

#2. PALE BLUE DOT

Voyager 1 was launched on September 5, 1977. The space probe's mission was to study Jupiter, Saturn and Saturn's moon, Titan. On February 14, 1990, as Voyager 1 was leaving our solar system, it turned its cameras back toward the sun and captured an image of earth, a pale blue dot in a sunbeam. This tiny planet is suspended in a universe of at least 14 billion light years in any direction. Nearly 2,000 years ago, the Creator of our vast universe left His throne in Heaven on an expensive journey to this pale blue dot. Though He knew what would befall Him, He decided to take the risk to save as many as possible.

18) Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. 19) Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. 20) But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. 21) And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. 22) Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 23) Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Matthew 1:18-23

Our Creator was born in manger. He is 'God with us.' He is the omnipotent commander of the angels who came to seek and to save the lost and reveal His Father's love. If Jesus was to save His people from their sins, He would need 2 things. He would need to provide a perfect life and an atoning death. He would need to restore what Adam had lost. What is righteousness? It is right doing; flawless obedience from birth to death.

You and I, however, do not have a flawless obedience to present to God. Even if we were to perfectly obey the Law of God from this moment to the end of life or time without ever sinning again in thought, word or action, it would not be enough to satisfy the claims of the Law of God because our future obedience cannot atone for our past sins. The only righteousness God can accept is the perfect life of Jesus Christ. We don't have a righteousness like His and never will have because we've all sinned. But what of Jesus? Did He have a perfect life?

21) For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. 2 Corinthians 5:21

15) For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin. Hebrews 4:15

22) Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23) Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously: 1 Peter 2:22,23

46) Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? John 8:46

Jesus thought no sin, did no sin, nor did He speak any sin. His life was flawless. He is the only one to ever do this for their entire lifetime. You would have thought people would be happy to welcome Jesus, but they were not.

1) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2) The same was in the beginning with God. 3) All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. John 1:1-3

John introduced Jesus as the Creator but not everybody rejoiced to see Him.

10) He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. 11) He came unto his own, and his own received him not. John 1:10,11

The world did not know Him nor did His nation receive Him. He lived a life of poverty with not where to lay His head. He endured suffering and temptation far beyond anything we have or shall ever be called upon to endure. Why was He living like this? It was to make it impossible for you and I to lose eternal life if we would believe on Him.

Satan, however, made sure that the life of Christ would not be easy. He tempted Him in the wilderness when Jesus was at His weakest. Most of the religious leaders rejected Him and most of His siblings did not believe Him either. This made the path of Jesus a thorny one to travel. The difficulties associated with the teachers of the nation rejecting Him was made still more painful by those within His own family. It was a relief to Him to go where this rejection did not exist. Jesus often found relief in being alone and communing with His heavenly Father.

One day a group of religious leaders thrust a woman taken in adultery into the midst. After a brief exchange with Him, the religious leaders dispersed and Jesus encouraged the woman with the hope of a transformed life. The Pharisees regrouped and questioned His claims, seeking to refute them.

16) And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. John 8:16

But Jesus said his record was true. His Father was with Him and had not left Him alone. The leaders asked, "Where is your father? Who are you?" Jesus once again answered that when they had crucified Him, they would know Him. He said His Father had sent Him and was always with Him. He was not alone.

Every day brought its terrible temptations. Every day He was weaving more threads into the robe of righteousness, that perfectly flawless character. Finally, the hour of His death was upon Him.

23) And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

In the final week of His life, Mary anointed Him with ointment, He rode into Jerusalem, and the Greeks wanting to see Him. Jesus knew He was heading to the cross. John 12:23

27) Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. John 12:27

There came a Voice from Heaven saying He would glorify His Son. The Father had always been with His Son, and this day was no different. Jesus knew His Father was always present – but disciples needed to hear it. They were going to be plunged into a terrible trial of their faith and needed to have the assurance that the Father acknowledged Jesus as His Son.

30) Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. 31) Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. 32) And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me. 33) This he said, signifying what death he should die. John 12:30-33

The destiny of the world was now hanging in the balance as Jesus made His way to Gethsemane at the foot of the Mount of Olives.

36) Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. Matthew 26:36

As Jesus entered Gethsemane to pray, He took with Him, Peter, James and John.

37) And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Matthew 26:37

He began to be deeply saddened. “Very heavy” is the strongest expression in the Greek language for depressing sorrow. The disciples had never seen Him this sad before.

38) Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. Matthew 26:38

Your sin and mine, together with the sins of the whole world were being placed upon Him. They were crushing out His life. Jesus was dying under the load. His sorrow was beyond description and He longed for human comfort.

39) And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou *wilt*. Matthew 26:39

Jesus clings convulsively to the ground. His agony is due to the very real possibility that sin was so hateful, it would cause His Father to be eternally separated from Him. Jesus and His Father had been one from eternity. The purity and holiness of their oneness was infinite. Jesus was overpowered by a terrible fear that God was removing His presence from Him. An angel comes to comfort Him and assure Him of His Father’s love.

43) And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. Luke 22:43

The angel surely told Jesus that His Father was greater and more powerful than Satan and that by enduring this terrible test He would see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied, for He would see a multitude of the human race saved, eternally saved.

Great drops of sweaty blood now dripped from Christ's brow. The Father suffered intensely as well. What would have happened if Jesus failed? Yet They took the risk of eternal loss. The mob comes to arrest Jesus and the disciples fled.

56) But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled. Matthew 26:56

Jesus was rushed to Annas and Caiaphas, then to Pilate, then to Herod and back again to Pilate. He was beaten, whipped, and crucified. His suffering lasted for hour after hour, not knowing if His suffering and death would be accepted as sufficient to atone for such an enormous weight of sin.

45) Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. Matthew 27:45

From Noon to 3:00pm, darkness fell over the land. Jesus was feeling alone for the first time in eternity. The weight of the sin made the separation feel real. We can only imagine the horror by separations we have felt. When at a young age we are separated by tragedy from our closest friends or family. It is so traumatic that we never really get over it. In that darkness, the Father hid His presence. To reveal Himself would have been too much for the people around the cross to endure. There with the holy angels, the Father suffered with His Son, yet He did not reveal His presence to Him. Jesus must suffer alone. His intense suffering from the thought of abandonment by His Father caused Him to cry out in anguish.

46) And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Matthew 27:46

“Why?!!,” Jesus cried out. Why, for I have always done everything that has been pleasing in your sight. I have never by so much as a fleeting thought transgressed any of your commandments. “Why have You” the God of mercy, My own Father from eternity, Who loved Me before the foundation of the world? “Why have You forsaken Me?” Your Son, the One You've been the closest to from eternity, the One Who has shared Your deepest thoughts, one with You as only two pure, holy beings can possibly be. Jesus was feeling the anguish which the sinner will feel when mercy shall no longer plead for the guilty race. He was experiencing what every sinner will feel who is finally lost, total abandonment by One He deeply loved.

23) And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Matthew 7:23

The agony of a child whose parent has abandoned them. The devastation of a friend betraying and abandoning a lifelong friend. The horror of a spouse of many years walking away from their husband or wife saying, 'I never knew you.' Jesus in His hour of anguish could no longer sense His Father's presence and yet He was there as every loving parent would be when their child is suffering.

50) Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.
Matthew 27:50

When Jesus breathed His last, victory over death & grave were assured. The sacrifice was accepted. On Sunday morning, Jesus came forth from the tomb a conqueror. He was raised for our justification. At great cost, Jesus atoned for your sin and mine. Why did He take such a risk, a risk of failure and eternal loss?

16) For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16

There were two things needed for the salvation of every individual. One is a perfect life that will be acceptable to the Law of God and the other is an atonement for sins committed. Jesus accomplished both by His life and death. He did so to provide a way to bestow eternal righteousness upon as many as would believe on Him, to make it impossible to be lost if we exercised faith in Him. It was to elevate you to a seat on His throne, so He could have you close to Him and never be in danger again. The Father bowed at the cross of Christ and declared the sacrifice was sufficient. Will you bow at the cross and surrender your life to Him who loves you with an everlasting love?