

**THE BEATITUDES**

PGLADDJIIGYUGYA  
 EPUREBNGZRNRUOM  
 RPAVCHOWTHYSRRG  
 SQOGEDDETROFMOC  
 ENSREKAMECAEPQQ  
 CQITJSMZMURSATF  
 UTBIOYTHIRSTSBM  
 TBCNNKVMODGNIKE  
 ESSENSUOETHGIRE  
 DGBIHDESSELBFBK  
 BALUFICREMTFNIH  
 RFILLEDFGVEJTJW  
 POORINSPIRITQEU  
 PMUPEKDRAWERCB  
 JMDGECIOJERSDSK

BLESSED INHERIT PEACEMAKERS REWARD COMFORTED KINGDOM PERSECUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS  
 FILLED MEEK POOR IN SPIRIT SONS GLAD MERCIFUL PURE THIRST GOD MOURN REJOICE



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“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned.”  
 Mark 16:16

August 23, 2009

**Jesus: The Swoon Theory**

The resurrection of Jesus is truly a centerpiece of faith, simply because it stands as the final and ultimate proof of His miraculous power and thus the ultimate confirmation of His claim to being God incarnate. Of course, to those who were eyewitnesses of His ministry and who carefully recorded these events for our generations, He had already provided incontrovertible evidence of this by countless deeds of which the miraculous nature was so undeniable that those determined to hate Him finally resorted to ascribing these miracles to the power of Satan instead.

But His own resurrection was the final step. He had healed the sick and disabled and had even brought others back from the dead. Now, at His own bidding, He rose to life again and proved forever that He held the power that could only belong to the eternal God.

Few try any longer to deny that existence and the impact of Jesus. Those who would discredit Him as the Messiah have now largely turned to denying the resurrection, for if this did not occur, "then we may ignore His claims and teaching as we please." Among the various anti-resurrection theories put forth is one that I find especially unbelievable: Jesus didn't actually die on the cross. The theory, as usually put forth, holds that Jesus did en-

sure the beating, scourging and other torture and was, in fact, nailed to the cross for some hours that day. Allegedly, He was so weakened by this massive trauma, and the attendant blood loss and dehydration, that He came very close to the near-death state of shock (in its proper medical definition) and appeared so lifeless that His Roman executioners mistakenly thought Him dead.

Thus, they supposedly removed Him from the cross and released the body for burial without ever realizing that He was still alive. He then allegedly revived in the tomb, left it, and shortly thereafter began appearing to others.

Readers may recognize this as the "swoon theory." The first time I encountered it, I thought it was being presented as a joke. The theory strains credibility in such a desperate fashion that it is difficult to comprehend its ever being believed. It has gained some prominence, though, and the necessary takes of examining it yields useful knowledge for any honest observer, whether believer or resurrection skeptic.

In the first place, though we may never base valid beliefs on a count of how many others, or even how many scholars, believe one thing or another, it is telling

that even the most ardent resurrection deniers reject this particular theory as untenable; just as they do not contest the undeniable historicity of Jesus' life and transformational teaching, they do not dispute His execution on a cross that day. Even Prof. Dr. Gerd Luedemann, a theologian and scholar who has become, quite possibly, this generation's best known denier of the resurrection and divinity of Jesus, asserts without doubt that the death took place as described! This is the only plausible outcome of His crucifixion, because, as the student of history quickly comes to realize, the Roman executioners were experts in the business of death. Crucifixion was a Roman specialty favored for its exquisite pain and its public spectacle, and the soldiers who administered it were well-honed in their deadly craft. The possibilities that they were so incompetent as to mistakenly certify death or that they would be so inefficient as to allow a despised subject to survive beyond their own appointed period of amusement are equally beyond the realm of credibility.

