

Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

“. . . Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body.” - Ephesians 5:23

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WHY DID JESUS CRY?

by Ted J. Clarke

INTRODUCTION

In our Western society many believe manliness and crying are exclusive of one another. If a male cries, he isn't a man; if he is a man, he won't cry. Accordingly, many men hide their emotions and fight back the tears that would normally come. Young boys are told not to cry - to be a man, because men don't cry. Many male children are raised believing it is wrong to shed tears, whatever the situation. We can hardly be surprised that these boys turn into men who have difficulty expressing their emotions, first to their peer groups and later to their wives. God created us with the ability to cry when there is good reason to do so (cf. Psalm 139).

The Bible notes that Jesus Christ was both fully man and fully God (I Timothy 2:5; Colossians 2:9). As a male human being, Jesus wept. He did so at the tomb of His dear friend Lazarus (John 11:35). As Jesus entered Jerusalem for the last time during His teaching ministry He wept over the city (Luke 19:41). In the Garden of Gethsemane, shortly before His betrayal by Judas and His soon coming death on the cross, Jesus agonized and wept "with strong crying and tears" (Hebrews 5:7; cf. Luke 22:39-45). Was Jesus less than a man because he cried? Absolutely not, but it is interesting to consider what brought tears to the eyes of Jesus.

WHY JESUS CRIED

The shortest verse in the English Bible is John 11:35, "Jesus wept." That is one of the first verses little children memorize in Bible school, but perhaps one of the least explained. Why did Jesus weep at the tomb of Lazarus? Maybe it was a combination of things. He may have wept for His own loss of a friend, though He knew He could raise him from the dead. He may have been weeping in compassion for the others that wept. Are you not sometimes moved to tears by the crying of others? Perhaps Jesus was thinking of His own death, which He knew was to come (cf. Matthew 16:21-24). Perhaps He was thinking of the evil work of Satan in bringing death to mankind through sin (Hebrews 2:14-15), and how it would require His (Christ's) own death to defeat that grip Satan had on mankind. However one looks at this event, Jesus wept because of death - death in general, the death of Lazarus, or His own death to come. It would not be "unmanly" for any male to weep for the same reasons.

In Luke 19:41-44, we are told that Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem; the coming destruction of that city and its people. In Luke 21:1-32 Christ foretold the awful fate of Jerusalem and the Jews, which was fulfilled when Roman armies

destroyed the city and the temple in AD 70. The Jewish historian, Josephus, said that over one million Jews were killed and nearly 100,000 taken captive by the Roman armies (*Works of Josephus: Wars VI, 420*). In Matthew 23:37-39, Jesus noted that the rejection of Him by the Jews sealed the doom of their city and those who rejected Him. These were lost souls whose eternal damnation was certain because they rejected Him as God's Son and mankind's Savior (John 1:11-12; 12:42-43; 48; 14:6). Yes, Jesus cried over lost souls who rejected Him as the Messiah, knowing those souls would be tormented for eternity (Matthew 10:28; 25:46). It cannot be wrong for anyone to cry over lost souls, those who do not obey the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Finally, in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus agonized and wept with such strong crying and tears that He sweat drops of blood (Luke 22:44; Hebrews 5:7). The anguish of Christ's soul was the suffering and death He faced as He went to the cross for the sins of the lost world. John tells us that the Word was eternally God before He became flesh (John 1:1, 14, 18). Though Jesus was not guilty of sinning Himself, He bore the penalty for our sins on the cross (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:21-24). Part of that penalty, besides the physical anguish and pain He bore, was the separation of His spirit or soul from God for those six hours He hung upon the cross (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:25-34). The greatest tragedy anyone could ever experience is separation from God. Though Christ's separation from God was temporary, the contemplation of a death that would cause Him to have to be separated from the Heavenly Father for even six hours brought forth the strongest crying and anguish our Lord ever experienced. Are there people who have never understood that their souls are their most precious possessions (Matthew 16:26)? Are there those precious souls who do not know that separation from God for eternity will be as though one was burning in a lake of fire or being eaten by worms forever and ever (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Mark 9:42-48)? Should one cry over the lost state of one's own soul, or over the billions of other lost souls? Would it be "too feminine" to cry over such matters?

WHEN IS THE LAST TIME YOU CRIED?

