

Lesson 11 7 January 2018

Jesus' Agony and Arrest

Lesson Scope: [Luke 22:39-71](#)

References in brackets pertain to Luke 22 unless otherwise noted

Lesson Focus

Jesus' earthly ministry of three and one-half years was now ending. He had thoroughly prepared for the crowning achievement of His earthly ministry—His death. He taught principles and parables to the people regarding His kingdom, performed miracles to convince His listeners that He was their Messiah, and also carefully taught His disciples. However, "he came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John 1:11). His hour was now come (John 17), and the destiny of all men rested on His willingness to suffer and die for man's redemption.

In this passage, Jesus encountered the most difficult calling a man has ever faced. These scenes in Gethsemane are nearly too sacred to behold, though we are given only the barest glimpse of this epic struggle. The tragedy of this scene is almost beyond human comprehension. One of His disciples betrayed Him with a kiss. Another denied, with cursing and swearing, ever having known Him.

Yet Jesus, as "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," willingly came to this sin-cursed world to redeem it, saying, "A body hast thou prepared me' " and "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God

Jesus Christ faced the cross as the Son of Man. Although in agony, He submitted Himself to the suffering that He knew was before Him.

History is full of false teachings surrounding the work and person of Christ. The early church faced the error of Gnosticism, which based its belief on the Greek philosophy that the divine cannot be human. Other false doctrines declared that Jesus was human but not divine. Still others believed that Jesus was divine, but His human body was only similar to the body of a man, but not truly a human being. More recently, much effort has been made to deny the historical facts surrounding Jesus' life on earth. Attempts are also made to view Jesus and His work purely as symbolic, not as actual occurrences.

However, the Scriptures plainly teach the doctrine of the Incarnation.

Jesus is described as the "Son of man" numerous times. This lesson should be taught with the emphasis on the fact that Jesus, the Son of God, became the Son of Man, and ultimately suffered and died in His human body.

Lesson Aim: To see that Jesus suffered as a man.

Theme Verse: [Isaiah 53:3](#). He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Lesson Text

The Travail of Prayer

[Luke 22:39-46](#) And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the Mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. ⁴⁰And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. ⁴¹And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, ⁴²Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. ⁴³And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. ⁴⁴And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. ⁴⁵And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow, ⁴⁶And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.

The Tragedy of Rejection

[Luke 22:47-62](#) And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. ⁴⁸But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss? ⁴⁹When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword? ⁵⁰And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. ⁵¹And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him. ⁵²Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves? ⁵³When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands

against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness. ⁵⁴Then took they him, and led *him*, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off. ⁵⁵And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them. ⁵⁶But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him. ⁵⁷And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not. ⁵⁸And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. ⁵⁹And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this *fellow* also was with him: for he is a Galilaeen. ⁶⁰And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. ⁶¹And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. ⁶²And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

The Travesty of Justice

Luke 22:66-71 And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying, ⁶⁷ Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe: ⁶⁸And if I also ask *you*, ye will not answer me, nor let *me* go. ⁶⁹Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God. ⁷⁰Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am. ⁷¹And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.

Questions for Study

The Travail of Prayer

1. What is significant about Jesus going to the Garden of Gethsemane "as he was wont"?
2. What did Jesus pray for? Were His prayers answered? Explain.
3. How does the presence of an angel provide proof of Jesus' humanity?

The Tragedy of Rejection

4. Why were they able to arrest Jesus on this night when they were unsuccessful on other attempts?
5. How did Jesus demonstrate His own teachings during His arrest?
6. How can we be guilty of denying Christ?

The Travesty of Justice

7. How did the council understand Jesus' response to their questions? Why was their conclusion wrong?
8. Why have Christians always faced misunderstandings, false accusations, and rejection as followers of Christ?

Analyzing the Passage

Twice, Jesus called His disciples to pray that they enter not into temptation (22:40, 46).

Withdrawn is a strong, active verb, literally meaning "to drag forth." It seems Jesus was shrinking back from the intense agony He was experiencing and had to actively force Himself through this struggle.

The increasing intensity of the moment is implied by Jesus' prayers. Prayed (22:41) is in the imperfect tense, as in "kept on praying." As the tension and agony of the moment increased, Jesus "prayed more earnestly" (22:44).