If there can be any doubt about this, it should be dispelled by an additional medical detail provided in the historical account of John. Whereas most of the disciples seem to have been watching from afar for various reasons, 2 John makes clear that he was close by and personally observed a critical event described in John 19:31-34:



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**Worship Schedule**

Sunday Morning:  
 Bible Class: 10:00 AM  
 Worship: 11:00 AM

Sunday Evening:  
 Worship: 6:00 PM

7:00 PM  
 midweek BIBLE CLASS

Visit our website at:  
[www.blackcreekchurchofchrist.org](http://www.blackcreekchurchofchrist.org)

**Evangelism**

- ◆ Bible Call
- ◆ Georgia Mission (Soperton Church of Christ, Soperton, GA)
- ◆ Bible Correspondance Courses & Tracts (By Request)

**Works of Benevolence:**

- ◆ Hospital Benevolence Basket ~ Orange Park Medical Center)
- ◆ Raintree Village Children's Home (Valdosta, GA)

*"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."*  
 Galatians 6:9. NIV

**Works of Edification:**

- ◆ The Black Creek Courier
- ◆ Black Creek Christian School
- ◆ Visitation Program
- ◆ Vacation Bible School
- ◆ Bible Classes For All Ages
- ◆ Keenagers Group (Over -50)

**THE LORD IS GOOD TO ALL; HE HAS COMPASSION ON ALL HE HAS MADE.**  
 Psalm 145:9



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What Must I Do To Be Saved?  
 Hear the Gospel (Matthew 7:24-27; Romans 10:14,17) → Believe the Gospel (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6) → Repent of My Sins (Luke 13:3,5; Acts 17:30) → Confess Christ (Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10) → Be Baptized (Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:21) → Be Faithful Unto Death (Matthew 10:22; Revelation 2:10).

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31 Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. 32 Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. 33 But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. 34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.

Note that these experienced executioners observed that He was already dead, but they didn't even leave it at that-and indeed they were there to make sure of it by breaking the legs if necessary to end any possibility of raising the body to get another breath. Instead of breaking the legs of Jesus, the soldier took an action that not only confirmed but would also have assured the death of Jesus. The description of an immediate gush of blood and water is telling as to the medical phenomena involved and the reassurance of accuracy of the account.

A brief refresher in human anatomy allows us to make perfect sense of the event. This is certainly not intended to trivialize the suffering of our Lord but to attest to its reality. In the thoracic cavity (the chest), the lungs occupy most of the space and envelop the heart which is situated primarily on the left side. This is illustrated by the image shown below.



The reader can appreciate how the left lung surrounds the heart. Note also the close proximity of the aorta, which carries all the blood out of the heart into the network of arteries, lying just to the left of and immediately adjacent to the vertebrae of the spinal column. Finally, we remember that each lung is surrounded by two thin layers called the pleura, which preserve the vacuum seal around the lungs (which causes them to expand when the chest cavity does) and keep the vital thoracic organs sliding smoothly against each other with breathing, heart beats, and general changes in body position. If the lungs have been severely irritated, and in certain cases of cancer and other pathologies, fluid can leak into the space between these pleural layers and thus begin to restrict the necessary expansion and inflation of the lungs.

Such an abnormal collection of fluid is called a pleural effusion, and if that fluid is not safely drained, the individual will soon be unable to take an effective breath.

Now let's consider blood and water. Many believers have suggested that John's account represents an egress of clotted blood from the body of Jesus, since, upon clotting, the blood separates into its solid components and watery appearing serum. While I respect this theory, I don't believe it is correct. Just piercing the side would not result in any significant volume of fluid, especially in one who had suffered so much dehydration and blood loss already, as there are no major blood vessels running nearby. And if the blood were already clotted in the arteries and veins, there would be no appreciable flow at all, certainly not the definitive demonstration that John describes and which immediately convinced the executioner that Jesus was dead. The description and forensic clues suggest, instead, that the soldier's spear released the gush of a large water pleural effusion, which would have been collecting and slowly suffocating Jesus over the previous hours. The same thrust would, of course, puncture and tear the lung itself, deflating it and eliminating any possibility of further breathing. This would be more than enough to ensure death, but I believe the soldier did one more thing that accounts for the blood. A quick glance back at the illustration shows how a deliberately placed spear could not only tear through the lung but also pierce the heart and sever the aorta with one quick motion.

