



The Christian Citizenship Committee (C3) provides information to the Christian community regarding critical issues that affect our faith, family, and government. Our goal is that believers, once equipped with this information, will seek God in fervent prayer and respond appropriately as God-fearing, patriotic Americans.

The Christian Easter Celebration

The Christian Easter celebration represents many emotions and events that led to the Crucifixion of our Lord Jesus. Every Easter, believers all over the world relate the story of Jesus suffering and dying on the cross for our sins. Jesus was the earthly presence of our Lord's amazing love for us. Jesus' life and resurrection was not a random event or an afterthought. His life was part of a magnificent plan that God perceived before the earth was formed and Jesus agreed to go to the cross because of his love for us.

Every Easter we move closer to Christ's return. The chapters of the book of Revelation reveal there are foretold events that must happen before Jesus returns his final time. However, there are not any predetermined events or timelines for the Rapture. The problems in our country and all over the world are paraded before us nightly on the evening news. We try to envision a peace in the Middle East but the countries around Israel are engaged in endless wars. Jesus spoke about the events that are happening in the world today. For the faithful, we must believe that the Rapture may occur at any time because of these world events. Reality should almost demand that we wake up

each morning with the coming Rapture as our first thought. We must truthfully examine ourselves and our family and ask, "Are we prepared for the Rapture? Or will I or my family be left behind? Our Lord has told that that he does not want anyone to be lost. If we are to be prepared for the Rapture, we must have a personal relationship with Jesus. Salvation and prayer are the beginnings of a personal relationship with our Lord.

Our heavenly Father loves us with immeasurable passion. We are also commanded to love him with all our heart and soul. Love him with passion; pray to him with passion. In all matters, seek the Lord's counsel. Through our prayers, we can ask the Lord for wisdom, healing for ourselves and others and for peace in our world and lives. We pray with the expectation that our prayers will be heard and answered. Did Jesus not say "If you ask in my name it will be given unto you." For our prayers to be effective and heard by our Lord, they must first be asked in Jesus' name. However, there are also reasons that our prayers will not be heard or answered. One reason is ongoing sin in a believers life. In Psalm 66:18, the Psalmist says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear." Our Lord does not grade sin on a scale of 1 to 10. Sin of all degrees are not tolerated in his domain. If you have unkind thoughts about the person in the next pew, this is sin. If we carry any sin or anger and vengeance in our heart, our Lord will not hear our prayers. The Lord's church is under constant attack by Satan and his army. Satan has used social issues to divide our nation, church denominations and church members within the same church. We must not allow Satan to control our lives and we must push sin out of our hearts before we can truly communicate



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communicate with our Lord.

When we pray, our Lord does not always supply one's desires because he knows it will not benefit that person. He will not always answer our prayers in the affirmative. Our Lord will not act in ways that are contrary to his will, even if he is besieged by fervent prayer. In our prayers, God does not always bow to our will, instead we submit to his good will for our lives. As Christians, we are often perplexed and anxious for all the chaos that Satan creates in our world. We just cannot understand why our Lord allows things to happen. Many times it is a heartbreaking event such as losing a loved one. One of the most difficult losses to understand is a child or an infant. When the prayers to save a loved one go unanswered, we are often angry and bitter with God because we do not understand his works. When we pray, we must always enter into prayer with the assurance that the Lord is always in control of our lives and the outcomes are in his will. Satan will constantly sow doubt in our hearts and minds as to why the Lord allows our troubles but our faith in our Lord must always overcome Satan's attempts to separate us from God.

In James 1:5-7, we are given another reason that God will not answer our prayers. The author, James says, "*If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God, who gives all liberally without reproach and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For not let that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;*". In this verse, we are reminded

that if there is any doubt in our faith, we will not receive an answer to our prayer. This is one of the main reasons our prayers are not answered. Remember "*O ye of little faith.*"

In Proverbs 21:13, we receive wisdom regarding the rejection of prayer. We are told that "*Whosoever shuts his ears to the cries of the poor, will also cry himself and not be heard.*" We should always remember those that are poor financially, poor in health, poor in spirit and hope. In his ministry, Jesus gave us countless examples of how we should treat and help the poor. Jesus came to give hope to all people. Hope gives all of us the will and courage to ask and expect the Lord to hear and to help us!

As believers and followers of Jesus, we pray every day and expect the Lord to answer our prayers. Forgiveness of our sins and a personal relationship with Jesus should be our first answered prayer. We should pray that our families, our church and our nation will be ready for the Rapture that will certainly come sooner than later. Pray that no one will be left behind.

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