

CHAPTER 11

The Agony of Christ

The Dreadful Hour

Did you know that the Lord Jesus once cried out to be **saved**? In John 12:27 Jesus said, "Father, _____ Me _____ this _____." On the evening before His death on Calvary's cross, Jesus went to a place called _____ to pray (Mark 14:32). It was there that Jesus became deeply troubled, and He fell on the ground and prayed that if it were _____, the _____ might _____ from Him (Mark 14:35). Jesus, in His perfect humanity, did not want to face this dreadful hour. Jesus had **anticipated** this hour (He had seen it and known about it in advance), but now when the hour was very, very **near** (see Matthew 26:45: "the _____ is _____"), as a real Man, He naturally shrank from it. What was this hour that the Lord spoke of?

To determine the exact meaning, of "**the hour**," please study the following passages: John 7:30; 8:20 (compare Mark 14:41,43,46 where the Lord allows His captors to lay their hands on Him); John 12:23-24 (How is "**the hour**" defined by these two verses?); John 12:27 (compare verses 32-33 which speak about His _____); John 13:1; 17:1.

Though the Lord's desire was to be saved from this terrible death, He knew that it was for this very purpose that He had come into the world (John 12:27—"Save me...but for this cause I came"). Why did the Lord Jesus come into this world? Please do the following MATCHING problem:

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| Jesus came... | |
| 1. _____ to save sinners. | A. Luke 19:10 |
| 2. _____ not to condemn (judge) the world but to provide salvation for it. | B. Mark 10:45 |
| 3. _____ to save His people from their sins. | C. 1 Timothy 1:15 |
| 4. _____ to seek and to save the lost ones. | D. John 10:10-11 |
| 5. _____ to give us life through His death. | E. Matthew 1:21 |
| 6. _____ to give His life a ransom for many. | F. John 3:17; 12:47 |

Jesus wanted to be saved from this hour only "if it were _____" (Mark 14:35), but the Father knew that if Jesus were to be saved, then it would be **impossible** for sinful men to be saved. God did not save Jesus from that hour so that we could be saved from sin. He died and tasted death for every man (Hebrews 2:9) so that we would never taste death (John 8:51-52; 11:25-26). Later at the foot of the cross, men cried out to Jesus saying, " _____ and _____ from the _____" (Mark 15:30). But it was for this very purpose that He had come into the world! If Christ had come down from the

cross, salvation for sinners would have been **impossible!** In Luke 23:35 the rulers derided Christ by saying, "He _____ others; let Him _____." But our Lord knew that if He should save Himself, it would be **impossible** for others to be saved. Our Saviour loved us so much He was willing to pass through that terrible hour of death!

In John 12:27-28, Jesus presented two prayer requests before the Father. His **minor** (comparatively unimportant) prayer request was given in verse 27: "Father, _____ from this hour." His **major** (extremely important) prayer request was given in verse 28: "Father, _____ thy name." Which prayer request did the Father answer (verse 28 and compare John 17:1)? _____ Jesus wanted to be saved from that dreadful hour, but there was something He wanted even more! What is it that you want more than anything else? What are your **major** prayer requests? To do well in school? To be free from sickness? To have the right kind of relationships with friends, parents, etc.? Is there something more major and more important than all of these things?

The Terrifying Cup

Not only did Jesus pray that the hour might pass from Him (Mark 14:35), but He also made the following similar request (Mark 14:36): "_____ away this _____ from me." Compare Matthew 26:39. From these verses, it is evident that there was something in view which the blessed Lord had never encountered before--there was a "cup" being prepared for Him of which He had not yet drunk. In His sinless humanity, Jesus shrank from the awful prospect of drinking from this cup.

