

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

Vol. XX

September 5, 2010

No. 36

## Jesus Died For . . .

(Jerry Fite)

God, not affected by time, saw that it was time to send His only begotten Son into the world to die for man. “for while we were weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly” (Romans 5: 6). It was time in God’s eternal existence to execute the plan. In the “fullness of time”, God sent his son to be born of woman and take on flesh and blood to live under law (Galatians 4:4, Heb. 2:14). Also, it had become “due season” or the time for him to die to save man, for man could not save himself.

Jesus once said that there is no greater love shown than for one to lay down his life for his “friends” (John 15:13). What must we think of God’s love when we fathom the truth of Jesus dying for His “enemies”? But this is exactly Paul’s point in Romans 5: “But God commendeth His own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by His life” (Romans 5:8, 10). What love!

Paul helps us grasp God’s love by applying it in human terms. “For scarcely for a righ-

*teous man will one die: for peradventure for the good man some one would even dare to die.” (Romans 5:7). Oh, he is a just man who is fair and follows what is right in his life, but I probably will not give up my life for the righteous man. The good man. . .? Yes, he not only does what is right, but always goes beyond his duty in seeking my well-being. Such self-sacrifice might bring me closer to my own self-sacrifice for him. But I cannot begin to fathom what it would take for me to give up my life for my enemies. It takes the love of God, which He manifested when Jesus died for all the sinners in the world.*

This fact of God’s love has been perverted by various forms of the “Social Gospel.” James Cone, the father of “Black Liberation Theology” has said that Jesus died for “the victim”. No, man was not a victim when he sinned. He stood guilty before God for his sin. Jesus’ death for the guilty, allowed God to be “just” with the sinner while achieving His goal of “justifying” man from his sins (Romans 3:23-26).

Yes, Jesus died for the “weak”, in that once we had sinned, we were powerless to ex-

tricate ourselves from the judicial wrath of God. But we were no victim. We were “ungodly” sinners at enmity with God. (Romans 5:6-10, I Jn. 4:10).

Knowing for whom Jesus died, we have a basis in having hope for such men as Jeffrey Dahmer. Yes, the Jeffrey the Dahmer who strangled and dismembered 17 boys and men, cannibalizing some of them. He certainly fits in the “ungodly” category. But sometimes men of such heinous crimes are not allowed into our category of those who can ever be forgiven.

While in prison, Jeffrey Dahmer completed a correspondence course where he learned of God’s love, and He responded by obeying the Gospel. Roy Ratcliff, an evangelist for the Madison church of Christ in Wisconsin baptized Jeffrey Dahmer into Christ on May 10, 1994. After his conversion, he asked for 25 copies of the correspondence course to be sent to him so he could share them with others. Just a few months later, November 28, 1994, Jeffrey Dahmer was killed in prison while cleaning bathrooms. “Let him fry in Hell!” some say. What would Jesus say?