

dc 19. ¹⁸⁻¹⁹

¹⁸Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—¹⁹nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men.

I have never been a big fan of calling Jesus my “elder brother”—and, no, “Elder Brother” does not strike me as better. In this passage Jesus refers to himself as “God.” And, for good measure, “the greatest of all.” There are no caveats here. No hedging. No “God, the Son.” No “the God second in command.” He is “God, the greatest of all.” Period. We would do well to think more often and more seriously on this truth.

And, while we’re at it, we might think on this. What sort and amount of suffering could cause “God, the greatest of all” to shrink from the pain of that suffering? We simply cannot fathom the suffering any more than we can fathom him. But we should know, and do know, that no one else could have or can experience such suffering and survive. This is the angel’s witness to King Benjamin. He described Jesus’ suffering as “even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death.”¹ And I don’t think we are talking about physical death only. No one else can endure what Jesus suffered and remain a viable living entity, physical or spiritual. Jesus’ ordeal would result in the complete and total physical and spiritual annihilation of anyone else. Moses... obliterated from existence. Joseph Smith... annihilated. Russell M. Nelson... exterminated. You and me, vanished.

So, no, Jesus isn’t just a little older, a little taller, a little stronger, and a little more experienced version of us. He is “God, the greatest of all.” If I had my way, we would put an end to this “elder brother” stuff once and for all. If I had my way, we would even change this “God, the greatest of all.” In my version it would read, “God, the Greatest of all.”

The season of Lent and Easter is a good time to consider the greatness of Jesus, and to grow in our appreciation for the breadth, the depths, and lengths to which he will go to prove his commitment to the human race; to me and to you.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

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¹ Moiah. 3.⁷