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The Experiences of the Lord's Earthly Sojourn - Part 2

Introduction

Last month we considered a basic introduction to the fact of there being no recorded reference to the priest or High Priest having any shoes. This led to the consideration of that which the Lord experienced, not from walking on the desert floor as the priest did, but from the verbal and active eruptions of sinful man. This paper is musing upon "Experiences which are common to both unsaved persons and saved persons," and those of the Lord.

It greatly helps if there is an understanding that the sufferings of our Lord fall into two major areas:

- a) The sufferings which He bore when suffering for our sins
- b) The sufferings He experienced throughout His entire life, apart from the three hours of darkness.

When our Lord was on the cross, during the three hours of darkness He suffered the penalty for our iniquities and transgressions (Isa. 53:5), but in the three hours of light not one sin's penalty was executed on Him. The three hours of darkness was when He suffered to be our Saviour but the balance of His earthly sojourn was the qualifying Him to be our High Priest. It is with these experiences these papers are dealing with.

Experiences of the Lord

It is a very uncomfortable feeling when an individual knows others are speaking in a disparaging way about them and with side glances looking down on them. Our Lord knew what this was like for He also was looked down upon, despised and rejected. In the grace of God I have never been arrested and walked through a shopping mall handcuffed. Only twice have I been in prisons, and that was to present the gospel. It was an experience I would not want if I was a criminal. The prophet Isaiah wrote, "He (the Lord) was taken from prison and from judgment" (Isa. 53:8). The apostles knew what it was like to be in prison (Acts 5:18; 12:7). The writer to the Hebrews spoke of those who were in bonds (Heb. 13:3). Paul knew imprisonment, once as house arrest (Acts 28:30) and when Onesiphorus came to visit him (2 Tim. 1:16-17). It causes a deep wondering of how the blessed Son of God felt when:

- a) He stood before the chief priest and elders of the people (Matt. 27:1, 12, 20)
- b) Being questioned and set at nought by Herod's men (Lk. 23:7-11)
- c) Standing in the wings and then brought forth as Pilate cried, "I find no fault in this man" (Lk. 23:4; also Jn. 19:4, 6)
- d) Yet, to stand there before that motley crowd of unfeeling obstinate "spiritual leaders" who wanted nothing but His blood. He who loved beyond telling was hated with a satanically inspired hatred. Nothing He did was acceptable. In a very real way He was despised and rejected of men (Isa. 53:3).

This was all the more intensified to him in hurtfulness because of His rejected love.

How stupendous the truth that God, who cannot be tempted, yet in becoming human He experienced what it is to be tempted and not just any temptation. The Gospels record the three major temptations (Matt. 4:1-10; Mk. 1:13; Lk. 4:1-14), two in the wilderness and one on the pinnacle of the temple in the holy city (Matt. 4:5). As noted, there are thousands who are hungry and the temptation to make bread from stones would not be a temptation to them because they do not have the ability to do such. In contrast, the Lord who later produced sufficient bread for thousands, and being God, could have easily satisfied His hunger by creating bread. This is where the crux of the temptation was. He, by faith, depended on God to give Him, in His own time, that which He needed to satisfy His hunger. It was an attempt by Satan to separate Himself from the will of God and to use His own power to get that which, humanly speaking, He needed at that time.

The Lord knew the dreadful experience of being misunderstood from two avenues:

- a) There are very few things worse than to have that which is said twisted and given an entirely different meaning, especially if it is to condemn and lead to one's death, or take the truth of what is said and mock it. The Lord experienced the hostility and hatred of the religious leaders by twisting His words. As that perfect man whose words came from God stood before the Sanhedrin, they took His words recorded in John 2:18-21 and gave them an entirely different meaning, then added to them. The Lord never said He would destroy this temple, yet they said, "We heard Him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with

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hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands" (Mk. 14:58). Bad enough to put a distorted meaning to what He said but to add words to it was very evil, "yet He opened not His mouth" (Isa. 53:7). Then when on the cross His words were taken wrongly and used to mock the possibility of what He had apparently cried for. The Lord cried, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani" (Matt. 27:46). Some of them then said, "This man calleth for Elias" and "Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him" (Matt. 27:47, 49). The disciples also misunderstood His words when He told them, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth" (Jn. 11:11-12) when in fact the Lord was speaking of the death of Lazarus (Jn. 11:13-14).

- b) From His disciples and others in their failure to grasp the deeper truths the Lord spoke about, it was important for Him to learn the patience needed in dealing with those who are slow to grasp the matters spoken of. For instance, when at the well the Lord said, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water. The woman saith unto Him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep" (Jn. 4:10-11). The woman failed to understand the Lord spoke of the "Living Water" that only He could give.

