

The Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane

One of the most dramatic statements that Christ ever made while here on earth occurred in the Garden of Gethsemane. He said to his disciples that night that his “soul was exceedingly sorrowful unto death” and that he wanted the cup to “pass from him”, if it were all possible.

This study attempts to answer the question why he experienced such a state of depression that he wanted to die? What reason caused such an extreme reaction from the Messiah? Was it the thought of the crucifixion he was about to endure? Or was it some other reason that he sweat drops of blood?

Mat 26:36 Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

37 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.

As we know he prayed or pleaded vehemently to the Father to have this cup taken away from him. He did this three times and afterward said that he would acquiesce his will, which was to find another way, to the Father`s will which was to remain with the plan decided before the foundation of the world.

Why was he so distraught? Was it that he did not want to go through the beatings and torture or hanging on the cross in shame? Did he have second thoughts about being the atoning sacrifice? Was he afraid to be separated from the Father and experience death?

It seems by the statements that Yahshua made in the gospels that he was well aware of what lay ahead of him and one of the main reasons he was here on the earth.

Mat 16:21 From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

He even had to deal with Satan influencing Peter to discouraging him from fulfilling his destiny by dying on the cross. Christ response was very firm; He was not going to let anybody including Satan stop him.

Mat 16:22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

Mat 16:23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

These passages show that Yahshua did not consider rejecting the mission ahead of him at any time prior to the Garden of Gethsemane. There is no record of him struggling with completing the job ahead of him.

Christ also when contending with the Pharisee's gave them a metaphor and a prophecy about Jonah and the Whale.

Mat 12:40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

So, Christ seems to have been fully aware of what was to take place in the future with regard to his death. It was not a mystery to him. He was to remain in the grave for three days and nights and be resurrected.

Paul speaks of the attitude Christ had concerning his people and mankind in general. His will was that he loved us and wanted to give himself for us.

Eph_5:2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.

However, when we see him in the Gethsemane he seems quite sorrowful and in great anguish over this event. It seems that the reality of the prophesied events took hold of him suddenly. They were now right at the door. It all came to bear on him at the same time. The plan of salvation was upon his shoulders.

- The beatings and torture
- The shame on the cross
- The experience of death
- The separation from the Father

All these factors played a part as the reason he was “extremely sorrowful”

In Hebrews, the main reason given for the anguish is the experience of death. Especially, a death that was caused by crucifixion. The scripture says that he tasted death for all men. I think that death was especially difficult since he existed from eternity as a self-existing being and now he had to experience being flesh and blood which had no life in itself.

Heb 5:7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;

Another aspect could be the separation that would occur between him and the Father at the point to death. Christ in the gospels said that even though those that followed him would separate from him and he would not be alone because the Father would always be with him.

He would have to enter the grave alone without the Father for three days and nights.

Some say that he experienced this separation when he hung on the cross and said Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? why have you forsaken me. It is said that the Father turned his back on his Son because at that instance he became sin and the Father could not associated himself with his Son because of what he represented. However, when one examines Psalm 22 an answer does occur to the opening question in verse one.

Psa 22:1 To the chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shahar, A Psalm of David. **My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?** why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?

Normally, verse one is quoted as Christ plea to the Father about why he forsook him, but as seen in verse 24 of the same psalm the answer is that He was heard of the Father.

Psa 22:24 For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; **but when he cried unto him, he heard.**

This shows a continuous communication between the Father and the Son and up to the point where Christ says that he commended his spirit to the Father. He communicated to the Father up to the very end. The veil in the temple was ripped in two as he died. [signaling the acceptance of the sacrifice] There was no turning away from the Son before his death.

Luk 23:45 And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.

Luk 23:46 And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy **hands I commend my spirit:** and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

So, we can see from these passages that there was an overwhelming intensity and gravity of the events that were to happen to Christ when he was in the Garden of Gethsemane. It was also a temptation to not continue forward to complete the job ahead. Christ chose to submit his will to the Father`s will. Interestingly, there existed a garden in which the first Adam experienced temptation and did not submit his will to the Father`s will. The second Adam, Christ, chose to obey.

Rom 5:19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.