

Jesus Wept!

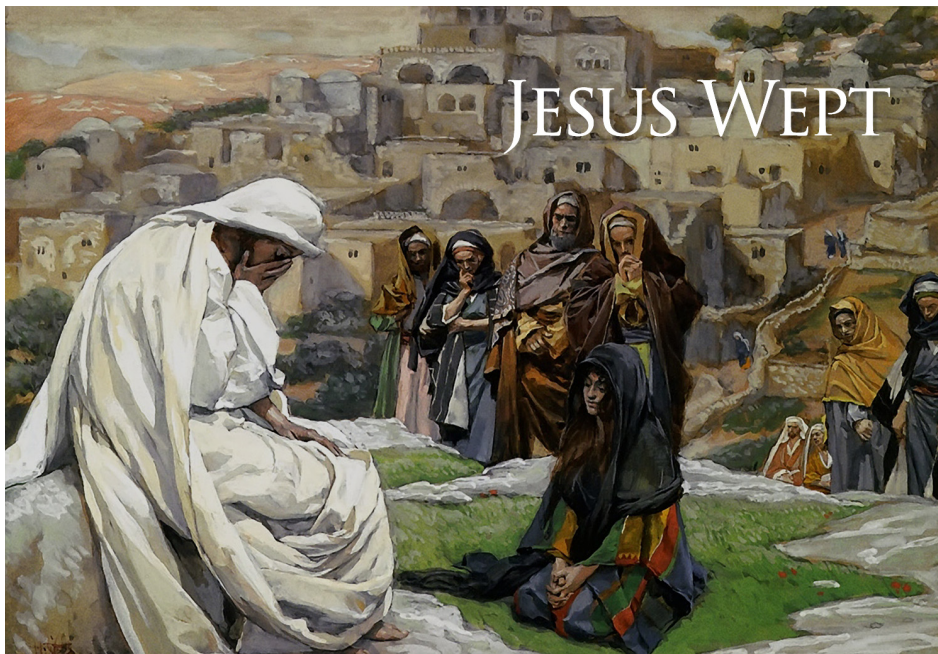
It is amazing how many different gods and goddesses people have worshiped down through the centuries of time. I have a book on my bookcase that lists all of the gods and goddesses the author knew about since about 3300 B.C. The author claims there over 2,500 deities in the world, which includes creator gods, astral and sky gods, sun gods, fertility gods, sea gods and primordial gods. Virtually every god and goddess is limited in what they can do because each god or goddess controls different areas. How ironic that a god would be limited. It is a strange definition of a god. A god who is not a god. But there is one exception to these statements. There is one God who is humble, holy, and rules over all for the benefit of His creation. This God protects us by warning that there is no other god. In Isaiah 44:6, He says there is no other God besides Himself. In Isaiah 44:7 He declares that there is no one like Him. In Isaiah 44:8, He says that there is no god like Him. The apostle Paul states that the power behind all other gods are demons (1 Corinthians 10:20). Our study is about this God—Jesus Christ. We will discover in this study that He is loving and compassionate. There is nothing in His creation like Him. Our study is in John 11:28-37.

MARY QUICKLY COMES TO JESUS. In our last study, *I Am The Resurrection and the Life*, we saw that Martha eagerly hurried off to find Jesus. We are told Mary stayed home. When Martha reached Jesus she said, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.” Then Jesus told her that Lazarus would live again, but she thought Jesus was referring to the future resurrection. She did not understand that Jesus was telling her that he would be resurrected soon! The conversation that followed was important because it revealed that she believed in a future resurrection, and in verse 27 we learn that she believed Jesus was the Christ—“He who comes into the world.” And she was correct. Her doctrine

her heart could not see that Jesus was her God. Then verse 28 tells us that immediately she left Jesus, went home and told her sister Mary that Jesus had arrived.

When she had said this, she went away and called Mary her sister, saying secretly, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” And when she heard it, she got up quickly and was coming to Him.

John 11:28-29
(NASB)



about the future was incomplete and her heart also seemed to lack emotion. She never wept for Lazarus. She was the sister who would rather work than sit and listen to Jesus teach, and

likely reason this occurred is that, as we have already discovered (v. 19), there is a large crowd in the home. Maybe Jesus wanted a private conversation with Mary without a group of

people listening, or maybe Martha just decided to communicate the message in private.

Then Mary quickly left to find Jesus. Verse 30 tells us that Jesus was still outside the village where Martha had found Him.

Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha met Him. John 11:30 (NASB)

I am impressed with the details that are given to us and the details that are not given to us. Verses 27 did not tell us that Jesus asked Martha to ask Mary to come to Him. Instead, verse 28 just said that Martha communicated that fact. The Holy Spirit did not repeat the information and just gave us the essential information. I am always amazed at how brief the gospels are most of the time. It usually gives the essential facts. It is not trying to be sensational!

Now Scripture jumps from the home of Lazarus, Martha and Mary to wherever Jesus was sitting or standing outside the city and we were not told before where He was. Most authors would add details about this event such as Mary was thinking about what to say and how she may have run to Jesus. Maybe that she was surprised Jesus was just where Martha said He would be. But God the Holy Spirit just gives the facts that He wants us to know—what we need to know.

MARY LEAVES TO FIND JESUS. Next, we are told the Jews who had been with Mary at her home followed her.

Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and consoling her, when they saw that Mary got up quickly and went out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. John 11:31 (NASB)

In the time of Jesus, it was common for family, friends, and those others to participate in mourning for the dead (1 Samuel 25:1; Luke 7:32). The mourning usually involved wearing sackcloth, wailing, and making very loud noises (Jeremiah 49:3; Joel 1:13). Everyone would go to the tomb with the grieving family (2 Samuel 3:32). Professional wailers would be hired, including flute players. Matthew 9:23-24 is a good example.

When Jesus came into the official's house, and saw the flute-players and the crowd in noisy disorder, He said, "Leave; for the girl has not died, but is asleep." And they began laughing at Him.

Matthew 9:23-24 (NASB)

Here the crowd and professional mourners are referred to as a "noisy disorder." Verses 19 and 31 refer to this crowd of real mourners and hired mourners. So, the crowd followed Mary because they thought she was going to the tomb to mourn and weep.

A survey of burial and funeral practices around the world reveal that every culture has a different practice. Sometimes the dead bodies are paraded through a town and lit on fire. Cremation is common. Ashes are scattered into the sea. Families may mourn for several days. Every culture is different. All of the practices reveal that we are grieved when someone we love dies and leaves this life. Yet, it does not matter how you or I will be mourned, the fact is that some day you and I will die. Then God determines where we will go. Hebrews 9:27 says that after we die, judgment will occur.

And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment . . . Hebrews 9:27 (NASB)

Then God will judge you and me and Jesus warned us that most will go to hell in Matthew 7:13-14 when He said that the way to heaven is like a narrow road, because few are walking on that road. Instead, most people are walking on a wide road that goes to hell. But if we keep reading the next verse in Hebrews 9, we are given hope.

. . . so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him. Hebrews 9:28 (NASB)

Here we are told that Christ offered to bear our sins. That is, when He died on the cross He bore our sins Himself (1 Peter 2:24-25). As a result, we can have our sins forgiven by seeking His forgiveness. He did everything that is necessary to forgive your sins and my sins. We do not need to do anything, but believe He died on the cross in order to forgive our sins and

was resurrected (John 3:16). Then when we die our destiny is not hell but heaven where we can finally see our God whom we cannot see now!

MARY FINDS AND SPEAKS WITH JESUS. Verse 32 tells us that when Mary arrived where Jesus was, wherever He was, she saw Him and fell at Jesus' feet.

Therefore, when Mary came where Jesus was, she saw Him, and fell at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." John 11:32 (NASB)

Then she asked Jesus the same identical question that her sister had asked in verse 21. Maybe the two sisters had been discussing the point that if Jesus had been there, then Lazarus would be alive! But that is the only way in which these two sisters were identical. Earlier, Martha did not fall at Jesus feet, instead she started a theological discussion.

Now, there is nothing wrong with a theological discussion. In fact, there are not many Christians today who are even interested in theology. That is a sad statement. But the contrast between Martha and Mary is stunning!

Mary is not like Martha. When Mary saw Jesus, she fell down at His feet. That means she is on the ground at Jesus' feet. Her attitude was different than Martha's attitude. Martha never fell at Jesus' feet. Martha never bowed before Jesus. In fact, it appears that she remained standing while she spoke to Jesus. If Martha had a wrong attitude when she asked this question, it is clear that Mary had another attitude when she asked the same question. She is a humble and grieving woman. While Martha could not see that Jesus was her God, Mary acted more like she believed He was God.

JESUS IS MOVED WITH COMPASSION. The next verse tells us that Jesus saw Mary and the crowd who came with her weeping.

