

JESUS IN GETHSEMANE

Mt.26:36

Ed Dye

I. INTRODUCTION

1. As we study about Jesus' experience in the garden of Gethsemane in preparation for Calvary and then on to Pentecost, we hope to impress upon our minds the depth of his sacrificial suffering there even before Calvary.
2. As we do this, we should come to learn more about and to appreciate more his infinite love; a love that means salvation for sinners; a love that required his voluntary suffering.
3. This study is designed to remind us not only of the degree and intensity of the agony of his sacrificial suffering in Gethsemane, but also of the events and circumstances connected with it.

II. DISCUSSION

A. THEY CAME TO GETHSEMANE

1. Mt.26:36: "Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane..."; Mk.14:32: "And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane...".
2. In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus, "began to be sore (greatly) amazed, and to be very heavy," Mk.14:33.
3. Mk.14:34 further declared that Jesus said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death..." Also Mt.26:38.
 - a. Ironically, Gethsemane means "olive press."
 - b. It was here that the Lord "began" to be compressed with unimaginable sorrow!
 - c. He was "greatly amazed", an intense response to extraordinary circumstances.
 - d. As if a single word was insufficient, Mk.14:33 adds, "sore troubled."
4. As Peter, James and John accompanied him into the garden, he said unto them, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death," Mk.14:34.
 - a. The sadness overwhelmed him.
 - b. It suggests a sorrow so deep it almost kills.

- c. Not overwhelming sadness and sorrow because of the suffering he would endure there, but because of the reason why it was necessary! – because of the sins of man that made it absolutely necessary!
- 5. Removed from his disciples only a stone's throw, according to Lk.22:41, Jesus "kneeled down and prayed."
- 6. According to Mk.14:35, the weight of the distress brought Jesus to the ground. Mk. said, "And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground."
- 7. Mk.14:36, quotes Jesus as praying, "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee, take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt."
- 8. Luke alone records the attendance of an angel between his 2nd and 3rd sessions of prayer in the garden of Gethsemane strengthening him (Lk.22:43), and says in V.44, "And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (ESV). "And his sweat was as it were great drops of blood" (KJV).
 - a. As we notice this, we are made aware of the fact that in a sense there was more intense pain in Gethsemane than at Calvary.
 - (1) The "sweat like blood" fell in Gethsemane.
 - (2) Jesus was in agony "to the point of death" in this garden.
 - b. Even the cross did not have the anxiety of soul of Gethsemane. In Gethsemane, Jesus through prayer won the battle.
 - c. In Gethsemane was decision time. The battle of all time and eternity was fought there – in prayer.
 - (1) "It is finished," it is true, was uttered on the cross.
 - (2) But it was decided in Gethsemane!
 - d. Jesus gave his soul in Gethsemane; he gave his body and his blood at Golgotha; without Gethsemane, there would never have been Golgotha!
 - e. Gethsemane was also pain time. The Scriptures actually say more about suffering and agony in Gethsemane than on the cross.
- 9. Did blood actually come from the Lord's skin when he prayed in Gethsemane, or is this merely figurative language when it says, "and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling

down to the ground” (ESV). “And his sweat was *as it were* great drops of blood” (KJV).

a. The expression at the point of controversy is “*as it were*,” i.e., “as it were great drops of blood.”

b. There is evidence that the term “*as*” (hosei), which is an adverb, and normally expresses a comparison, does not always signify a mere figure of speech.

(1) Proof: See Mt.3:16; Mk.1:10; Jno.1:32; Lk.3:22.

c. “One scholar observes (F. Godet, *The Gospel of Luke*, 1870, Vol.2,306: “The words, *as it were drops*, express more than a simple comparison between the density of the sweat and that of blood. The words denote that the sweat itself resembled blood. Phenomena of frequent occurrence demonstrate how immediately the blood, the seat of life, is under the empire of moral impression. Does not a feeling of shame cause the blood to rise to the face?”

d. “Several years ago an article titled, ‘On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ,’ appeared in the prestigious Journal of the American Medical Association. It was authored by Dr. William Edwards, a pathologist with the Mayo Clinic; Wesley Gabel, a biblical scholar; and Floyd Hosmer, a specialist in medical graphics at the Mayo Clinic.

“These gentlemen suggested that Luke’s description of the agonizing event is perfectly consistent with a condition known as hematidrosis, in which there can be hemorrhaging into the sweat ducts during periods of acute emotional distress.

“In such cases, the skin becomes fragile and tender, and subcutaneous capillaries can dilate to such an extent that they burst, causing blood to ooze from the skin. (*Journal of the American Medical Association*, Vol. 255. March 21, 1986)”

e. “It is both exegetically and medically possible that Jesus literally ‘sweated great drops of blood’ in the agony of Gethsemane.”

