

Beyond Church Ministries

So Exactly How Did I Die?

Dec. 5, 2023

I. Introduction:

Gal. 2:20 — *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”*

In the very first history of the Christian church, after Christ had risen from the dead and ascended into Heaven, the man who would become Paul rose up as a ferocious persecutor of the church. He arrested Christians, destroyed families, and, in his own words, “imprisoned and beat those who believed in Jesus.” By his own testimony, as the first Martyr, Stephen, was stoned to death by Jewish zealots, Paul stood by and held the clothes of those men who had shed their robes to be able to throw stones hard enough to kill Stephen.

Paul was not saved until years after Jesus was crucified, buried, rose and ascended into Heaven. How then can he say, as he does in Gal. 2:20, “I have been crucified with Christ.” How can he declare that he was on the cross with Jesus? If Paul was actually crucified with Christ, how did he even write his letter to the Galatians, seeing that this letter wasn’t written until at least 15 years after the crucifixion happened?

In fact, Paul maintains that not just he but ALL believers — including you and me — were on the cross with Christ, even though we weren’t even born until around 2000 years later. Listen! Listen to the Scripture:

Again, Paul writes in Gal. 2:20 — *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”*

Rom. 6:7- — *“He who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.”*

2 Cor. 5:14 — *“For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died.”*

Gal. 3:3 — *“For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”*

2 Tim. 2:11 — *“This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him.”*

Rom. 6:4 — *“Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that*

just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

II. Question: So if Paul says he was crucified with Christ and then argues over and over again that we all died with Christ as well, how did that happen?

Who was Melchizedek? Heb. 7:2b-4 — “In the first place, Melchizedek’s name means king of righteousness. He is also called king of Salem (which means king of peace). 3 No one knows anything about Melchizedek’s father, mother, or ancestors. No one knows when he was born or when he died. Like the Son of God, Melchizedek continues to be a priest forever.” The KJV says Melchizedek was “without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.

Gen. 14:18-20 — “Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. 19 And Melchizedek blessed Abram, saying: “Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; 20 And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.” And Abram gave Melchizedek a tithe of all the spoils.”

Psalm 110 — “The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool.” 2 The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies! 3 Your people shall be volunteers in the day of Your power; In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth. 4 The Lord has sworn And will not relent, ‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’”

Heb. 7:1-2,8-10 — Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of the Most High God. He met Abraham and blessed him when Abraham was returning from defeating the kings. 2 Abraham gave Melchizedek a tenth of everything he had captured.

8 Priests receive a tenth of everything, but they die. Melchizedek received a tenth of everything, but we are told that he lives. 9 We could even say that when Abraham gave Melchizedek a tenth of everything, Levi was giving a tenth of everything. Levi gave, although later his descendants would receive a tenth of everything. 10 Even though Levi had not yet been born, he was in the body of Abraham when Melchizedek met him.

Because Adam is our physical ancestor, we were physically inside Adam’s loins when he sinned. We all therefore inherit from him the consequences of Adam’s disobedience.

1 Cor. 15:22 — “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.”

(Example of slaves)

When we come to Christ, Christ adopts us into his family — breaking the ties that bound us to Adam. With that bond broken through adoption, we are set free from the bitter inheritance of Adam and and come into the glorious inheritance of not just Jesus but the risen Christ of God. As children of God, we are carried through Christ’s death in the same way that we were carried from life into death in Adam’s body as He sinned. We all once died in Adam. We then, as believers, are carried through death into eternal life inside the body of Christ. In Adam, we all died. In Christ, we die again and then are re-born.

In Adam, we inherited the consequences of Adam’s sin

**the spirit and practice of sin
eternal death**

**law, judgment and condemnation
poverty and illness**

**In Christ, we inherit the benefit of
His death, burial and resurrection**

**The Holy Spirit & practice of righteousness
eternal life**

**grace, innocence and exaltation
provision and wellness**

III. The type of the wilderness experience

IV. Question: Why is this all so important?

Christ didn’t die for us in order to give us the chance to clean up our old man; He came here to kill us and raise us up as entirely new beings.

That’s the difference between religion and Christianity. In many, many, many churches throughout the world, leadership, often in good conscience, preaches a Christianity which is all about the Ten Commandments, overcoming sin through discipline and behavior modification, and earning righteousness by our giving and our behavior. No! No! No! When we become Christians, we embrace the cross as God’s means of killing our old man and the resurrection as His means of raising us up as new beings. As believers, we have a new Spirit, a new identity, a new life, a new righteousness, a new mind, a new Father, a new family, a new future, a new security, a new inheritance, a new worldview, a new Kingdom and a new endowment of authority and power. We don’t come into all of those things through self-discipline and obedience. We come into those things by letting God kill forgive our sins, kill our old man and raise us up as entirely new beings.

Only Christianity brings about an entirely new kind of being.

Only Christianity brings people out of death into eternal life.

**Only Christianity brings people out of law and into divine righteousness.
Only Christianity brings us out of fear and into joyful security.
Only Christianity brings people from slavery to authority.**

Col. 3:3 — “*For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*”

This weekend, we had the privilege of sharing time with a wonderful family. We drove about two hours to meet them and try to set the man of the family, the husband and the father, free from a burden he had picked up in a misguided rehabilitation program.

A few times in my life, I've accompanied friends of mine to their meetings at Alcoholics Anonymous centers, and can I tell you that for lost people, for people who don't know Christ and have not been born again, Alcoholics Anonymous is a great organization. AA brings together men and women who are all struggling against a common enemy, a shared affliction in their lives. Even if it's only for the camaraderie of others fighting the same battles, there's a benefit to AA.

But for Christian people, AA presents a huge problem. You see, each time someone speaks in an AA meeting, he or she has to begin by introducing themselves by name and then reciting this sentence: "I am an alcoholic." So say, if a woman named Susie Stormchaser stands up to speak, she has to begin every time by saying, "Hi, my name is Susie Stormchaser, and I am an alcoholic."

For a believer to say "I am an alcoholic" is to speak out both a lie and a curse. It's a lie, not because Susie Stormchaser is trying to be dishonest. It's a lie because it's simply not true. Susie's identity as an alcoholic was put to death on the cross and left behind in the tomb that once held the body of Jesus of Nazareth. It's a curse because it empowers the enemy in her life by acknowledging a state of bondage from which Christ has already set Susie free.

For a believer to speak out the words "I am an alcoholic" is to identify himself or herself by the old man who is mouldering in the grave. Listen, listen, listen to Col. 3:3 and the words of Peter Louis this morning.

... What's true for Susie is true for all of us this morning. We are no longer in bondage to the habits, the trauma and the addictions of our past. Today, as believers, the body and the blood of Christ stand between us and the substance of our pain.