

NEWS AND VIEWS
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*“Southern Baptists with the Full
Gospel for the Whole World”*

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What does this mean??? Have you ever noticed how many times we ask that question in our day to day lives? Whether it's a mysterious email, or a cryptic "snail" mail letter, we can be puzzled at the message we receive and try to get a clear interpretation. And when a strange circumstance occurs we try to assess the situation to determine what action, if any, is necessary and required. And don't let me get one of those new-fangled text messages!!! Trying to figure out what some person means by words that are written on a phone you can carry in your pocket...who would have ever thought of such? Then there was the message that Mr. Morse sent over his telegraph in 1844 ...*What hath God wrought?*

This message was not original with the inventor and communication of Morse Code, but found in the following passage and its source is the living God. Listen as the Lord speaks through a man named Balaam who refused the King of Moab's edict to curse Israel. God often speaks through pagan people.

Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought! (Num. 23:23)

Human history has a long history of interpreting meaning. Thinking that this is part of what it means to be created in the image and likeness of God, we ask these questions about meaning throughout the generations...especially in light of how humanity has dealt with the Jewish nation. One such descendant of Abraham lived through the horrors of the Nazi death camps. His name was Viktor Frankl, and here is an excerpt from his book *Man's Search For Meaning*.

Fifteen hundred persons had been traveling by train for several days and nights: there were eighty people in each coach. All had to lie on top of their luggage, the few remnants of their personal possessions. The carriages were so full that only the top parts of the windows were free to let in the grey of dawn. Everyone expected the train to head for some munitions factory, in which we would be employed as forced labor. We did not know whether we were still in Silesia or already in Poland. The engine's whistle had an uncanny sound, like a cry for help sent out in commiseration for the unhappy load which it was destined to lead into perdition. Then the train shunted, obviously nearing a main station. Suddenly a cry broke from the ranks of the anxious passengers, "There is a sign, Auschwitz!" Everyone's heart missed a beat at that moment. Auschwitz—the very name stood for all that was horrible: gas chambers, crematoriums, massacres. Slowly, almost hesitatingly, the train moved on as if it wanted to spare its passengers the dreadful realization as long as possible: Auschwitz!

With the progressive dawn, the outlines of an immense camp became visible: long stretches of several rows of barbed wire fences; watch towers; search lights; and long columns of ragged human figures, grey in the greyness of dawn, trekking along the straight desolate roads, to what destination we did not know. There were isolated shouts and whistles of command. We did not know their meaning. My imagination led me to see gallows with people dangling on them. I was horrified, but this was just as well, because step by step we had to become accustomed to a terrible and immense horror.

I'm thinking that a man who lived through so much death and destruction would have asked that question a lot...*What does this mean??* He was a successful psychiatrist and a learned man who lived through an experience that stripped him of everything except what truly mattered and what truly had meaning. Life in the midst of death. Last month I spent some time telling you about traveling on this road of life with death ever present. This month I want to get us to a place where we need to be asking some meaningful questions about meaning of life. Our culture, even the Christian culture, may be all wrapped up in fables about Easter Egg Hunts, Easter Bunnies and Baskets, but what does it all mean? Let's start by asking *What hath God wrought?*

Sometimes the greatest questions about meaning-making can come from pagans in authority. Consider... *Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" (Matt 27:22)*

Our hope is built on the reality of a vacant cross and an empty tomb. Our eternal death was swallowed up by the execution of Jesus Messiah...Our everlasting life is revealed in the power of God to raise Jesus from the dead. And the Holy Spirit is given to us as a witness that these things are true. We live because He lives. This is the meaning of Resurrection Day on April 1, 2018. What will *you* do with Jesus on that day...don't be an April Fool! We were built to make meaning...we were built to worship Jesus the King!

Blessings to you,
Pastor Sam