

The Death of Jesus

1. The Fulness of Times

- A. God had spent several thousand years preparing for the present moment: the promises to the patriarchs, the rise and fall of Israel, the giving of the Law of Moses, and the 400+ years of silent anticipation.
- B. Finally, the time was right - Gal 4:4-7. But oh the price for sonship!
- C. Jesus has lived, taught, worked signs, rebuked - now it was time for the most horrible and dreaded part of God's plan.

2. Jesus Anticipates His Death

- A. Jn 12:23-32 - *"The hour has come ... now my soul is troubled ..."*.
 - 1. Jesus had been tempted at the outset by hunger; this temptation more severe.
 - 2. Jesus recognizes purpose (v 27, 32) and victory (v 31) but is still troubled.
- B. The struggle continues in Gethsemane - Mt 26:36-46.
 - 1. Peter, James and John had seen Jesus' glory on the mount of transfiguration (the subject of which was His death), but now they see Him in agony.
 - 2. v 38 - "Exceedingly sorrowful" (or overwhelmed) is first in word order.
 - 3. We can understand Jesus physical needs - food, water, sleep, etc. - but what about *emotional*? He needs friends, but they are *"sleeping for sorrow"* (Lk 22:45).
- C. While Jesus is submissive to God's will (v 39), He knows the trauma it will bring:
 - 1. Jesus' mother will watch the death of her son.
 - 2. Jesus' friends will be grieved, scared and filled with despair.
 - 3. Jesus knows the fate to fall upon Jerusalem - Lk 19:41-44 (a few days earlier).

3. The Suffering of the Final Hours

- A. This was Satan's final chance; he couldn't stop the atoning death from occurring but he unleashed the powers of hell in order to defile the sacrifice. Jesus endures:

1. The denial of His person - Mt 26:63-66. Have you ever had someone insist that you are not what you know yourself to be?
2. Betrayal by Judas, abandonment by disciples, the cursing disavowal of Peter - Mt 26:69-75. Jesus was **alone** in His suffering.
3. Miscarriage of justice. How did you feel about the O.J. Simpson trial?
 - a. False witnesses with contradictory testimony - Mk 14:55-59.
 - b. Pilate's cowardly capitulation to the Pharisees.
 - c. Herod's perverse curiosity to see a miracle - Lk 23:8.
4. The humiliation: spitting, slapping, nakedness; the ridicule - Mt 26:39-44.
5. The physical suffering - We sometimes sell Jesus short on this. Some want to think that Jesus was somehow above concern for His physical well-being. Did the thorns hurt? Was He numb to the scourging? Did the nails rip His flesh and part His bones? Did six hours of body-weight against iron and raw wood **not** have an effect upon Him?
6. Maybe the **ultimate** suffering was that He was paying a price for something He *did not do*. All of the sins of mankind - past, present, and future - were heaped upon His pristine, pure and sinless shoulders.

B. Yet unto such an agonizing, inglorious end (as man saw it), Jesus:

1. Cared for the welfare of others: His mother (Jn 19:26-27); the penitent thief (Lk 23:40-43); and even His enemies (Lk 23:34).
2. Trusted in God - Lk 23:46.
3. Died for His **enemies** - Rom 5:6-8.

Conclusion

1. This was not for "mankind" but for **me**, for **you** - Gal 2:20.
2. The character of God defined: "I will die for you." Left to his own imagination man insists on appeasing God's wrath by offering something valuable - babies, virgins. But we have nothing to offer. The debt was paid by Jesus, and we owe Him our lives.
3. How you respond to this event is the most important decision you will ever make.