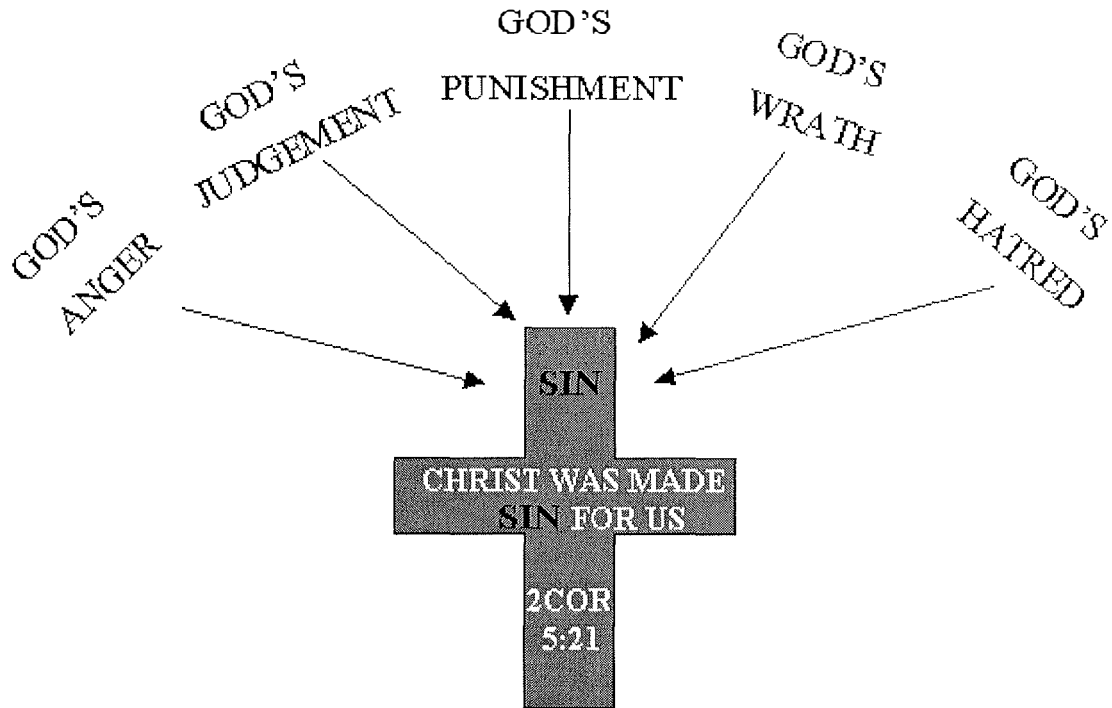
What was this "cup" and what was it filled with? The contents of a cup can either be good or bad: a blessing or a curse. Because of our Lord's strong aversion to this cup, it obviously contained something terrible. Study the following verses which may help to shed light on what was contained in this cup: Psalm 11:6 (Who is this cup for? _____); Psalm 75:8 (Who shall drink from this cup? _____); Isaiah 51:17,22; compare Revelation 14:10; 16:19.

According to John 18:11, who gave this cup to Jesus to drink?

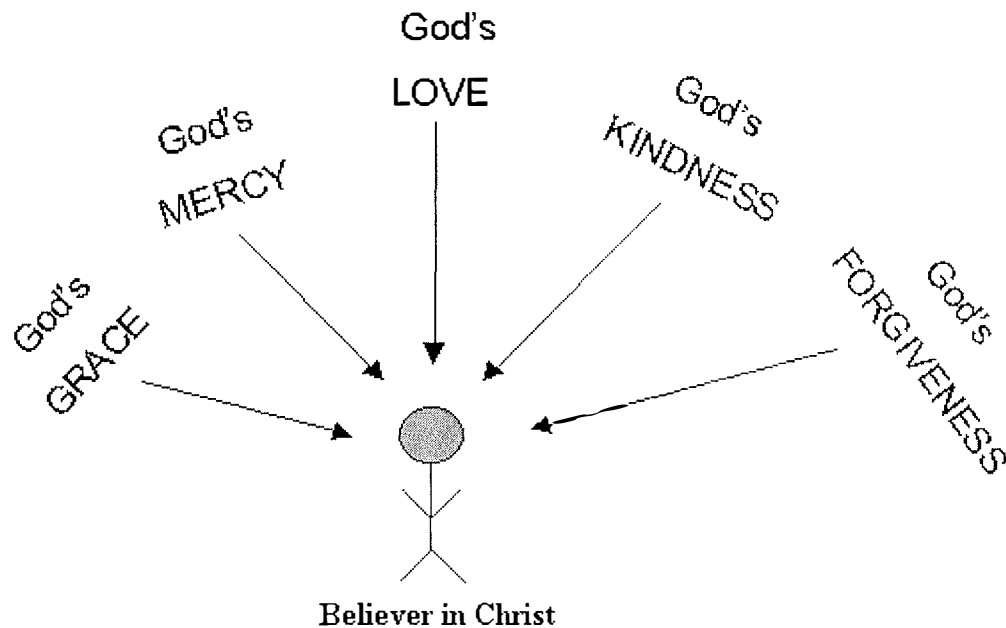
- a. **the devil**
- b. **the Father**
- c. **wicked men**
- d. **the Jewish leaders**
- e. **Judas**

