

The Longest Day

There is an old movie from 1962 titled, “The Longest Day.” It deals with the pre-invasion planning, tensions, stresses and the execution of the Allied invasion of France on D-Day June 6th, 1944. While exact figures are disputed, by midnight on June 5th, nearly 132,000 men had landed in France. By the end of June 6th, there were nearly 2,000,000 allied soldiers involved. Over 5,000 assault and landing craft vessels were utilized with countless other types of Naval ships. The liberation of Europe from Nazi Germany had begun. Nearly 10,000 men were killed on the D-Day June 6th, 1944. The movie focused on the stress and preparation for the tremendous undertaking that would take place in the period of about one day.

Nearly 2000 years ago, another liberation began. The battle was won in 72 hours by just one man. This plan for deliverance had been decided before the world began.

“Knowing that you were not redeemed by corruptible things, by silver or gold, from your futile way of living, inherited *by tradition* from your forefathers; But by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; Who truly was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last times for your sakes;”- **1 Peter 1:18-20**. While the movie focused on the night before and events leading up to the invasion of Europe, what was Jesus doing during the hours and through the night before His arrest and crucifixion?

Gethsemane

Jesus knew what was lying ahead. Jesus was troubled in His spirit because Judas' act of betrayal was already in progress set forth during their observance of the Passover.

John 13:27- “And after the sop, Satan entered into him. Then Jesus said to him, “What you do, do quickly.” One of the first things to occur that evening was Judas' betrayal. Have any of us been betrayed by a close friend of several years? If so, none of us knew in advance as Jesus did. It is doubtful if we had that foreknowledge, we would have never broken bread with them, much less wash their feet.

Having finished the Passover with His disciples, they went to a place called Gethsemane to pray. Shortly after the group had arrived at Gethsemane, Jesus began to be deeply sorrowful and greatly distressed.

Matthew 26:36-42- “Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, “Sit here, while I go onward and pray.” And He took with *Him* Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, *and* He began to be very melancholy and deeply depressed. Then He said to them, “My soul is deeply grieved, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.” And after going forward a little, He fell on His face, praying, and saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You *will*.” Then He came to His disciples and found them sleeping. And *He* said to Peter, “What! Were you not able to watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, so that you do not enter into temptation; the spirit

indeed *is* willing, but the flesh is weak.” The second time He went again *and* prayed, saying, “My Father, if this cup cannot pass from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.” The depth of Jesus' sorrow was far greater than that of any man, either before or since these final moments of His human life on Earth.

Lamentations 1:12-13- “*Is it* nothing to you, all you who pass by? Behold and see if there is any pain like my pain which is done to me, with which the LORD has afflicted *me* in the day of His fierce anger. From on high He has sent fire into my bones and it prevailed against them. He has spread a net for my feet; He has turned me back; He has made me desolate *and* faint all the day.” Notice the words, “all the day.” Aside from the physical torture that was to come, Jesus would be afflicted with anguish, abandonment and desolation on His last day of His human life.

I’m sure we can all relate somewhat to an agonizing, physically stressful and demanding day. Perhaps not one of physical pain but of physical and mental fatigue. Maybe you had to go to work with just a couple hours of sleep, perhaps a long 70-hour work week? Maybe a long drive between states? I’m sure most of us in our younger years pulled an “all-nighter” partying or dancing or whatever activity that kept us from rest.

I remember as an Investigator in Violent Crimes of getting called out for a car-jacking and a murder. From the time I received the call till I got back home was 37 hours. It gave fatigue a whole new name. These human examples do not in the least

bit compare to what our Savior was prepared to do and did so willingly for all mankind. The words "even to death" in Matthew 26:38 strongly propose that, had His sorrow been any more intense, He would have died right then and there. But He was so focused and determined to stay alive. He knew that the time set for His death had not yet come. He would have to endure much more in order to fulfill all things. He had to carry the sins of the world for several hours more.

We as human beings, equate agony and suffering with great physical pain. At this point, no one had laid a hand on Him, but His time of great agony had begun. "And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. And His sweat became as great drops of blood falling down to the ground."- **Luke 22:44**

I've often wondered what exactly was the foremost thoughts running through His mind in these last hours. Just one of the burdens He had to bear would cause us to collapse and die. Was it the fact that He had been betrayed? Was it because He had been rejected by those He was sent to save? **Mark 8:31**- "And He began to teach them that it was necessary for the Son of man to suffer many things, and to be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and to be killed, but after three days to rise from the dead." (**Luke 9:22**). Did He fear the physical torture that was drawing closer? Perhaps it was the blackness of physical death itself?