I have the habit of listening to the morning news programs on TV as I cleaning up for the day. From the bathroom sink I could hear the story about a New York elementary school principal who had been shot to death while in the housing projects looking for an absent student. This principal really cared about his students. Children and mothers told newscasters how much this man had done for them:

seeing that they had food or clothes; getting them off drugs and out of gangs, and so on. They cried as they told their stories of this man's love and sacrifices on their behalf. I listened as I shaved and was touched by what they said. Tears welled up in my eyes as I thought of this man's dedication to these children, the good he had done, the lives he had touched and made better, and the senseless death he suffered. He was killed in the crossfire of rival gang violence, perhaps by some of those whom he sought to save. He was a good man, an innocent victim. Some asked, "How can he be replaced?"

Then it was over. The newscast went quickly to another story. Within minutes my emotions had subsided and my mind went on to other things. I cannot even remember his name. In a few days he would be buried and his name probably forgotten by a new generation.

Suddenly, I became ashamed. I thought to myself, "I am shedding tears for a man I never knew personally and really knew little about; a man who reportedly did good unto others, but never did anything directly for myself. **When is the last time I cried about Jesus Christ, what He had to endure, and what He has done directly for me?**" I couldn't remember the last time, but I cried that Friday morning as I contemplated the love shown by Christ and the suffering and death He endured on my behalf and yours. Would this principal have willingly given his life to save others? There is no way I can know that, but I do know that Jesus was dedicated to the Father and to mankind, even to the point of willingly going to the cross as an innocent victim, for my sins and yours. No one can ever replace the Lord and what He did (Acts 4:12; John 14:6). **No one has ever loved me more or sacrificed more for me than Jesus (Romans 5:8-9)!** That is the good news of the gospel story in the New Testament. I do not consider myself less of a man for crying in sorrow because my sins caused the Son of God to die on the cross. There are times when it ought to be impossible to think about and talk about Christ's death, burial and resurrection with dry eyes!

Christians do not need to walk about with tear filled eyes all of the time, but if you cannot remember the last time you cried when you thought about what Jesus has done for you, maybe you are not thinking about it as seriously as you should. Do not let the memory of what Jesus has done for you fade with time. Read and re-read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Also read the Acts to see Great Commission carried out, as the apostles save souls by telling of this great love and salvation Christ brings. Read the epistles as they fill in the details of what response we should make to the knowledge of and possession of the gracious salvation through Christ. Refresh

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your minds and sensitize your emotions as you reflect on the love and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Remember the weekly memorial of the Lord's Supper that God gave to the church to keep us "in remembrance" of Christ's body and blood sacrificed for us (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29).

CONCLUSION

Have you **ever** been moved to tears by the love of Jesus? Are you **still** occasionally moved to tears when you concentrate on that love He has shown? When is the last time you were moved to tears by thinking of the only Savior, Jesus Christ?

Do the things that made Jesus cry also make you weep? Do you have tears in your eyes as you think of Satan bringing mankind into death through sin; does the prospect of lost souls dying, forever separated from God make you sob; do your eyes ever moisten or tears flow when you think of Jesus' agony in bearing the penalty for your own sins? Peter said that Christ is our example (1 Peter 2:21-22), and Paul said to imitate Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1). Have you shed tears in common with Jesus?

A most beautiful concluding thought on this topic is expressed by the song, "No Tears In Heaven." Also, Revelation 21:4 says, **"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes,"** and continues by saying that the things that cause sorrow and tears on earth will be totally missing from heaven! Those who cry on earth as Jesus cried will never cry again. Those who are not moved to faith and obedience by the matters which caused the Lord to cry will be cast into the outer darkness where there will be "weeping and gnashing of teeth" for eternity (Matthew 25:30, 46).

SOLD FOR ONE MORSEL OF MEAT

by Victor M. Eskew

"For ye are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:26-29). When one obeys the gospel, that person becomes a child of God. As children, we are heirs, that is, we have promise of an inheritance. That inheritance is due to our unique birthright.

In a time long past, two brothers were born, twins. Throughout their lives they struggled with one another. One boy was a home body. The other was an outdoorsman. Having returned from a long hunt, the outdoorsman was extremely hungry. When he entered his home, his brother had prepared a delicious pot of soup. When the older brother asked for a portion of the soup, the younger brother told him he could gladly have some if he would sell his birthright. Reasoning that if he did not get food he would die anyway, and his birthright would profit him nothing, he agreed to the sale. At that point in time, Esau lost many rewards that came from possessing the birthright. He sold a precious possession for a morsel of meat (cf. Genesis 27).