Luke alone mentioned an angel ministering to Jesus in the midst of His agony. In His first recorded temptation (Matthew 4), angels strengthened Him after His test. Jesus here faced the most powerful emotional and spiritual struggle of His earthly life, and the presence of a divine being to strengthen His physical body because of fatigue and stress is proof that He faced this agony as a man.

As a physician, Luke recorded what effect the intensity of Jesus' struggle had on His physical body. Agony is rooted in an old word used only here in the New Testament to mean a severe mental or emotional struggle. It was so intense that Jesus sweated "as it were great drops of blood" (22:44).

The initial trial following His arrest by the Sanhedrin was illegal, though they continued their investigation the following morning to give some semblance of legality to their proceedings. The Sanhedrin asked, "Art thou the Christ?" (22:67). Jesus affirmed that He was the Son of Man and would sit at the right hand of God. They took this as a claim to be the Son of God, and Jesus accepted the challenge and admits that He claims to be all three: the Messiah, the Son of Man, and the Son of God.

Principles and Applications

The Travail of Prayer

1. Jesus recognized His need to commune with His heavenly Father (22:39-41). He had asked the disciples to pray as well, but sleep overcame them. In times of distress or danger, we too must retire into our prayer closets away from the clang and clamor of life and seek closer communion with God.

2. In His humanity, Jesus shrank from the suffering that He knew must culminate the purpose for His earthly life (22:42). His prayer revealed that He wished for another way of redeeming humanity without the awful sufferings of offering His body for atonement. He chose, however, to submit to the higher purpose God had for His life by praying, "Not my will, but thine, be done."

Jesus left us an example to follow in times of difficulties. It is right for us today to seek deliverance from times of calamity, though by submitting to adversity, we can confidently rest in the will of God.

3. An angel came to strengthen Jesus in His great struggle (22:43).

The presence of an angel proves that Jesus was indeed a man, needing to be strengthened physically and emotionally due to the extreme distress He faced in the hour of His temptation. Though God did not remove the cup of suffering, the angel's attendance shows that God had not doomed Jesus to suffer alone. If only we could peek behind the scenes and see how often an angel has stood by us in times of deep distress!

4. The emotional strain of this struggle was evident in Jesus' physical body (22:44). As further proof of Jesus' humanity, we are given a glimpse of the effect this agony had on Jesus' body. The great drops of sweat were not from high temperatures, since we know that Peter later warmed himself by a fire. Instead, the heaviness of His soul was so great that His sweat mingled with blood and ran to the ground.

5. Jesus craved the emotional support of His disciples (22:45-46).

Matthew's Gospel records that Jesus desired the disciples to watch and pray with Him. He also took the three closest disciples deeper into the Garden before going on alone. Twice He came back to His disciples and found them sleeping.

The Tragedy of Rejection

6. Jesus suffered the pain of rejection by His dearest friends (22:47-48, 54-62). A band of men came to arrest Jesus, and who should be guiding them but Judas. He identified Jesus with a sign of friendship, a kiss. When the astonished disciples finally reacted to their shock of Jesus' arrest, they fled in fear. Peter, though, followed in anonymity to see what would become of Jesus. However, thrice he was identified, whereupon he vehemently estranged himself with cursing and swearing from ever having had anything to do with Jesus. Jesus went through the "trial" with absolutely no defense, all alone.

7. Jesus allowed Himself to be captured as a criminal (22:52-53). The band of men came armed with staves and swords to capture Jesus. He had all power to deliver Himself from arrest, but He allowed the forces of darkness to prevail over the power of light so that He could provide redemption for these very men and for all humanity.

The Travesty of Justice

8. Jesus allowed Himself to stand trial before a council of hypocrites (22:66-71). The sinless Son of God was facing trial before sinners. He admitted that His claims of being the Messiah were correct and accepted the charge of considering Himself the Son of God. To the Jewish council, this amounted to blasphemy, which was punishable by death. The tragic mistake of the Sanhedrin was in not recognizing the truth of Jesus' claim. Through this sentence of death, Jesus was making a way to salvation that would be available to every person who believes that He is the Son of God!

