

“A JOURNEY THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF JOHN” SERIES

#23: “The Hour has Come for the Son of Man to be Glorified”

SCRIPTURE: John 12:20-50

INTRO:

Jesus has just shown Himself to be the most courageous man of all time: He has ridden into Jerusalem on the colt of a jenny, accompanied by two groups of thousands of cheering people, and witnessed by men who have the authority to demand his execution, while knowing that within a week He'll be dead, executed by one of the most excruciating forms of capital punishment known to man. The triumphal entry into Jerusalem was, in a sense, the victory lap after a three-year race.

In all probability, Jesus went from Bethany into Jerusalem each day of his last week. He would go into the temple courts where He would have both the most sympathetic and the most challenging audiences, challenging the rulers to either recognize His Messiahship or arrest Him.

There were three temple courts in Jesus' day: the extreme outer court was “the court of the Gentiles”; the next court was “the court of women”; and the inner court was “the court of Israel,” reserved for Jewish males. It was in the outer court that...

...SOME GREEK PROSELYTES ASKED TO MEET WITH JESUS.

These Greeks were in Jerusalem to worship, so they must have been converts to Judaism. They contacted the disciple Philip about a meeting with Jesus. Philip told Andrew, and so they both went and told Jesus.

John doesn't say whether or not Jesus spoke to these Greeks, but he does record Jesus' response to his disciples. Since God's plan was to give the gospel plan to the Jews first and then to the Gentiles, I tend to believe that Jesus did *not* speak to these Greeks.

Jesus said to His disciples,

“THE HOUR HAS COME FOR THE SON OF MAN TO BE GLORIFIED.”

In other words, the time for His sacrifice as “the Lamb of God” is near. Sometimes He used the term “Son of God” to refer to Himself; here he uses “Son of Man.” We can only guess why: perhaps to emphasize His humanity in all its frailty at the hands of cruel men.

He uses this occasion to teach His disciples, using three paradoxes:

1. Seeds have to die before they can produce new life. Life comes by death. In other words, we must “die” to sin and self before we can be born again.
2. For we humans, holding on to life selfishly will result in losing it. When our life is lived for God, we have eternal life. Only by spending our life for God do we attain true life.
3. God honors those who serve Him. Greatness comes only by being servants. We become great in God’s eyes by serving others.

Then Jesus continues by teaching that...

“...THE SON OF MAN MUST BE LIFTED UP.”

He says to his disciples in verse 27: ***“Now is my soul troubled.”*** Butler suggests that ***“The Lord now becomes more explicit in showing the agitation of His own soul which has been caused by the seeking of the Greeks. Their request has reminded him of the fast-approaching hour when the barrier between Jew and Gentile will be taken out of the way. . . He is reminded that the very purpose for His coming, just a few hours away, is death for all sin!”*** (p. 190).

Then, in verse 28, when He says, ***“Father, glorify your name,”*** a voice from heaven says, ***“I have glorified it and I will glorify it again.”*** Those around Him heard it, thinking that an angel had answered Him. Jesus commented, ***“This voice has come for your sake, not mine.”***

Then, He says, ³¹ ***Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out.*** ³² ***And I, when I am lifted up from the***

earth, will draw all people to myself.” Then John explains, ³³ He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

He was going to be ***“lifted up”*** on a cross, but there’s more to His declaration than this. The death of Jesus Christ is a turning point in the history of the world! Albert Barnes, the Bible scholar of yesteryear, commented on this point: ***“Now is approaching the decisive scene, the eventful period – the crisis – when it shall be determined who shall rule this world.”*** Satan had ruled it since the sin of Adam and Eve in the garden, especially through the descendants of Cain, Esau, and Ishmael. Christ was about to deal him a death blow on the cross.

The crowd understood the meaning of ***“lifted up,”*** but they didn’t understand that the Messiah should die. (This is still a stumbling block for Jewish people.) They didn’t accept this truth then, and they don’t accept it now. They said, ***“We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?”***

It was Isaiah who prophesied in his 6th chapter, verse 7: ***“Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.”***

The Jews have focused on this, but have essentially ignored chapter 53, where the purpose of and the agonizing death of the messiah is prophesied.

Jesus as much as said to them, “The light (that’s me) will be with you only a little while longer. Follow me while you can see me. Believe what you see and hear of Me and become enlightened.”

BUT EVEN WHILE SEEING, THE PEOPLE DIDN’T BELIEVE IN HIM.

Again, Isaiah had prophesied such some 700+ years prior to this time that the Jews would be blind to the truth that Jesus was the Christ. In spite of the fact that Jesus had been healing and doing

other “signs” for all the people to see, most of them still would not accept the fact that He was the promised Messiah.

There were actually few Jewish believers who would believe that Isaiah was God’s prophet and that what he spoke was true. Now, the descendants of those Jews won’t believe Jesus. And even today most Jews are not even believers in God! Ever hear of George Soros? He’s a Jew. By his own admission, he is not religious. Only 9% of American Jews are orthodox or devoted to God through Judaism. According to a report released by the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics in 2010, 8% of Israel’s Jewish population identifies themselves as ultra-Orthodox, 12% as Orthodox, 13% as traditional-religious, 25% as traditional, and 42% as secular. Of the 14,242,000 Jews in the world, less than half of them will admit a belief in God, and only 1,600,000 are believers in Jesus.

John points out in verse 42 that *“many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue”* explaining that *“they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.”*

This reminds me of the people of so many Muslim-ruled countries and countries like China and North Viet Nam, where Christians are tortured and pressured in various ways to get them to denounce Christ, and to scare prospective converts into not becoming Christians.

I want to conclude today’s journey through John with verses 44 through 50, where...

JESUS TEACHES THAT HE CAME TO SAVE THE WORLD.

Note what He says:

1. ***“Whoever believes in me believes in him who sent me.”***

In other words, to believe in Jesus as the Son of God is to believe in God. To believe in God is to believe in Jesus. The two are one.

2. ***“I have come into the world as light so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.”***

Believing in Jesus turns on the light to the extent that we are able to understand what life is all about.

3. ***“If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him . . . The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.”***

Jesus will never condemn anyone. Those who refuse to be obedient to the gospel are condemning themselves.

4. ***“For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment – what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.”***

To refuse to obey what Jesus says is to refuse to obey God the Father, because it is God who has told Him what to say.

IN CLOSING...

So many of the Jews will miss heaven because, even though they believe in God, because they have rejected His Son, Jesus.

The same is true of many of us Gentiles. Many of us pretty much accept the idea of a Creator, but we reject Jesus as the Son of God.

We can't have one without the other.