

Sunday, November 20th sermon: "False Teachers Blaspheme Some More - The Lord's Bitter Cup (Pt 2)"

Preached at the Lord's Table at Grace Bible Church in Greenwood, MS,  
by John Pittman Hey

John 12:20-26; 1 Peter 1:10-12

False teachers claim that the bitter cup given to Jesus was not a cup of wrath at all. They do this because they deny the Biblical doctrine of substitutionary atonement.

Christ knew God's decree that He would die as a substitute in the place of His people, to propitiate God's wrath against our sin.

Yet Jesus cried out for deliverance in the Garden of Gethsemane. Moments later, He declared that He must drink down that bitter cup.

Christ's prayers for deliverance, and His sure knowledge that He would not be spared that judgment, are not incompatible at all.

That is why, following Christ's example, His people pray for deliverance, for the salvation of family and friends, and for rescue from the acts of wicked men. We do this even though we know that God determines all things that come to pass.

Those who mock us for believing in God's sovereignty and praying for help at the same time, are blaspheming Jesus, and would shut Him up in His prayers of agony to His Father.

Since last week, some of these false teachers have responded to the sermon. They have claimed that Jesus was not murdered, since He volunteered to die, and that Jesus, in His humanity, didn't know the Father's will regarding His crucifixion.

They deny that Christ was murdered by the Romans and the Jewish leaders, because they know that God ordained it beforehand, and their false doctrine would make God a sinner for ordaining Christ's murder.

They deny that Jesus knew His Father's will, because they claim that would render His prayers in the garden useless and dishonest.

So their denial of God's decree and ordination of all things that come to pass, has a cascading effect of more and more blasphemies from them against our dear Savior.

The martyr Stephen put to rest the question, whether Christ's death at Calvary was a crime. He said, just before they martyred him, that as to Christ, "you have now become His betrayers and murderers!"

The Apostle Peter proclaimed at Pentecost, "Christ, being delivered up by the determinant counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."

God had ordained long beforehand that Christ would be put to death, and He used wicked men to murder Jesus, in order to save His people from their sin.

In Acts 4, the Lord's people declared this truth: that God had determined beforehand to use the rebellion of wicked men to persecute and crucify the Lord Jesus, and had, in fact, foretold this truth as far back as the writing of Psalm 2!

God's eternal decree was carried out by wicked men against Jesus!

But these false teachers deny that Jesus knew all this in His humanity.

The question is not, HOW did Jesus know these things.

The fact is, THAT Jesus knew, and WHAT Jesus knew in His humanity about God's eternal decree that He must die on the cross, there is simply no doubt at all.

Christ in His divine nature is God of very God, and of course always knew and always knows everything forever.

But did all that divine knowledge necessarily flow to Jesus in His humanity?

Perhaps not, simply because the human brain is finite, and can only hold a small quantity of knowledge.

Yet Jesus' communion with His Father was intimate and profound, and something we can only long for!

Jesus proclaimed that He says and does only what the Father has told Him to say and do. None of us can claim such things.

Jesus proclaimed that He finished all the work commanded by His Father.

Christ studied the Scriptures, knew them inside and out, and cited various texts as speaking about Himself. Moses wrote of me, Jesus said.

Christ appropriated the "I AM" name of God, Jehovah, YAHWEH, as His very own!

Christ knew things about Abraham, that he rejoiced to see Christ's day, and saw it, and was glad, that are not mentioned previously anywhere in Scripture.

Jesus' knowledge was far above our own, even in His humanity.

What Jesus knew about God's decree that He must die is simply indisputable.

That's because it is revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures by Christ Himself.

All Jesus would have had to do to know God's decree regarding His sacrifice for sin, was to study Scripture!

In Psalm 16, Christ told the psalmist about His death and resurrection.

In Psalm 22, Christ told the psalmist details about the cross, and His being forsaken by the Father, and being mocked, and tortured, and horribly mistreated. Christ even provided direct quotes that He would make at Calvary, and direct quotes from His tormenters. Christ also disclosed to the psalmist that in the end, God would hear His cries, and did not despise His affliction, but accepted it.

