
Words of Truth

Hebrews 5:7

By: Brian A. Yeager

We have been studying about our high priest Jesus Christ (Hebrews 4:14-5:6). In the verse we are going to study in this article we are continuing that study. Here is the Scripture we will be studying in this article: *“Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared”* (Hebrews 5:7).

When we consider the days when Jesus was in the flesh, we are talking about His years on this earth. It is no mystery to us who are in Christ that He, being deity, lived in human flesh on this earth (Matthew 1:18-25, John 1:1-14, Romans 1:3, Romans 8:1-3, and Romans 9:1-5). We have been studying how that makes Him our perfect high priest. Now we get to think about a few more relevant details of His life in this world.

While Jesus was in the flesh He offered up prayers (Matthew 14:22-23, Luke 6:12, and John 17:1-26). The writer of this letter also states Jesus offered up supplications. The Greek word “ἱκετηρία” means: “Intreaty: — supplication. An olive branch; for suppliants approached the one whose aid they would implore holding an olive branch entwined with white wool and fillets, to signify that they came as suppliants; supplication” (Strong’s # 2428). It is very hard to say much on that. This word only appears this one time in the New Testament. What we can understand is that Jesus sought aid from our Father in prayer.

As we tie all of that together and consider Jesus’ strong crying and tears in prayer unto the Father, we have to talk about Jesus’ prayer the night He was betrayed. Notice: *“Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time,*

saying the same words. Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me” (Matthew 26:36-46; cf. Mark 14:32-42 and Luke 22:39-46).

The Hebrew writer, without doubt, was referring to what you just read. For anyone to read that and think that Jesus was unafraid is inconceivable. He knew what was coming in the moments ahead of Him while He was praying to our Father (Matthew 16:21, Matthew 20:17-19, and Matthew 26:20-35). Jesus knew He had to go through with it regardless of the fears He was facing (John 4:34). Since Jesus knew that and willingly carried out His Father’s will. It can be said that Jesus fulfilled all that the prophets prophesied concerning Him (Acts 3:18). Think about how it was prophesied that Jesus was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (Isaiah 53:3). It was foretold that He would be put to grief (Isaiah 53:10).

The penman of this letter recorded that Jesus prayed to Him who was able to save Him from death. That was certainly true (Mark 14:36). However, Jesus was not without freewill in what He was going to face. Jesus said: *“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father” (John 10:11-18).*

The Hebrew writer also stated that Jesus was heard in that He feared. There is a lot to consider in that statement. In brief, think about our Father’s presence in the life of His only begotten Son, during a time of fear. Jeremiah wrote of a time when he was imprisoned and how that God heard him in a time of his fears (Lamentations 3:55-57; cf. Jeremiah 38:6). The faithful can come to our Father with our burdens (Psalms 56:1-4 and I Peter 5:7). That does not mean deliverance from what is to come. Jesus knew that as we’ve already considered. As you go back to that night of betrayal and arrest when Jesus was in prayer, after His time in prayer, He was ready to go forward unto His horrific death.

If we learn from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ about prayer, we can know we have a Father that hears us in our difficult times (Proverbs 15:29 and I Peter 3:12). What we will discuss going forward is that prayer did not relieve Jesus of what was expected of Him. The same is true for us. Thankfully, our high priest understands all of that from His experiences.