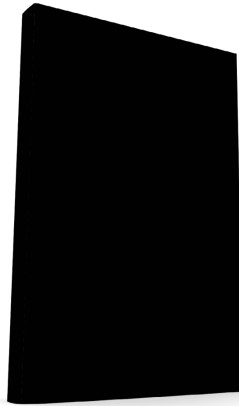
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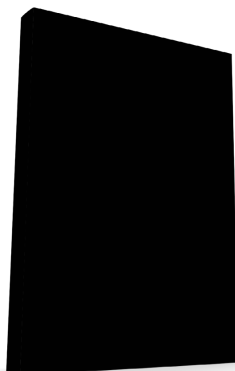
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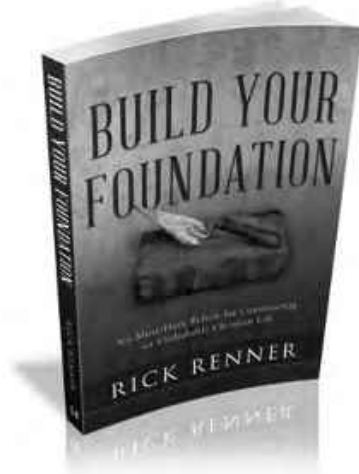
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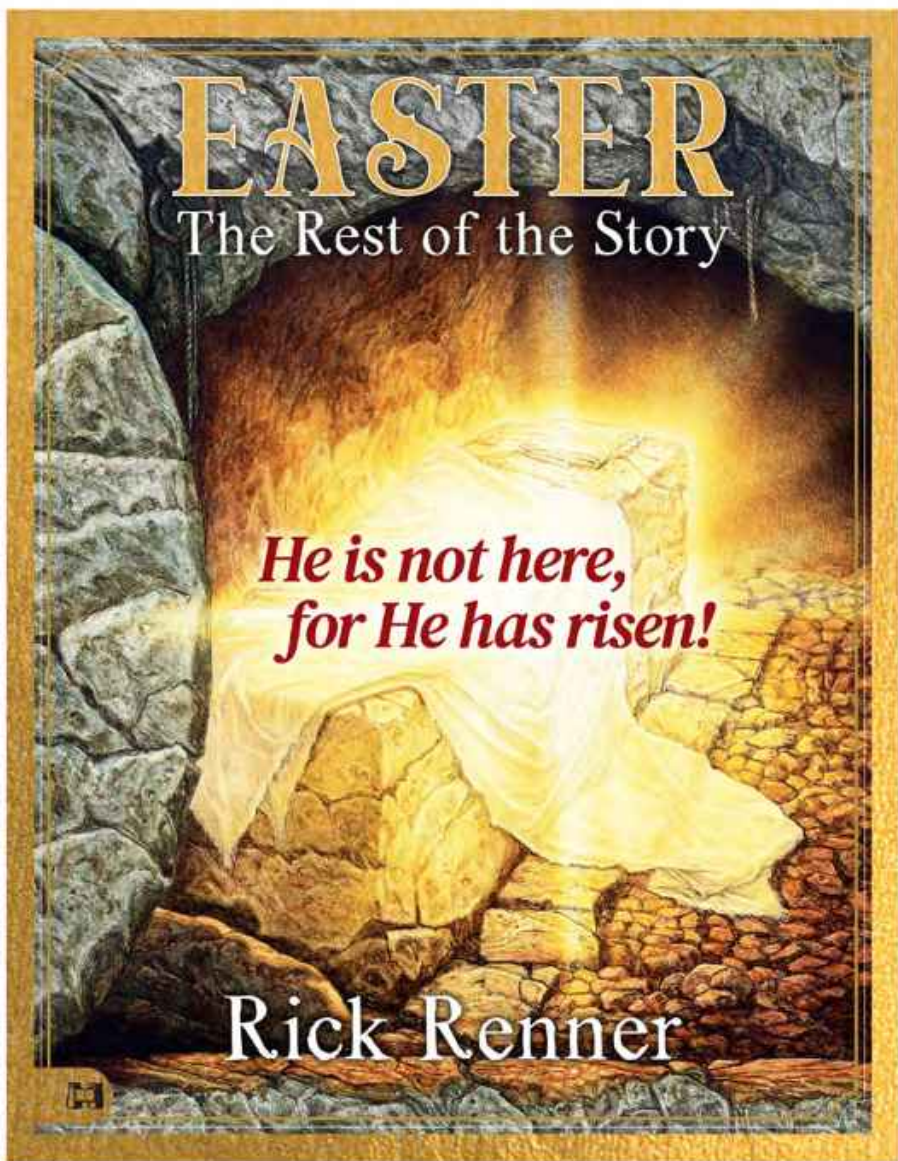
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