

**A Declaration of Those Things Which Are  
Most Surely Believed Among Us**  
An Expository Study of the Gospel According to Luke  
Chapter 23- **Luke 23:26-31**  
344- The Supremacy of Christ in the Final Beating; the  
Issuance of Mercy; and the Final Warning

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April 23, 2017

**Luke 23:26-31**

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**27** And following Him was a large crowd of the people, and of women who were mourning and lamenting Him.

**28** But Jesus turning to them said, "**Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.**

**29** "**For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.'**

**30** "**Then they will begin TO SAY TO THE MOUNTAINS, 'FALL ON US,' AND TO THE HILLS, 'COVER US.'**

**31** "**For if they do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?"**

To the Glory of God

We are now at the point now of no return in the real-life drama of the most astounding Act in the history of the world. About 33 years before this day, God inserted Himself into the world through a miracle that should take your breath away. The Owner and Creator of the Universe overshadowed a scared and insignificant young virgin and she became with Child, and at that moment Almighty God took on flesh and became Man.

And for 33 years now, this world has had the honor and privilege of having Deity walk on it. For 33 years, a single Man has not committed any act of sin. He has never lusted a single time; He has

never coveted a single time; He has never had a bad attitude for even a single second. For 33 years now, a Man born of woman has loved God with all His Heart, with all His Soul, with all His Mind, and with all His Strength. And that had never happened before. And it will never happen again until this same Man bursts the clouds of Glory and comes back.

For 33 years now, this one Man has loved His neighbor to the very same extent and with the very same urgency that He loves Himself. And that had never happened before either. Every single day for 33 years, this one Man has carried out the Father's Will- *perfectly*. This one Man has been *perfectly* led by God the Holy Spirit, He has been *perfectly* and *continuously* submitted to God, and He has *perfectly* obeyed God and perfectly kept every aspect of the Law of God, without fault every second of every minute of every hour of every day for 33 years.

This Man has had total and complete Command over every aspect of God's Creation. And so, He has walked on water, He has commanded fish to be caught in a net, He has calmed the waves and the wind, He has cursed the fig tree. This one Man has created fish and bread, and opened blind eyes and unstopped deaf ears, and straightened out withered arms and caused cripple people to walk, and lepers to be cleansed. And this Man but spoke and dead people rose up and lived.

This one Man has had total Authority over the fallen angels and He would simply speak and they would beg him not to throw them into the pit. And this Man had the ability to forgive sin and save souls.

Jesus was and is the single most unique Person Who ever lived. Nobody is like Him, nobody else even comes close. He was truly, in every aspect, an exclusive, the One and Only of the Father. In the words of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century preacher, John Chrysostom, Jesus was:

“fully God and fully Man, in the same Body at the same time, without conflict or contradiction.”

And in the words of the early leaders of the Christian Church, Jesus was

“God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Begotten not made, being of the very same Substance of the Father.”

Jesus is the only Person Who always spoke perfect Truth. He had full command of God's Will and Word. At 12, He silenced the doctors and lawyers. At 30, He baffled the religious elite. And at 33, He amazed even His enemies. When the officers came back empty handed, the Pharisees asked:

**John 7:45b**

**... Why did you not bring Him?**

... they answered:

**John 7:46b**

**... Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks.**

And now, the most amazing Act in the history of the world is about to happen, sinful rebels are going to murder God. Evil men are going to crucify the immortal King of the Universe. And this one Act is so astounding, so strange, so out of the ordinary, and so unbelievable that right this moment, every Muslim on earth categorically rejects it. There is not a single practicing Jew on the face of the earth that believes that human beings killed God. I mean, that's ridiculous. How could human beings kill God? And so, every single genuine Hindu and Buddhist rejects this, and every agnostic refuses the notion that people could kill God.

But that is exactly what the infallible Word of the living God says happened. Jesus was not replaced by someone else, as the Gnostics and Muslims teach. There was no substitute. Jesus didn't take a potion that put Him into a coma so He appeared to die, as Henry Schonfield wrote in his 1965 book, "The Passover Plot".