The hemorrhage would have been especially horrifying, and if the victim were alive, these injuries would bring death in a matter of seconds. If the spear thrust were placed on the right side instead of the left, it would need to penetrate about two inches deeper but would still produce the same result by destroying the heart and the major pulmonary arteries and veins. So the executioner's blade, with a ruthless maneuver he undoubtedly knew very well, was the final assurance that no pain or insult would be spared and that no man left a Roman cross alive.

He survived the crucifixion? Professional executioners took Him down and never realized He was still alive? He revived in the tomb and walked away? Let's be realistic. Jesus Christ died in the most horrible torture imaginable. We're not only given all the testimony and all the assurance that any honest observer could want, but we are even given enough medical detail to infer the most likely ultimate causes of His death. That death stands as the only hope for my sins, and the resurrection that surely followed stands as the final and ultimate proof that He is the almighty God whom He claimed to be.

~ Stephen Cantrell

# Black Creek...This Week

## Servants For the Month of August

	A.M.	P.M.
Announcements	Larry Russell	Larry Russell
Scripture Reading	Gordon Richau	Gordon Richau
Song Leader	Sam Sipper	Steve Atnip, Jr.
Opening Prayer	Gary Evans	Billy Smith
Lord's Table - Directing	Don Miller	Ted Copeland
Assistant	Floyd Grace	
Assistant	Frazier Blair	
Assistant	Stephen Hedgecock	
Assistant	Don Shaw	
Sermon	Steve Atnip, Sr.	Steve Atnip, Sr.
Closing Prayer	Steve Atnip, Jr.	Dick Morgan
Prepare Communion	(Aug) Cindy Lou	(Sept.) Brenda & Linda
Cleaning the Building	(Aug) The Evans'	(Sept.) Brenda & Linda

## NEWS Notes



There is a list on the bulletin board for anyone who could volunteer to watch the little ones during service if the need is present.

**Volunteers Needed:** There are still some months open for volunteers to do the building cleanup and preparing the communion. If you can do these, please sign up on the bulletin board in the foyer.

**Mailboxes:** Please remember to check your mailboxes weekly.

**Hospital Basket:** We need to restock our snacks for the Hospital basket. If anyone can contribute, please see Billy Smith or Mary Register.

**Ladies Bible Class:** Ladies, come join our Bible class on Tuesdays at 10 AM. **Ladies, don't forget your homework.**

**FSOP Class:** Steve's class started on August 13th. It is not too late to join us. The class is entitled "Difficult Texts of the Old Testament Explained."

**Updates:** If there is anyone on the prayer list that needs to be taken off or added, please let Cindy know so that she can update the prayer list. Thank you.

**Dinner on Grounds:** There will be a dinner on the grounds after the morning services on Sunday, August 30th. Come and enjoy this time of fun, food and fellowship with us. We will also be celebrating those with birthdays and anniversaries in the month of August.



## Keep Them In Your Prayers...



### Black Creek Family:

Keith Copeland, Mitchell family, Wanda Cheek, Kathy Moore, Lackey family, Copeland family, Posey family, Morgan family, Dasher family, Shaw family, Sonny Best, Grace family, Dennard family, Dix family, Vaughn family, Blair family, Evans family, and Maloy family.

### Away:

Lee Copeland, Nancy Byers, Johnny Humphrey, Beers family, Roberta Cook, Irish family, Bob Teitz, Barbara Lonier, Dot Sitch, Clyde Howell, Brena Bishop & New Baby (Brenda's Niece), Pardue Family, Jayne Imery, Steve Holiday (Mary Dennard's Nephew), Evan Chapman (5 yr. old who was just diagnosed with Leukemia), Thompson Family, Baxter & Mary Louis Forrester, Dwayne Seaman and family, Cindy Anderson, James Smith, Kay Taylor, Dorothy Wilson, Eileen Lacy, Donald Petteway, Gerri West, Terry Thompson, Gary Bartlett, Sloan Hunter, Bob Melson, Catherine Moon and Judy Angelo.

## Welcome to Worship



We are so happy that you have chosen to worship with us today. If you are visiting with us, please remain a bit after services so we can become acquainted and let you know how special you are to us. Also, if you have any questions concerning anything you saw in our services today, please ask any one of us here today. We will be more than happy to answer any of your questions.

