

# Inside Wyoming

*The Newsletter of the Wyoming Ave. Baptist Church*

*Vol. 19, No. 1, April 11, 2004*

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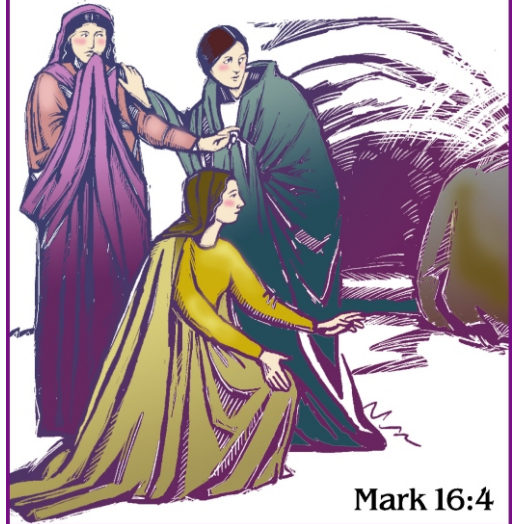
Why Did Jesus  
Have to Die?



## Quick Pic

Muslims and Christians in Feltonville gather each month for “Meetings for Better Understanding.” We hear from a Christian speaker and a Muslim speaker on various theological and social issues, such as “Jesus in the Qur’an” and “Jesus in the Bible,” and “Hospitality.” Praise God for this opportunity to show His love to our neighbors in the Muslim community.

They saw that the  
stone ... had already  
been rolled back.



Mark 16:4

# He is Risen!

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Wyoming Ave. Baptist Church  
123 E. Wyoming Ave.,  
Philadelphia, Pa. 19120  
(215) 329-8295*

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### Questions?

Do you have questions about Jesus or about anything you've read here? Feel free to come to one of our services or to call the church, (215) 329-8295.

### Our Sunday Services

9:30 am ~ Sunday School  
10:45am ~ Worship

# Why Did Jesus Have to Die?



If you look around in our church, you will notice the symbol of the cross in many places. Like the apostle Paul, and Christians throughout the ages, “we preach Christ crucified” (1 Cor. 1:23). Every time we celebrate the Lord’s Supper, we commemorate His death. During the week between Palm Sunday and Easter, particularly on Good Friday, we remember and meditate on the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus (called the Christ). And with the release of the movie, “The Passion of the Christ,” this subject has been brought to the forefront of our minds. But why is the death of Jesus the most important thing we teach? Why did Jesus die?

## Jesus Died So We Might Live

This is the simple answer. Jesus dies in our place. He took the sentence of death

that belonged to each one of us, and Himself bore our punishment. To understand this, we need to go back to the very beginning of the world.

When Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the garden of Eden, sin entered the world. Sin is rebellion against God – not only direct disobedience, but any action or thought that says that we are in control of our lives, not God. Sin is falling short of God’s standard of perfection. The Bible tells us in Romans 3:23 that, “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” No one is perfect and without sin. – if we think so, we are lying to ourselves and to God.

The punishment for sin is physical and spiritual death – eternal separation from God in hell, a place of never-ending torment. This is what each one deserves because of his or her sin.

God sent His one and only Son, Jesus, to

take our punishment, to die in our place. By His death, we are restored to a right relationship with God, and God adopts us as His sons and daughters. All people are not children of God by birth, in fact all are God's enemies, deserving of death. But to those who receive Christ, who accept the gift of Jesus' death on their behalf, God gives the right to become children of God, entitled to life and all the blessings of our Heavenly Father. This is all because Jesus dies in our place, taking our punishment. He died so that we might live.

## Jesus Was the Only Perfect Sacrifice

God made clear in the Old Testament that for His justice to be satisfied and sin to be removed, it could only be done by the shedding of blood. This is why the Jews brought animal sacrifices before God, year after year, slaughtering them in the Temple and pouring the animals' blood on the altar. The animals died so that the Israelites did not have to.