No, the Bible is crystal clear about this; the immortal Word of God took on flesh and became Man. The second Person of the Godhead, God the Son, the Darling of the Trinity, draped Himself in human flesh and became a part of His Own Creation. And now His initial earthly Ministry is reaching its zenith and He is going to allow wicked rebels to murder Him.

But, before He goes to the Cross, there is one more beating to go through, one more time of torture that He must endure. Now keep in

mind it is now mid-morning on Friday. And Jesus has now been up over 24 hours, and aside from the Last Supper, Jesus has undergone prayer so intense that He literally sweat Blood. Jesus has endured non-stop and relentless interrogation and brutality that is almost unspeakable. But there is every reason to suggest that this final beating will be even more brutal, more inhuman, more torturous than anything He has experienced so far. Remember, Pontius Pilate has now done the politically expedient thing and has turned Jesus over to those who will execute Him. Dr. Luke wrote in verses 24-25:

**24 And Pilate pronounced sentence that their demand be granted.**

**25 And he released the man they were asking for who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, but he delivered Jesus to their will.**

And this means that Jesus has been turned over to the Roman soldiers, whose specialty it was to torture people unmercifully before they are crucified. These are the most hard-hearted men in the Roman army. They have developed special skills and tools to deliver the most inhumane treatment while keeping the condemned people just above the threshold of death. And to get an idea of just what Jesus is going to face next, we need to read the Apostle Levi's account from **Matthew 27**. So please go there with me, **Matthew 27:24-31**:

**24 When Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a riot was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this Man's blood; see *to that* yourselves."**

**25 And all the people said, "His blood shall be on us and on our children!"**

**26 Then he released Barabbas for them; but after having Jesus scourged, he handed Him over to be crucified.**

So, after Pilate saw that he could not release Jesus without risking his own position, Pilate did what all worldly people do, he chose his career over Jesus. He chose his fortune and his prestige and his position over Jesus.

And this is the great distinction between those who are religious and those who are saved, between those who know *about* Jesus and who may even think or say nice things about Jesus, and those who actually

follow and serve Him. Jesus refuses to be second. Jesus will not become a *part* of your life. You will not simply “add” Jesus to your already planned-out life. No, Jesus will *be* your entire life; He will have *preeminence* over everyone and everything; He will be first, or you can have your entire life all to yourself.

So, do not come to Jesus so you can have a better life down here. Do not come to Jesus so you can hit more home runs or make more money or drive a nicer car or so you can win the big awards, or so that the lost pagan world can make much of you. That isn't Christianity. And the motivational speakers, who masquerade as Preachers and Teachers, who teach that, are false.

No, you come to Jesus to die. You come to Jesus, and that is the end of your life as you know it. You come to Jesus, as a wicked sinner, who deserves nothing but the Wrath of God, and as you are so ashamed of your wretched life that you cannot even look into heaven, you beg God for Forgiveness and Salvation.

And, if you are so blessed that God hears your prayers and you are forgiven and you are saved, then from that very second until the day you cross Jordan and stand in His Presence, you live every moment to God's Glory, you make every decision to the betterment of Jesus Christ, so that He will look magnificent, and you devote every fiber of your being to the success of the Gospel and you exist now as a “bought and paid for” bond-slave of the Lord Jesus Christ.

*That* is what it means to be forgiven. *That* is what it means to be saved. And *that* is what it means for Jesus to be “Lord”. I want you to notice that **Romans 10:9** does *not* say that we are to confess Jesus as “Savior”. That is *not* what we confess, even though Jesus is absolutely our Savior. We do not confess Jesus as our “Savior” or our “Best Friend” or our “Co-Pilate” or “the Man upstairs” or our “Lover”. No, the Holy Spirit moved upon the Apostle Paul to say that to be saved, we must confess Jesus as “Lord”, as God, as Master, as Father, as King.

And, because Jesus is Lord, as you grow in both the Grace and Knowledge of God, you begin to learn the language and function of slavery. You learn what it means to live as a slave and to function as a slave. You learn what it means to live your life as someone who has been purchased outright, as someone who has been redeemed and rescued.

