

THE GOSPEL PROJECT – CHRONOLOGICAL

JESUS SAVES

JESUS THE SAVIOR

The Savior is Arrested

The prophet Isaiah foretold of the coming Messiah in *Isaiah 53:3 (ESV)* ³ *He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

The life of Jesus reveals how He was the Man of Sorrows of whom Isaiah had spoke. We pick up today after Jesus had just left the Upper Room where He had washed the disciples' feet, eaten the last supper with them, and predicted that one of them would betray Him. His hour had come to take the path to death on the cross for our sins – that path led through Gethsemane. The Garden of Gethsemane is located on the Mount of Olives. Gethsemane means oil press. In this garden on the Mount of Olives was a place for crushing olives. It was similar to a winepress, where they crushed olives for oil – one of the most valuable products in the country. Here in the Garden of Gethsemane, a place where men pressed the oil from olives, God Himself bruised and crushed His Son so that the fresh oil of the Spirit might flow to all believers from Him.

Here Jesus prayed to His Father in agony knowing He would die for the sins of the world the very next day. Although all the gospel writers take us through Gethsemane, Luke is the only one who mentions Jesus' sweat as being like great drops of blood on that dreadful night. We are not sure if it applies to Jesus but we do know that there is a rare physical phenomenon known as *hematidrosis*, in which, under great emotional stress, the tiny blood vessels rupture in the sweat glands and produce a mixture of blood and sweat. The emotional stress of Jesus that night was beyond what we can comprehend.

Human history began in a garden called Eden and so did human sin. When Adam took the fruit from Eve, he had a choice – rebellion or obedience. Adam chose rebellion and brought sin and death into the world. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus had the same choice – rebellion or obedience. He chose obedience to do the Father's will. Jesus willingly accepted the cup of wrath that would be poured upon Him for the purpose of saving us from experiencing the Father's wrath. He chose to become sin for us. Jesus agrees to drink the cup of suffering and death.

Read Matthew 26:36-46 (ESV) ³⁶ *Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here, while I go over there and pray."* ³⁷ *And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled.* ³⁸ *Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me."* ³⁹ *And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."* ⁴⁰ *And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with me one hour?"* ⁴¹ *Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."* ⁴²

Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.”⁴³ And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy.⁴⁴ So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again.⁴⁵ Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.⁴⁶ Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.”

Jesus left eight of His disciples probably near the entrance and took Peter, James, and John deeper into the garden to a private place to pray. Out of the 11, these three formed what has become known as the “inner circle”. There was a closer relationship with these more than the others. Peter, James, and John were the only disciples allowed to accompany Jesus when he raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead. On the mountain where Christ was transfigured in the presence of Moses and Elijah, none of the apostles was invited to witness this glorious event except Peter, James, and John. And now, in the Garden of Gethsemane, not long before his arrest and eventual execution, the Lord selected only Peter, James, and John to accompany him to a solitary place for prayer.

On this particular night of Jesus’ greatest need, His friends could not keep their eyes open. When experiencing great suffering or fear, most people want to have someone with them, to help share the burden. Being perfectly human, Jesus wanted companionship as He faced the cross. In so many situations of life, we have no idea what we can do to help a person. But, we can always be there for them and pray for them. The disciples were there for Jesus; however, they missed the blessing of praying for Him. When David in his flight from his own son, Absalom, wept on the Mount of Olives, his followers wept with him. (**2 Samuel 15:30**). But when the Son of David was in the same place in tears, His followers fell asleep. While His enemies remained wide-awake on that fateful night, His personal friends who should have watched with him were napping.

Although He did not draw strength from His friends, He did find strength from His Father! From the example of Jesus in the Garden, we see there is strength available from our prayers to the Father even when the answers are not the ones we would prefer. C.S. Lewis, said, “In Gethsemane the holiest of all Petitioners prayed three times that a certain cup might pass from Him. It did not.” And yet, Jesus remained obedient to the end.

Let’s consider the *cup* that Jesus spoke to the Father about. When the mother of James and John asked Jesus if her sons could sit in prominence with Him in His kingdom, Jesus said to the two brothers in **Matthew 20:21 (ESV)**²² ... “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?” They said to him, “We are able.” But, they had no ‘clue’ regarding the cup that Jesus would drink. Key passages in the Bible connect God’s wrath with the imagery of a cup. For example, **Jeremiah 25:15 (ESV)**¹⁵ *Thus the LORD, the God of Israel, said to me: “Take from my hand this cup of the wine of wrath, and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it.*

Because He loves us Jesus was willing to drink the cup of God’s wrath for us. Those who accept His sacrifice do not have to experience the wrath of God. Steve Lee writes on DesiringGod.org, “Jesus drank the cup of God’s wrath for us so that he could extend the cup of God’s fellowship to us. It might include suffering, but not wrath. We don’t get wrath anymore — now we get God. We get the sweet, satisfying reality of His eternal fellowship in Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit.”

