



# ASSOCIATED BIBLE STUDENTS

“WEEPING MAY ENDURE FOR A NIGHT, BUT JOY COMETH IN THE MORNING.” PSALMS 30:5

[www.baltimorebiblestudents.org](http://www.baltimorebiblestudents.org)

May 2005

## Heart Communion with Jesus

The last week of Jesus' life pulses with drama. The drama gathered momentum with Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Daily confrontations with the Pharisees ensued. Judas' betrayal pushed the drama to a tragic, though victorious, climax. "It is finished" was his cry. But death was swallowed up in the victory of the resurrection.

Jesus died for our sins and was raised for our justification (Rom. 4:25). "He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for the sins of the whole world"(1 John 2:2 NIV). His death as a "ransom for all" will be "testified [to all] in due times" (1 Tim. 2:6). In God's Kingdom it will finally be fulfilled, Jesus is "the true light which enlightens everyone" (John 1:9 NRSV). Their wholehearted acceptance of Jesus will determine their eternal destiny.

First there is an intellectual understanding of the purpose of Jesus' death. But faith doesn't stop with head knowledge. There must be a heart response of full consecration-complete dedication. Jesus invited us to deny self, "take up his cross daily" and follow him (Luke 9:23).

### Heart Communion

Heart appreciation, also, involves another aspect of Christian experience-heart communion with Jesus. If we take the time to meditate, to probe the meaning of all his experiences, we will find ourselves living in our hearts every event in that

momentous life. To know Jesus is to love him and to love him is to emulate him-to want to be just like him. This is one way we become filled with the holy spirit. We will want to think like Jesus thought, talk like Jesus talked and love like Jesus loved. We will be very concerned to meet the needs of those around us. Why? Because Jesus died for them.

### Sheer Pathos

The drama of Jesus' last week climaxed in sheer pathos on his last day. The Jewish day began at sundown. We find Jesus in the "upper room" celebrating the Jewish Passover that he was about to fulfill by his own death as the antitypical Passover lamb (1 Cor. 5:7). What drama! While Jesus is emotionally overwhelmed with his imminent death, his disciples are boasting which one would be greatest in the kingdom. Since the roads were dusty and people wore sandals, it was the custom for one to wash the feet of others. Being so concerned over whom would be greatest, they were too proud to wash one another's feet. But Jesus humbly knelt before them and washed their feet. Are we willing to perform any menial task for others?

Then Jesus instituted the Last Supper-our communion of his death. Bread broken, wine poured out-again a grim reminder of his death. These were emblematic of his body that would be broken and his life soon to be poured out unto death, as "a ransom for all." After Judas departed to conclude his secret scheme of betrayal, Jesus

lingered in the upper room with the eleven, his dearest friends. Jesus knew his imminent arrest and death would stagger their faith. Oh, how his heart ached for them. "Let not your heart be troubled"-in tender words of loving concern, Jesus tried to prepare them for the immediate events that would temporarily shatter their lives (John 14). At about 11:00 p.m. he said, "Arise, let us go hence." Yes, Jesus had a Divine appointment with his enemies in Gethsemane.

"I am the vine, ye are the branches." On the way to Gethsemane, Jesus used the imagery of the vine and the branches in John 15 to assure them of his oneness and presence with them. Further words of comfort followed in John 16. They were not grasping the full implications of Jesus' words that "the shepherd would be smitten and the sheep scattered."

They stopped. And Jesus offered the most powerful intercessory prayer in the history of Christianity (John 17). So powerful that Christians today feel its benefits. Remember, Jesus prayed not only for the eleven but also for "those who believe on their words." This includes all Christians even to our time.

Somewhat comforted by Jesus' prayer, the weary little band followed their Master over the brook Cedron and up the Mount of Olives to the peaceful Garden of Gethsemane. Finally Jesus confides, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (Mark 14:34). How selfless! During the whole evening Jesus ignored his own dire needs to comfort his disciples. Can we emulate Jesus and forget the needs of self to serve others? Despite Jesus' plea that they watch with him, his closest friends slept while he agonized in prayer. "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Jesus was always there when they needed him. But they were not there when Jesus needed them. Where are we when others need us?

### **Arrest and Trial**

As Jesus woke them he said, "Behold, he is at hand that doth betray me." Soon a band of temple soldiers led by Judas surrounded them. For thirty pieces of silver, Judas was to deliver Jesus to the

High Priests and Pharisees, away from the multitudes who loved him and would have defended him. A kiss of betrayal by Judas would identify Jesus. That night and the next day, Jesus' face was marred in many ways-bruised with blows, spat upon and rent with thorns. But nothing pierced his heart more than the profanity of this kiss of betrayal by a close friend.

