

## Christ Laid Down His Life for His Enemies

*Christ Laid Down His Life for His Friends  
(Jn. 10:11; 15:13).*

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(Rom. 5:10).*

If Jesus Christ stated that we are to love our enemies, why would anyone be surprised that he laid down his life for them (cf. Rom. 5:10)?

But I (Christ) say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you (Mt. 5:44; Ed. note in parenthesis; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted).

On the long road to becoming perfect, it is essential to love one's enemies.

For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? <sup>47</sup>And if you greet your brethren (friends) only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? <sup>48</sup>**Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect** (Mt. 5:46-48; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

This is a tall order for any human being to live up to, but with God's help attaining this kind of love is possible.

But looking at them (Christ's disciples), Jesus said, **'with men it is impossible**, but not with God; for **with God all things are possible** (Mk. 10:27; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

It is apparent that Christ's instructions, regarding loving one's enemies, were followed by other servants of Almighty God.

And they (Jewish religious leaders) stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' <sup>60</sup>Then **he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, 'Lord do not charge them with this sin.'** And when he had said this, he fell asleep (died) (Ac. 7:59-60; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Christ knew that human beings are deceived, and their real enemies are not composed of flesh and blood (Rev. 12:9; cf. Eph. 6:12). This is why he asked his heavenly Father to forgive the people involved with killing him.

Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.' And they divided his garments and cast lots (Lk. 23:34; cf. Ac. 3:17).

Ultimately, the real enemy of God and mankind is Satan and the fallen host. Therefore, Christ laid down his life for them as well. Although this is a very hard concept for many human beings to accept, it is nonetheless true.

**The Lord is** not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, **not willing that any** (SHD 5200; anyone) **should perish but that all** (SHD 3956; everyone; all things) **should come to repentance** (2Pet. 3:9; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Originally, all those created by Almighty God were part of His flock. In the course of time, more than one individual has gone astray, and it is clear from Christ's parables that God desires that everyone, who has left His fold, be restored.

What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not

leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying? <sup>13</sup>And if he should find it, assuredly, I (Christ) say to you, he rejoices more over that sheep than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray (Mt. 18:12-13; cf. Lk. 15:11-27; Ed. note in parenthesis).

John 10:11 has been used to state that Christ laid down his life for his friends, but the context is not limited to those who are necessarily friendly toward God at this time.

I (Christ) am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep (Jn. 10:11; Ed. note in parenthesis).

**And other** (SHD 243; all others; the remainder; the rest) **sheep** I (Christ) have **which are not of this fold**; them also I must bring, and they will hear my voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd (Jn. 10:16; Ed. notes in parentheses).

In addition to the sheep which are not necessarily in God's fold right now, Christ stated that he laid down his life for those he regarded as his friends. When he made this statement, he defined his friends as those who obeyed the commands that were given to him by his Father,

Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. <sup>14</sup>**You are my friends if you do whatever I command you** (Jn. 15:13-14; cf. 5:19; 8:28b).

Because Christ loved his Father, his friends, and even his enemies, he was able to lay down his life believing that his shed blood would be the means of reconciling every sinner within God's realm (Rom. 6:23; cf. Heb. 9:22). So there is no contradiction in scripture unless Christ was supposed to lay down his life only for his friends which would be a contradiction of what he taught in Matthew 5:44-48.

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