

## Do Not Weep for Me

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Luke 23:27-31

**27** And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him. **28** But Jesus, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, **do not weep for Me**, but weep for yourselves and for your children. **29** For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, 'Blessed *are* the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which 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 in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?"

But Jesus, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem,  
**do not weep for Me**, but weep for yourselves and for your children.  
{Luke 23:28}

All four Gospels record the mocking and scourging of Jesus as they led Him away to be crucified. But only Luke records what He said to the women who mourned for Him here in Luke 23:27-31. The context of our passage is what happened just before Jesus was crucified. Cf. Matthew, Mark, and John.

Matthew 27:27-31

**27** Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. **28** And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. **29** When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put *it* on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

30 Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. 31 And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His *own* clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified.

Mark 15:16-20

16 Then the soldiers led Him away into the hall called Praetorium, and they called together the whole garrison. 17 And they clothed Him with purple; and they twisted a crown of thorns, put it on His *head*, 18 and began to salute Him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" 19 Then they struck Him on the head with a reed and spat on Him; and bowing the knee, they worshiped Him. 20 And when they had mocked Him, they took the purple off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him out to crucify Him.

John 19:16

16 Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. Then they took Jesus and led *Him* away.

Matthew, Mark, and John give us the record of His being taken away to be crucified but only Luke records what Jesus said to the women who were there to mourn for Him.

Most of these women were professional mourners. The culture of the Jews was to ensure that a funeral was sufficiently sad. These women were not relatives of Jesus who were personally saddened by His imminent death. They were sometimes hired to "mourn." Come to think of it that is not too far from having someone sing a funeral dirge. Now it is entirely appropriate to sing at a funeral, especially when the singer knew the deceased. But this scene is a large crowd who mostly come to gawk and enjoy the tragedy being unfolded. Back in the days of the Wild West public hangings were great entertainment. It is notable that many in this crowd would soon cry out, "Crucify Him!"

You can see this same expression of grief today when the television pans to a crowd of women in Palestine howling over the death of some person who has been killed in a bombing raid. No doubt some of the mourners know the deceased but many of them just show up to wail and mourn.

That same solicitation of this emotion is present in the movies that attempt to capture the drama of the crucifixion. Almost all of the portrayals of the crucifixion of Jesus the Christ appear to me to evoke sympathy for Jesus as a **victim** of extreme cruelty. It is true that He was mocked, smote, spat upon, cursed, ridiculed, taunted, and scourged; but we must never lose sight of the fact that He was a willing Substitute for the likes of you and me. Christ and the Father and the Holy Spirit were in total control of the situation.

John 19:10-11

<sup>10</sup> Then Pilate said to Him, "Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?"

<sup>11</sup> Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above...."

And from that time on Pilate tried to release Jesus but was intimidated by the mob.

There is complete harmony in the Godhead and there were no circumstances that were not foreordained in the eternal and secret counsel of almighty God.

Therefore we read:

But Jesus, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.

### **The Holy Trinity**

An old spiritual has a line: "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?"

### **God the Father was there at the crucifixion!**

God the Father was not surprised or disappointed when His Son died on the cross. Was the wrath of God poured out on the Son of God? Indeed, in the most awful way that you can ever imagine. But it was only as the Son of God was made to be sin for us that the wrath of God was unleashed. But it was not in disappointment or defeat because **"the world was made for Calvary!"**

Jesus is the Lamb of God. What was the purpose of the sacrifice of a lamb; an innocent animal?

Substitution! Adam's guilt is imputed to man. Man comes into the world already guilty because of imputed sin and as soon as he is born he is "speaking lies."

When by grace through faith alone you are enabled to repent and believe the Gospel; your sin is imputed to Jesus Christ and in the most wonderful transaction ever devised by a holy God, Christ's righteousness is imputed to you!

It's done, the great transaction is done! Hallelujah, what a Savior!

The entire sacrificial system of the Old Testament was to point to a day sometime in the future when God would deal once and for all with the sin of His elect.

### **The Lamb of God**

John 1:29

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

The "back of the book" tells us that the Lamb of God was foreordained before there ever was a world or a cross on which to hang a man.

Revelation 13:8

All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

One of the greatest of the Old Testament prophets wrote that it was God the Father that put His only begotten Son on the cross.

Isaiah 53:10-11

**10** Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him;

He has put *Him* to grief.

When You make His soul an offering for sin,

He shall see *His* seed, He shall prolong *His* days,

And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.

**11** He shall see the labor of His soul, *and* be satisfied.

By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many,

For He shall bear their iniquities.

God the Father was not an idle bystander when God the Son was crucified. It was the God the Father who sent Christ to be crucified.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Acts 2:22-25

**22** "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know — **23** Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; **24** whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.

**And so God the Father was there.**

**God the Holy Spirit was there at the crucifixion.**

Hebrews 9:13-14

**13** For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, **14** how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

**God the Son was there at the crucifixion, it was He who was on the cross; and God the Son gave Himself freely and willingly.**

John 10:17-18

**17** "Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. **18** No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."

And so the Holy Trinity was there: Father, Holy Spirit, and Christ.