And a slave has no personal agenda. A slave makes no individual plans. A slave makes no decisions by himself. No, a slave, a human being who has been bought, lives only for the agenda of his Master. He works for his Master. His plans are intertwined with his Master's plans. The Master tells him what to do and what to wear and what to eat and how to speak and what job he will carry out. The Master tells the slave who he will marry and how to raise his children, and the Master is in complete control over whether the slave lives or dies.

So, humility, biblical humility, is the life of slavery. Arrogance is the rebellion *against* slavery. So, we must understand that at no time is the individual in charge. Many times, we collectively say that people out in the world are "*doing their own thing*", when that is actually not true. Lost and unsaved people are *not* in charge of their lives. The Bible teaches that lost people are cruelly *driven* by their carnal lusts and are slaves to sin. Lost people serve their father, the devil, and they do His bidding, even when they don't want to and even when it brings destruction to them. Lost people are *powerless* to resist satan, long term, because sin cruelly *dominates* them. And the only thing that breaks that cruel domination of sin is Salvation.

But understand this, when you are saved, you're *still* not in charge. No, as a redeemed, Blood-bought, born again, Spirit-filled, heaven bound, sin hating child of the living God, the cruel domination of sin has been broken and you are now "free"; not to be "autonomous", no sir. You are now "free" to be a purchased bond-slave of the Lord Jesus Christ. You are now "free" to love and serve God. You are "free" to treasure Jesus Christ, to obey Him with joy, and you are now "free" to delight yourself in His Commandments.

So, the poet is wrong. William Ernest Henley wrote "Invictus" in 1888, and in the poem, Henley said:

"I am the Master of my fate;  
I am the Captain of my soul".

... well, no, you're not, Mr. Henley. You're either a slave of sin or a bond-slave of Jesus Christ, but at no time were you the Master, and at no time are you the Captain.

But lost people see no value in being a "bought and paid for" slave of Jesus Christ. Lost people consider devotion to God as being

hopelessly naive, and they see glad obedience as entirely unworkable in keeping with the myth that they themselves are in charge. So, when Pilate saw that he had to either continue with his career or worship Jesus, his unconverted mind would not allow him to love Jesus, and he washed his hands as a symbolic gesture that what was going to happen to Jesus wasn't his fault. Now look what happened next:

**26 ...but after having Jesus scourged, he handed Him over to be crucified.**

Now, in verse 26, the Apostle Levi says that Pilate had Jesus "scourged". Now this scourging was called by the Romans "verberatio", and was possibly the worst kind of flogging administered by ancient courts. While the Jews administered whippings in the synagogues for certain offenses, these were mild in comparison to Roman scourging. Scourging was not normally a form of execution, but it certainly was brutal enough to be fatal in many cases.

A person certainly could be beaten to death by the scourge if that was desired. Its purpose was not only to cause great pain, but to humiliate as well. To scourge a man was to beat him worse than one would beat an animal. It was belittling, debasing, and demeaning. It was considered such a degrading form of punishment that, according to the Porcian (248 B.C.) and Sempronian (123 B.C.) laws, Roman citizens were exempt from it. It was, therefore, the punishment appropriate only for slaves and non-Romans, those who were viewed as the lesser elements in Roman society. And to make it as humiliating as possible, scourging was carried out in public.

Now the instrument used to deliver this form of punishment was called, in Latin, a "flagellum", or a "flagrum". And this was much different from the bull whip that is more common in our culture. It was, instead, more like the old British cat o' nine tails, except that the flagellum was not designed merely to bruise or leave welts on the victim. The flagellum was a whip with several (at least three) leather thongs or strands, each perhaps as much as three feet long, and the strands were weighted with lead balls and pieces of bone. The lead balls were designed to give deep-seated and painful bruises. The pieces of bone were designed to tear the skin and rip it into shreds. The weighed thongs struck the skin so violently that the skin just broke open. The

church historian Eusebius of Caesarea recounts with vivid, horrible detail a scene of scourging. He said:

“For they say that the bystanders were struck with amazement when they saw them lacerated with scourges even to the innermost veins and arteries, so that the hidden inward parts of the body, both their bowels and their members, were exposed to view” (Ecclesiastical History, Book 4, chap. 15).