Jesus could have escaped arrest. He stopped Peter's attempt to protect him. He knew all the brutality that awaited him. Willingly he submitted. His mission was to die as a "ransom for all." Are we willing to perform the Heavenly Father's will regardless of the cost in pain or loss?

During the long night and breaking of day, two trials (civil and religious) were held - each in two parts. In reality, it was a grueling ordeal of six trials. Jesus was continually abused, mocked, confronted by false witnesses, spat upon, ridiculed, beaten, taunted and scourged. Yes, he was scourged by a whip, with a cat-o'-nine-tails each containing metal cleats, that tore flesh out of his back.

In mockery the Roman soldiers dressed him as a king. A king must wear purple. And so they found an old cloak of this color and threw it over his shoulders. A king must have a crown so they crushed a crown of thorns upon his head. Each soldier advanced one after another to Jesus and bending low said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" After passing him with mock solemnity, each turned and with a burst of laughter, struck him with a rod and covered his face with spit.

There is an instinct in all of us to desire to see others cast down beneath us in esteem. Whenever we have the desire to belittle another, even in a dignified manner, think of this mockery of Jesus.

The temple mob cried, "crucify him," "crucify him!" Jesus' heart response was a willingness to die for them because he loved them. Are we willing to love our enemies?

Pilate "delivered Jesus to their will."

"And they led him away to crucify him." With the crushing weight of his cross, Jesus began the long journey to a place called Golgotha. But the merciless ordeal of the long sleepless night had so weakened Jesus it was necessary for the soldiers to constrain a bystander, Simon, to carry the cross. Finally the journey ended with their ascent of a hill shaped like a skull. As the soldiers set about their preparations for the last act of history's greatest drama, a common incident occurred, but Jesus filled it with significance. It was the benevolent practice to provide a stupefying drink for those condemned to the excruciating punishment of crucifixion, in order to dull the senses and deaden the pain. A cup was handed to Jesus. Exhausted with fatigue and burning with thirst he grasped the cup eagerly and lifted it without suspicion to his lips. But as soon as he tasted it and smelled the stupefying mix, he laid it down and would not drink. It was a simple act, yet full of heroism. Face to face with outrageous torture, Jesus chose not to allow his intellect to become clouded. His obedience was not yet completed. The Father's plan for him was not fully carried out.

### On the Cross

Jesus' sufferings on the cross defy our comprehension. At 9:00 a.m., he was stretched upon a cross lying on the ground. The sound of a hammer against nails was mingled with the sound of groans as the nails tore through flesh and grated on bones. Several husky soldiers lifted the cross and dropped it into a deep hole. The pain of flesh tearing against nails was unbearable. Jesus gazed at the crowd beneath him. The priests and Pharisees stood in front with hate radiating from their eyes. They lost their dignity and as common rabble hurled insults at

Jesus. The crowds followed then the soldiers and even the thieves so that the mob under his eyes became a sea of scorn like angry waves that dashed about his cross.

Suddenly at noon every voice was hushed as every light in creation seemed to be snuffed out and an intense darkness settled over the earth for three hours. Lightening flashes thundered across the sky. It was as if the wrath of God joined its fury with that of the mob against the forsaken One. The heart that so bravely endured man's rejection could not seemingly endure separation from his God. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Then the cry, "It is finished." But before Jesus died, he confidently said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

Then God verified that Jesus was indeed the Son of God. The earth shook and the veil into the Most Holy of the Temple was torn from the top to the bottom. The death of Jesus had opened a new and living way into the Holiest (Hebrews 10:19, 20). Some said, "Truly this was the Son of God." WHAT A SAVIOR!

Much of this drama is diffused throughout the four Gospel accounts, but there is much repetition. We have published a seamless flow of THE LAST WEEK OF JESUS from the Gospel accounts which eliminates duplications while capturing every descriptive phrase of this drama. THE LAST WEEK OF JESUS is graced with a four-color cover of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem on the back of a colt. You will want to cherish it as a keepsake that you will re-read each year in remembrance of Jesus' death. This special free gift is a one-time offer to our readers.



ASSOCIATED BIBLE STUDENTS · P.O. BOX 44 · JARRETTSVILLE, MARYLAND 21084

Toll Free: 1-877-596-9791

You are invited to send for one or more of the following. Please indicate your selection(s) below:

- The 50-page booklet entitled "*Heart Communion with Jesus: The Last Week of Jesus*". (\$1.00)
- The dramatic and inspiring 60-minute video entitled "*For This Cause*". (\$6.50)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_