

THE SUFFERING OF THE SAVIOUR

Jonah 2:3 For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. 4 Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight.

In this, our final Sunday evening celebration of the Lord's Table in 2014, we come to consider the darkest night this world has ever experienced ... It was the night when the Lord Jesus became overwhelmed by the deep extremities of the justice of our holy God.

From everlasting to everlasting, - before earth and time began, - these moments had been written in eternity that Christ would suffer torment of mind and agony of body for sinners to be redeemed.

No preacher, no Bible commentator, no theological professor could adequately put into human words *The Suffering of the Saviour* that had already been purposed in the mind of God.

As we look into the Garden of Gethsemane, and as we listen to the cries of the Saviour I would like us to consider His words by using the *reflection* of the experience of an Old Testament prophet. In relation to this, you might not immediately think of Jonah ... Jonah had tried to run away from the call of God ... Jesus, on the other hand, Luke tells us, 9:51 it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem. Calvary was His reason for coming into this world, and His agony began even in the Garden of Gethsemane.

In Jonah chapter two we find the disobedient prophet in the belly of the great fish (v.1). He began his prayer to God, v.2 I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice. 3 For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. 4 Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple. 5 The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about ...

THE DEPTHS OF THE SEA OF GOD'S JUDGMENT Mt. 26:38 My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death ... Jonah 2:3 For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about.

The Lord Jesus had brought eleven of His disciples from the city of Jerusalem, across the Kidron Valley, - over the stream King David, one thousand years earlier, had crossed to flee from his son Absalom (II Sam. 15:23), - and then the Lord Jesus led them into a garden at the foot of the Mount of Olives. There, He requested of them that they watch with Him. In particular, He took Peter, James and John just a little further.

Something was beginning to bear down heavily upon them too because we read they *began to be sorrowful and very heavy* (v.37). Peter, James and John could sense something was happening. Indeed, they were sorrowful (v.37), but take note of how the Holy Spirit describes the condition of the soul of the Lord Jesus Christ, He said, v.38 *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death*. His sorrow was more than any human could imagine.

The disciples were *sorrowful* (λυπέω, gripped with grief). They didn't know exactly what ... but they knew something terribly foreboding was looming over them for Matthew, - one of them, - describes their condition as not only being 'sorrowful', but also being *very heavy* (greatly distressed and in deep anguish). ... They did not know what would take place that evening, but they knew, - by what Jesus said, and by His whole appearance, - this was going to be horrific more than they could bear.

But what about Jesus? ... The word that is used to describe the disciples, - as I have said, - is λυπέω, gripped with grief ... However, the word that is applied to Jesus is even stronger for it is the word περίλυπος and it describes someone who is being so wrecked with pain, there is hardly a word that gives it an adequate expression.

Jesus had come to the time when Calvary beckoned. He would be arrested. He would be imprisoned. He would be beaten. He would be mocked. He would be forsaken and rejected. ... He knew already the soldiers had sharpened their swords with which they would pierce His precious body with the cruellest of strikes. He knew already of the wickedness in the eyes of the people God had loved uniquely throughout the ages. ... He knew already the tree upon which He would be crucified was waiting for Him ... Yes, Jn. 1:10 *He was in the world, ... and the world knew him not. 11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not. In the sovereign will and purpose of God, Is. 52:14 his [face] was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men. The Son of God, the Christ of eternity, looked out upon an ocean of man's hatred and scorn.*

He had not been arrested yet. He had not been nailed to the cross ... but already He was *despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief* (Is. 53:3). Even in the Garden of Gethsemane, He was bearing our burdens. ... In the language of Jonah, - as the Saviour knelt in the garden, v.38 *exceeding sorrowful, even unto death* ... more than words can describe, - He was being cast into the depths of the sea of God's judgment.

The waters around about Him were stirred and enraged by no less than Divine wrath. They were sweeping over Him so powerfully Jesus *fell* on His face (v.39). ... His weakness brought Him to His knees ... The Son of God, the Creator, fell on His knees ... such was His exceeding sorrow!

He cried, - I don't know how the disciples could have slept, because how could they have missed the Saviour pleading with His Father, v.39 *O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.* He knew this was the only means the Godhead in the eternal Council Room of Heaven would accept. He knew this was what He willing agreed would happen ... for the salvation of lost hell-deserving men and women, boys and girls. He knew it was only possible if *He* paid the price of our redemption. This was a vast and immense *account* He had to settle. ... You know, I almost made the mistake of saying it was a limitless, immeasurable and infinite price He had to bear ... but no ... Jesus paid the exact, and the explicitly particular price that needed to be paid because *none* of His energies were wasted either in Gethsemane or on Golgotha.

He paid the *right* price, which was the full price. None of His blood flowed in vain. None of it wasted, - it was all used to completely and perfectly atone for the sins of His people. His anguish in the Garden was beyond human comprehension, but He knew that every drop of sweat He shed would accomplish completely and perfectly the will of His Father.

The depths of the sea of God's judgment ... *thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about* ... such was the faithfulness of our Saviour to take upon Himself the Divine wrath of God that was rightly ours.

THE DANGERS OF THE SEA OF GOD'S JUDGMENT

* Mt. 26:42 *if this cup may not pass away from me* ... Jonah 2:3 *all thy billows and thy waves passed over me*

On the 13th April 1685, two women from Wigtown, - Margaret Lachlane aged 63 and Margaret Wilson in her mid-twenties, - were sentenced to death for the Covenanting cause. They were taken from the Tollbooth in Wigtown, and paraded along the streets to the shore. Two stakes were hammered into the sands. ... The tide was *away* out. If you know that part of the Solway Firth, you will know the sands are so flat the sea goes out for almost two miles. The soldiers of the dragoons, - led by the infamous Robert Grierson of Lag, - went to Margaret Lachlane and give her one final opportunity to renounce her covenanting principles, but she would not.