But can an animal's death really take the place of our own death? The answer, of course, is no. The imperfect animal sacrifices of the Old Testament were a picture of what was to come: one perfect sacrifice, a perfect God-man who would die once for all sins, past, present, and future.

Jesus, being a perfect man, was the only

one who could die on someone else's behalf. A sinful man dies for his own sin, he cannot die in the place of another. But because Jesus obeyed God's Law perfectly, without sin, He alone was not guilty of death and thus could take another person's punishment.

But if Jesus was just a perfect man, his death would be a substitute for only one guilty man. Jesus, in addition to being fully man, is also fully God. His death as the divine Son was sufficient to cover the sins of all mankind. Jesus, the perfect God-man, was the only sacrifice that could pay for the sins of the whole world once and for all time.

## Jesus' Death Bought Our Freedom

Because of our sinful natures, we are by birth slaves to sin. It is our master, it controls us, our thoughts, and our actions. In the end, it claims our lives and brings us to death. Jesus' death on our behalf paid the price for our freedom. His shed blood bought those who believe in Him, and now we belong to God. We are no longer slaves to sin and death, but we are free to live for God. Our eyes are opened and we can know and see truth, as children of the God who is Truth.

God's justice demanded from us a price we could not pay. But because of His great love for us, God provided satisfaction for His

judgment by sending Son, Jesus, who became a man for the sole purpose of dying in our place. This is love, that God laid down the life of His own Son for us.

## How Will You Respond?

How will you respond to the gift of life that God offers you in Jesus? Heaven is not automatic – it doesn't come to everyone, and you can't get there by trying to be a good person. The only way to gain life is by submitting to God and His Son Jesus, acknowledging Jesus' death on your behalf, and in faith trusting Him for your salvation.

Let us not think that we glory in Jesus Christ's death alone, for we worship Christ *not* as a defeated, dead Savior, but as a *living* Savior, who conquered death when He rose from the dead. Ephesians 1:19-20 tells us that this *same power* which God demonstrated in raising Jesus from the dead is available to all those who trust in Jesus as Savior. Have you trusted in Jesus Christ as your Savior, the one who died in your place to take your punishment for sin? Believe in Him and God will make you alive with eternal life!

If you already have believed, believe afresh and walk in the power that raised your Lord from the dead! Let us preach the gospel to ourselves every day, reminding ourselves of the good news of Jesus, and let us every day rejoice in the abundant life we have in God.



For this is  
my blood...  
poured out for  
many for the  
forgiveness  
of **SINS.**

Matthew 26:28

# Beky Poteat: Togo Bound!

Dear Family & Friends,

It hardly seems possible that I have been in the states since the end of June! How time flies, but I am so thankful for all of the opportunities that God has given me to share about His work in Togo (in Africa). It has been a joy to see many of you on my travels. You have been such an encouragement to me! Thank you for your faithful prayers for me as well as for the Togolese.

I am busily getting ready to return to my dear Togolese! The difficult good-byes have begun – won't it be great in heaven when there'll be no more good-byes? It will be the best of both worlds, and many of you will meet the dear Togolese people for whom you have been praying so faithfully!

God has used this time to teach me many things and prepare me for the work He has for me when I return to Togo. The Lord has laid a burden on my heart for the women of Togo. My goal is to train women to teach the Bible chronologically to the women in their villages. Please pray that they might understand that our Heavenly Father loves them and has a plan for their lives. Please pray with me that those women who cannot read the Word of God would desire to learn and persevere through reading classes so they might read and apply the Bible to their hearts and lives. I have been so encouraged hearing Akouwa read and understand her Bible after much hard work. I wept tears of joy as I received a letter she had written all by herself! God has encouraged me

with Luke 4:18 and Isaiah 61:2-3. My prayer for these women is that those in bondage will be set free – that their mourning will be turned into joy – all for God's glory.

These past two months I have been working to translate and adapt material from the book by Nancy Leigh DeMoss – *Lies Women Believe and the Truths That Set Them Free*. I have been working on a teacher's guide so that trained Togolese women can teach these principles to the women in their churches. Please pray as we continue to see this project to completion.

