

# **“I Come to the Garden Alone”**

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from multiple sources)

## Introduction:

### A. Text: Luke 22:39-46

1. There is a great gap between the message of the song and the portrait of Gethsemane in scripture.
2. Jesus foretold Peter's denial of Him as they made their way to the Mount of Olives, then they came to a place called Gethsemane, a garden outside the city, across the Kidron brook. Its name means "olive press", and was possibly a remote walled garden, a place where Jesus often went with His disciples.

### B. There is a stark contrast between the Garden of Eden and the Garden of Gethsemane.

1. In Eden, Adam, the first man, fell to temptation by yielding to the overtures of the Adversary
2. In Gethsemane, the Second Man (1Cor. 15:47) overcame temptation by yielding to the will of God
3. The Garden of Eden was the most beautiful place on earth ever experienced by man
4. The Garden of Gethsemane was the most terrifying place on earth for all of humankind
5. The Garden of Eden was the end of man's sinless relationship with God
6. The Garden of Gethsemane was the place where Jesus resolved to go to the cross, the beginning of a chain of events leading to our return to a sinless relationship with God

### C. How important is Gethsemane?

1. Gary Berdine likes to say: "No Gethsemane, no Calvary."
2. No garden, no cross; no cross, no forgiveness; no forgiveness, no heaven.
3. It was in the Garden of Gethsemane that Jesus' courage and determination to go to the cross was made complete.

## **I. WHAT WAS JESUS EXPERIENCING IN THE GARDEN?**

### A. Great distress

1. He went to pray, accompanied only by His dearest friends and closest disciples Peter, James, and John - Matt. 26:36-37
  - a. How serious must a matter be to us to move us to ask our dearest friends to come to us and kneel together with us to pray in vigil fashion?
2. Before He began praying, He was "deeply distressed" - Matt. 26:37
3. Mark records He was troubled and deeply distressed" - Mark 14:33
4. Luke states He was "in agony," and His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground - Luke 22:44
  - a. How strong did His fear of the cross have to be in order to make Him sweat in to that extent?
5. He was troubled because He knew His hour had come - John 12:27

6. He knew what was coming; He had told His disciples three times
  - a. Matt. 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:17-19
7. He knew that greater than the physical pain he would have to endure, He would have to carry the massive burden of all the sins that have ever been committed or ever would be committed
8. He also knew that while He was bearing our sins, He would be separated from God even more than when He was when He left Heaven to live as a man. Throughout all of eternity and all of the history of this world, He had always been with God - Isa. 53:6; Matt. 27:46

#### B. Intense sorrow

1. He described Himself as “exceedingly sorrowful, even to death”
  - a. Matt. 26:38
  - b. Jesus was not given to exaggeration
  - c. It was really a sorrow so powerful that it was tantamount to death
2. The Hebrew writer refers to His “vehement cries and tears” - Heb. 5:7
  - a. Do you have a hard time imagining that? Do you even want to?
  - b. Why have we thought that Jesus went to the cross with firm detachment, with little emotional affect?

#### C. Solemn loneliness

1. He wanted His friends to keep vigil with Him - Matt. 26:37-38
  - a. “I am there for you!” (Snore)
2. Yet after each prayer, He found them sleeping - Matt. 26:40-41, 43, 45
  - a. He just wanted to see His best friends there with Him for comfort, but they were sleepy, and He had to face this decision alone.
  - b. Psalm 69:20

#### D. Agonizing prayer

1. “He... **fell** on His face” - Matt. 26:39 (He was not given to histrionics!)
2. “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me”
  - a. Matt. 26:39, 42, 44
3. Three times! Do you understand the implications of this?!
  - a. Jesus, who knew from eternity before this world began that this had to happen...
  - b. Jesus, who knew more than anyone except God the Father that this had to take place...
  - c. Jesus, who knew that God heard Him the first time and already said “No”...
  - d. Jesus, who knew before He asked, asked three times with intensity, with tears, and with fear
4. His prayer was heard and answered - Heb. 5:7
  - a. God’s answer to Jesus’ prayers: “I am not removing the cup of suffering; you are strong enough to drink it.”

#### E. Difficult resignation

1. “Not as I will, but as You will” - Matt. 26:39
2. “If this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done” - Matt. 26:42

#### F. Exhaustion of His last reserves of strength

1. Jesus received an answer to His prayer - Luke 22:43

G. The crux of eternity

1. He has a decision to make

- a. The Sanhedrin police are coming for Him
- b. A cross is being shaped, nails are being forged, spears are being sharpened, a scourge is being braided
- c. Three courts are being bribed, pressured, or subverted
- d. Roman soldiers are standing by drinking cheap wine and very likely saying racist things about the Jews
- e. His best friends see His fear and sorrow and fall asleep
- f. God said "No" to three of the most fervent prayers ever expressed on this planet
- g. The Devil is leering intently on the scene, ravenously eager for Jesus to fall
- h. It's dark, the hillside is cold, and Jesus is alone

2. All of eternity hangs in the balance while this frightened, grieving man wrestles alone with the choice to walk to the cross or flee the garden

- a. God and Jesus planned this from before He ever said, "Let there be light."
- b. The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross was the inevitable purpose of every interaction of God with man on every page of scripture
- c. Without the cross, everything God planned for humankind cannot take place
- d. Heaven cannot be filled with the children of God
- e. The righteous Patriarchs cannot be justified; the righteous Jews under Moses cannot be cleansed; no one would ever be saved in the Christian dispensation, because there would be NO Christian dispensation; the Law of Moses would still be in effect.
- f. All of the prophets, angels, and beings of power wasted their time
- g. If Jesus chooses to flee the garden instead of walk to the cross
- h. Between the moment when Jesus finished His third prayer and then arose and left with His friends, all of heaven and earth were holding their breath

i. It was all up to Jesus who had the choice to decide either way

- 1) It was a choice. He could not be compelled against His will, or else God was not made flesh to dwell among us.

3. Matt. 26:44-46 - Between 44 and 45 He made His decision, He generated the resolve to go forward. This is a different spirit than the one that moved Him to fall on His face

4. All praise to God the Father and to Jesus Christ His Son that our Lord made the right choice!

Conclusion:

A. Since He made it through the Garden, He proved that we can do the same. We can face our own Gethsemane where we are alone facing a critical temptation and must make a hard, painful, fearful, sorrowful choice. How can we make the right one? - Phil. 4:6-7; Heb. 4:14-16, 7:25