Important Teachings

1. Jesus recognized His need to commune with His heavenly Father (22:39-41).
2. In His humanity, Jesus shrank from the suffering that He knew must culminate the purpose for His earthly life (22:42).
3. An angel came to strengthen Jesus in His great struggle (22:43)
4. The emotional strain of this struggle was evident in Jesus' physical body (22:44).
5. Jesus craved the emotional support of His disciples (22:45-46).
6. Jesus suffered the pain of rejection by His dearest friends (22:47-48, 54-62).

7. Jesus allowed Himself to be captured as a criminal (22:52-53).
8. Jesus allowed Himself to stand trial before a council of hypocrites (22:66-71).

Answers to Questions

1. What is significant about Jesus going to the Garden of Gethsemane "as he was wont"?

Jesus knew Judas would look for Him at His usual place of retirement. He did not try to avoid or flee arrest, but willingly positioned Himself in a place where He could be found. Jesus often came to the Garden for spiritual refreshment and physical rest. In times of distress or suffering, we too will benefit by leaving the distractions of the world and retiring to our "prayer closets" for a time of close communion with God.

2. What did Jesus pray for? Were His prayers answered? Explain.

Jesus asked the Father that the suffering He was about to face would be avoided and some other way would be made available to redeem the world. Yet even in the midst of suffering, He chose to do the will of God, not allowing His own will to conflict with the higher purpose God had for His life. However, "without shedding of blood is no remission." Jesus still had to face the cross, yet God answered His prayer by sending Him an angel to strengthen Him during His agony.

3. How does the presence of an angel provide proof of Jesus' humanity? If Jesus was not come in the flesh, He would not have needed a created being to strengthen Him. Since He took on the form of man, He needed both physical and emotional strengthening for the suffering He was facing just as any other man would have needed.

4. Why were they able to arrest Jesus on this night when they were unsuccessful on other attempts?

Jesus clearly revealed that the power His captors displayed could not subdue Him (John 18:5-6). They had never been able to capture Him before, though numerous attempts were made to destroy Him. Jesus said, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." God alone had permitted them to be able to capture Jesus, so the powers of darkness could act against the power of God.

5. How did Jesus demonstrate His own teachings during His arrest?

His teaching of nonresistance was demonstrated by His rebuke to the disciple who attempted to defend Him with a sword. He did not defend

Himself or seek His own rights, though He knew He was wrongly accused and arrested illegally. He meekly accepted the mockery and blasphemy of His captors.

6. How can we be guilty of denying Christ?

We may be guilty of not rebuking someone who takes the Name of the Lord in vain. We may also attempt to shrink back when mocked for the sake of Christ. We may "follow at a distance" by trying to blend in with our surrounding culture in our dress habits, or by our affluent lifestyles or work ethics.

7. How did the council understand Jesus' response to their questions? Why was their conclusion wrong?

Jesus refused to answer whether He was the Messiah, though He did not refute it either. When Jesus responded with His declaration of the Son of Man sitting in the position as the Son of God, and His admittance to such a claim, the council took that as an act of blasphemy against God.

The mistake of the council was in not accepting or acknowledging that Jesus was in fact the Messiah, the Son of Man, and the Son of God.

8. Why have Christians always faced misunderstandings, false accusations, and rejection as followers of Christ?

The epic struggle between good and evil continues today. Satan and his forces are out to overthrow God and His people. Satan uses every tactic he can to discourage, destroy, or discriminate against God's people. Ultimately, God will triumph over the powers of evil and sin, and those who are willing to suffer for Christ today will be part of this triumph!

Summarizing the Lesson

The account of the suffering of Jesus is filled with paradoxes. The Man who could calm troubled hearts with words of encouragement had to face the extreme agony of wrestling with the powers of darkness. The Man who could lift up the down-trodden soul from despair needed to be strengthened by an angel. The Man who had power to calm the seas meekly accepted arrest at the hands of a well-armed mob. The Man who had crowds following Him was finally all alone in facing the biggest test of His life. The Man who was innocent received the sentence of death for blasphemy. All this because of Satan's supreme attempt to destroy God's only Son, though ultimately it paved the way for the triumph of Christ and his own defeat.

Research Guide

1. Isaiah 53 is the clearest prophetic Scriptural passage describing the suffering of Christ.
2. Read Doctrines of the Bible, Part 1, Chapter 5, "God, the Son."