

Tuesday, March 1, 2016 - "Let this Cup Pass from Me..."

I received a note this week asking the following question:

"Christ came to this earth knowing what His mission was. When He prays, '...let this cup pass away from me...', was He trying to get out of His purpose? What is the CUP?"

The passage you are referencing is Matthew 26:39 when the view provided us of the events in the Garden state, "And he went forward a little, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

The question is one that causes many people to struggle. First, I would advise that, though Christ was God's son, he, at the point of His prayers, was human and susceptible to the immense emotional strains related to the things which he was getting ready to suffer. One must remember that Jesus was human as well as divine, and he had terrible moments of anxiety as he approached the dread of dying for sin (Heb. 5:7). Jesus knew the suffering that He would endure as a perfect sacrifice for sin (2 Cor. 5:21), and His prayer demonstrates that Jesus desired to find some other way to satisfy God's justice. Though the Savior had a temporary moment of yearning — "if it be possible" — it was tempered with that "nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will." No other way was possible, and so Jesus obediently submitted to His Father's will.

This cup refers to the great suffering Jesus was to undergo for the sins of mankind. Jesus prayed that if there was any way other than his death to save mankind, for God to do it. However, Jesus was ready to do the will of the Father. Jesus would do the will of the Father. In order to please God, there must be complete submission to God's will and complete humility. Jesus demonstrated both of these.

Sin has only one solution — God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son (John 3:16). The sacrifice of Jesus is the ONLY solution to the problem of sin: "He takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). God reconciled us to Himself through the body and blood of Christ (Col. 1:20-22). It was impossible for the blood of mere bulls and goats to take away sin (Heb. 10:4). Moral law-keeping is good, but the keeping of the law could never undo the effects of even one sin (James 2:10-11). The fact that Jesus prayed, "Let this cup pass," and yet still went to the cross forever confirms that there is but one solution to the problem of sin: the blood of Christ (Rev. 1:5).

Glory to God for His love.