

# The Lamb's High Feast

Lesson 7d

Review of Lesson 7a-c: Christ saves us by his incarnation and by his sinless life

## Lift up your hearts! Ascension Theology

One of the most important points of the Liturgy is the *sursum corda* – the command to lift up your hearts. This part of the liturgy is so rich and deep, it requires a substantial foundation to understand.

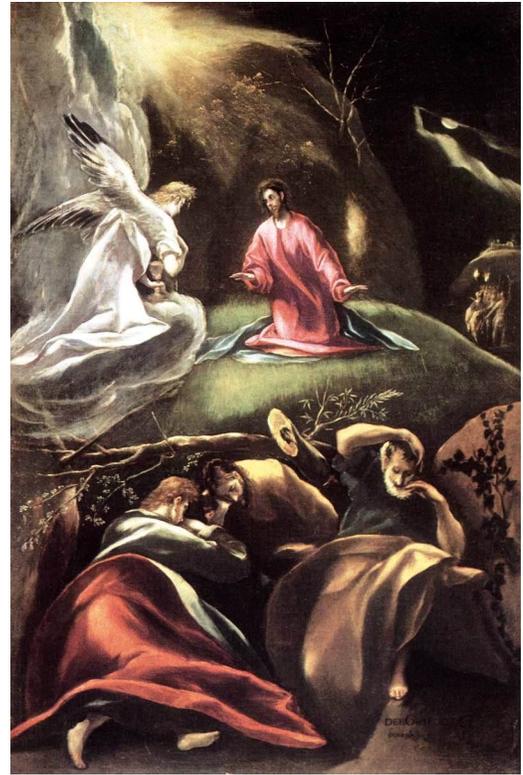
For the next few lessons, we will lay that foundation, one block at a time, until we build a theological base for the beautiful truth of what is happening at the *sursum corda*.

## What did Jesus do that Saves Us? He Suffered.

That the Saviour was to suffer when He came, had been foretold from the beginning. The first sin of man drew from God the merciful promise of the Deliverer, ‘the seed of the woman.’ It was promised that He should come to ‘bruise the serpent’s head,’ i.e., to destroy the power of Satan; but it was added, that in so doing the serpent should ‘bruise his heel,’ i.e., inflict suffering upon him in his humanity. (Gen. 3:15) As time went on, this truth was taught again and again both by word and deed – by type and prophecy. The system of the Mosaic sacrifices taught the solemn lesson that without the shedding of blood, which is the life, there is no remission of sins;<sup>14</sup> and pointed to the shedding of the precious blood of the Lamb of God, who should take away the sins of the world. The prophets, notably Isaiah, foretold that Christ should suffer and die for this people.<sup>15</sup>

We have seen that it is probable that the Son of God would have been incarnate if there had been no sin for which to atone, but the sufferings of our Lord are clearly traceable to the sin of man. Suffering is the shadow and the penalty of sin. Thus, when we see our Lord suffering, we know that, in some mysterious way, He was in contact with sin, and suffering because of sin. He was perfectly sinless, ‘holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners;’ (Heb. 7:26.) but, as the representative of our guilty race, He allowed himself to be accounted guilty, and in surrendering life in such agonies, He bore the punishment due to our sins. In the striking language of St. Paul, God ‘made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.’ (2 Cor. 5:21.) Thus, Jesus was the sin-bearer, bearing ‘our sins in his own body on the tree.’ (1 Peter 2:24.) The prophet Isaiah specially declared that ‘the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.’ (Isa. 53:6.)<sup>1</sup>

By his cross and passion our incarnate Lord wrought the great atonement – the reconciliation of man to God: He redeemed us from the power of Satan, from sin, and from the punishment of sin. He did this as God and man in one person. As a man, He suffered death for us; as God, He gave an infinite value to his sufferings and death. We must not regard the Redemption as the offering of so much pain for so much sin. It is not so much the painfulness of our Lord's suffering which gave them value, as the



The Agony in the Garden  
El Greco c. 1600

1 The Catholic Religion by Vernon Staley, Moorehouse Publishing, 1893, 1961, 1983

obedience of which they are the evidence. As St. Bernard says, "It is not his death, but his freely dying, which was pleasing to God." The suffering and death of Jesus were the witness to his perfect obedience to the will of God. He satisfied to the full the righteous demands of God on the obedience of man. His obedience knew no limits, for He "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Philippians 2:8) We can not conceive of obedience going beyond such an offering.

We should always think of this perfect obedience of our incarnate Lord as the cause of our Redemption... as the human race fell from God through disobedience, so it could only be restored by obedience.

## The Anglican Answer to this Question: What did Christ do that Saves?

### From the Great Litany, BCP p. 40 / 1928 p.55

By the mystery of thy holy Incarnation, by thy holy Nativity and circumcision; by thy Baptism, Fasting, and Temptation,

*God Lord, Deliver us.*

By thine Agony and Bloody Sweat, by thy Cross and Passion, by thy precious Death and Burial; by thy glorious Resurrection and Ascension; and by the Coming of the Holy Ghost,

*God Lord, deliver us.*

## Foundation Block #3: By thine agony and bloody sweat

**A. Passion.** The Passion of Christ refers to the intense suffering, physical and moral, which Jesus suffered from the end of the Passover celebration in the upper room until his death on the cross. Theologically, the term passion is loaded with meaning:

1. The state or capacity of being acted on by external agents or forces.
2. Intense, driving, or overmastering feeling or conviction
3. a strong feeling (such as anger) that causes you to act in a dangerous way

### B. Scripture

1. List the incidents of suffering Jesus endured at this time:

Betrayed by \_\_\_\_\_, denied by \_\_\_\_\_, abandoned by the \_\_\_\_\_  
mocked and beaten by the \_\_\_\_\_, crowned with \_\_\_\_\_, falsely  
accused and convicted by the \_\_\_\_\_, condemned by \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, rejected by his own people who shouted \_\_\_\_\_,  
forced to carry his own \_\_\_\_\_, nailed to a \_\_\_\_\_ as a cursed sign,  
mocked and ridiculed by the \_\_\_\_\_, mocked and ridiculed by the \_\_\_\_\_  
on the crosses next to him, pierced by the \_\_\_\_\_ in his side.

2. What is the meaning or the value in all this?

A. See Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. St. Luke 22:39-46

“It is not so much the painfulness of our Lord's suffering which gave them value, as the obedience of which they are the evidence. As St. Bernard says, “It is not his death, but his freely dying, which was pleasing to God.” The Catholic Religion – A manual of instruction for members of the Anglican Communion, by Vernon Staley, p. 112

B. Another key verse to understanding Christ's salvific work in suffering is found in Hebrews 12:1c-2a

let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

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