“Was Jesus trying to change God’s mind so that He would not have to die?” Previously, I answered this way: The human side of Jesus possibly was asking God, is there another way out? ‘Surely, you can think of something else, Father – like the ram in the thicket to take Isaac’s place!’ And maybe the words came down from the Father – You are the ram in the thicket, my Son!” Now, I think the answer is much deeper than the human side. Many godly people have been arrested, beaten, and slain because of their faith. But only Jesus experienced being made sin and a curse for mankind. The Father has never forsaken any of His own but Jesus knew that the Father would have to forsake Him and that was breaking His heart. Charles Stanley comments, “Dying on the cross was the reason He’d come to earth. What Jesus dreaded was separation from His Father. That’s why He prayed, *“if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.”*”

Jesus went to His Father three times, asking if there was another way to accomplish mankind’s redemption. It is okay to ask the Father in prayer regarding the same burden time after time. Jesus did. However, each time He ended His request with these words: *“nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will”*. By the third time, He knew that this was the only way. That’s when the struggle ended, and His resolve to carry out the Father’s will grew strong. The personal lesson we learn from Jesus’ agony in prayer is that our struggle will end when we yield to the Lord’s will. Jesus accepts the plan of His Father as foretold in scripture.

Read Matthew 26:47-56 (ESV) ⁴⁷ While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. ⁴⁸ Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; seize him.” ⁴⁹ And he came up to Jesus at once and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” And he kissed him. ⁵⁰ Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you came to do.” Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him. ⁵¹ And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. ⁵² Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. ⁵³ Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴ But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?” ⁵⁵ At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. ⁵⁶ But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples left him and fled.

The cup was just beginning to be poured out upon Jesus. He was betrayed by a ‘friend’s kiss – a gesture of friendship, respect, and reverence. It was now clear that Judas had only made an appearance of being faithful. At the times when earthly friends betray us, we can find comfort in knowing that Jesus truly understands how we feel. John in his account named Peter as the disciple who cut off the ear of the high priest’s servant and identified the servant as Malchus. Luke in his account adds another detail – that is Jesus healed the servant’s ear!

Jesus could have prayed for 12 legions of angels and it would have been answered. However, Jesus would not pray that prayer because that request would not fulfill His Father’s will. It was His Father’s will that He drink the cup of wrath. Jesus knew that the writings of the prophets were about to be fulfilled. **Isaiah 53:10 (ESV)** ¹⁰ *Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt,*

he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. Jesus was not a martyr, nor was His death an accident. He was God's sacrifice for the sins of the world. Jesus knew that besides His death, Isaiah had also prophesied that He would be resurrected to live forever! Jesus affirms the truth about His identity as the Messiah.

Read Matthew 26:57-68 (ESV) ⁵⁷ Then those who had seized Jesus led him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had gathered. ⁵⁸ ... ⁵⁹ Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death, ⁶⁰ but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward ⁶¹ and said, "This man said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.'" ⁶² And the high priest stood up and said, "Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?" ⁶³ But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, "I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." ⁶⁴ Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven." ⁶⁵ Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy. ⁶⁶ What is your judgment?" They answered, "He deserves death." ⁶⁷ Then they spit in his face and struck him. And some slapped him, ⁶⁸ saying, "Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?"

Those who had arrested Jesus hurried Him to Caiaphas in the dark of night. A group of the leaders were waiting to pass speedy judgment on Him in defiance of their own law. It is my understanding a trial of any person charged with crime between the hours of sunset and sunrise was forbidden. Christ's teaching had caused many to lose confidence in the authority of the Jewish leaders and they were eager to get their power restored at any cost.

Witnesses were quickly called to bear witness against Jesus. These witnesses were prepared to perjure themselves to gain favor. Their lying testimonies did not agree until two men testified that Jesus had said, "*I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.*" They were misquoting Jesus. **John 2:19 (ESV)** ¹⁹ ... "*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*" His reference had been to the temple of His own body. Jesus made no attempt to correct the liars fulfilling **Isaiah 53:7 (ESV)** ⁷ *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.*

Jesus affirmed that He is the Son of God by applying messianic scripture to Himself. He quoted **Psalms 110:1 (ESV)** ¹ *The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool."* AND **Daniel 7:13 (ESV)** ¹³ *"I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.* With these two quotations, Jesus predicted His resurrection and ascension and His return in glory but He also sealed His own death warrant with the high priests. It was a sad – sad night when Jesus was arrested and convicted of crimes He did not commit. However, it would have been more devastating for all of us if He had not been willing to die in our place. What Jesus did for us provides a choice – we can avoid God's cup of wrath by accepting God's cup of salvation. **Psalms 116:13 (ESV)** ¹³ *I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD.*