Space forbids to go into more detail concerning the experiences of the Lord but the following are some of the ones common to all humanity:

- a) To be utterly lonely (Psa. 88:18; 102:6-7)
- b) To stand at the grave of a loved one (Jn. 11:33-38)
- c) To know no abiding home (Matt. 8:20)
- d) To know what it is to be the object of mockery (Lk. 23:11)
- e) To be silent in the midst of false accusations (Matt. 26:60)
- f) To know what it is to not be wanted (Jn. 1:11; Psa. 69:8, 13; 88:11)

Experiences which are unique to those who live in fellowship and walk with the Lord

For the child of God who seeks to live life in fellowship with God, there are experiences which the unsaved know nothing about, a fact the Lord knew intellectually. We know it is one thing to know a truth by mere knowledge but quite different to know the same fact by experience. For instance, I know the Arctic is very cold but it is an intellectual knowledge. However, if I were to go there and upon getting off the aircraft I would quickly realize it's freezing cold. No longer an intellectual head knowledge but I know that coldness by experience and now able to feel for others who are going there. Because the Lord has experienced my world, He knows what I feel and succors me in the affliction. The Lord knew that many saints would be humiliated and mocked and He knew the cruelty of humiliation. However, the Lord could never be humbled for pride was not in His character. He knew nothing of the pride of:

- a) Birth: "Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (Jn. 1:46)
- b) Wealth: "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Lk. 9:58)
- c) Reputation: For He said, "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me" (Lk. 7:23)
- d) Superiority: For He said, "I am among you as he that serveth" (Lk. 22:27)
- e) Ability: For He said, "I can of mine own self do nothing . . . I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (Jn. 5:30)
- f) Pride: It was a major problem in Laodicea (Rev. 3:17)

The Lord knew what it was to have those whom He loved virtually blaming Him or opposing the will of God for Him. When Lazarus died his sisters sent for Him, fully expecting Him to come with all haste for He loved them (Jn. 11:3, 36). The Lord waited and when He did arrive, Martha said unto Him, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died" (Jn. 11:21). Then Mary said the same words (Jn. 11:32). How that must have hurt the Lord. Again there came that point of time when the Lord told the disciples that He "must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer . . . and be killed, and be raised again the third day." The rebuking response of Peter was, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee" (Matt. 16:21-22). Peter, in his love and zeal for the Lord, was in ignorance standing against the will and purpose of God. Sometimes in life we find the will of God quite different to our

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desires, they can be so natural. For instance, if a spouse dies or a much loved child or parent, very seldom would that be our desire, yet in God's wisdom takes them to himself. Christ knew what that was like.

The Lord lived in a family and none of his brothers and sisters (humanly speaking) (Matt. 12:26-27; 13:55; 56) believed in Him (Jn. 7:5). In fact, they went even further than not believing in Him, that is, who He was but publicly intimated that He was mad because of His non-conformity and self proclamations. How deep must the prayers of the Lord have been for his family circle. What a responsibility He had living the divine life among them. There are so many saints in the same situation. How hard it is not to let speech slip a littler bit and take all the loved one's abuse and not retort to it but love them, knowing they do not understand the solemnity of what they are doing.

The reality of Satan and his demons in the affairs of life is to be remembered that, while there is only one Satan, there are untold numbers of demons who, with untiring zeal, do his will. Satan is not omnipresent but with his many loyalists spread all over the world, there can be sinful influences on individuals and nations across the world. The Lord was of such a high priority that the temptations He was to be put to were not left to a mere demon, but by Satan Himself. In unmasked determination against God, Satan came to the Lord for the sole purpose of splitting the oneness of the Godhead by trying to have Christ act contrary to God's will. There was no hidden front made from Satan for the Lord had cast Satan from his place of superlative excellence in the government of Heaven. Now the Lord is on Satan's turf and Satan will do all to discredit Him and destroy Him from being able to glorify God in His life, death and resurrection, thus defeating Satan and having the victory over death. When we speak of the temptations of the Lord reference is being made to the unrecorded temptations (Lk. 22:28). When the Lord spoke of the passion, there was Satanic temptations for He called it, "Your hour, and the power of darkness" (Lk. 22:53). While Satan could never, despite every allurements, entice Christ to sin (He could not sin) yet the Lord knew the lure Satan dangled before Him was very real. He could never be dominated by sin's powers. He did know the appeal of that which was used as bait. I would be very foolish to say that any saint, no matter how spiritual, has never known the subtlety of Satan and the attractions of sin. Christ, our High Priest, knows those experiences so well.

Concluding Thoughts

How wonderful to have such a High Priest who can succor us in our temptations and who lived untainted by the world in which He lived.

. . . . Rowan Jennings