The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews picked up on this Old Testament narrative. He wrote: "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright" (Heb. 12:15-16). The inspired writer understood that what happened to Esau could easily happen to God's children. For a small, meager sum they could give up the blessing that comes from being a child of God.

Sadly, many in the church are selling their birthrights for a morsel of meat. For some the morsel is a night of pleasure in the arms of one to whom they are not married. For others, it is some worldly project that will one day be destroyed. For still others, it is some unlawful form of recreation such as alcohol, drugs, gambling, pornography, dancing, or revelry. Others are selling their birthrights for bad peer groups, gangs, and unhealthy boyfriend/girlfriend relationships. Other morsels of meat consist of riches, relaxation, and retirement.

The Hebrew penman encouraged his readers to "look diligently" at their lives. We must do the same. Are you selling your birthright? Is the trade really worth it? Will it benefit you in the hereafter? Some of us need to answer these questions honestly. Before you close that deal with Satan, take the contract back, and tear up the deal. Make your place sure and secure in the family of God.

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SALVATION IN CHRIST

Bible Lesson Number Six

"*Thou art the Christ . . .*" is the confession that Peter made (**Matthew 16:16**). The world Christ means anointed, a king. The Hebrew word is Messiah. The nation of Israel looked for the King, the offspring of David. Both the Jews and the Samaritans looked for the Messiah (**John 7:42; John 4:25**). They did not, for the most part, believe that Jesus was the Christ. Jesus himself confessed that He was the Christ before the High Priest (**Matthew 26:63-65**) and before Pilate (**Mark 15:2** esp. NIV).

Paul explained that the promise to Abraham and his "seed" concerned the "Christ" (**Galatians 3:16**). Peter identified Jesus as "both Lord and Christ" (**Acts 2:36**).

To be in Jesus Christ is to be the recipient of "all spiritual blessings" (**Ephesians 1:3**) including redemption and the forgiveness of sins (**Romans 3:24; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:4**). Furthermore, there is no salvation in any other (**Acts 4:12**).

How does one get INTO Christ Jesus?

Galatians 3:26 says: "*For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*" In the context of this verse, Paul had contrasted the Law and the Faith. The term faith, as used here, refers to the entire system of the gospel as preached by the inspired men. Jude also used the word in the same manner when he wrote that Christians "... should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (**Jude 3**). It is not just mental acceptance that justifies. If it were the rulers would be saved who believed (mentally only) on Jesus, but, would not confess him because "... they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (**John 12:42, 43**). The implication is, of course, that they did not have the "praise of God." In addition to that, even the devils would be saved because they also believe (**James 2:19**).

Without repentance we will perish (**Luke 13:3**). God has commanded all men everywhere to repent (**Acts 17:30**). Repentance is "unto life" (**Acts 11:18**).

Confessing Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God is also a requirement if one expects to obtain "the praise of God" (**John 12:42, 43**). Jesus said we should confess Him (**Matthew 10:32, 33**). Paul, by inspiration wrote that the confession is made "with the mouth" (**Romans 10:9, 10**).

Having heard the gospel of Jesus Christ, believed it, repented of sin and confessed Him, one is then baptized INTO Him (**Romans 6:1-6**). This is also shown in the very next statement which follows **Galatians 3:26**. "*For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ*" (**Galatians 3:26, 27**).

Faith in God and obedience to His word have been required in every dispensation. But, the faith and obedience of those who lived before Jesus died, was buried and raised from the dead did not provide for

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them forgiveness until He came and shed His blood (**Hebrews 9:15**).

A synecdoche is "a figure of speech by which a part is put for the whole (as *fifty sails for fifty ships*) . . ." (Webster). Obviously, if an item were not a part of the whole, it could not be used to stand for the whole. In the case of what is necessary to get into Christ, to obtain the forgiveness of sins, to be redeemed, etc., if something were not required at all, it could not be used as a figure of speech to stand for the entirety of what is required. Those that "hear" Jesus, shall live (**John 5:25**). Those who "believe" in him will have everlasting life (**John 3:16**). God granted "repentance unto life" to the Gentiles (**Acts 11:18**). Those who "confess" Jesus, obtain salvation (**Romans 10:9, 10**). "Baptism" saves us (**1 Peter 3:21**). Of course, all of these must be done in order for any one of them to be effective for our salvation in Christ. Also, there must be love for God and man. Without these things, one cannot be IN Christ. Outside of Christ, one is lost.

