

Title: **“HE BEHELD THE CITY AND WEPT”**
Text: Luke 19:41-44
Subject: *The Savior’s Tears*
Date: Sunday Evening — December 26, 2004
Tape # Y-54b
Readings: *Ron Wood and Merle Hart*
Introduction:

Among the ancient pagans, there were numerous weeping gods. The dismembered moon goddess of the ancient Mexicans is portrayed as having tears of gold flowing from her eyes. In Joseph Smith’s Book of Mormon, he relates his fabrication of a time when Enoch saw God weeping, tears that fell as rain upon the mountains. (Mr. Smith must have smoked one too many peace pipes with the Western Indians!)

Of course, we have no regard for pagan idols and the religious myths built around them. But, tonight, I want us to look at three texts of Scripture that portray God our Savior weeping tears more precious than gold. In these three texts of Scripture we see the incarnate God, our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ in tears. Surely, there are things to be observed in the tender heart of our Savior, both to instruct and comfort us, as we see him weeping.

JOHN 11:35

First, I want us to turn to John 11. Here we see a wondrous thing. You know the context. Lazarus, a man the Savior loved, has died. The Lord Jesus has come to raise him from the dead. Lazarus’ sisters, Martha and Mary, were broken-hearted and weeping. In the company of his bereaved friends at the tomb of Lazarus, we see the Son of God, weeping and groaning in himself (vv. 32-38).

(John 11:32-38) Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. (33) When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, (34) And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. (35) Jesus wept. (36) Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! (37) And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? (38) Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

“*Jesus wept.*” — That 35th verse is the smallest verse in the entire Bible. Yet, in some respects, it is the largest. Here is our incarnate God, weeping with his weeping people. **What can this mean?** Why has God the Holy Spirit caused these words to be written? What do they teach us?

- The Lord Jesus Christ, our blessed God and Savior, is a real Man, touched with the feeling of our infirmities.
- His love for Lazarus was great. — “*Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!*” Oh, how the Son of God loves us!
- Though we sorrow not as others who have no hope, God’s people feel pain and sorrow just like other people do. — Sorrow does not necessarily imply rebellion against the will of God, or unbelief. — The most fragrant flowers are found growing in the soil of sorrow. — Were there no tears in our eyes, there could be no rainbow in our souls.
- If our God and Savior is so tender and sympathetic that the sorrows of his friends caused him to weep, how much more we ought to weep with those who weep and mourn with those who mourn!

HEBREWS 5:7-8

Now, turn to Hebrews 5:7-8. Here we see a description of our Savior in the days of his flesh.

(Hebrews 5:7-8) Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; (8) Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.

I have no doubt that this passage has specific reference to our Savior’s agony of heart and soul in Gethsemane.

(Mark 14:34-36) And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch. 35 And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. 36 And he said, Abba, Father, all things *are* possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.

In his time of great heaviness, sorrow and distress, we find our Lord Jesus in prayer. What an example he sets before us. The first one to whom we should turn in every time of trouble is our heavenly Father. Our God should be the first to hear the words of our complaints. He may or may not relieve our trouble; but it is good for our souls for us to unburden our hearts at the throne of grace. There, and only there, will we discover the all-sufficiency of his grace.

(Hebrews 4:16) Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

(James 5:13) Is any among you afflicted? let him pray.

What was the cause of this great heaviness and sorrow? What was it that crushed our Master’s heart? What so greatly disturbed him?

- Not The Fear Of Physical Pain.
- Not The Fear Of Death.
- Not Even the Fear Of Dying Upon The Cross.

That which crushed our Savior’s heart was the anticipation of being made sin for us. The heavy, heavy burden which crushed his very soul was the enormous load of sin and guilt, the sin and guilt of all God’s elect which was about to be his.

Our Savior’s great sorrow was caused by his anticipation of being made sin for us. “It was,” wrote *J.C. Ryle*, “a sense of the unutterable weight of our sins and transgressions which were then specially laid upon him.”

