

G R A C E

Reformed Baptist Church

Soli ♦ Deo ♦ Gloria

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Sermon Notes

The Son of Man Will Be Lifted Up

John 12:27-36

January 29, 2006

Verse 27

- Jesus says that His “soul has become troubled...”
 - The verb, here, for “troubled” is τεταρακται, *tetaraktai*, meaning, “revulsion, horror, anxiety, agitation.” In other words, it is a very strong verb.
- Jesus, then, says, “and what shall I say, ‘Father, save Me from this hour? But for this purpose I came to this hour.’”
 - Some scholars believe that this is an actual prayer that Jesus is praying, and should be viewed, not as a question, but as a plea: “Father, save Me from this hour!”
 - If this is the case, then, the next statement, “But for this purpose I came to this hour” reveals the resolve of Jesus, after His prayer of agony, to submit to and fulfill the will of His Father.
 - Furthermore, if this Verse contains an actual prayer, then it would parallel the prayer of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane [although this account is taking place several days before Jesus’ prayer in the Garden]: “Take this cup from Me...not what I will, but what you will” (Mark 14:36).
 - However, the context and structure of this Verse indicates that this prayer by Jesus is **only hypothetical** – words that Jesus looks at, but refuses to pray, answering that “for this purpose I came to this hour.”
 - Note, however, the turmoil and agony that Jesus is beginning to wrestle with as He faces the “hour” of His crucifixion.
 - It is as though the reality of the horror of His substitutionary death is now coming upon Him.
 - So often, when we seek to know Jesus, we want embrace His full deity, often to the neglect of His humanity. Let us not forget that Jesus Christ is fully

[100%] God and fully [100%] man. These are the two natures of Christ. In order to save us, He had to be BOTH.

- Possibly nowhere in all of the Gospels do we see the **humanity of Christ** more than here and in the Garden of Gethsemane. It seems that, in this Verse, Jesus raises a hypothetical prayer that He does not ask; but, several days later, when the day of His crucifixion is at hand, He will sincerely ask the Father to “Take this cup from me.”
- Because Jesus Christ was not some super-human, but was *just like us* in His human nature, **we can relate to Him**; for He was tempted in every way as us, but was without sin!
- It is truly here, and in the Garden of Gethsemane that “the horror of death, and the ardour of His obedience, were meeting together” (Bengel, 2. 408).

John Calvin wrote, concerning this verse:

It was highly useful, and even necessary for our salvation, that the Son of God should have experienced of such feelings. In his death we ought chiefly to consider his atonement, by which he appeased the wrath and curse of God, which he could not have done, without taking upon himself our guilt. The death which he underwent must therefore have been full of horror, because he could not render satisfaction for us, without feeling, in his own experience, the dreadful judgment of God; and hence we come to know more fully the enormity of sin, for which the Heavenly Father exacted so dreadful a punishment from his only-begotten Son. Let us therefore know, that death was not a sport and amusement to Christ, but that he endured the severest torments on our account.

- We can certainly learn a great deal from the example of Jesus in this scene. He was committed to the will of the Father in both word and deed. When the “rubber met the road” Jesus Christ remained steadfast in His obedience to the Father. Once again, obedience is costly. Let us consider the cost. We can say, “I will follow Christ,” but let us never forget what this truly means.

Verse 28

- After saying, “But for this purpose I came to this hour,” Jesus says, “**Father, glorify Your name.**”
 - Once again, the name of God reflects the very character and nature of God.
 - This is also revealed by our Lord when He prays the “Lord’s Prayer” and says, “hallowed by Your name.”
 - Jesus professes the truth that it is His desire and His mission to glorify the Father. As the One sent by the Father and functionally subordinate to Him, Jesus seeks to always glorify Him.
- Then, a voice came from heaven and said, “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.”