Matthew 12:40- “For just as Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days and three nights, in like manner the Son of man shall be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights.”

Think about for a moment, the totality of Who He was and Who He is and where He came from. The mental anguish had to be a compiling of multiple reasons. He knew He was about to bear the weight, pain and knowledge for 7,000 years of mankind’s sins. The horrific fact that as the sins of the world were being placed upon His head, He in fact was becoming the sin of the world. **2 Corinthians 5:21-** “For He made Him Who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, so that we might become *the* righteousness of God in Him.”

Galatians 3:13- “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed *is* everyone who hangs on a tree”). Perhaps the greatest reason of sorrow was that God the Father, must now turn away from Him as the sins He bore, He was now becoming. God the Father, with whom Jesus had never been separated from must now turn away and be separated totally from His only Son. **Isaiah 53:8-** “By oppression and judgment He was taken away; and with His generation who did consider that He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of My people He *was* stricken.”

Drink of the Cup

One line in particular sticks out in Jesus' prayer in **Matthew 26:39, 42**- "And after going forward a little, He fell on His face, praying, and saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You *will*."

"The second time He went again *and* prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cup cannot pass from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done." (Also verse 44). There and then the future salvation of all mankind was decided.

Was Jesus asking His Father to intervene and prevent Him from the coming hours of torture and pain? This is quite doubtful as Jesus had been preparing for this moment in time His entire human lifetime and the millennia prior to it. In reading several studies on this topic, we need to look at the meaning of the word "cup." Translated from the Greek noun *poterion*, which can mean the vessel's liquid contents as well as the vessel itself. We know Jesus drank the contents, not the vessel itself. The root word *poterion* derives from *pino*, which means "to drink." Another key word is "pass" which is translated from the Greek verb *parerchomai*, which can mean "the passage of time." Combining these two meanings, we can reason the Jesus may have been asking God the Father to make this time pass quickly, but only if it were His will.

Having known of the plan of salvation for all mankind since the beginning, Jesus absolutely knew it was necessary for Him to drink of this cup so that it could be poured out with His lifeblood. **Isaiah 53:12**- “Therefore I will divide to Him *a portion* with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He has poured out His soul to death; and He was counted among the transgressors; and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for transgressors.”

It is doubtful that Jesus was having any second thoughts about accepting the terrible events of the hours that lie ahead. Before His Gethsemane prayer, both during and after, Jesus knew beyond any doubt, that He must drink of the cup that had been prepared for Him by His Father.

Matthew 20:20-23- “Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Him with her sons, worshiping Him and asking a certain thing from Him. And He said to her, “What do you desire?” She said to Him, “Grant that these my two sons may sit one at Your right hand and one at *Your left hand* in Your kingdom.” But Jesus answered *and* said, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and to be baptized *with* the baptism that I am baptized *with*?” They said to Him, “We are able.” And He said to them, “You shall indeed drink of My cup, and shall be baptized *with* the baptism that I am baptized *with*; but to sit at

My right hand and at My left *hand* is not Mine to give, but *shall be given to those* for whom it has been prepared by My Father.”

John 18:11- “But Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword into the sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given Me?” Jesus knew well ahead of time.

Before Pilate to be Crucified

After His agony at Gethsemane and His beginning of suffering, Jesus seemed more accepting to the brutal events coming in His last hours. It is doubtful that He spent much time thinking of the individual acts of mankind’s sins during this time. He need not focus on something He had been able to witness since the creation of the Earth. He had witnessed Adam and Eve’s original sin in the Garden of Eden. He could clearly foresee man’s sins for the remaining centuries of man’s time on Earth. He had to be focused on the future victory that would soon reunite Him with God the Father and His return to Earth to claim His bride. He would establish His millennial Kingdom which He would reign forever and ever, that every knee would bow and tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (**Romans 14:11, Philippians 2:10**). And with the knowledge that, one day, even His enemies, hopefully repentant by that time, would see Him seated at the right hand of His Father: “Jesus said to him, “You have said *it*. Moreover, I say to you, in the future you shall see the Son of man

sitting at *the* right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.”- **Matthew 26:64**

While yet in Gethsemane, Judas Iscariot showed up with a crowd and identified Jesus to them by giving Him a kiss. **Luke 22:47-48** “And while He was still speaking, a crowd suddenly appeared, with the one who was called Judas, one of the twelve, going in front of them; and he came near to Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus said to him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of man with a kiss?” Jesus was arrested and taken to the high priest’s house. It was during this time that Peter denied Jesus three times as Jesus had predicted (**Luke 22:56-62**).

