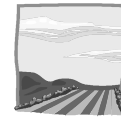




About ... Death & "Fruit"



Jesus said, "... but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24b, NASB)

For the "Whole World"

- ❑ In about AD 30-33, during the Passover Feast, Jesus entered Jerusalem for the final time. A large crowd went out to meet him, shouting, "*Hosanna!*¹ *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the King of Israel*" (John 12:13, NIV). The Pharisees, who had tried to discredit Jesus, said to one another, "*See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!*" (12:19, NIV)"
- ❑ Read John 12:20-22. Some Greeks² were among those who went up to worship at the Feast. They came to Philip and said, "*We would like to see Jesus*" (12:21). Philip and Andrew went to tell Jesus. Jesus' reply (in verses 23-26) was for the "whole world."

The Path for Jesus

- ❑ Read John 12:23-24. Verse 24 is more literally translated, "*Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit*" (John 12:24, NASB). What does this mean?



- 📖 "*For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body, but made alive by the Spirit*" (1 Peter 3:18, NIV).
 - 📖 "*But Christ really has been raised from the dead. He is the first of all those who will rise*" (1 Corinthians 15:20, NIV).
 - 📖 *Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies" (John 11:15, NIV).*
- ❑ Jesus knew that he would be arrested and killed (Mark 10:33-34a). He also knew that he would be raised from the dead (10:34b). Jesus said, "*For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and give his life as a ransom*³ *for many*" (10:45). It was only through the death of the one man⁴ (Jesus) that "life" (abundant and eternal) could be given to the many.

¹ "hosanna" was a Hebrew expression originally meaning "O save now!" It had become an exclamation of praise.

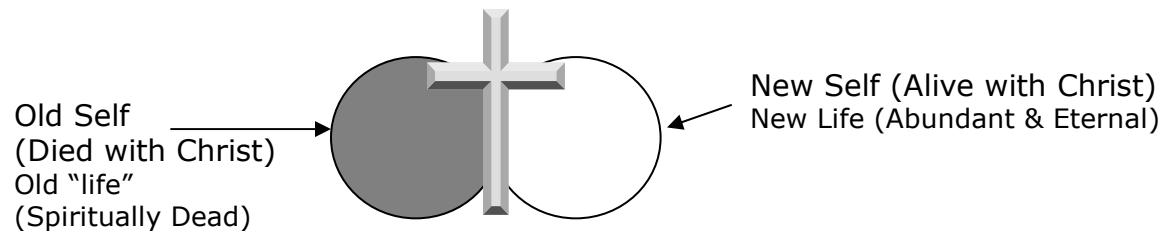
² "Greeks" – not necessarily from Greece, but probably Greek-speaking Gentiles (non-Jews) who were "God-fearers" (that is, they were attracted to Judaism, but had not become full converts to Judaism).

³ A "ransom" is a price paid for release from captivity and/or punishment. The price paid was Jesus' life. The "released" are those who receive Jesus Christ through faith. They are released from captivity to sin and God's punishment of sinners.

⁴ Jesus is the only human being qualified to pay the ransom. He is the unique Son of God, and the only human being without sin (Romans 3:10-12, 23). In Christ, the righteous died for the unrighteous (1 Peter 3:18).

The Path for Jesus' Followers

- ☐ Read John 12:25-26.⁵ What is necessary to have eternal life? As followers of Jesus, how can we maximize (increase) our experience of this new, abundant life in our daily living?



- ☞ *“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20, NIV)*
- ☞ *“Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him” (Romans 6:8, NIV).*
- ☞ *“And anyone who does carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:27, NIV).*

“Much Fruit” (the metaphor extended)

- ☐ Jesus said that his death would result in “much fruit.” Likewise, if we have been united with him in his death (that is, if we have died to our old life), we will bear “much fruit.”
- ☐ Jesus said, *“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5, NIV).*
- ☐ To “bear fruit” can mean the following:
- To be part of God’s reproductive, multiplying work (that is, to be involved in leading others to Christ, resulting in more “new lives”).
 - To experience and reveal the “fruit of the Spirit,” consistent with the character of Christ.
- ☞ *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23, NIV).*

Reflection/Application

- Are you experiencing abundant and eternal life? Are you bearing fruit? The only path to life and fruitfulness is the path of Christ, which is the path of the cross. Have you placed your faith in Christ? Have you “died with Christ?” Have you died to the “old self?” Are you putting to death the old ways of thinking and acting? (Read Colossians 3:1-17).

⁵ The truth of verse 24 is applied to Jesus’ followers. To love one’s life is to deny God’s sovereignty. The love-hate contrast is Semitic idiom, expressing preference, not hatred on absolute scale. For example, see Luke 14:26-27.