Questions

1. What is the meaning of the word "Christ"?
2. Who is the "seed" of Abraham in whom all people will be blessed?
3. Give two ways in which the word "faith" is used in the Bible.
4. Where is salvation? In what location?
5. What is a synecdoche?
6. What must be true of any item before it can be used as a synecdoche?
7. How does one get INTO Christ?
8. Can one be saved outside of Christ?
9. What must be in the heart of everyone who truly wants to please God?

"WHAT IF?"

by Wayne Brewer

What if your life was about to end and you knew eight hours in advance? Would you make some changes? Would you mend some fences? Would your attitude toward others change?

What if you knew the next time you see a lost friend or family member it would be the last opportunity you would have to proclaim the Gospel to them? Would you still feel uncomfortable about proclaiming God's plan of salvation to them? Or would you be eager and prepared?

What if the next three words you spoke were going to be your last three words to someone who has not obeyed the Gospel and you knew in advance they would be? Would you say, "I love you" or "Obey the Gospel"?

What if your next prayer was going to be your last and you knew it? Would its contents be of wanting of repentance and thanksgiving?

What if the next time the collection was taken would be your last opportunity to give back part of what you have been blessed with? Would you give more?

What if the next song of praise was your last chance to praise God in song and you knew it? Would you give more thought to the words as you sang?

What if the next sermon you hear would be your last and you knew it? Would you pay closer attention?

What if you only had one more hour to study God's word? Would you make the most of it?

What if judgment day was today? Would you be ready? If not, get ready. Because it could be !!

All of these "What ifs" will be reality and perhaps sooner than we think!

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IS REINCARNATION THE TRUTH?

by Marvin Rickett

Reincarnation is the belief that after this life, one will be reborn into another life on earth; and some in this life lived as another person in a previous life. In a survey taken a decade ago, nearly one in four Americans said they believed in reincarnation. It may be more than that now. Where do people in a "Christian nation" come up with such an idea? It certainly does not come from Christian teaching. It has infiltrated from Eastern religions, but it is based chiefly upon the reasoning: "If I don't get it right the first time around, I will have another chance."

It is not a new belief. It was introduced into organized religion by the Hindus and later the by the Buddhists. Some believed it in New Testament times: Hence the Nero redivivus myth - that Emperor Domitian was a reviving of Nero, the beast of Revelation who received the deadly wound and survived: "the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven" (Revelation 17:11).

Is reincarnation the truth? Or is it just a product of fertile human imagination? The only sure information we have of life before or beyond this life is the Bible. It is the Word of God. If reincarnation is the truth, the Bible will somewhere reveal, confirm and support it. Where is it? Its proponents who claim affiliation with the Christian religion are hard-put to find any Bible support.

Some appeal to Job 1:21, 22, where Job says, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither." They reason: If Job is to return to a womb, it means he will be reborn into another, later life. He says no such thing! If he were speaking literally, it would have to be his own mother's womb he returns to. Actually, he is saying that he can't take this world's goods with him when he leaves this life, so what if he is deprived of them now? He says nothing of another life.

Others think they find an allusion to reincarnation in Jeremiah 1:4, 5, where the Lord tells Jeremiah, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee" (1:5). They reason that if God knew Jeremiah before he was conceived, then He must have known him in a previous life. This is reading too much into the passage. It is not speaking about a previous existence but of the foreknowledge of God. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate . . ." (Romans 8:29).

Some read in Psalm 139:13-16, "thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were

written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them;" and think they see reincarnation. But nothing in the passage speaks of a previous life.

Others try to find reincarnation in Galatians 1:15, 16, where the apostle Paul says that God "separated me from my mother's womb." But this says nothing of a previous life. His existence began in the womb. God separated Paul from his mother's womb to preach Christ to the heathen.

Perhaps the Scripture they use most in their vain attempt to find support for the doctrine of reincarnation is Matthew 11:14. "And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come." Combining this with Malachi 4:5, 6, they conclude: "See, John the Baptist is the reincarnation of Elijah!" "If you will receive it" means if you understand and accept reincarnation you will know that John is actually a reincarnated Elijah! There are two insurmountable obstacles to this conclusion: (1) Elijah's appearance on the mount of transfiguration **after** this declaration - he still retained his identity; and (2) the correct interpretation is back in Luke 1:17 - John came in the **spirit** and **power** of Elijah. It wasn't a literal reincarnation at all. John was **like** Elijah.