Those that held Jesus began to mock Him and strike Him. They blindfolded Him and struck Him in the face (**Luke 22:63-65**). After accusing Him of blasphemy, they took Him before Pontius Pilate. After questioning Jesus, Pilate sent Him before Herod and Herod in turn, sent Him back to Pilate.

Matthew 27:12-14- “And when He was accused by the chief priests and the elders, He answered nothing. Then Pilate said to Him, “Don’t You hear how many things they testify against You?” And He did not answer even one word to him, so that the governor was greatly amazed.”

Matthew 27:22-37- “Pilate said to them, “What then shall I do with Jesus Who is called Christ?” They all said to him, “Let *Him* be crucified!” And the governor said, “Why? What evil did He commit?” But they shouted *all* the more, saying, “Let *Him* be crucified!” Now Pilate, seeing that he was accomplishing nothing, but *that* a riot was developing instead, took water *and* washed *his* hands before the multitude, saying, “I am guiltless of the blood of this righteous *Man*. You see *to it*.” And all the people answered *and* said, “His blood *be* on us and on our children.” Then he released Barabbas to them; but after scourging Jesus, he delivered *Him* up so that He might be crucified. Then the governor’s soldiers, after taking Jesus with them into the Praetorium, gathered the entire band against Him; And they stripped Him *and* put a scarlet cloak around Him. And after plating a crown of thorns, they put *it* on His head, and a rod in His right hand; and bowing *on* their knees before Him, they mocked Him, and *kept on* saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” Then, after spitting on Him, they took the rod and struck *Him* on the head. When they were done mocking Him, they took the cloak off Him; and they put His own garments on Him and led Him away to crucify Him. Now as they came out, they found a Cyrenean man named Simon; *and* they compelled him to carry His cross. And after coming to a place called Golgotha, which is called Place of a Skull, They gave Him vinegar mingled with gall to drink; but after tasting it, He would not drink. And when they had crucified Him, they divided His garments *by* casting lots; so that it might be

fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, “They divided My garments among themselves, and for My vesture they cast lots.” And they sat down there to keep guard over Him. And they put up over His head His accusation, written, “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.” There at Golgotha, they crucified the Lord Jesus.

Have you ever hit your thumb with a hammer? If you have ever worked on any project and used a hammer and nails, chances are you most certainly have “nailed” your thumb on occasion. It is definitely not a pleasant experience and often ends in a nice purple thumbnail that eventually falls off. Just one smack of the hammer. Now, if you will just for a moment, imagine the pressure at the point of the nail going into the wood. Now up the image from a regular claw hammer to a two-pound mini-sledge and a nail the size of a railroad spike. The wood is no longer the place of impact but your hands and your feet. The bones and tendons are cut and severed as the spikes are driven into your flesh with anger and fury. All of this agony is inflicted *after* you have been scourged with a leather whip laced with pieces of lead and bones. Your naked skin is literally tattered and hangs like rags off your body. Aside from the beating that left you unrecognizable, you have a crown of thorns thrust down onto your head, all the while being slapped, punched and spit upon. And the worst thing about all of this suffering? You are completely innocent!! In His final human hours, the Scriptures reveal that with a level of compassion impossible

for anyone but the Son of God, He suffered the *results* of those seven millennia of sin. He strove to overcome the physical torture and the pain to pay for the sins of mankind once and for all.

Throughout His trials, Jesus knew that if the anguish would have become too much for Him, He just had to say the word, and He would have been instantly saved from His adversaries. He tells the disciples, “Don’t you realize that I have the power to call upon the Father at this time, and He will furnish Me with more than twelve legions of angels?”- **Matthew 26:53**.

Jesus forced this knowledge to the deep recesses of His mind because He knew that, if He chose this physical deliverance, it would be mission failure. He would make scripture ineffective and essentially God’s Word a lie. And we all know, God cannot lie. “In *the* hope of eternal life, which God Who cannot lie promised before the ages of time,”- **Titus 1:2**. There would be no forgiveness of sins and we would still be under the death penalty.