One of the townspeople standing nearby shouted in rage, “Let her gang [*Scots. ‘go’*] to hell!” ... As the tide came in, and as it began to rise up her body, one of the soldiers took his sword and slit her throat. ... The cruel ISIS didn’t start that kind of cruelty ... for it was done here to Christians in Scotland 330 years ago.

While the blood streamed down the body of Margaret Lachlane, the other woman, Margaret Wilson, began to sing the 25th Psalm ... v.1 Unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul. 2 O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me. ... 4 Show me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths. 5 Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day. 6 Remember, O LORD, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses; for they have been ever of old. ... 8 Good and upright is the Lord ... A wonderful psalm. Near to its conclusion, the crowds listened to the young Margaret Wilson crying out to her Lord, v. 19 Consider mine enemies; for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred. 20 O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee.

Another soldier came up to her and pushed her head under the water. Such vile and cruel wickedness in this country ... and yet ... *yet* ... the sufferings of Christ were more than any man. ... As the billows and the waves passed over Jonah in the belly of the great fish ... As the tide of the Solway Firth passed over the Wigtown Martyrs ... in an even more incomprehensible way the great waves of God’s wrath consumed our Saviour ... beginning *even* in the Garden.

The humanity of the Lord Jesus was crying out to God, v.39 *if it be possible, let this cup pass from me* ... but it was not possible for He would have been breaking His own instruction that ... Lk. 9:62 *No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.* ... He had put His hand to the plough, - firmly holding on to it, - and *nothing* would take Him away from the course His Father had set before Him to complete ... the course that would redeem your soul and mine. If He had merely been a man He could not have gone through what the Lord required of Him. Besides, if He had merely been a man His death would not have accomplished our salvation, - it would not have been sufficient ... But He was Christ, the Son of the living God ... *God Himself!* ... And with His face to the ground in the Garden of Gethsemane, with the tears that flowed, with the exceeding sorrowfulness in the innermost recesses of His soul He was in **The DEPTHS and the DANGERS of the sea of God’s judgment.**

THE DESOLATION IN THE SEA OF GOD'S JUDGMENT

Mt. 26:44 He left them, and went away again, and *prayed the third time*, saying the same words ... Jonah 2:4 Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight.

He was out of the sight of man ... Yes, He had drawn Peter and James and John away from the other disciples, but He left even them to become the solitary Figure bending down on His precious knees before the holiness and the justice of His Holy Father in Heaven. ... He was appearing before the judgment throne, and my sins had brought Him there. As He along with His Father anticipated Calvary He knew all my iniquities would be laid upon His precious body ... "Bearing shame and scoffing rude, In my place condemned He stood".

Oh, He knew what was in the cup of suffering, and He knew it would not pass from Him. He knew He *must* fulfil the Divine command, - issued from before the foundations of the world, - to atone and be the propitiation for His people. ... He knew He had to drink from that cup ... and He experienced the beginnings of the **desolation** as He knelt, with His face to the ground, and in true Servant obedience He declared, v.42 O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. ... Yes, He was out of the sight of man ... but just a few hours later, He would be out of the sight of God!

About the ninth hour of the following day, they would hear Him cry, - again, from deep within His heart, Mt. 27:46 My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? ... Ps. 22:2 O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not ... 6 But I am ... a reproach of men, and despised of the people. 7 All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, 8 He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him. ... 11 there is none to help. 12 Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. 13 They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. 14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. 15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. 16 For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.

The Garden was leading Him into that awful time when He would not only be forsaken by the crowds around Him, but He would also be forsaken by His Father! Jesus went through Hell on the cross, for surely the substance and reality of Hell is being rejected and cast off by God.

Judged for me ... In the Garden, *alone* for me ... as He approached the time, - a few hours later, when the words of Jonah would be applied to our Saviour also, Jonah 2:4 I am cast out of thy sight. ... **Desolate in the sea of God's judgment.**

CONCLUSION

Jonah, because of his *disobedience* was entombed within the body of the great fish ... but Jesus, *because of His obedience*, became the Man of Sorrows. Indeed, "what a Name For the Son of God, who came Ruined sinners to reclaim. Hallelujah! What a Saviour!"

But He knew that ahead of Him, - beyond Gethsemane and beyond Calvary, - ... the throne of Glory was already prepared and waiting. He knew the reward was before Him, ... Phil. 2:9 God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name. He knew and was certain of the victory He would win and of the people He would redeem.

For Calvary to happen, Gethsemane *had* to take place. Yes, in the Garden, - more than we could ever understand, - He entered into **the depths of the sea of God's judgment**, and all around Him He was confronted by **the dangers** ... and, as the exceeding sorrowfulness of His soul demonstrates ... His **desolation in the sea of God's judgment**.

Long in anguish deep was He,
Weeping there for you and me,
For our sin to Him was known;
We should love Him evermore
For the anguish that He bore
In Gethsemane, alone.

Ps. 6:1 O LORD, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. **2** Have mercy upon me, O LORD; for I *am* weak: O LORD, heal me; for my bones are vexed. **3** My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O LORD, how long? **4** Return, O LORD, deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies' sake. **5** For in death *there is* no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks? **6** I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears. **7** Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies. **8** Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the LORD hath heard the voice of my weeping. **9** The LORD hath heard my supplication; the LORD will receive my prayer. **10** Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed: let them return *and* be ashamed suddenly.

The suffering of our Saviour ...

*Lest I forget Gethsemane,
Lest I forget Thine agony;
Lest I forget Thy love for me,
Lead me to Calvary.*