- This is one of three places in the Gospels where the Father speaks directly from Heaven concerning Jesus:
 - His baptism (Matthew 3:17)
 - The Transfiguration (Matthew 17:5)
 - Here.
- In this account, the Father makes two points:
 - *I have glorified it*: Most likely through the Incarnation, the sinless life of Jesus, and specifically, the signs and miracles in the ministry of Jesus.
 - *I will glorify it again*: Through the death, resurrection, ascension of Jesus Christ, as well as the sending of the Spirit that will immediately follow [the ascension].
- One of the interesting points that this verse raises is that we so often pray for things that God already promises. This certainly does not mean that Jesus was in any way wrong to pray for God’s name to be glorified [as His prayer was an affirmation of the purpose of His mission]; yet, God **will** bring glory to Himself. Another example may be when we pray that “God will be with” another Christian during, for example, a trying time. Yet, God promises that He will never leave us or forsake us. Let us, therefore, take comfort in what the Scriptures promise us that God **will do**. [Again, this is not to say we are wrong to pray for such things; however, let us be mindful of what God has promised He will do.]
- Consider the Lord’s Prayer: “...Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven...” How does this passage relate to the words of Jesus in Verse 27?

Verse 29

- Some of those standing by believed that the voice from heaven was thunder; others believed it was an angel.
 - In the Old Testament, thunder bears witness to the power of God (1 Samuel 12:18; 2 Samuel 22:14; Job 37:5)
 - In the book of Revelation (4:5; 8:5; 11:19; 16:18), thunder sounds from the very throne of God.
- The main point; however, is that it does not appear that anyone, other than Jesus, understood what the Father was saying.
- John Calvin commented on this Verse, saying:

It was a monstrous thing that the multitude was obtuse to so plain a miracle. Some were deaf, and caught what God had pronounced distinctly only as a confused sound. Others were less dull, but yet detracted greatly from the majesty of the divine voice by pretending that its author was an angel. But the same thing is common today. God speaks plainly enough in the Gospel, in which there is also displayed a power and energy of the Spirit which should shake heaven and earth. But many are as cold towards the teachings as if it

came only from a mortal man, and others think God's Word to be a barbarous stammering, as if it were nothing but thunder.

Verse 30

- Despite the fact that no one but Jesus understood the voice, He says, "This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sakes."
 - Of course, it is difficult to say that the voice was for the crowds' sake **right then**.
 - However, once Jesus was tried, crucified, and resurrected, the voice, and Jesus' words concerning it, would serve as great confirmation and comfort regarding the true identity of the Jesus Christ.
 - "that message, recorded in Verse 28, is for the enormous benefit of the disciples amongst the bystanders once they had lived through the period of the cross and find themselves in urgent need of making sense of it all...eventually they would remember what Jesus had told them the voice had uttered, and it would be for them a divine confirmation that the shameful cross, and all that flowed from it, was not a defeat but a victory, not final destruction but ultimate glorification." D.A. Carson

Verses 31-33

- The careful reader of the Gospel of John should read Verses 31 and 32 **together**.
- Through the crucifixion of the Son of Man, God will accomplish several things:

1. Judge the world, condemning and destroying the power of sin; and

"Lift up" / exalt the Lord Jesus Christ

2. Cast out Satan, the ruler of this world; and

Draw all men to Himself

- As Jesus Christ is tried and crucified, it will appear that Satan has won the victory; yet, it is through the death of the Lord – the grain of wheat – that the power of Satan will be destroyed and that life will be given to many. What appears to be ultimate victory for Satan will be, in actuality, his utter destruction.
- The phrase, in Verse 32, "if I am *lifted up* from the earth" has a two-fold meaning:
 1. **Exalted or Lifted Up**, as in Isaiah 52:13: "Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be *high and lifted up*, and *shall be exalted*;"