The victim of a scourging was bound to a post or frame, stripped of his clothing, and beaten with the flagellum from the shoulders to the loins. The beating left the victim bloody and weak, in unimaginable pain, and near the point of death.

Unlike what many teach today, Jesus was not beaten with 39 “stripes”. That was reserved only for Roman citizens. The Prince of Peace, the most kind and loving Man the world has ever known, was beaten by these men until they got tired. They beat Him and beat Him and beat Him and beat Him, no doubt driven by demons. And if it had not been the Will of God, Jesus would have died from this beating. But, as horrific as this was, it was God’s Will for Jesus to endure something much worse than demon-possessed torturers. It was God’s Will to pour out the full Fury of His Wrath on His Own Son. Isaiah tells us:

**Isaiah 53:10b**

**... the Lord was pleased To crush Him ...**

No one will rescue Jesus now. Not a single soul will say, “*Stop this, that is enough!*” Jesus is all alone. His disciples have forsaken Him, Peter and John are at a safe distance, the crowds that cried out, “Have mercy, Son of David!”, as He walked through their midst healing them and feeding them and blessing them and forgiving them are all crying for Him to be crucified. Pilate has washed his hands and is back inside, eating lunch. There has never been a moment like this in all of recorded history. And soon, as He places on His trembling Son, all the sins of all of God’s elect, even God the Father will depart from Jesus. And as Jesus hangs between earth and heaven, the only sinless Man Who ever lived will scream out in agony as for the first time, His Father will withdraw His Presence from His Own Son, and all that Jesus will



have at that moment is the Father's Just Damnation. And then to add insult to injury look what Matthew says happened next:

**27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole *Roman* cohort around Him.**

**28 They stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him.**

**29 And after twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand; and they knelt down before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"**

**30 They spat on Him, and took the reed and *began* to beat Him on the head.**

**31 After they had mocked Him, they took the *scarlet* robe off Him and put His *own* garments back on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him.**

By the time they finished with Jesus, He was completely unrecognizable. His Face disfigured by the beatings, Blood running everywhere, His Eyes swollen, His garments covered in sweat and dirt, with spit running down His Face.

Saints, behold your King! Behold your Redeemer! Look at your Savior! See Christ in His Glory! Look at Him! Let the Image of this beaten, tortured Man burn into your very soul! So, the next time you have an urge to sin against God, the next time you feel as though God has forsaken you, the next time you think that God doesn't care, remember Jesus in His scourging. Isaiah says:

#### **Isaiah 53:4-5**

**4 Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted.**

**5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being *fell* upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.**

As they laughed at Him and spit on Him and mocked Him, Jesus just looked at them. He could have eviscerated them in a moment because He had the Power to stop this. But Jesus loved His Father so much that He was fully committed to obey His Father's Will and go to the Cross.

After this scourging, as Jesus could barely stand, they forced Him to carry the cross beam of His Own Cross through the streets of Jerusalem.

Now there is some controversy as to just how much of the Cross Jesus was actually carrying. Many godly men teach that Jesus only carried the "crosspiece", and that may be true. However, we must remember two things about Dr. Luke:

1. He was a highly educated and trained medical doctor.
2. His Gospel Account is very detailed.

.. and the doctor says this in **Luke 23:26**:

**When they led Him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, coming in from the country, and placed on him the cross to carry behind Jesus.**

Now some people make a fuss about the fact that some records say that Jesus carried His Own Cross while Dr. Luke says that Simon of Cyrene carried Jesus' Cross. And they point to this as supposedly a contradiction in the Bible. But that is nonsense. So, who carried Jesus' Cross? Did Jesus carry His Own Cross or did Simon? And the answer is, "Yes". Jesus carried it until He collapsed because He was so weak from the beatings, and it was then that the Romans forced Simon to carry it. So, there are no contradictions about this.

