

WHAT WAS IN THE GARDEN CUP?

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 (John 12:27).

When the Lord Jesus Christ, was in the Garden of Gethsemane, He prayed three times and asked His Father to "take away this cup from me." So, what was in the cup? Some have suggested, without reference to any verse in context, that Jesus, in a moment of human weakness, was asking the Father if there was another way other than the cross. This would mean that Jesus' prayer was a self-serving and self-centered attempt to abort His mission at Calvary. The idea of a "moment of human weakness" also implies that His human nature was like ours rather than flawless as the perfect Son of God manifest in the flesh.

A look at the Lord's prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane from the synoptic gospels is the best way to focus on the context. Before we do that, let's take a look at what was not in the cup. These verses in John make it clear that Jesus was not referring to Calvary in His garden prayer, for He knew His time to be crucified was very near. John 12:23&27; *23 And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. 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.*

The context of the synoptic gospels will show that death was in the cup, but it was not His death at Calvary; rather, it was the immediate threat of His death in the Garden that prompted Him to pray three times saying, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."

Matt 26:37-39 *And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. 38 Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. 39 And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.* At this point He was about to physically die.

Mark 14:33-36 *And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; 34 And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch. 35 And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. 36 And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; takeaway this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.*

Luke 22:41-45 *And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, 42 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. 43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. 44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. 45 And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow.*

Our Lord's prayer was answered within moments when the angel came to strengthen Him, and the cup of death, imminent death, in the Garden, was soon removed. The Lord's sorrow and agony in the Garden was, in part, a fulfilling of the prophecies in Isa 53. Much of the mental suffering mentioned in Isaiah's prophecy, Christ experienced in the Garden of Gethsemane before His physical sufferings began.

In a seemingly moment of time, Jesus suffered the mental anguish that placed Him at the very threshold of death. He was bearing the griefs and carrying the sorrows of every soul that will have ever lived. This affliction brought the sinless Son of God to His knees to ask His Father to remove the cup of death that was about to take His life. A life that was to be sacrificed at Calvary and not at Gethsemane. Oh, what a Savior is He and Oh, what love could this be! Thank you, Jesus!

Heb 12:2 *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Oh, what a Saviour, what a victory, what a reason to celebrate Easter, resurrection day, and spread the gospel that Jesus preached about the eternal kingdom of righteousness, when He shall make *all things new*.