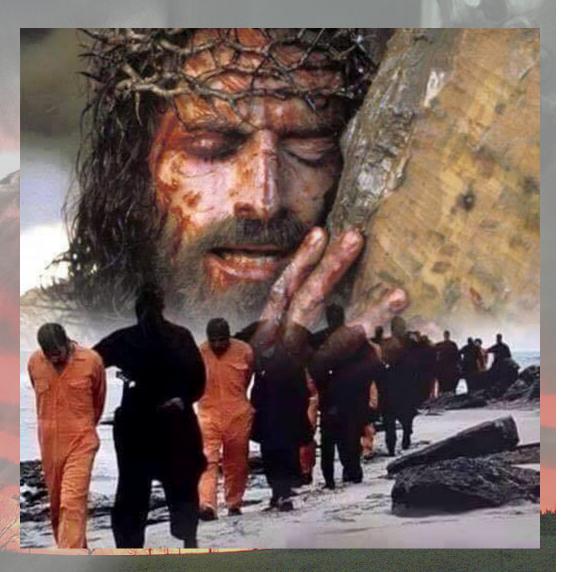


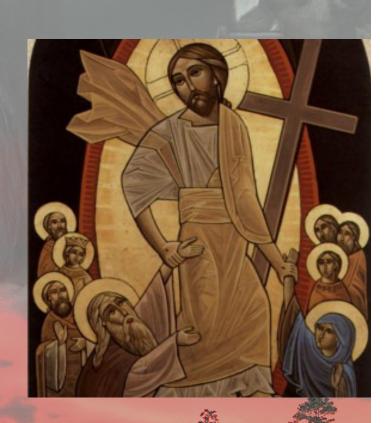
The Most Powerful Word!

- Can we forgive?
- We're seen "live"
 the slaughter of
 the Lord (in these
 martyrs).
- He has forgiven!
- What Power!