But notice that Luke says that Simon carried the Cross. He didn't say the cross piece, he wrote that Simon carried the Cross. All of it. And that meant that Jesus was carrying the entire Cross as well. Now it is true that this would have been unusual. But everything about Jesus was unusual. Now we can't be dogmatic about it, but it does seem to suggest that it was the entire Cross. And so, as Jesus stumbled from being so weak from the beatings, the Romans grabbed this man who was in the crowd to finish the job.

Now Dr. Luke says the man who was chosen by the Romans to carry the Cross of Jesus to Golgotha was named Simon. And Simon was a very common Jewish name. And he had come from Cyrene, which is a region in what is today modern Libya. And Simon was there in Jerusalem during this time. And so, you can put two and two together to surmise that Simon was a faithful Jew who loved God and was in

Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Passover. During this time, there was over 1 million Jews who would travel great distances to come to Jerusalem for the Passover.

And it is possible that Simon was curious about all the commotion that was going on, and he went to see what the fuss was all about. And as he got close, he saw that this was a procession for a Crucifixion. And the crowds had lined the streets to shout insults and throw things at the condemned man.

Now it is possible that Simon was just watching all this. It is also possible that, as a devout Jew, he was horrified at what he saw the Romans doing to his fellow-Jew. He may not have known anything that had happened up to this point and all he saw was another example of Roman cruelty against another Jew. And he may even have been angry about it.

But we must also hold out the possibility that Simon was with the crowd who were screaming insults at Jesus. He could very well have been throwing things at Jesus himself, joining in with the others. We simply don't know, but it could be either way.

What we *do* know is that the Romans compelled Simon to carry the Cross. But John Mark, the Apostle Peter's disciple, gives us some deeper insight into this man from **Mark 15:21**, that says:

**They pressed into service a passer-by coming from the country, Simon of Cyrene (the father of Alexander and Rufus), to bear His cross.**

John Mark tells us that this man, named Simon, was the father of two boys named "Alexander" and "Rufus". Now why did he do that? He tells us Simon's son's names and then he stops. He doesn't say anything else about it. So, what would compel John Mark to do this?

Well, there are a few choices. And one choice is that since everybody that was going to initially read Mark's Gospel record was very familiar with the entire Life and Ministry of Jesus, there was no need to further identify these two boys, because everybody would have known. We don't know, 20 centuries later, but Mark knew, and we can be sure that others did, too.

What we have to remember is that the Apostle Peter commissioned John Mark to write his Gospel record very early on. Records suggest that the Gospel of Mark was written around AD50,

which would mean that if Jesus was born in 4BC, He died around AD29, at 33 years of age. And so, Mark was written just 21 years after the Resurrection.

We also know that Mark wrote his Gospel when he was in the city of Rome. And so, the Roman believers would have been familiar with Mark's Gospel. And we also know that the Apostle Paul was moved along by God the Holy Spirit to pen down his masterpiece called "**Romans**", around AD56. And in **Romans 16:13**, Paul wrote:

**Greet Rufus, a choice man in the Lord, also his mother and mine.**

Now is this the same "Rufus" that Mark was talking about? We don't know for sure, but it would answer why Mark didn't need to say anything else about Simon's sons. Because if 21 years had transpired since Rufus was a boy, and Mark wrote his Gospel record from the same city where Rufus and his mother lived, and Paul acknowledges them both here in his Epistle, it would all tie in together.

So, behold the Sovereignty and Providence of God. Here's a complete stranger, who had traveled many miles to keep the Feast of the Passover, who may or may not have been initially antagonistic toward Jesus, who is seemingly randomly picked out of the crowd by vicious and pagan Romans to help Jesus carry the Cross. And even though he did not know anything about Jesus, the fact that he was forced to carry the Cross would mean it would have been hard for Simon to just walk off as soon as they got to Golgotha.

And so, he probably stayed there and watched Jesus die. And it would have been very hard for Simon to just forget all this. And so, he might have stayed in Jerusalem and came to know about the Resurrection. Maybe he was with the 120 who went to the Upper Room. Maybe he was among the 500 who watched Jesus ascend into Heaven. And he goes back home, trying to sort it all out. And when he gets home he relates to his family all that happened.

