

Title: **THE CRISIS OF THE WORLD**

Text: John 12:31-33

Subject: *The Death of Christ and Its Results*

Date: Sunday Evening — April 25, 2010

Tape: John #84

Readings: *Merle Hart and James Jordan*

Introduction:

My subject is **THE CRISIS OF THE WORLD**. Our text will be John 12:31-33. In these three verses, our Lord Jesus Christ defines the meaning of his death upon the cross.

(John 12:31-33) “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. 32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all [men] unto me. 33 This he said, signifying what death he should die.”

GLORYING IN THE CROSS

No wonder Paul exclaimed, “**God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ**” (Galatians 6:14). What does Paul mean by the cross? He is not talking about **the historic fact** that Christ died upon the cross. The knowledge of that fact, though it is necessary to salvation, is not salvation. Neither is Paul referring to **the literal, wooden cross** upon which Christ died. He was not

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an idolater, a worshipper of religious relics. He knew that there was no superstitious, spiritual value in that piece of wood. And he certainly is not suggesting that we glory in **some sign**, symbol, representation, or form of the cross.

When Paul speaks of the cross, **he is talking about the glorious, soul saving doctrine of the cross**, the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is talking about **blood atonement** (Romans 5:6-11).

(Romans 5:6-11) “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. (7) For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. (8) But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (9) Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. (10) For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. (11) And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.”

Paul used the word “cross” to speak of legal propitiation (Romans 3:24-26),

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(Romans 3:24-26) “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: (25) Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; (26) To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”

The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ is substitutionary redemption (2 Corinthians 5:18-21).

(2 Corinthians 5:17-21) “Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (18) And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; (19) To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. (20) Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. (21) For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

And the cross speaks of free justification (Romans 5:19).

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(Romans 5:19) “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”

As it is used here, in Galatians 6:14, and as it is commonly used in the Epistles of the New Testament, **the word “cross” refers to the gospel of Christ.** Pagans glory in religious relics. Idolaters glory in religious images, signs, and symbols. Ignorant people glory in religious feelings, emotions and experiences. **God’s people glory in the gospel of Christ,** not in the “old rugged cross” the sentimentalists sing about, but the old, old story of redeeming blood. **We glory in that which is the revelation of the glory of God.**

BACKGROUND

Now, let’s look at John 12:31-33, and let me remind you of the background.

(John 12:31-33) “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. 32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all [men] unto me. 33 This he said, signifying what death he should die.”

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“My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8-9). — This is never more clearly and extraordinarily demonstrated to be the truth than by the statements which fell from the lips of our Savior in our text. It is a great marvel to me that God should, in his infinite wisdom, chose to judge the world, destroy the devil and save his elect by sending his Son to become a man that he might suffer and die upon the cursed tree! Oh, mystery of mysteries, — *“God hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”* Oh, the height of God’s love! Oh, the depth of his mercy! Oh, the breadth of his wisdom! Indeed, his ways and his thoughts are beyond man, as high as the heavens are above the earth.

In this 12th chapter of John our Lord Jesus rehearsed his passion with his disciples before it actually took place. **He saw those Greeks who came to Philip and whom Philip and Andrew brought to him; and his heart was filled with joy.** This, he knew was to be the result of his death, that the Gentiles would be gathered to him. That thought reminded him of his approaching crucifixion. It was now very near. Only a few days were to pass, and then he would die upon the tree.

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In anticipation of Calvary, his soul was full of trouble. It was not that he feared death, but his death was to be a very precious one. Death is the penalty of sin, but he had done no sin. Death was due to the sons of Adam, but his is the Son of God. **He was to die the Just for the unjust. He was to bear our sins in his body upon the cursed tree. Is it any wonder that his pure and holy soul should shrink from contact with sin, let alone from being made sin?**

To stand in the sinner's place, to hang before his holy Father as a horrid mass of iniquity, to endure the Father's wrath as a guilty man deserving his wrath, this thought was astonishing to him. He was, as a man, very faint of heart and he cried, — "*What shall I say? Father save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name.*" Here we see the Savior of the world, the eternal Son of God troubled and disturbed in mind. We see him, who could heal diseases with his touch, cast out demons with a word, command the waves to obey him, and call the dead to life, in great agony and conflict. **Nothing can ever explain our Lord's agony here, and later in Gethsemane, except that he felt the burden of man's sin pressing him down.** Without any repining at his Father's will, he saw how terrible that will was; and he shuddered at what it included. Here the God-man was sipping that bitter cup which he was to drink until he could cry, "*It is finished,*" and give up the ghost.