The fact is, there is just no evidence in the Bible that there is such a thing as reincarnation. There is the absence of anyone who had a previous life or will have a future life on earth. On the other hand, the Bible urges folks to live this one life righteously, soberly and godly (Titus 2:11, 12). It plainly implies that there will be no second chance. Abraham told the rich man, "thou in thy lifetime" had all the chance you will get (Luke 16:25-31).

There is one verse that forever refutes the theory of reincarnation. Hebrews 9:27 says, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement." If reincarnation were a fact, a man would die many times - after each incarnation. Instead of another earthly life following death, there is only the judgment. Just as surely as Jesus suffered only once on the cross for the sins of the many (Hebrews 9:28), so each person lives and dies only once.

May a Christian believe in the doctrine of reincarnation with no harm done? Surely, the honest person is going to believe only that for which he has adequate evidence. (Testimonials of those who "think" they have memories and impressions from a former life are not adequate evidence.) The doctrine of reincarnation is not harmless! It causes folks to procrastinate, to put off doing right because they think they will have a second chance in another life. This is fatal thinking! It builds a false hope - the hope of another chance when there is none. It causes people to speculate idly about another life when their time could be better spent pursuing their present duty. Since we go through life only once, we must be concerned with getting it right, now, the first (only) time through.

No, reincarnation is not the truth. It has no reality. It does not happen!

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A CHRISTIAN FATHER IS A PROTECTOR

by David Macy

Ordinarily we only hear about a man protecting his family physically. We often hear the question, "What would you do if someone broke into your home and attacked your family?" "Would you kill them or would you stand by and let your family be abused?" I am sure there are several different opinions on this subject. But the point is most people think of a father's protection in terms of physical protection, but a Christian father protects his children in several ways. You could beat the stuffing out of everyone who tried to abuse your family in any way, and still be a poor all around protector.

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Ephesians 6:12). A Christian father protects his family spiritually. He stands between them and the ferocious powers of darkness. The possible assault of a man or even men against a family is nothing compared to the daily assault of Satan and all of his evil forces. But even the old devil himself is forced to recognize the authority of the husband and father in the home and his God given role as protector. I wrestled with Satan often to protect my precious children and without the strength which Jesus gives I would have lost the battle every time. A Christian father also protects his family mentally and emotionally. He stands against anything which would be detrimental to their emotional health. Pornography is detrimental and destructive so he stands against pornography. Dirty movies are detrimental so he stands against dirty movies. False teaching is detrimental so he stands against false teaching. I know from experience that it is very difficult to keep any child, and especially teenagers, away from evil influences, and even some participation in things which you do not approve, but just strongly voicing your disapproval carries much more weight than you may realize.

A real life father who protects in the true sense is a rarity today, but what a beautiful thing it is when you find one and observe his words and actions which are far more precious than a great abundance of riches to his family. They are safe on many fronts, while most families are being bombarded with little or no protection, and often are completely destroyed. Yes, one Christian man can do worlds of good.

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OPPOSITE VIEWS

Two Christian wives sat mending their husbands' pants. One of them said to the other, "My poor John is so discouraged in his church work. He said the other day he felt like quitting. Nothing goes right for him". The other replied, "Why, my husband was saying just the opposite! He is so enthused it seems that the Lord is closer to him than ever before". A hushed silence fell as they continued to mend the trousers, one patching the KNEES, the other the SEAT.

YOUR CHILDREN

It is hard to convince your children: That the work of the church is really important when you are not taking an active part in the work of the church.

It is hard to convince your children: That faithfulness to the church is the most important loyalty in life when you permit them to forsake worship services to engage in other activities.

It is hard to convince your children: That the church is the body of Christ when you constantly complain and criticize the efforts of those who care enough to be doing something.

It is hard to convince your children: That the church is the world's most important institution when you give so little to finance the church's work.

It is hard to convince your children: That they can believe God's Word if you cannot believe Him enough to place the kingdom of God first in your life.

CONTRIBUTIONS

CHURCHES

| | |
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GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (1 Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; 1 Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2, 3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

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