When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled, and said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see." John 11:33-34 (NASB)

The picture is very emotional. Everyone is weeping! The Greek word for emotional in this verse is *klaio*. It refers to wailing but the emphasis of the word is one very loud noise! That is, they

were very loudly weeping! Most likely Mary's loud crying was very real but we cannot be sure the weeping of the crowd of Jews was real. It may have been purposeful and planned wailing as we have already discovered. Some may have been professional mourners.

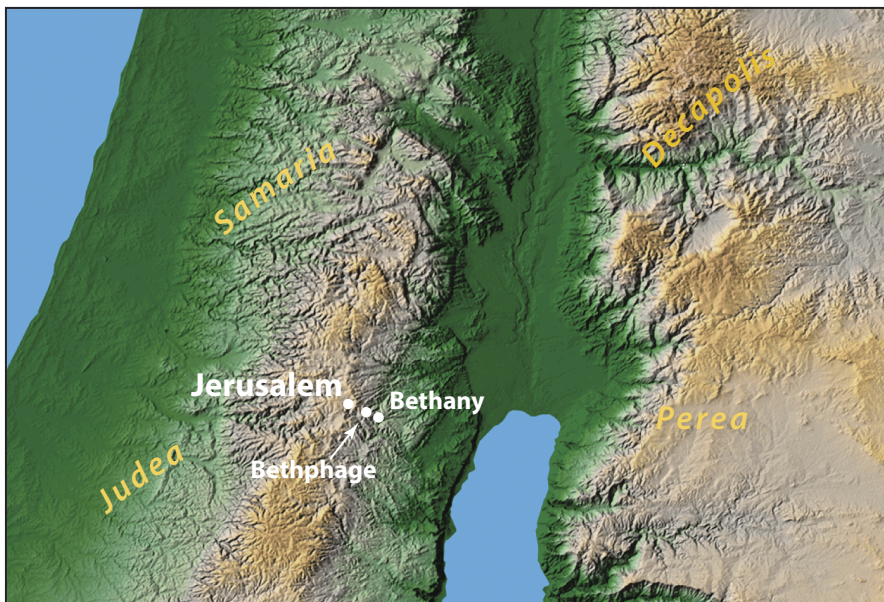
JESUS WEPT.

And we are told that Jesus was deeply moved when He saw them. I know that I am usually deeply moved inwardly when I see or even hear someone crying. But here there is an entire crowd, even if some of them were professionals. So Jesus asked where Lazarus was buried and they said, "Lord, come and see."

Jesus wept. John 11:35 (NASB)¹

The Greek word that describes Jesus' weeping is different. It is not *klaio* but *dakryo*. It refers to weeping but the emphasis is

1. This is the shortest verse in our English Bibles because it has only 9 letters in two English words. But in the Greek New Testament this verse has only 16 letters, "ho Iesous dakro." The shortest verse in the Greek New Testament is 1 Thessalonians 5:16 because it has only 14 letters in two Greek words, "chairō pantote." The verse is, "Rejoice always."



on the tears that are shed. That is, Jesus was truly crying! His crying was not the result of being paid some money! He was not paid to cry like a professional. His crying was different. It was the result of a broken heart.

Now this creates a very interesting question. Why would Jesus be crying when He intentionally waited to travel to Bethany and as a result Lazarus died? Our study will reveal that He raises Lazarus from the dead and gives Him life. So, why would He cry? The reason we have the question is that we are not accustomed to Scripture telling us that Jesus cried. Another thing we must remember is that if Jesus did not raise him from the dead, Lazarus would be in heaven. Jesus would be seeing him soon! When this happened, we are very close to Jesus' crucifixion.

Some have suggested Jesus was grieved at the hardness of the hearts of the Jews. It could be that Jesus knew the mourners' external wailing was for public display and did not reveal their true hearts. It could be that Jesus was grieved that their hearts were insensitive and hardened and the outward display of compassion for Martha, Mary, and Lazarus was deceptive. We will learn later in John 11:46 that there were no religious leaders present at this time. I believe He was moved because He knew Mary's heart was full of grief and her loud weeping reflected her heart, and maybe that was true of some in the processional following her.

The gospels tell us that this is not the only time that Jesus had compassion for others. Matthew 9:36 tells us that Jesus felt compassion for the crowds that He saw during His travels.

Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. Matthew 9:36 (NASB)

Matthew 14:14 says that Jesus felt such great compassion for a large crowd that He healed the sick.

When He went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and felt compassion for them and healed their sick. Matthew 14:14 (NASB)

Matthew, Mark, and Luke report that He also felt compassion on two other occasions for the hungry and the sick (Matthew

15:32; 20:34; Mark 1:41; 7:13). Clearly, these passages teach us that Jesus cares about us. Jesus was a warm and compassionate person.

When Jesus cried upon seeing Mary and the mourners, it is obvious that He responded with compassion. His tears revealed His heart. Luke 19:41 says that Jesus cried on another occasion.

When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it ... Luke 19:41 (NASB)

Just before this happened, Jesus was approaching Jerusalem after His triumphal entry, which is yet to come in our study series of the gospels. After the Triumphal entry Jesus cried again because He knew the Jews would reject Him, crucify Him, and in A.D. 70 the Roman Army would defeat Jerusalem and utterly level the city to the ground. These wonderful passages teach us that the God-man, Jesus Christ, loves us. He cared even for those who were going to murder Him.

In the gospel of John we are told five times that the apostle John was the disciple "whom He loved" or was the one "whom Jesus loved." Three times in the gospel of John we are told that God the Father loves Jesus (John 3:35; 5:20; 10:17; 15:9).

The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand. John 3:35 (NASB)

For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing ... John 5:20 (NASB)

For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. John 10:17 (NASB)

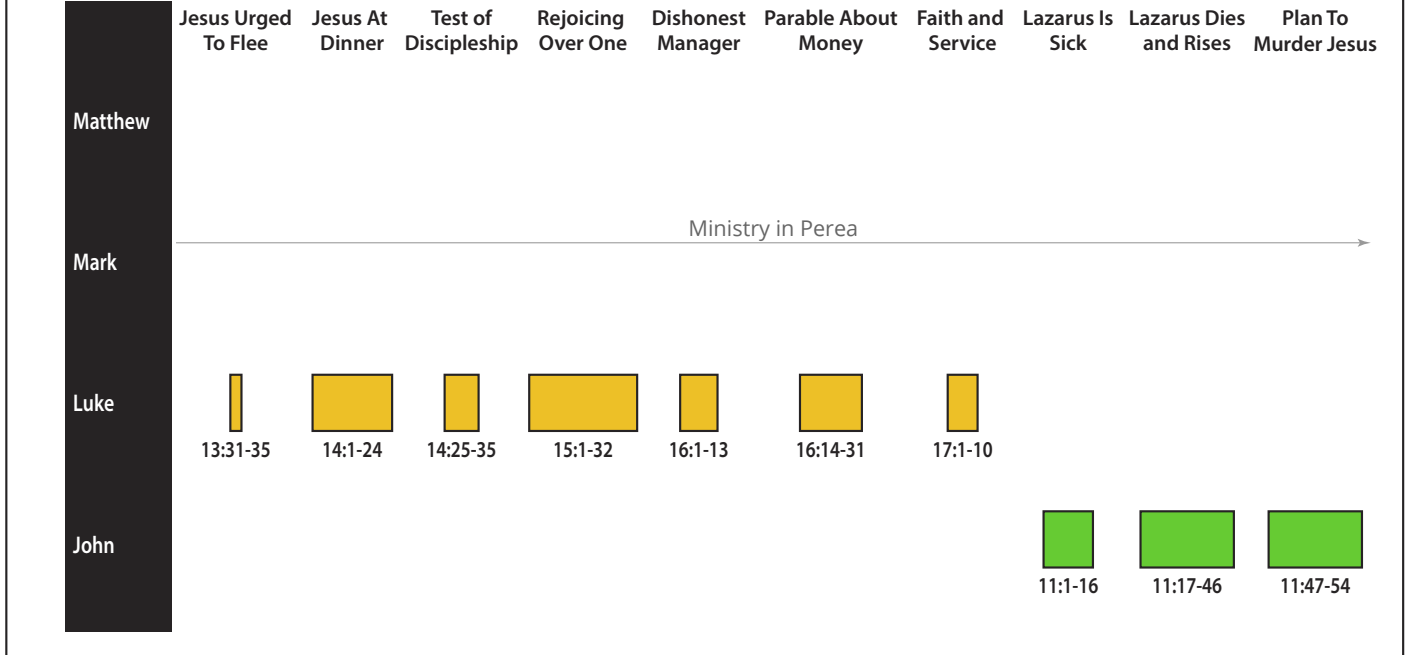
Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. John 15:9 (NASB)

Now reread these four verses and ask yourself, what two things are common? Then we must notice John 14:31.