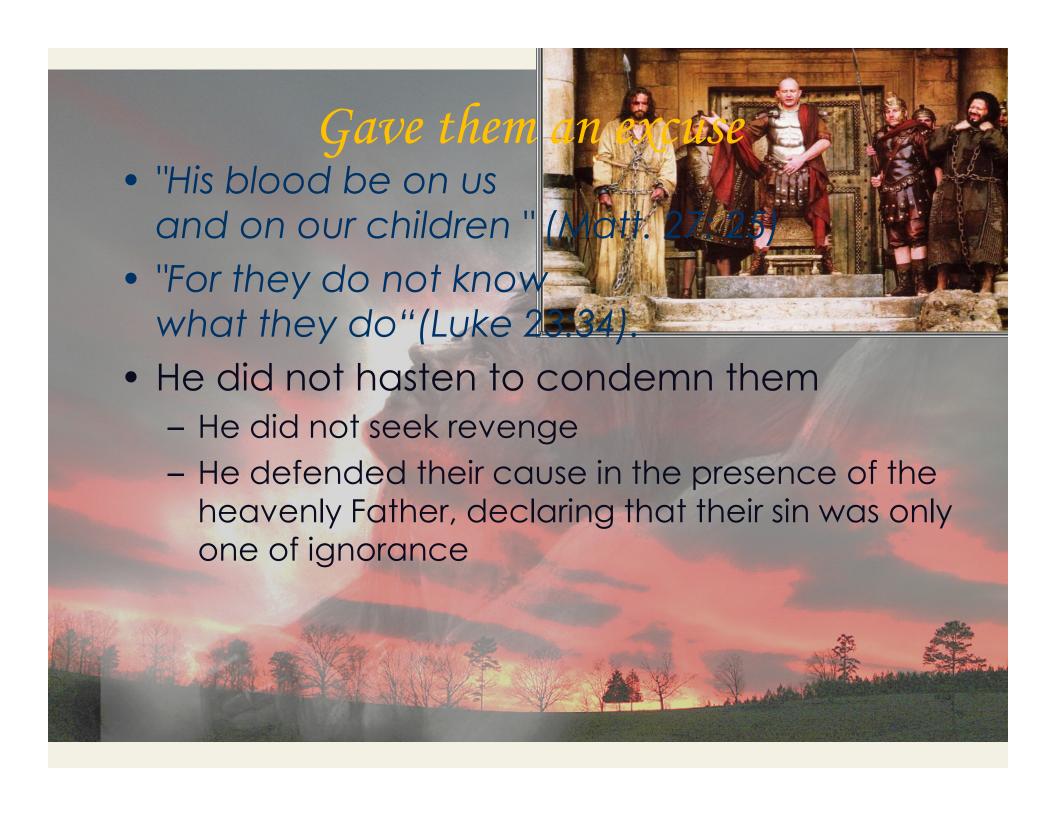
Preoccupied by the interests of others

- Not thinking about His own sufferings, pain, exhaustion, wounds
- His sole concern was His love for mankind
- First thought: to save His adversaries and persecutors



Cared for His enemies

- Before He cared for His friends or Himse
 - Offered forgiveness to His persecutors first
 - Forgave the thief
 - Directed His attention to His mother
 - After all that, He began to speak about Himself
- He was at the peak of torment and affliction at the hands of those for whom He was asking forgiveness!
- His love for them was greater than their hostility towards Him



Ignorant? What were their crimes?

- Priests
 - covetousness, jealousy, enmity,
 slander and double-crossing
- Public
 - reckless wrongful rejection
- Soldiers
 - atrocities, calamities, cursing and assaults
- Pontius Pilate
 - cowardice, injustice and indifference.
- Crime of homicide, torture and fabricating false evidence.
- "For they do not know what they do..

Put His teachings into practic

- "Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you," (Matt. 5:44)
- He accomplished that with faithfulness.
 - He forgave His persecutors and offenders
- Can we say?
 - "I will also do as you did my Lord for all those who harassed and hated me, who persecuted and mistreated me. I ask You to forgive them for they do not know what they do".
 - Sister of one of the martyrs



- If we do not forgive:
 - We take no part with Christ in His benevolence
 - We do not partake in His work
 - We do not follow His path
- Christ forgave us, so that we may forgive others, and enjoy the bliss of forgiveness





- Father, forgive them, for I have paid off the wages of their sin, and they stand in no debt.
- I have satisfied the divine justice;
- I repaid all their debts, now forgive them.
- Here I am dying on behalf of those who crucified Me and on behalf of those who loved Me.
- When I say, "Forgive them". I do not mean only those, but all those who seek refuge in My blood: All penitent sinners

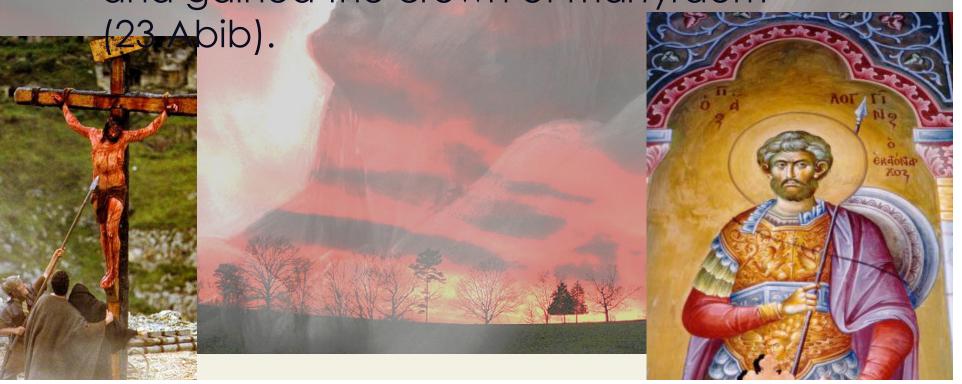
from the day of Adam to eternity.



• St. Longinus, the soldier

 He pierced Christ with a spear "not knowing what he was doing."

 He believed and preached in Cappadocia and gained the crown of martyrdom





• St. Arianus the governor of Ansena

A wild beast; fought the Christians fiercely

- He killed thousands of Christians.