No surprises and no failures. There is complete harmony in the Godhead.

So do not fall into the same category as the "Daughters of Jerusalem" who wept for Jesus.

Jesus was not a helpless victim but a willing and sufficient Sacrifice for the sins of His people.

Matthew 1:18-21

**18** Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. **19** Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. **20** But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. **21** And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."

That will serve as an introduction to our message on our text in Luke:

Luke 23:27-31

**27** And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him. **28** But Jesus, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. **29** For indeed the days are coming in

which they will say, 'Blessed *are* the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which 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 in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?"

This message was suggested to me when I listened to a sermon on this text by Charles D. Alexander that he titled "Daughters of Jerusalem."

While I borrowed the idea from Mr. Alexander, this message is from my own research and study.

This message is a slight digression from my series on the Minor Prophets, per se, but it follows my theme for the Minor Prophets, viz. that all the prophets primarily wrote and spoke about the Messiah, who is Jesus of Nazareth.

**I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.**"

### **Revelation 19:10**

For several years now I have been emphasizing how important it is that we do not neglect the Old Testament in our study of the Bible. For over a year I have been putting OT and NT passages together on a page in the bulletin. The NT interprets the OT. You will not correctly understand prophecy until you see that it is mostly about Jesus Christ and His Church.

Many Christians in our day are being denied the fullness of exposition because the OT is being ignored.

To emphasise the place of the prophets, notice three passages of Scripture in the New Testament that point us to the main message of the Old Testament prophets. Now there are many more such references but these three are sufficient to make the point.

**Acts 10:43**

**To Him [Christ] all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins."**

**That is, the OT prophets witnessed to the gospel.**

**Luke 24:25-27**

**25 Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" 27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.**

**And remember that Paul based his masterful exposition of the Gospel in the Book of Romans on the Old Testament.**

**Romans 1:1-4**

**Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated to the gospel of God <sup>2</sup> which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, <sup>3</sup> concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, <sup>4</sup> *and* declared *to be* the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.**

**The New in the Old Concealed; the Old in the New Revealed. {Augustine}**

**"In the Old Testament God meant what He said; in the New Testament God says what He meant." John Wilmot**

To make the case for the significance of knowing your OT we will examine the passage in Luke 23:27-31.

You can read this passage in Luke and gain a certain level of understanding but apart from a thorough examination of the OT you cannot possibly get the depth of its meaning. In these four verses the Lord Jesus Christ calls on at least ten OT prophecies.



In checking about ten commentaries, not a single one mentioned the OT sources for what Jesus said to the Daughters of Jerusalem.

One of my favorite sayings from the writings of Mr. Alexander is:

**“Jesus walks among the prophets.”**

## **The Mourners**

As Jesus is being led to the “slaughter” a crowd of women are beating their breasts and crying out loudly for Him. Now the translations do not specifically say they were beating their breasts but the Greek includes that action as going with the wailing.

NT:2875; to "chop"; specially, to beat the breast in grief:

That Messiah would be so mourned was prophesied by Zechariah.

Zechariah 12:10-11

**10** "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for *his* only *son*, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. **11** In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem,...

## **“Daughters of Jerusalem”**

The term “daughters” refers to the inhabitants of Jerusalem who reject Jesus and will face severe judgment which is why Jesus says to them, “...Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children ...”

The full term “daughters of Jerusalem” occurs only in Song of Solomon and is used there 14 times. The Song of Solomon is the love story of Christ and His Church and the “daughters of Jerusalem” are the challengers of the bride in the Song.

**“Weep for yourselves and for your children”**

There is a day coming in which Jerusalem will be destroyed. That day came 40 years after the crucifixion when the Roman army destroyed the temple and the city and Judaism was finished forever.

Jeremiah 9:19

For a voice of wailing is heard from Zion:  
'How we are plundered!  
We are greatly ashamed,

**“For indeed the days are coming....”**

This is an often repeated phrase by the prophets. Notice a few of the many times it is used, and see that the context is always judgment.

1 Samuel 2:31

Behold, the days are coming that I will cut off your arm and the arm of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your house. {Samuel}

2 Kings 20:17

'Behold, the days are coming when all that *is* in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,' says the LORD . {Isaiah}

Isaiah 13:9

Behold, the day of the LORD comes,  
Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger,  
To lay the land desolate;  
And He will destroy its sinners from it.

Amos 4:2

The Lord GOD has sworn by His holiness:  
"Behold, the days shall come upon you  
When He will take you away with fishhooks,  
And your posterity with fishhooks.

Malachi 4:1

"For behold, the day is coming,  
Burning like an oven,  
And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble.  
And the day which is coming shall burn them up,"  
Says the LORD of hosts,  
"That will leave them neither root nor branch.

The common usage of the days are coming is to predict judgment and that is what Jesus is doing in this passage.

The thrust of the words of Jesus to the Daughters of Jerusalem is that the prophets have warned you for centuries and you still don't understand.

"Weep for yourselves..."

The way that Jesus uses the phrase is in reference to eschatological judgment.

Luke 5:33-35

**33** Then they said to Him, "Why do the disciples of John fast often and make prayers, and likewise those of the Pharisees, but Yours eat and drink?"