2. **Crucified** – physically “lifted up” on the Cross of Calvary [we know this, without question because of John’s commentary in Verse 33].
- This verse demonstrates how the sinful acts of man [i.e., the crucifixion of Jesus Christ] not only do not thwart the plans of God, but can often serve as the ordained means that He uses to accomplish His ordained ends [i.e. the salvation of His people].
 - When Jesus states, “if I am lifted up from the earth, I **will draw all men** to Myself” two things need to be examined: (1) the nature of the *drawing*; and (2) the meaning of *all men*.
 1. The word for “draw” here is the Greek word *helkousay* [el kush] which is translated, most accurately, **drag**.
 - This word occurs eight (8) times in the New Testament: John 6:44; 12:32; 18:10; 21:6; 21:11; Acts 16:19; 21:30; and James 2:6.
 - John 21:6 states, “And He said to them, ‘Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you will find a catch.’ They cast therefore, and then they were not able to **haul** it in because of the great number of fish.”
 - John 21:11 states, “Simon Peter went up, and **drew** the net to land, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not torn.”
 - Acts 16:19 states, “But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and **dragged** them into the market place before the authorities,”
 - James 2:6 states, “But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not he rich who oppress you and personally **drag** you into court?”
 - Theologian David P. Henreckson states:

In the Greek, the verb for “draws” is much stronger than most translations put it. Literally, it means “drags.” Unregenerate man does not want, and in fact hates the things of God. But when God decides to claim someone for His own, that regenerate person all of a sudden wants, and in fact loves the things of God (John 3:5-6).

- The late Baptist theologian and author Arthur Pink writes:

Well, you say, what do you mean by [“draws”]? I mean this, that God had to overcome the resistance of your will, God had to overcome the reluctance of your heart, God had to overcome you loving of pleasure more than [your] loving of God, your love of things of this world more than Christ. I mean that God had to put forth His power and draw you; and if any of you know anything of the Greek...look up that Greek verb for “draw” in John 6:44...It means “use violence.” It means to drag by force. There is not a Greek scholar on earth that can challenge that statement...It is the same Greek word that is

used in John 21 when they drew the net to the land full of fishes. They had to pull with all their might, for it was full of fishes. They had to DRAG it. Yes, my friend, and that is how you were brought to Christ. You may not have been conscious of it, you may not have known inside yourself what was taking place, but every last one of us was a rebel against God, fighting against Christ...and God had to put forth almighty power and overcome that resistance and bring us to our knees; and if any of you object to that strong language, then I am here to tell you, you do not believe in the teaching of this Book on the absolute depravity of man.

- In other words, the “drawing” is the **effectual calling**, the **irresistible grace of Almighty God**.
- 2. Because of (1) the nature of the “drawing” in this Verse and (2) the context of this passage, “all men” here **cannot** mean “every individual in the entire world.”
 - Recall Verse 19 when the Pharisees state, “the **world** has gone after Him.”
 - Also, Verse 20 states, that at the Feast of Passover there “were some **Greeks**.”
 - A similar context occurs in 1 Timothy 2:1-2, when Paul urges Timothy to pray “for **all people**, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life...”
 - In other words, in this context, Paul defines “all people” as “kings and all who are in high positions.” Therefore, by “all people” he means “all types of people,” not [in this context] “all people everywhere without exception.”
 - So it is with John 12:32, where “all people” must mean “all men without distinction of race...BOTH Jew and Greek.”
- ✳ This passage gives us today great insight into what **our responsibility** is with respect to the salvation of all men – lift up / exalt the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 34

- As is so typical throughout the Gospels, the crowd’s view of the Messiah differs greatly from the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Several things are clear from the response of the crowd:
 - They equate the “Christ” [Greek for the Hebrew word “Messiah”] with the Son of Man.
 - They understand that Jesus is referring to His death – either hanging or crucifixion [“lifted up”].
 - They interpret the Old Testament to say that the true Messiah – the Son of Man – will remain [with them] forever.
 - It is difficult to determine specifically what passages they are referring to.

- Isaiah 9:7
 “There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace...
 On the throne of David and over his kingdom...
 From then on and forevermore.”

 - Ezekiel 37:25
 “...and David My servant will be their prince forever.”

 - Psalm 72:17
 “My his name endure forever...”

 - Psalm 89:35-37
 “I will not lie to David...
 And his throne...shall be established forever like the moon...”
- Yet, the crowd did not understand that Jesus **would** remain forever, but, again, His kingdom would not be of this world.