

Jesus weeps, and so do we

In John 11:25, our Lord weeps at the death of Lazarus. Doesn't He know what is about to happen? Yes. Then why is He so sad? Like us, our Lord lives in the moment. Knowledge of God's ultimate will does not remove any of us from feeling or responding to the process. It is only by weeping now that we can know the delicious contrast of never weeping again.

Backward times

It's a strange situation we live in when those who suppose they are furthering God's kingdom (I speak of pastors, teachers and leaders in orthodox Christianity who know nothing of grace or the potency of Christ's sacrifice for all) are in actuality working against it, and those who suppose that they are opposing God's ultimate will (politicians and world leaders) are actually moving us closer to a one-world government and the second coming of Christ. In the big picture, however, EVERYTHING is operating together in accord with God's will (Eph. 1:11).



Martin Zender's Clanging Gong News

"If I know all mysteries and all knowledge, but have no love, I am a clanging gong" --1 Cor. 13:1-2



Two out of three isn't bad.

We win, but it's always a struggle

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NOTHING IS EASY

It's normal to question God, so let's get started.

We know that, when we are finally immortalized and show up at God's address, we're going to feel good. Really good. Everything will be smooth and hassle-free. We will experience no more pain, heartache, or crushing fatigue. God is going to bless us with every spiritual blessing among the celestials. Here's our question: Since God is going to do this with us eventually, why not do it now? Why take us down the long and winding road paved with unbelievable hassle, frustration and mistakes? Is this not chaos?

Consider my ongoing computer woes. I will eventually get my new computer, and will produce God-glorifying articles and videos on it. In the meantime, however, I've encountered dozens of hassles associated with this seemingly simple endeavor. Since God is God, there is no way I can accept the premise that He could not have made this a painless experience. I conclude, therefore, that God not only wanted me pained, but that He brought on the pain Himself, via Satan.

Philippians 1:29-30: "For to you it is graciously granted, not only to be believing on Him, but to be suffering for His sake also, hav-



The present eon is ill-designed to make us feel good.

ing the same struggle such as you are perceiving in me, and now are hearing to be in me."

What do my computer woes have in common with, say, Paul's shipwreck en route to Rome, and every other divine hassle? Struggle.

Goliath was going to die and David was going to win, but not before a lengthy stalemate between Israel and the armies of the Philistines. We first have to feel the fear of Saul and hear the tone and tenor of Goliath's taunts. And more. Can't David just go out and fight? No. Too simple. Saul has to offer David his armor first, and David has to try it on, and—naturally—it has to not fit.

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The significance of "Christ Jesus" vs. "Jesus Christ"

A reader asked for details about the Issue 1 revelation that Peter calls himself "an apostle of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:1), while Paul calls himself "an apostle of Christ Jesus" (Eph. 1:1).

On earth, our Lord's name was "Jesus." The name "Jesus Christ" associates us first with His earthly experience. Apparently, "Jesus" was one

of the most common names of those times. "Christ," we know, is not Jesus' last name. This is His exalted title; it means "annointed." Thus, the name "Christ Jesus" brings immediately to our mind His exalted status and station.

Remarkably, Paul is the only New Testament writer who uses the name, "Christ Jesus;" he does it approximately 89 times. The Circum-

...we win

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The Exodus. Why not a quiet passage out of Egypt? Why the death of the Egyptians? The plagues? The lamb blood on the doorpost? God goes out of His way to manufacture struggle. It is so unnecessary. *Or is it?*

The crucifixion. Jesus cannot merely die, He must die painfully. Examine the subdivisions: the added trial of the garden; betrayal by a disciple; denial by a disciple; go to Pilate, then Herod, then back to Pilate; soldiers gamble for His clothes; priests mock Him; He is given vinegar to drink—and *must* we run His heart through with a lance?

Apparently so. Struggle must be so absolutely essential both to the glory of God and to our

...“Christ Jesus” vs. “Jesus Christ”

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sion writers (Peter, James, John, and Jude) use “Christ Jesus” ZERO times. What about the name “Jesus Christ?” The Circumcision writers use it, by my count, fourteen times.

Does Paul use the title “Jesus Christ” also? Yes. Around 19 times. Why does only Paul mix the titles? Like the other writers, he refers to the person of Jesus Christ. But, again, only Paul uses the unique combination: “Christ Jesus” because *only Paul received the truth that a select number of human beings will share the*

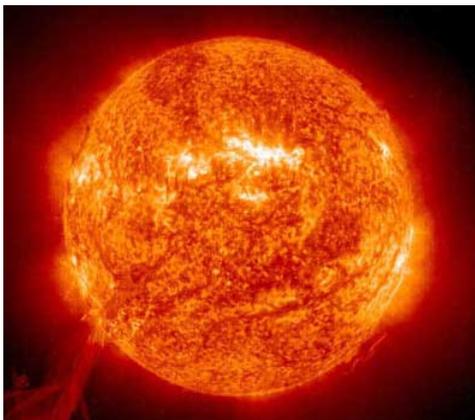
future exaltation and happiness that it cannot be dispensed with in this eon. After all, struggle is GRACIOUSLY GRANTED US (Phil. 1:29). My conclusion is that struggle turns mere accomplishment into God-rewarded heroism; *eventually*.