In Psalm 40, Christ disclosed His incarnation and obedience unto death, and that He would own our sins and be treated as guilty for them in our place.

In Psalm 69, Christ disclosed an extensive description of His persecution, and again, of His owning as His own our sins, and of His reproach and sorrow and heaviness.

In Isaiah 50, Christ discloses His torments, and His faithfulness and courage in the face of them, that He would be vindicated, and His death would be effectual and victorious.

In Isaiah 52, Christ discloses His mutilation and vindication before the kings of the whole world.

In Isaiah 53, Christ describe how He was smitten by God, had our sins laid upon Him by God, was made our Lamb of sacrifice by God, was

punished by God in our place, was crushed by God, was made an offering for our sin by God, how God would be satisfied by Christ's substitutionary death for us, how He would justify many by bearing our iniquities.

In Zechariah, Christ discloses how He would be smitten by God's sword of wrath. This text Christ explicitly cited the night He was betrayed.

Jesus knew all these things! Peter describes how it was Christ Himself that revealed these things by the Holy Ghost to the prophets of old.

Even if Christ, in His humanity, had to learn all these things, by reading what He Himself had disclosed to the writers of the Old Testament, there can be no doubt that in His humanity He knew all about God's decree that He must die to save His people.

And we know this, because Christ Himself preached that knowledge to his disciples all throughout His ministry.

Jesus repeatedly taught them how He must suffer and die at the hands of the rulers and the Gentiles, how He must be betrayed into the hands of sinners, and be killed, and rise again the third day.

Even in the aftermath of marvelous miracles of healing, Jesus was pointed: let this sink down into your ears, the Son of Man shall be delivered into the hands of men!

Six days before He was crucified, He commended Mary for anointing Him, as He put it, "for His burial." Mary would not be able to anoint Him after His burial, for He would rise again before she had the chance!

Jesus declared His knowledge of what God had determined beforehand to do to Him, and His distress, and His obedience to it. When the Gentiles wanted to see Jesus, at the end, Christ described how He must

die, so that life might be brought unto His people, like a seed being buried and springing forth into abundant life.

The hour had come, that He must be glorified! This refers to His death as God's sacrifice, which is His great glory, because by it He saves His people whom He loves!

But Christ goes on: now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour!

A few verses later, Jesus speaks of being "lifted up," which John explains was a reference to being crucified on the cruel cross.

Jesus thus makes very clear His detailed, excruciatingly painful understanding of what God had determined would be done to Him, and the anguish it caused Him, in His humanity, and His determination to be obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

So against the false teachers who blaspheme, and then pile blasphemy on top of blasphemy against Jesus, the case is conclusive: Jesus knew all about what God had ordained would come to pass against Him, in all His sufferings and death for us.

And yet, Christ prayed in Gethsemane for deliverance, and wept and mourned the physical and moral pain that He knew He must endure.

Thereby, Jesus puts the lie to the false teaching that claims God's eternal decree is incompatible with our questions, and sorrow against sin and wickedness, and our prayers for deliverance and salvation for our loved ones.

Those who mock those doctrines would shut up our Savior, Who, unlike us, already knew what was to come to pass, and yet prayed in this manner.

False teachers have no compunction at lying about Jesus, denigrating His knowledge, if that's what it takes to uphold their heretical views.

And no doubt, God ordained that these false teachers blaspheme Jesus, to draw out the truth about Jesus to those who love Him! They drive us to study Scripture to search out these precious truths.

Praise God, nobody can stop Jesus from his obedience and fear and sorrow and prayers over His glorious cross work for us!

Not Peter. Not wicked men in His day. Not His murderers and betrayers. Not the devil Himself.

And certainly not the filthy blasphemers in this day!

No matter what anybody says, the Lamb is still all the glory in Immanuel's Land!