[c,d,e, are quoted from *Christian Courier*, Sept., 2007, Vol. XLIII, No.5, p.20, in “Notes from the Margin of My Bible,” by Wayne Jackson, Editor]

10. Question: For what did Jesus pray when he cried that the cup might pass from him? Was he asking that he might avoid death on the cross altogether?
- a. I do not believe that is the case at all!
 - b. Critics often pounce upon this prayer of Jesus and suggest that Jesus manifested a lack of courage, perhaps cowardice, or even a lack of faith when he prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me..."
 - (1) That is blasphemy! He was not a coward.
 - (2) He was not afraid of death!
 - (3) He had no lack of faith! Never sinned! Not once!
 - c. To have done so would have contradicted everything prophecy had said about him, everything he knew he came in the flesh to do, and how he knew he would have to do it, everything he had earlier told his chosen apostles about his earthly mission.
 - (1) Jno.12:23, "The hour is come for the Son of man to be glorified."
 - (2) Jno.12:27, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour."
 - (3) See Mt.20:22; Lk.12:50; Mt.26:53-56.
 - d. He was not asking the Father to abort the cross and substitute another way.
 - (1) The cross was God's eternal purpose. 1Pet.1:18-20 Eph.3:11.
 - (2) There was no other way. Rom.3:23-26; Gal.3:15-19,21-29.
 - (3) Jesus knew this. He came for this purpose and endured the cross with joy, Heb.12:2.
 - e. Jesus did not want out of this arrangement to save sinners. He knew that only in humanity could sinful man be saved. Cf. Rom.7:25-8:3; Mt.1:21; Heb.2:11-18; 10:4-14.
 - (1) The cross is of no benefit to fallen angels.
 - (2) Jesus, as a man, as God in the flesh, went where no mere man could go; he, as man, did what no mere man could do.

- (3) In Gethsemane he prepared himself to die on the cross; there he would shed his blood for the remission of sins. See Mt.26:28.
- g. This leaves only one thing the “cup” could be for which he prayed might pass from him. That “cup” had to be the dreadfulness of being “separated from” God the Father.
 - (1) In other words, he prayed that he might endure the cross without experiencing such a separation – alienation to that degree!
 - (2) See Mt.27:46; Mk.15:34. Cf. Psa.22:1.
 - (a) This was the only time in all eternity that God, the Father, and Christ were ever separated. Horror of horrors!
 - (3) This was the “cup” which could not be passed; had to be endured – which he willingly did!
- h. “My God, My God,” etc. This expression is one denoting intense suffering.
 - (1) This was without a doubt the most excruciating of all of Jesus’ sufferings. It, too, was a suffering in our stead!
- i. There is no denial that this happened. The problem has been in understanding why and in what sense Jesus was forsaken by God, the Father.
 - (1) It is certain that God approved his work, which included his dying on the cross. He had sent Jesus for that very purpose!
 - (2) It is certain that Jesus was innocent. He had done nothing to forfeit the favor of God.
 - (3) Perhaps the best explanation is that:
 - (a) It was because Jesus was “made to be sin for us,” 2Cor.5;21. Cf. Jno.1:29; Gal.3:13; Isa.53:10.
 - (b) Being made to be what God hates, he turned away; he forsook his Son..
 - (4) Of course we must understand that he was not made to be sin because of any sin he had committed, or in the sense that he became a sinner in bearing the sins of all humanity for all time (Isa.53:4,5,8,11,12).

- (a) But in the sense that he was made to be a “sin-offering” for sinful man.
- (5) This God-forsaken Son is the centerpiece of the faith for both Jew and Gentile through Gethsemane to Calvary to Pentecost.
- (6) Do not minimize the physical pain of the cross. It was horrific! However, the N.T. places little or no emphasis upon the physical and emotional at the cross as compared to them in Gethsemane.

III. CONCLUSION

1. May we also remember that Gethsemane was also *betrayal time*.
2. With an hypocritical kiss, he was betrayed by Judas, one of his own chosen apostles, who led a heavily armed multitude to arrest him, one who was himself unarmed, and who refused to allow Peter to use the sword against them. See Mt.26:47-56; Jno.18:1-11.
3. When approached by this heavily armed multitude he simply stood out in the open, as it were, saying, “Here I am.”
4. “As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground. Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:” Jno.18:6-8.
5. The battle was won in Gethsemane even before the mob arrived. The decision was made by the Lord in Gethsemane even before the trial preceding his crucifixion!