And so, I am telling you that it is very possible that this Simon of Cyrene became a believer. And that means that his wife and, at least one son, Rufus, became believers. And Simon may have died and Rufus and his mother migrated to Rome where they came into contact with the Apostle Paul. And Rufus bore so much godly fruit that Paul

classified him as “**a choice man in the Lord**”, and Simon’s wife, Rufus’s mother, was so godly that this great Apostle called her “**my mother**”.

And then in **The Acts 11:20-21** Dr. Luke wrote:

**20 But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who came to Antioch and *began* speaking to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus.**

**21 And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord.**

So, within 30 years of the Resurrection, there was a Church established in Cyrene. And Luke said this Church was growing and developing, and out of that Church came preachers, who preached the Lord Jesus, and they were sent as missionaries over to Antioch; from North Africa to Antioch.

And, at least one of those preachers who came to preach the Lord Jesus from Cyrene, all the way to Antioch, stayed in Antioch, and became one of the Pastors in the Church in Antioch that sent Paul out. **The Acts 13:1-3** says:

**1 Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was *there*, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.**

**2 While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."**

**3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.**

So, what appears to be a totally random event, the Roman soldiers just grabbing the first person that they see and compelled him to carry Jesus’ Cross, was actually the Providence of a totally sovereign God to not only help Jesus die for the sins of the world, but also to save a family and connect them to the Apostle Paul.

So, now look at what Luke wrote next in **Luke 23:27-31**:

**27 And following Him was a large crowd of the people, and of women who were mourning and lamenting Him.**

**28** But Jesus turning to them said, "**Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.**

**29** "**For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.'**

**30** "**Then they will begin *TO SAY TO THE MOUNTAINS, 'FALL ON US,' AND TO THE HILLS, 'COVER US.'***

**31** "**For if they do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?"**

Now this scene is not at all what is usually taught. Most people think this is Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of the Lord, and some other women. But those women were far off at quite a distance from Jesus. This is *not* Jesus giving a final blessing to grieving women who loved Him. These women are paid criers, people who were paid money to weep and wail and mourn and throw themselves down on the ground and make a big fuss. And this is Jesus giving a final prophecy about the utter annihilation of the Old Covenant, the destruction of the Temple, and the Judgment of God against unbelieving Jews.

Remember, the Jews utterly despised the Romans. And even though Jesus had been falsely accused as being a blasphemer, He was a Jew Who was being put to death by pagan Romans. And so, the Jews always gave another Jew a proper send off, even though it was the Sanhedrin which had wanted Jesus' Death.

And part of that proper send-off was appropriate mourning and weeping. Now, it is very possible that these women were sincere and that their crying was genuine. But, they would have gone through this mourning if they hadn't been sincere because they were paid to mourn. This is the same crowd that you see at Lazarus' funeral. Look with me at **John 11:33-37**:

**33** **When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled,**

**34** **and said, "**Where have you laid him?"** They said to Him, "**Lord, come and see.**"**

**35** **Jesus wept.**

**36** **So the Jews were saying, "**See how He loved him!**"**

**37 But some of them said, "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind man, have kept this man also from dying?"**

Now Jesus absolutely loved this family. John tells us that He did. But Jesus did not weep because He loved this family so much. That just isn't true. And He didn't weep to show His Humanity at the death of Lazarus, either, because back in verse 11 Jesus said:

**Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I go, so that I may awaken him out of sleep.**

Now we weep at a death because we are finite humans, and no matter how much we trust God, we have a sense of loss when a loved one dies. But there was no such sense of loss here because Jesus already knew that He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead before He ever went down to Bethany. And He said in verses **14-15**:

**14 ... "Lazarus is dead,  
15 and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe; but let us go to him."**

So, this entire exercise was carried out so that the disciples would believe. And this is *not* talking about the faith to perform signs and wonders so they could raise people from the dead, and show everybody how spiritual they were, as is so commonly taught in our day. No, this was so that these men would believe that Jesus was God and had the Authority to bring someone back from the dead.

