Easter 2003

"Sunshine, dreamlike sand, heavenly peace" The travel brochure had promised quite a lot. Brigitte and Peter had been looking forward immensely to this Easter vacation. The travel agent could not have done anything about the fact that, for one whole week, it poured in buckets. He might have known that the beach was teeming with garbage, however. What a nuisance. And there was probably no one, other than the travel agent, who would make you believe that the noise from the aeroplanes and the nearby disco had anything at all to do with heavenly peace. Brigitte and Peter are bitterly disappointed. Their Easter vacation ended up to be a nightmare because no one had told them the whole truth.

The disappointment at Easter some 2,000 years ago was a different story: someone had told the pure truth, and still there were some that were profoundly disappointed. A certain Cleopas and his travelling companion were talking, sharing the frustration that lived in their souls: "But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel" But now He was dead. The man they had set their hopes on had died on the cross. And then their last glimmer of hope had died, they complained to a stranger who joined them. Angels had said that the Crucified One still lived, but He had simply gone? And with Him their last hope.

Poor Cleopas! His hope was shaky. He and his companion had not listened properly, had believed the wrong thing. "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" The unknown traveller, the Risen One, shook them into wakefulness!

How easily do we not confuse wishful thinking with peoples' promises or the promises of the Most High. But the story of Cleopas teaches us just how dangerous this is. The result: disappointment, the termination of the relationship, or accusations. That is why it is so important to listen carefully and clarify matters where necessary.

What did the Lord promise? That He would create peaceful, heavenly conditions here on earth before His return? No! That the people who follow Him would have health, honour, power, and fame heaped upon them? No! That His servants would be infallible, and His followers angelic? Certainly not.

What then?

- "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed".

- "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand" (John 10:27,28).
- "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die" (John 11:25,26).
- "And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).
- "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:3).

Easter morning: God called His Son from the grave. He resurrected for our salvation. This is how the Almighty underlined His own words: "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." And we want to listen to Him, believe Him without bias, and so experience perfect Easter joy.

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