Try to remember this the next time you lose a sock in the dryer, or notice that you’re out of milk *after* you pour your corn flakes. No struggle is too small to count with God! ■



title “Christ.” The humans who eventually do this are known in Paul’s letters as “members of the body of Christ.” The Circumcision saints, by contrast, are *not* members of the body of Christ; they are the bride of the Lambkin (Rev. 19:7-8). ■

There is the sun



We take it for granted that a big orange ball of fire hangs in the sky. The sun is a type of Good. That it goes away twelve hours of the day is a type of evil. That it comes back is a daily hint that evil gives way to Good. Even at night, there is limited light from the moon. The moon is generally a type of evil, but the reflected sunlight from its surface tells us that there is no such thing as absolute evil, and that even evil, in whispers, speaks of the illumination of God. ■

What a Revelation!

Grace has more power than law. Apart from divine illumination, this is an impossible truth for mankind to grasp. Mankind can’t, by default, think this way. Law came with stone, so it must be strong. Grace comes with a Man dying on a cross, so it must be weak.

The Man dying on the cross spells the end of mankind’s ability to please God. Thus, mankind hates the message of the cross. Even religious mankind? *Especially* religious mankind.

Q&A

Why did Paul and Silas, after getting beaten in Philippi in Acts, chapter 16, sing hymns in jail?

They didn’t sing right away. They were jailed earlier in the day, but did not start praying and singing until midnight (Acts 16:25). The flogging would have been an unbelievable shock to their systems, and they were no doubt stunned by it. They were still human beings. It hurt like hell.

Now, midnight. Paul and Silas realized something that you and I rarely realize because we live such staid, timid lives: There is a mind-boggling reward of joy and happiness ahead, in the presence of Christ, for those who suffer evil with the proclamation of the gospel. At midnight, Paul and Silas were thinking of this reward, and what it would mean to both them and Christ.

Rants & Stuff

The Apostle Paul says we ought not murmur (Philippians 2:14).
Therefore, I rant.



Unhappy woman at Wal-Mart; it was not Rachael Ray

I love Wal-Mart. Going to Wal-Mart twice a week for groceries is the sum total of my social life. I love looking at all the people at Wal-Mart; it's kind of like being at a zoo. I am happy to be part of the zoo.

It thrills me to be surrounded by so much order and cleanliness. When I see tables full of bright, shiny red apples, I praise God quietly to myself (I do it quietly to myself because I am not a Pentecostal.) When I get to the soup section, I notice that Rachael Ray has a soup starter line. I look at the picture of Rachael Ray, and I thank God for Rachael Ray because I think Rachael Ray is really cute.

I love the air freshener smell in the men's room at the Wal-Mart. I don't know if it's the same freshener used in the women's rest room, and I don't intend to find out. I am tempted to ask what brand it is so that I can get it and waft it throughout my house, but then the specialness of going to Wal-Mart twice a week would be ruined.

I go to Wal-Mart on Tuesdays and Fridays. Last Tuesday, I bought a large bag of Wal-Mart variety cat food, the kind that weighs 600 pounds and costs twenty dollars. It's good enough for my cats. I love my cats. The cashier was a woman, I'm pretty sure. She grimaced at me, and I smiled at her. Rather than lifting the bag to the counter, I presented the bar code to Sourpuss from the cart. She tried to shoot it with her barcode gun, but it wouldn't take. She tried three times; it was a no go each time. I was ready to lift the bag to the counter when Sourpuss *ran* around the counter, *grabbed* the bag from my cart, *threw* it on her side of the counter, *pressed* the code manually into her cash register, and then *plopped* the bag into my cart. I said, "Um, I would have been happy to have done that for you." She responded by turning the

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merry-go-round baggie thingee so sharply that, had my hand been in the way, I would have lost it.

Almost all the people at Wal-Mart are friendly. There are a couple exceptions. Thank God for apples, Rachael Ray, and whatever miracle substance de-odorizes the urinals there. ■



Computer update—because you're dying to hear

Amarillo, TX, is the headquarters of CPU.com, who sell discount computer parts. Amarillo, TX, is also the home of my genius friend, Aaron Miller, who will build my new supercomputer.

All seemed well three days ago when I called CPU to

order and pay for the parts on the telephone. The key word of the previous sentence is the word "seemed."

"We can't take card numbers over the phone," said the clerk. I was going to ask why, but I knew he would say, "Because you are destined to struggle in this evil

eon, in accord with the high purposes of God."

I have mailed a cashier's check to Amarillo, and hope to have my supercomputer sometime before the consummation of the eons. ■