And so, as Jesus looked around and saw that nobody believed, that His disciples didn't believe, that Mary and Martha didn't believe, and that these professional mourners didn't believe; Jesus wept. So, Jesus wept over their lack of belief in Who He was. And this was the same paid mourners at Jesus' journey to the Cross as it was here with Lazarus.

Now, even though these women are official mourners, and even though they are doing their official duty, it is very possible that they are very sincere about grieving over Jesus if for no other reason than He is pitiful as He is so weak and struggling and so dirty and bloody and the

Romans are so cruel and heartless. And so, just human pity alone may have contributed to their weeping.

But, however sincere these professional mourners may or may not have been, we need to remember that even now, Jesus is in full command. Jesus is not dependent on His mother or Simon or anyone else to accomplish His Will. He is, at this very moment, issuing out both Mercy and Judgment; Mercy to Simon, and Judgment to the unbelieving Jews.

This is a very powerful moment, a very important moment, a very serious and profound moment, but it isn't a sentimental moment. Jesus hears and sees them weeping, some may be serious and some may be just going through the motions. But He is not, at this moment, to help people become sentimental. He is here in His weakened and bloody condition to die for their sins. He is at this moment to satisfy God's Justice against unworthy rebels by absorbing all of God's Wrath against all of the sins of all of God's chosen people.

So, notice that Jesus doesn't say to these women, *"Thank you, ladies, for your sympathy. I appreciate your compassion."* And He is not being rude. He is not here to garner sympathy. He doesn't want compassion for Himself. He wants people to understand Who He is and what He is doing so they will repent and trust in Him for Salvation. So, what does Jesus tell these professional mourners?

**28 ..."Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.**

**29 "For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.'**

**30 "Then they will begin *TO SAY TO THE MOUNTAINS, 'FALL ON US, AND TO THE HILLS, 'COVER US.'***

**31 "For if they do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?"**

We must understand that these women were not Jesus' disciples. They weren't saved. They didn't love Him. They didn't believe in Him. These were Jewish women, who had lived their entire lives under the Old Covenant, and it was their job to mourn at Jewish funerals and processions toward death at the hands of the despised Romans. And even though some of them might have been sincere in showing Jesus



pity, they didn't have a clue as to what was going on here with this Man. And if these women would have had their way, Jesus would have never died. So, even though He is close to death, Jesus issues a Divine Command to them:

**..."Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children**

In their eyes, Jesus was nothing but a pitiful victim of Roman abuse. And if their mourning was in any way sincere, it was completely off base. In other words, these women were mourning for the wrong reason. Jesus is God. And Him going to the Cross is Right and Good and the Will of God. They were mourning out of human pity and sympathy over what they perceived to be a condemned man and because they were paid.

So, Jesus commands them to stop weeping for Him, as though He is a victim, and to start weeping for *themselves* and for their children. Now this is so strange to hear a condemned man talk like this. He is the one about to be crucified. Why is He worried about them and their children? Why? So, He tells them. Why should they stop weeping for Him and start weeping for themselves and their children?

**29 "For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.'**  
**30 "Then they will begin *TO SAY TO THE MOUNTAINS, 'FALL ON US,' AND TO THE HILLS, 'COVER US.'***

Now this is just another way of telling them to repent. He is calling all of these people to a place of weeping and repentance before the annihilation comes. We need to remember that the greatest Sin since the Fall of Adam is being carried out right before them. Evil people are murdering God. Wicked creatures are killing the Creator. Fallen men are assassinating the immortal God. And even though it is God's Will for Jesus to die, woe to them by whom this Death comes.

But once Jesus dies and rises, the partial and inferior Revelation of God that He gave to the Jews in the Old Covenant will not be enough. It will no longer be enough for people to simply believe in God. They must now believe in Jesus Christ. After the Death and Resurrection of

Jesus, Temple worship will not be tolerated, animal sacrifices will be an abomination, and the Levitical priesthood will be a farce.