Why would God the Father give His beloved Son something terrible to drink? Why did the Father give to Jesus that cup which **the wicked should drink**? The answer to these questions is found in 2 Corinthians 5:21. When Christ died on the cross He was made _____ for us. Galatians 3:13 says that when Christ hung on the cross He was made a _____ for us.

How does God deal with sin?



How does God deal with the believing sinner?



God deals with the believer in **grace**. God pours out upon the believer His mercy and love and kindness which the believer does not deserve at all.

How does God deal with the person who refuses to come to Christ for salvation (see Romans 2:8-9; Ephesians 5:5-6; Colossians 3:5-6)?

Our Saviour drank a cup of wrath without mercy, that we might drink a cup of mercy without wrath!

In the garden, the Lord was anticipating the cross. In John 18:4 we learn that Jesus knew "_____ that should come upon him." He knew what was ahead. He saw the tidal wave of God's wrath coming because of our sin. C. H. Mackintosh in his *Notes on Leviticus* (page 65) says it this way:

In Gethsemane, He was anticipating the cross; at Calvary, He was actually enduring it. In Gethsemane, "there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven strengthening Him (Luke 22:43);" at Calvary, He was forsaken of all. There was no angelic ministry there. In Gethsemane He addresses God as "Father," (Luke 22:42) thus enjoying the full communion of that ineffable relationship; but at Calvary, He cries, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46). Here the Sin-bearer looks up and beholds the throne of Eternal Justice enveloped in dark clouds, and the countenance of Inflexible Holiness averted from Him, because He was being made sin for us" (2 Cor. 5:21).

In the garden, Jesus had two prayer requests. His **minor** prayer request was this: "Take away _____ from me" (Mark 14:36). His **major** prayer request was this: "Thy _____ be _____" (Matthew 26:42). The Father did not answer the minor prayer request, but He did answer the major prayer request. After His thrice repeated prayer in the garden, Jesus knew that it was the Father's will for Him to _____ the cup (John 18:11). Jesus wanted the cup to pass from Him (Matthew 26:39), but what did He want **even more** (compare John 4:34)? _____ Our Saviour was submissive and obedient to the Father's will, even unto death (Philippians 2:8)! Amazing love!

The Sorrowful Saviour

It is very difficult for us to really understand the agony that the Lord experienced there in the garden as He anticipated His death for sinners. Here is profound mystery, and there is much we cannot comprehend. Let us prayerfully and carefully consider some of the things the Bible says about our Lord's difficult experience in Gethsemane.

Sudden Amazement

In Mark 14:33, we discover that Jesus "began to be greatly (sore) _____." He was filled with astonishment. As the Saviour saw the ingredients of the terrible cup that was being mixed for Him, He was struck with terror and overwhelmed. As D. Edmond Hiebert has commented, "Jesus had long foreseen His coming death, but now that the shadow of the actual cross fell upon Him, He felt the shuddering horror of the terrible ordeal. It came with stunning effect" (*Mark*, p. 358).

