



Why did Jesus sweat blood?

What event in your own life would worry you so much, would cause you such anxiety and fear--to grieve so deeply, that you would pray for God to make it pass, if possible, and sweat blood in the agony of your prayer to him?

Just before Judas walked up the hill with the detachment of soldiers, Jesus was praying on the Mount of Olives.

Luke 22:39-44 tells us that Jesus went to the Mount of Olives to pray [as was his custom], and his disciples followed him. On reaching the place, he said to them, *“Pray that you will not fall into temptation.” He withdrew about a stone’s throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”* An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling on the ground.”

The medical term for bloody sweat is *hematidrosis*. Although rare, it occurs when a person is under great emotional stress and tiny capillaries in the sweat glands break.

Why was Jesus sweating blood? Was Jesus worried about receiving a horrific beating in a few hours followed by an agonizing death by torture? NO.

Jesus was sweating blood because he had never been separated from the Father in all of eternity. Later that day, he would find himself separated from God for the first time on this cross.

Jesus said it himself: *“And now Father, glorify me in your presence with **the glory I had with you before the world began**”* (John 17:5).

The Apostle John wrote about it: *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **He was with God in the beginning.** Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made”* (John 1:1-3).

He knew God at his birth. Psalm 22:9, *“Yet you brought me out of the womb; you made me trust in you even at my mother’s breast. From birth I was cast upon you; from my mother’s womb you have been my God.”*

From the beginning of eternity, Jesus was with God. He was with God in the womb of Mary, and knew God at his birth.

In Isaiah 49, Isaiah was not talking about himself. As in other passages, he was speaking of the Messiah. *“Before I was born the Lord called me; from my birth he has made mention of my name.”*

In Luke chapter 2, we learn that when Jesus was eleven years old, the family went to Jerusalem for the Feast of Passover. Without telling anyone, he stayed behind, talking to the priests in the temple. When his parents found him three days later, he said, *“Why were you searching for me?” he asked, “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?” But they did not understand what he was saying to them.”*

In all of history, Jesus had never been separated from his Father—they were one (think Trinity). But at the crucifixion, he would be for the first time. That is why he prayed for the Cup to pass, if there was any other way. This is why he was sweating blood. He could not imagine what it must be like to be separated from God. (I do not think of it as the cup of his death or crucifixion, but the Cup of Separation).

From the cross, as Jesus took on the sins of the whole world, he felt the presence of the Father depart, and what did he say? *“About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’—which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit”* (Matthew 27:46, 50).

Jesus completed his mission to save the earth—and us. He did not die of the scourging or the crucifixion; he gave up his spirit and died (John 10:18). When the Roman soldier pierced his side, out came water and blood, the sign of a broken heart.

How long was Jesus separated from God on the cross?

I always wondered about this passage in Isaiah—it does not quite fit with the story of Israel that Isaiah is telling. Instead, inserted in the middle, like Isaiah often does, is another mention of the Messiah. *“For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back. In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you, says the LORD your Redeemer”* (Isaiah 54:7-8).

Why was Jesus sweating blood?

Because he had never been separated from God.

And when it does happen, it breaks his heart -- and he dies.

FINAL NOTE: Jesus’ relationship with the Father was extremely close and intimate—always had been. That is why it is absurd to suggest that Jesus had a relationship with anyone else (some think he married Mary Magdalene and had a family). He didn’t have time or room in his heart for anyone but his Abba Father God.

Father Joel Graves