 "Knowing not what he was doing", he continued in his persecutions until he believed in Christ and died a martyr (8 Baramhat)



Forgive those who believe and repent

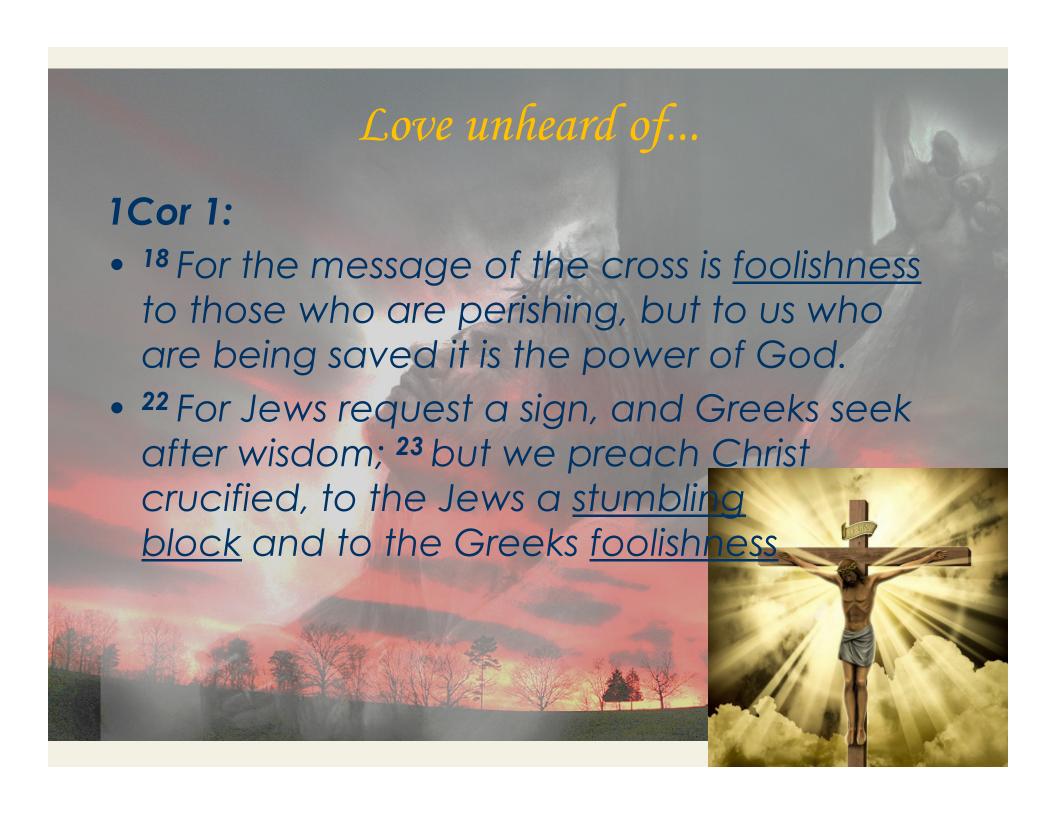
- Saul of Tarsus
- "He made havoc of the church, entering into every house and having men and women committed to prison" (Acts 8:3)
 - He took part in the stoning of St. Stephen
 - "He did not know what he was doing" until the Lord revealed Himself to him on the road to Damascus and found him a Chosen Vessel
- He believed and was baptized; he became Paul the Apostle who suffered more than any apostle.

Requirements: Faith and Penitence!

- Faith:
 - "For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son..."
 - Did the whole world attain salvation?
 - "...That whosoever <u>believes in Him</u> should not perish, but have everlasting life". (John 3:16).
- Penitence:
 - "I tell you, No; but, unless you <u>repent</u> you will a 11 likewise perish". (Luke 13:3).
- Would "Forgive them" apply to
 - Present day Jews?
 - Terrorist?
 - Athiests?

Ultimate Love

- Imagine! (In order to grasp the full significance)
- Forgive one who gave you a difficult time
- A person that would
 - charge you falsely, convict you unjustly,
 - instigate the people and authorities against you,
 - mock and insult you,
 - scourge you, hang you, nail your hands and feet
 - While at the peak of your agony and torment, would you forgive him, pray for him and even champion his cause???
- This is Supernatural Lave





- Devil strived to alienate people from God:
 - to block their path to salvation.
- "If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross"
 - Not have been able to say: "Forgive them"
- The supplication that all who had died in hope wished to hear.
- Forgiveness → Salvation