From the time of finishing His observance of the Passover with His disciples through His gruesome crucifixion and death the following day, Jesus had to endure: betrayal, loneliness (waiting for the coming events leading to His death), arrested (being taken by a mob but having committed no crime),

Isaiah 50:5-6- “The Lord GOD has opened My ear, and I was not rebellious, nor turned away backwards. I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting,”

He was beaten (all those who had Him in custody took advantage to “cheap shot” Him at every opportunity), His hair was plucked from His beard, He was spit on, He was stripped naked, He was scourged (beaten beyond recognition- **Isaiah 52:14**), they clothed Him in a scarlet robe, gave Him a reed as a scepter, forced a crown of thorns upon His head (all designed to humiliate Him), He endured mockery, ridicule and humiliation.

Perhaps the most painful thing our Savior had to endure that long night into day was being forsaken, when God the Father had to turn away from Him when He bore the sins of the world. All through His trial and torment leading to His crucifixion, Jesus was strengthened by knowing the God the Father was watching Him endure. But as the sins of the world were placed upon Him, God the Father had to turn away.

Matthew 27:46- “And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” That is, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” Sin separates us from God. **Isaiah 59:2-** “. But your iniquities have come between you and your God, and your sins have hid *His* face from you, that He will not hear,” It is difficult to imagine the level of this pain and despair. God the

Father was also suffering as the only other Being He could have a godly relationship with was being sacrificed. As an earthly father I cannot fathom for a moment of watching one of our children or grandchildren suffering without sharing in their pain. Yet, our God endured this for us. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life.”- **John 3:16**. The Father and The Son have given us everything that we may be united with them and we can live eternally with them. We ourselves must endure what lies ahead and live according to Their way of life recorded in Their Word.

The horrific way in which Jesus died, the mental and physical pain He endured bought us back, it redeemed us from sin and death. Jesus Christ was the perfect man, the perfect sacrifice, the Lamb of God that took away the sins of the world (**John 1:29, 36**). He knew He had the hope and the faith of the resurrection of the dead to endure the terrible death knowing that God would be with Him. He knew God would have to turn away from Him but He knew that God would also raise Him from the dead.

Our Savior was led to His death as a lamb led to the slaughter. **Isaiah 53:7**- “He was oppressed, and He was afflicted; yet He opened not His mouth. He is brought as a

lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before its shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth.”

Jesus only spoke *seven* times from the cross (**Luke 23:34, 43, 46, John 19:26, 28, 30, Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34**). Even then He only cried out when He felt forsaken. After this, He cried out and died. **Matthew 27:50**- “And after crying out again with a loud voice, Jesus yielded up *His* spirit.” There is no other mention of any additional complaints from our Savior. Just a quiet resignation and willful heart to redeem us all from the penalty of sin and death with His own life.

John 15:13- “No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends.”

The life of our precious Savior came to an end as planned. Although God the Father would suffer the separation for another 72 hours, Jesus’ wait and ordeal was over.

He was completely dead and in the heart of the Earth for three days and three nights.

Matthew 12:40- “For just as Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days and three nights, in like manner the Son of man shall be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights.”

As we observe “The Night to be Much Observed” this year, as we celebrate the beginning of the spring Holy Days, please keep in mind and reflect that nearly 2000 years ago, our precious Savior Jesus Christ was dead. But we can fully rejoice in knowing that God our Father had no intentions of leaving Him there in the grave.

Psalm 16:10- “For You will not abandon My soul to the grave; neither will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.”

Acts 2:27- “For You will not leave My soul in the grave, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.” God has raised Him up and has given Him all authority over heaven and earth. “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.”- **Matthew 28:18.**

The members of God's true church are called the Bride of Christ. We, as baptized members have the privilege of being part of this church. As we have celebrated the Passover, we are called to remember His suffering and death, the price He paid for our redemption. Let us remember once again what our Savior went through bodily for us. As He said to His disciples, "This is My body which is given for you. This do in remembrance of me"- **Luke 22:19.**

Each year, as we reflect upon the great sufferings of our Savior, let us not be depressed by them. Although we deeply appreciate the agonies that Jesus endured

for us (none of us could ever), we should realize that His physical suffering is now over and has been for nearly 2000 years. He is alive forevermore and sitting at the Right Hand of God the Father (**Mark 16:19, Luke 22:69, Romans 8:34, Hebrews 10:12, 1 Peter 3:22**). While we may not have to undergo such a horrific “longest day” we can rejoice in knowing that the stone was rolled away and He conquered death and the grave for all eternity (**1 Corinthians 15:56**). We have the rest of our lives to prepare for that glorious reunion with Him that lies ahead.

BL/04-16-22

