

June 10-16
New Testament Lesson # 23
“Not As I Will, But As Thou Wilt”
(Matthew 26; Mark 14; Luke 22; John 18)
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I. The atonement is the critical turning point in the Bible. More than that, *it is the great hinge upon which the destiny of all mankind and the whole earth hangs.*

A Video posted on my Website www.thefinaldaysofawe.com, shows *the atonement was a chiasitic turning point as demonstrated by Jesus in His role as Bridegroom.*

But there were additional aspects of that great turning point.

These relate to the Bridegroom’s Washing and Anointing of His Bride:

It was no accident that Gethsemane had both a Wine Press and an Olive Press.

Because Jehovah said [prophetically] He had cleansed and anointed His people (Ezekiel 16:9), some Hebrew husbands washed and anointed their brides.

At the Last Supper, Jesus had first washed His disciples’ feet. Now, in Gethsemane, *He began the fuller cleansing through His blood.*

II. *His cleansing blood was extracted by the terrible pressures He felt as He shouldered all the sins of all mankind, a burden so great He did “bleed at every pore” (D&C 19:18).*

There is a proven medical condition, hematuria, where great mental strain has caused blood to actually come through the pores.

Furthermore, the Wine Press in Gethsemane helps us understand the reality of the great work Jesus wrought through His “bodily-wept blood” in Gethsemane.

We learn that the first wine in the Wine Press actually comes from the pressure of the grapes themselves. The pressure of those above weighs so heavily on the fully ripe fruit below, that the wine begins to automatically flow (Smith’s Dictionary of the Bible). This wine, especially sweet, was set aside and called the “First Wine.” There are prophecies of the **Savior as the “first, new or sweet wine”** (Such as Amos 9:13). This likely symbolizes its being given of itself, or “willingly.”

The pressures which helped bring wine from the grapes helps us understand better the far greater pressures exerted upon our Savior --- to bring forth His cleansing blood.

For most of us, blood is a shocking sight. And undoubtedly it was meant to be, for blood is the sign of death. “And the wages of sin are death” (Romans 6:23).

The blood Jesus shed in agony in Gethsemane, scourging and cross, was His offering of blood given in exchange for the blood of guiltiness of all other men’s sins.

III. But the name “Gethsemane” actually means “Olive Press.” And there was also an Olive Press in Gethsemane.

Remember the Bridegroom was *to anoint* as well as cleanse His people.

Undoubtedly precious oils also ebbed from Him through His suffering in this terrifying “Olive Press.” Beyond cleansing us, this precious oil was to heal His people, consecrate them, and to set them apart as His.

And prophetically, the first oil that oozes from the olives, is tinged red!

IV. Jesus as Bridegroom Purchased His Bride.

Gethsemane was only the first instance where Jesus' blood was shed. Through later scourging and the crucifixion, Jesus Christ continued to shed His blood, and eventually to give His very life.

The tradition was that the Bridegroom paid a "bride price" for the bride. The offering of blood, innocence and life was the bride price He paid for Us!

"Know ye not that ... ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

The price a Bridegroom paid for His bride manifest the depth of His love. **Jesus could not have paid any higher price.**

V. Furthermore, one of the promises a bridegroom made in ancient Israel was that, if necessary, **he would redeem his bride from captivity.**

The bridegroom was expected to pay the bride price to whoever had authority over her. Thus the True Bridegroom had to conquer the powers of Satan to retrieve His bride.

"How the Atonement was wrought we do not know. No mortal watched as evil turned away and hid in shame before the Light of that pure being.... **When what was done was done, the ransom [or bride price] had been paid. Both death and hell forsook their claim on all who would repent. Men at last were free.**" (Elder Boyd K. Packer).

VI. Because what occurred in Gethsemane is so central to the salvation of mankind, it is surprising that the Savior's experiences there are covered by only about ten verses, repeated with just a few variations in three gospels.