- He who knew no sin was about to be made sin for us!
- He who is the only man really who knows what sin is, the only man who sees sin as God, was about to become sin!
- He who is the holy, harmless, undefiled Lamb of God, was about to be made a curse for us.
- The holy Son of God was about to be forsaken by his Father.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, “*began to be sore amazed*” to be in great consternation and astonishment, at the sight of all the sins of his people coming upon him; at the black storm of wrath, that was gathering thick over him; at the sword of justice which was brandished against him;

and at the curses of the righteous law, which, like thunderbolts of vengeance from heaven, were directed at him. No wonder the verse closes by telling us that, in consideration of these things, our Savior began “*to be very heavy!*”

That which crushed our Savior’s very heart and soul was the very thing for which he came into the world — **THE PROSPECT OF WHAT HE MUST ENDURE AS OUR SUBSTITUTE.**

Let me say it once more. The message of this blessed Book is Substitution. The Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate God, our Mediator and Surety died in our place, in the place of God’s elect, as our Substitute. By his own blood, when he was made sin for us, when he was slain in our stead, he satisfied the justice of God for us, magnified his holy law, made it honorable, and purchased for us the complete, everlasting forgiveness of all our sins. He died, the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. Christ died at Calvary so that God might be both just and the Justifier of all who believe. It is written, “**by mercy and truth iniquity is purged**” (Pro. 16:7).

(Romans 3:19-28 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin. 21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. 27 Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. 28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

(Ephesians 1:7) In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.

Since the Lord Jesus Christ died as the sinners' Substitute, since he has met and fully satisfied the justice of God for us, believing sinners have no reason ever to fear condemnation by God, accusation before God, or separation from God.

(Romans 8:1-4) *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

(Romans 8:31-39) **What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?** 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 **Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?** *It is* God that justifieth. 34 **Who is he that condemneth?** *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35 **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?** *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Do you see this, my brother, my sister? Since Christ died for me I cannot die. If you are in Christ, for you there is no possibility...

- Of Condemnation!
- Of Accusation!
- Of Separation!

It was the enormous load of my sin and my guilt which crushed my Savior’s heart in Gethsemane!

(Isaiah 53:4-6) Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

LUKE 19:41-44

Now, turn with me to Luke 19:41-44. Here we see the Lord Jesus weeping over the city of Jerusalem.

(Luke 19:41-44) And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, (42) Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things *which belong* unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. (43) For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, (44) And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

- **Behold the Man Christ Jesus.** — Tender! — Merciful! — Gracious! — Compassionate!
- **Behold your God, full of compassion!** — “*He is gracious, full of compassion*” (Ps. 112:4).

(Psalms 78:38-39) But he, *being* full of compassion, forgave *their* iniquity, and destroyed *them* not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath. (39) For he remembered that they *were but* flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.

(Psalms 86:15) But thou, O Lord, *art* a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.

(Psalms 111:4) He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion.

(Psalms 145:8-9) The LORD *is* gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. (9) The LORD *is* good to all: and his tender mercies *are* over all his works.

Here we see the great tenderness and compassion of our Lord Jesus Christ toward sinners. When he came near Jerusalem for the last time, “*He beheld the city and wept over it.*” He knew the character of the people who lived in Jerusalem. Their cruelty, their self-righteousness, their stubbornness, their obstinate prejudice against the gospel, their pride of heart were all things open to him. He knew that they were plotting to murder him, and that in just a few days their hands would drip with his blood. Yet, He beheld the city and wept.

Why did he weep over the lost and ruined city? His own words in these four verses give us three distinct reasons for his great pity.

- The Lord Jesus wept for his countrymen because **they were ignorant of the gospel** (v. 42).

(Luke 19:42) Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things *which belong* unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

- He wept for them because he knew **the judgment that was coming upon them** (v. 43).

(Luke 19:43-44) For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, (44) And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

- And he wept over the city because he knew that **the judgment they suffered was the result of them despising the time of their visitation** (v. 44).

(Proverbs 1:23-33) Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. (24) Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; (25) But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: (26) I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; (27) When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. (28) Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: (29) For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: (30) They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. (31) Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. (32) For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. (33) But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.

(Proverbs 29:1) He, that being often reproved hardeneth *his* neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

(Romans 9:1-3) I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, (2) That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. (3) For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

(Romans 9:31-33) But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. (32) Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; (33) As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

(Romans 10:1-4) Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. (2) For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. (3) For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. (4) For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.