After Jesus finishes God's Plan and rises from the dead all who will be saved, will be saved by and through Jesus Christ and to His Glory, or they will not be saved at all. And so, if these faithful Jews do not repent and trust in Jesus Christ, they will perish forever in hell alongside of the hated Romans. If these professional mourners do not weep over their own sins, they will die and spend eternity in a devil's hell.

For over 3 years, Israel had had perfect Truth and perfect Love and perfect Grace and perfect Obedience, and their response was to reject Him and beat Him and lead Him to die. And if they do not weep over their sins and the sins of their children, they have no hope.

Jesus is telling these mourning Jewish women, *"The day shall come upon you when your enemies will surround you and hem you in on every side. And they will level you to the ground. And you and your children will both perish. The Fury of the Lord will visit you and God will raise up a pagan army to become the Hammer of God, and when they finish, there will not be one stone upon another because you didn't recognize the time of your visitation."*

Earlier in the week, before all the beatings, Jesus had told them, *"When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, recognize that her desolation is at hand. Let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, those in the midst of the city depart. Let not those in the country enter the city because these are the days of vengeance. And woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days, for there will be great distress on the land and wrath to this people, and they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive into all the nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."*

These are prophecies of the destruction in Jerusalem that started in AD66 and ended in AD70. And hundreds of thousands of Jews were slaughtered, men, women and children. Following that, hundreds of thousands more were slaughtered as the Romans massacred Jews in 985 towns in the land of Israel. And the ones they didn't kill, they scattered, as the Prophecy said. So, weep for yourself if you're not ready for that Judgment.

And then, our Lord's final words as He walks to the cross, a proverb in verse 31.

**“For if they do these things in the green tree, what will happen in the dry?”**

This was a way of saying if everything goes bad when all is well, what's going to happen when it's not. In other words, the green tree symbolizes life, flourishing, fruitfulness, blessing, goodness, happiness, all that's good and rich and well. And if what you see in Jesus is what happens in the case of what is full of life and flourishing, what's going to happen in the day when Jesus is gone back into Heaven?

A way to interpret that is simply this, if this is what the Romans do to the green tree, meaning Christ, what are they going to do to the dry, meaning Israel? If this brutality is what's happening to the One Who is full of life, full of flourishing fruitfulness, if they did this to Him, what in the world is going to happen after Jesus ascends back into Heaven? So, you professional mourners better weep, and you better weep for yourself, not for Me. So, there's no desire here for Self-pity with Jesus. But there is immense pity that Jesus has; tremendous Compassion that this beaten and bloody Man has for the souls who are lost, and are facing not only Roman annihilation, but also the Wrath of God.

So, in this crowd are those who hate Him. In this crowd watching Him stumble and agonize are those who are simply curious and somewhat indifferent. And there are those who, like the weeping women, have certain human sympathy and compassion toward a beaten and bloody Jesus.

But know this, Jesus doesn't want or need your sympathy. Jesus doesn't want or need your apathy any more than He wants your hatred. Jesus is in this condition by the Will of God. Jesus is stumbling through the streets of Jerusalem, on His way to die by Crucifixion so that every sin that every single one of God's elect has committed or ever will commit may be paid for so that we may be saved. So, those who are merely sympathetic toward Christ are no better off than the curious crowd. And they are no better off than those who crucified Him.

Because, Salvation doesn't come by having sympathy for Jesus. Forgiveness of sin doesn't come by way of human pity that might produce some degree of weeping. No, Salvation comes by embracing

this beaten and bloody Man; by coming to Him and acknowledging that this is what it took to save your wretched soul.

Unlike us, Jesus never hesitated, He never flinched; He accomplished His Father's Will with Joy, even now. And the only way we can be saved is to embrace this horrific scene, and the one that is yet to come on the Cross, and the one that sees this same Man rise from the dead, absolutely victorious over hell, death, and the grave!

So, do not issue pity toward Jesus here. Weep, yes, but not for Him. What you see here in this tortured Man is part of the Glory of God's Grace. So, weep for yourselves and for your children. Rise early and stay up late. Pray, fast, and cry out to God, not only that God will have Mercy on you and save your own soul, but pray and weep for your children, that they may run to Jesus and find rest for their souls. Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.