Extreme Sorrow

We read in Matthew 26:37 that Jesus began to be S_____. This word means "to become grieved, sad, sorrowful; to be in pain." It is used in 1 Thessalonians 4:13 with regard to the Thessalonian Christians who were sorrowful because they were separated from their loved ones who had died. Jesus would soon be separated from His loved One. The wonderful love relationship and intimate fellowship between the Lord Jesus and the Father would soon be

broken (compare Matthew 27:46). Every believer knows how terrible it is to be out of fellowship with the Father because of sin. How much more terrible it must have been for the sinless Saviour to be abandoned by the Father because of **our** sins. No wonder Jesus said, "My soul is exceedingly _____, even unto _____" (Matthew 26:38).

Deep Trouble

Not only was Jesus overwhelmed with amazement and sorrow, but Matthew 26:37 also says He became very _____. This word means He became very troubled and distressed as the hour of His death drew near. On another occasion Jesus was moved in a similar way as He anticipated the cross: "Now is my soul _____" (John 12:27). This is a different word but similar in meaning. It carries the idea of being deeply disturbed or even terrified. Such verses remind us that the cross was the most difficult thing Jesus ever had to face. With great ease Christ created the universe (Colossians 1:16); with great difficulty Christ redeemed sinful men. You will never face a problem or difficulty as great as the one Jesus faced. It is therefore of great encouragement to know that our Saviour knows what we go through. He has been through it already, and He has been through far, far more (Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:15-16)!

Awful Agony

Luke tells us that Jesus prayed, being in A _____ (Luke 22:44). This is a word that is used of athletes, such as runners or wrestlers, who would be **struggling** in the midst of a great **conflict** or athletic contest. "As the powers of darkness closed in on Him and the imminence of the cross pressed upon Him, He found Himself in a conflict the like of which He had never before experienced" (J. Oswald Sanders). The mental and emotional agony of this experience was so great that it even affected the Lord physically. Luke, the physician, describes it as follows: "His sweat was, as it were, great _____ of _____ falling down to the _____" (Luke 22:44). According to medical authorities, it is apparently possible under conditions of great strain for certain capillaries to **dilate** (enlarge and expand) to such an extent that they will burst. When this happens in the vicinity of sweat glands, blood and sweat will be **exuded** (oozed out) together. In such a case the drops of sweat would be colored with blood. This was but a small outward evidence of the great inner agony that the Son of man was experiencing as the shadow of the cross drew nigh. Hebrews 5:7 also gives us a description of Christ in Gethsemane.

If the mere anticipation of Calvary produced such an agonizing experience, what must the experience of the cross itself have been like? Yet our Saviour was fully prepared to face all that was ahead (see Mark 14:41-42)! It was His supreme desire for the Father's glory and will, and His amazing love for those He came to save that made Him go to Calvary's cross!

**His life had also its sorrow sore,
For aloe had a part;
And when I think of the cross He bore,
My eyes with teardrops start.**

**Out of the ivory palaces,
Into a world of woe,
Only His great, eternal love
Made my Saviour go.**

--Henry Barraclough

Not My Will

When Jesus Christ my Savior prepared for Calvary's hill,
He went into the garden and sought His Father's will.
I read about His anguish and feel His sorrow there;
I see Him humbly kneeling and listen to His prayer.

Not my will but Thine, Lord; Lead me to Calvary.
Make my life a living sacrifice, crucified for Thee.

My Lord became a servant, a man of lowly birth;
He laid aside His glory to dwell with sons of earth.
But now He is exalted, let every tongue proclaim—
And some day all shall praise Him,
And magnify His name.

Lord Jesus, I surrender, my will shall be Thine own;
I lay aside ambition and bow before Thy throne.
I'll give myself for others as Thou didst die for me—
Lord, send me forth with power to live my life for Thee.

—Ron Hamilton