**34** And He said to them, "Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? **35** But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; then they will fast in those days."

Luke 17:20-25

**20** Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; **21** nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."

**22** Then He said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see *it*."

**23** And they will say to you, 'Look here!' or 'Look there!' Do not go after *them* or follow *them*. **24** For as the lightning that flashes out of one *part* under heaven shines to the other *part* under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day.

Luke 19:41-44

**41** Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, **42** saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things *that make* for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. **43** For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, **44** and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

Luke 21:5-6

**5** Then, as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations, He said, **6** "These things which you see – the days will come in which not *one* stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down."

Luke 21:20-24

**20** "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. **21** Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. **22** For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. **23** But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. **24** And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

**'Blessed *are* the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!'**

The force of the Lord's words here is that it will be better for a childless woman because she will not have to see her child being put to death.

Isaiah 54:1

"Sing, O barren,  
You *who* have not borne!  
Break forth into singing, and cry aloud,  
You *who* have not labored with child!  
For more *are* the children of the desolate  
Than the children of the married woman," says the LORD .

Paul, in Galatians 4:27 quotes Isaiah 54:1 in the same eschatological sense of Jesus' usage of Isaiah here in Luke.

Paul goes back to the Old Testament to show that "Jerusalem which now is" is the people in bondage to the Law and that the Church is the "Jerusalem above" and "is free."

Galatians 4:21-31

**21** Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? **22** For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. **23** But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, **24** which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar — **25** for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children — **26** but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.

**27** For it is written:

*"Rejoice, O barren,  
You who do not bear!  
Break forth and shout,  
You who are not in labor!  
For the desolate has many more children  
Than she who has a husband."*

**28** Now we, brethren, as Isaac *was*, are children of promise. **29** But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him *who was born* according to the Spirit, even so *it is* now. **30** Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? *"Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman."* **31** So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.

Paul is writing to the church at Galatia that was in danger of going back into the legalism of Judaism and Paul tells them and us that the record of Ishmael and Isaac had a meaning far greater than just two women and two boys. It is the Old Testament prophecy of the Church.

Then Jesus calls on Hosea:

**Then they will begin 'to say to the mountains,  
"Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!"'**

Hosea 10:7-8

**7** *As for* Samaria, her king is cut off  
Like a twig on the water.

**8** Also the high places of Aven, the sin of Israel,  
Shall be destroyed.  
The thorn and thistle shall grow on their altars;  
They shall say to the mountains, "Cover us!"  
And to the hills, "Fall on us!"

The Apostle John echoes this same lament from Hosea:

Revelation 6:12-17

**12** I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. **13** And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. **14** Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. **15** And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, **16** and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! **17** For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Revelation 9:6

In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.

Then finally Jesus utters a parable:

**31** For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?"

The "green wood" is Jesus and the "dry wood" stands for the Jews. What burns better, green wood or dry wood?

There are too many OT references to mention all of them but the meaning is always that the green tree is good and the dry tree is bad. The crucifixion of Jesus who is the "green wood," is surely awful; but what awaits the Daughters of Jerusalem who is the "dry wood?"

The prophet Jeremiah told Jerusalem what was going to happen before the Babylonians carried the best of them into captivity.

Jeremiah 11:14-17

**14** "So do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer for them; for I will not hear *them* in the time that they cry out to Me because of their trouble.

**15** "What has My beloved to do in My house,  
Having done lewd deeds with many?  
And the holy flesh has passed from you.  
When you do evil, then you rejoice.

**16** The LORD called your name,  
Green Olive Tree, Lovely *and* of Good Fruit.  
With the noise of a great tumult  
He has kindled fire on it,  
And its branches are broken.

**17** "For the LORD of hosts, who planted you, has pronounced doom against you for the evil of the house of Israel and of the house of Judah, which they have done against themselves to provoke Me to anger in offering incense to Baal."

The prophet Ezekiel uses the same imagery of the trees.

Ezekiel 17:24

**24** And all the trees of the field shall know that I, the LORD, have brought down the high tree and exalted the low tree, dried up the green tree and made the dry tree flourish; I, the LORD, have spoken and have done *it*."

My intent with this message was to show how superficial it is to try to interpret the New Testament without a firm grounding in the Old Testament. You can read our passage in Luke and come away with some understanding; and you can impose your own ideas on the words of our Lord; but there is no possible way to correctly understand what Jesus means apart from seeing how He "walks among the prophets."



Now a word of encouragement or a word of warning: it all depends on who you believe Jesus to be. Is He a pitiful victim or is He the Lord of lords and King of kings?

Is Jesus Christ really your Lord or do you use His lovely name to utter cursing? Do you say “Jesus Christ” when you have no thoughts of worship? Are you a “green tree” or “dry wood”?

Are you comfortable in your life without Christ or do you live out your days in thanksgiving that Jesus has saved you from your sins?

If you are still living a life in unrepented sin then Jesus is not your Savior.

The Gospel is for sinners. If you can agree with God that you are a guilty sinner then I have a Savior to offer to you.

This is not an appeal for you to make a “decision,” it is an earnest call for you to repent and believe in the Gospel.