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John 18 - Part I

The Oil Press

John 18:1: *When Jesus had spoken these words (prayer, chapter 17), he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into which he entered, and his disciples. There are lessons in the actual events of this night, as well as the allegorical views. The word Cedron, which should be spelled in Greek as Kedron', and is a transliteration of the Hebrew word quidron, pronounced kid-rone' ^(h6939). The name means dusky, blackish, and was always associated with uncleanness. It is a valley located on the east side of Jerusalem, a place where unclean things were discarded. It was also the location of the graves of the common people. When Josiah found the Book of the Law in the temple and read it, he realized that Israel had left the true God for idol worship. He put down the idolatrous priests and commanded the high priest to remove from the temple all the vessels made for Baal and burn them in the fields of Kidron (2Kings 23:4, 6).*

Jesus and the disciples passed through this valley of uncleanness when they entered the Garden of Gethsemane, on the Mount of Olives. **Mark 14:32-36:** *32. And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he says to his disciples, Sit here, while I shall pray. 33. And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; 34. And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch. 35. And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. 36. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.*

Luke adds a couple of other thoughts: **Luke 22:43-44:** *43. And there appeared an angel (messenger) unto him from heaven, strengthening him. 44. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. (Sweating blood is a rare medical condition caused by stress, which is called Hematidrosis)*

The content of the message from heaven that strengthened Christ was not mentioned. Perhaps it was the last bit of the revelation as to the purpose of him dying, and even a view of the other side of the cross. Jesus must have cringed at the thought that in a few hours he would go through the most hideous physical torture and death of the times. He pleaded three times with the Father to find another way, but never-the-less, let His will be done.

Gethsemane is of Chaldee origin and means oil-press. In 2013, an ancient stone olive press was found during an excavation in Jerusalem. It consists of a round basin and a stone wheel that rolled within the basin to press the olives. It could be rolled by people or an animal. There is a prophecy that I believe fits this idea: **Ezekiel 1:15-16:** *15. Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces (Rev 4:7). 16. The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the color of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel.*

Oil, used for anointing, is a symbol for the Holy Spirit. The prophecy in Ezekiel is depicting the work of the risen Savior. However, he first had to go through the experience himself. He passed through the valley of uncleanness

into the “oil press,” and now he is in *agony* because everything in him is resisting going through with the cross. While it is the spirit of the Father telling him what he needs to do, the pressure and stress come from within as he fights to yield to the will of his Father, to the point that he sweats blood. Blood is a symbol for the soul (Leviticus 17:11), or the record of who you are. **Proverbs 23:7:** *For as he thinks in his heart* (^{h5315} *soul*), *so is he*. Look at the story allegorically: The will of Jesus is in conflict with the will of his Father, and He is sweating blood. Figuratively, the record of who Jesus is, the old self, is being poured out as he struggles letting go. The evidence that he let go of self is in the cross - “Father, forgive them. They know not what they do.”

The Kidron Valley later came to be called the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There is a prophecy about this valley in the book of Joel that applies to our day: **Joel 3:1-2, 10-16:** *1. For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, 2. I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.10. Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning-hooks into spears: (take what you have learned and share it) *let the weak say, I am strong.* 11. *Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord.* 12. *Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about.* 13. *Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats (vats) overflow; for their wickedness is great.* 14. *Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.* 15. *The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining.* 16. *The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.**

The Valley of Jehoshaphat in this prophecy is referred to as *the valley of decision*, the same valley through which Christ passed that night. Think about Christ’s work and the experience just before us. Will you yield self and accept the will of God for your life? Or will you turn your back on the man who gave his life so that you might have life more abundantly? All must be brought into the valley of decision, a place figuratively, where we shed the uncleanness of our souls, or walk away into darkness. The darkening of the sun, moon and stars are symbols of man’s understanding of the Father and Son (sun) and the Bible (moon), which must be corrected so that we can see that what we perceived as light was actually darkness (i.e. stars withdraw shining). Are you going to enter the garden (the oil-press)? Before the gospel can go to the world every false teaching recorded in our minds and every bit of self must be pressed out by the Holy Spirit.

Ezekiel 36:25-27: *25. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. 26. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. Our filthy rags must be replaced with the white garments of Christ’s righteousness (Zech 3:4; Rv 19:7-8). Amen.*