I am very excited and thankful that God has also provided a book for young people to encourage them to keep their lives pure. The author has given us permission to translate and adapt it culturally, so we trust the book will be available soon for all of West Africa. I am so thankful for the people from Cameroon, Nigeria, and Togo that helped with this project; we trust that God will use this book in a mighty way in the lives of young people.

These tasks seem tremendously huge to me, but I am thankful that GOD IS ABLE, and NOTHING is too difficult for Him!

May the Lord find us faithful,

*Beky Poteat*

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*Beky is one of our missionaries in Togo, Africa. Since she wrote this letter in March, she has arrived safely in Togo and has begun to minister again to the people there. Pray for Beky as she brings the good news of Jesus to the people of Togo.*

# Thank You, Rev. Grover!

We at Wyoming want to extend a BIG THANK YOU (thus the size of the headline, by the way) to Rev. Allen Grover and his family, for the time that they spent serving at Wyoming.

Rev. Grover came to us in September of 2002 with a simple assignment, to preach in our pulpit for a period of three months. A year and a half later, after serving much longer than his initial call, we finally said “farewell” to our beloved interim pastor and his family.

On Sunday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, Pastor Allen spoke to us in the morning service, letting us know some of the things God is doing in his life and where God is leading his family next. Pastor Allen spoke of the many relationships that his wife Ginny has been developing in their apartment complex, and of the need for the gospel to be brought there. Might God be leading them to start Bible studies and maybe even a church there? As Allen said, “I don’t know,” but they are earnestly seeking the leading of the Lord in the next steps.

We had a luncheon following the service and we were blessed to be able to fellowship with Pastor Allen and his family and to thank them for their service among us. We presented them with a booklet of thanks, signed by many of the members of the congregation who were there that day.



*Pastor Allen Grover with his wife, Ginny, and two daughters, Sarah and Alyssa, on the steps of Wyoming.*

We thank God for bringing Pastor Allen to us and for allowing him to serve for this time. We pray that God would bless him and his family as they seek to follow God in their lives and ministry. We hope that when they return to us we will have much to share about God’s work in us and them!

# Rev. Luis Centeno Installed as Wyoming's New Pastor

On Saturday, March 27<sup>th</sup>, Rev. Luis Centeno was formally installed as Wyoming's new pastor. The service included participants from many cultures, and from all over the Philadelphia region. Wyoming's choir sang "Lord of Light," and Mrs. Ruth Floyd Rush, the daughter of the Rev. Melvin Floyd, sang two "gospel jazz" songs, praising God for his blessings on the church, and praying that He would "see His people through." A time of worship was led by a worship team from Church of the Savior in Wayne, Pa., led by Jim Dougherty.

Members of the community offered their congratulations and thanks, including Edwin "Bo" Diaz, the Philadelphia Da's Latino Liaison; Captain Francis Bachmayer, of the 25<sup>th</sup> Police District; and Elizabeth Hernandez, executive director of Refuge, a Christian counseling ministry.

The sermon preached by Dr. Anees Zaka was entitled, "The Mission of the Church – What is it?" The church's mission is to declare, without compromise, the whole counsel of God, even the parts which may not be politically correct or easy to listen to. We were thankful to have Rev. Bill Holmes, pastor of Maranatha Tabernacle, with us as a representative from the Middle Atlantic Conservative Baptist Association. Other



*Pastor Luis with his wife, Elsie*

pastors participating were Rev. Fred Estrada and Rev. Suler Acosta, both from Bethel Temple, Pastor Luis' former church; Rev. Carlos Martinez from Iglesia Christiana Bethesda; Rev. Fidel Echeverria from Iglesia Evangelica Bautista; and Dr. Bill Crispin, executive director of CityNet.

The service was an opportunity to thank God for providing Wyoming with a pastor, and to join with other believers to consecrate this new relationship. It was also an opportunity to introduce Pastor Luis to the community, and to welcome them as fellow neighbors of Feltonville.