This brevity is because Jesus' suffering in Gethsemane, while terribly agonizing, *was private and personal*. Peter, James and John, exhausted, slept through the event. Thus gospel writers could give but a brief glimpse of what actually occurred in Gethsemane. But Elder **Bruce R. McConkie says that what occurred there lasted for three to four hours!** (McConkie, "The Purifying Power of Gethsemane," *Ensign*, May 1985, 9).

Thankfully, in latter-day revelation, many scriptures, many articles, and many books have been written to elucidate the atonement. Even then, our prophets assert, its meanings and depths are still beyond our ability to completely comprehend.

VII. It is very important to understand that Jesus' suffering included taking upon Himself **the actual horror of our sins**, as well as the consequences of those sins.

There are many testimonies to this truth. Just some of them are:

1. Isaiah testified He would "bare the sins of many" and be "numbered with the transgressors" (Isaiah 53:12).

2. Peter testified "He bore our sins in his own body on the tree (1 Peter 2:24)."

3. President John Taylor testified "In a manner to us incomprehensible and inexplicable, he bore the weight of the sins of the whole world" (*Meditation and Atonement*, p. 148-9.)

4. Israel's Day of Atonement testified that **the sins of Israel were placed upon the head of a goat while another goat was sacrificed for those sins.**

5. While lambs were used at Passover to witness of the total innocence of the Savior, goats were used on the Day of Atonement to witness that Jesus' final sacrifice would be as a goat (goats were wild and symbols of the rebellious. See Matthew 25:31-46).

6. **The full symbolism was that while Jesus Himself was as innocent as a lamb, He would take upon Himself the sins of men, becoming as if He were a wild, rebellious goat.**

7. He thus became "the scapegoat" for the all men's sins.

VIII. The horrors of taking upon Himself the sins of the vilest of men, and the consequences for those sins, was a very great cause of Jesus' suffering.

This suffering went far beyond the terrible pains He endured in the scourging and the crucifixion, although those terrors are themselves beyond our comprehension.

Many believe He continued to bear those sins He had shouldered as He experienced their consequence in the scourging and the crucifixion. Elder McConkie says that while on the cross "all the infinite agonies and merciless pains of Gethsemane recurred."

IX. As the Fall occurred in a Garden, so man's redemption from the Fall occurred in a Garden.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie has suggested **it was Michael [Adam] who was the "angel" sent to strengthen the Savior in the Garden of Gethsemane** (Luke 22:43). ("The Purifying Power of Gethsemane," p. 9). Such a possibility gives a special meaning to this event. Adam, whose transgression brought about the Fall, would have deep personal feeling of the significance of Christ's work, and also for the absolute need of Christ's success.

X. "Not My Will but Thine Be Done."

In Gethsemane, we see the essence of Oneness, as Jesus submits His will in total obedience to that of His Father (Luke 22:42). When that Oneness is coupled with modern revelation, we get a powerful perspective of the Oneness the Father ultimately desires. .

Wilford Woodruff dedicated the Salt Lake Temple with this prayer

"We praise thee [God] that our fathers, from last to first, from now, back to the beginning, **can be united with us in indissoluble links**, welded by the holy Priesthood, and that as one great family united in thee and cemented by thy power we shall stand together before thee, **and by the power of the atoning blood of the Son be delivered from all evil, be saved and sanctified, exalted and glorified.**" (James E. Talmage, *The House of the Lord*, Deseret Book, 1976, p. 137).

Joseph Smith taught of the necessity for the welding of families through sons to fathers back through the ages, but these two things show its significance. In contemplating the beautiful example of Jesus totally submitting His will to His Father in Gethsemane, we should sense the deeper understanding of what this Oneness entails.

Consider the unimaginable power that will come through this welding link spoken of, as Son to Father/ Son to Father/ Son to Father/ not only upon this earth, but in the Eternal Heavens, are welded together both by Priesthood Power **and by this loving yielding of wills, demonstrated by Jesus in Gethsemane. Thus there becomes a powerful Oneness of Wills.** Competitiveness seems to be the driving force in our world, **but not in the next!**

The power that binds all Wills together there is the *bond of absolute Righteousness and absolute Love.*

That is the example Jesus set: "Not my will, Father, but thine be done."