... but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me. Get up, let us go from here.

Life and Heart of Jesus

Ministry In Perea - Winter of A.D. 33



John 14:31 (NASB)

Jesus loves the Father! Now I do not know how to explain the trinity, but these verses tell us love exists within the trinity. The trinity is not sterile and cold. The Father loves Jesus and Jesus loves the Father. Can I ask, "Do you love the Father?" Jesus did! You see, Jesus has compassion and love for the Father and for us!

We have already learned that Jesus loved Martha, Mary and Lazarus (John 11:5). It is obvious that this was not a sexual love. Sadly, that is usually our world's definition of love when we talk about love between adults. It is blasphemous when the world claims that Jesus loved a woman or women, whether they believe it or are only seeking to sell a book. It will be wonderful some day when we are heaven and can speak to someone without having to be concerned that someone will misunderstand a comment or a gesture, because in heaven sex and marriage do not exist. Jesus' love was a pure love, for Hebrews 4:15 says that Jesus lived His life without sin! He never sinned.

The Greek word for love that has been occurring in these

verses is *agape*. It refers to a high moral standard of love. Not a carnal and lustful love, if we want to call "lust" love. The Greek word for love in John 3:16 is *agape* when it says,

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. John 3:16 (NASB)

So, Jesus wept means much more than some water rolled down Jesus' cheek. His love and compassion were on display for Mary and Martha!

Frankly, I believe some Christians do not understand that God is not indifferent to the death of wicked people. Notice in Ezekiel 18:23 God declares,

Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord GOD, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live? Ezekiel 18:23 (NASB)

He repeats this in Ezekiel 33:11. In Lamentations 3:33 God

says that He does not enjoy afflicting anyone.

For He does not afflict willingly

Or grieve the sons of men.

Lamentations 3:33 (NASB)

Yet, He does rejoice when a believer dies and goes to heaven!

Precious in the sight of the LORD

Is the death of His godly ones. Psalm 116:15 (NASB)

When a believer dies and goes to heaven, it is homecoming!

Dr. J. Vernon McGee makes a good summary comment about Jesus' weeping when he says,

His sympathy was for the living. He knew what He was going to do for the dead wept. "Jesus wept." While John's gospel is written to show us the deity of Christ, here Jesus is shown in all His humanness. He even asked where Lazarus was laid because He was so human. And here we can see the way God feels at a funeral today. He mingles His tears with ours. He groans within Himself. I get a little impatient with Christians who say one must not cry at a funeral, but one must be a brave Christian. Death is not pretty; it is a terrible thing. Jesus wept!²

The point of all this discussion is that Jesus had compassion for His creation and He cared deeply! He still does because God's character never changes. He is immutable (Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8). Our God has emotion and He loves the world (John 3:16; Romans 5:5, 8). God loves us. It is God's nature to love us (1 John 4:8, 16). He is a loving God and that is obvious when Jesus wept.

REACTION OF THE JEWS. How did the Jews that followed Mary respond? Verses 36-37 says they believed Jesus loved Lazarus, but some found fault.

So the Jews were saying, "See how He loved him!" But some of them said, "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind man, have kept this man also from dying?" John 11:36-37 (NASB)

They were correct that Jesus loved Lazarus but they did not understand that He loved Mary and all of them. And just as we have discovered earlier in the gospels, there were always some who could find some reason to falsely accuse Jesus. So they did.

CONCLUSION. This is a wonderful passage of Scripture for we have been given a deeper look into the heart of Jesus. We have seen His love on display in a new situation. He allowed his friend, Lazarus, to die. Yes, the critics in the processional were right. He could have kept Lazarus from dying, but He did not. He waited until he had died before He came to Bethany. They did not know that Jesus let him die for a reason. They were about to experience a fantastic miracle and it would be declared that Jesus was their God. He was their loving God who was giving them every reason to believe in Him or another reason to condemn them on judgment day—their rejection of Jesus. Jesus wanted Mary, Martha, the disciples, the crowd and even His critics to know that He was God. His love was about to be revealed in a spectacular way. In fact, the resurrection of Lazarus was about to motivate them to crucify Him. "The Love" would die on the cross for us!

2. J. Vernon McGee, Matthew through Romans. *Thru the Bible*. Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1983. p. 440.