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When our blessed Savior was in this great distress of mind in anticipation of the terrible sufferings he was about to endure, his Father spoke to him out of heaven saying, — “*I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.*” **How beautifully this shows that the intimate relation and union of God the Father and God the Son was unbroken during the whole course of the Savior’s pilgrimage.** This was also a testimony to those who stood by that God the Father completely approved of his eternal Son as the Messiah, the Redeemer, and the Savior of men.

Child of God, here is a word of encouragement for you when you are in distress. In your hour of trial God will speak to you, as he did to his Son. If you are his child, when the weakness of your flesh seems to prevail over your spirit, you, too, shall have the reassuring voice from heaven.

The Savior seems to have recovered himself at once, and bracing himself up, he once again indulged his heart with the vision of the glorious results of his death.

Proposition: Jesus Christ, by his death upon the cross sealed every purpose of God for the world, the devil, and his elect.

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Divisions: I want to show you just two things in this message...

1. The success of the Savior's death (vv. 31-32).
2. The significance of the Savior's declaration (vv. 32-33).

SUCCESS IN DEATH

You will recall that on the Mount of Transfiguration Moses and Elijah spoke to our Redeemer about "*the death he should accomplish at Jerusalem.*" Here, in verses 31-32, our Savior tells us about that which he would accomplished (that which he did accomplish) in his death as our sin-atonement Substitute. So, *first*, I want us to see the success of the Savior's in his death (vv. 31-32).

(John 12:31-32) "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. 32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all [men] unto me."

As the Savior anticipated his sufferings and death, he spoke as though they were already accomplished and sums up the consequences in these three points:

1. "*Now is the judgment of this world.*"
2. "*Now shall the prince of this world be cast out.*"
3. "*If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me.*"

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JUDGMENT OF THE WORLD

First, the death of Christ was the judgment of this world. What does that mean? The word translated “*judgment*” is the Greek word (κρίσις) from which our English word “*crisis*” is derived. — So our Lord’s words might be very accurately translated, — “*Now is the crisis of this world.*”

Indeed, the death of Christ was the crisis of the world. The cross of Jesus Christ was the turning point, the hinge of the world’s history.

- The death of Christ was the death of sin.
- The death of Christ was the crushing of the serpent’s head.
- The death of Christ was the victory over death.
- The death of Christ secured the regeneration of the earth.

The death of Christ was also the judgment of the world. The world was convicted of guilt (Acts 2:23; John 1:4-5, 10-11).

- The world hated perfect love.
- The world hated perfect righteousness.
- The world murdered the Son of God! — The world would pull God off his throne and slay him, if they

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had it in their power. — The world is not good, but guilty. — How dare we embrace the world!

The world was sentenced to death when it put to death the Lord of Glory.

- The death of Christ is the clearest possible display of the heinousness of sin.
- The death of Christ is the clearest possible display of divine justice.
- If Jesus, God's Son, escaped not the Father's wrath in bringing many sons to glory, when sin was found upon him, if sin is found on you, surely you must die! — God must be just with you. — If you die without Christ, there is no hope. If you have no propitiation by the blood of Jesus, God must slay you.

By the cross you are judged; and by the cross you shall be judged! By the cross God judged the world. By the cross, let us judge the world (1 John 2:15-17; Galatians 6:14). — Its' Religion! — Its' Favor! — Its' Frowns! — Its' Fame! — Its' Friendship!

(1 John 2:15-17) “Love not the world, neither the things [that are] in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that [is] in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father,

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but is of the world. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

(Galatians 6:14) “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”

“**By which the world is crucified unto me**” (v. 14). — Faith in Christ, the assurance of redemption by Christ, caused the Apostle Paul to look upon the world as a thing crucified. He knew that he had no more reason to fear his most implacable enemies in this world than a man would to fear someone crucified and dead. Happy are those who learn this! Because our Lord Jesus Christ, by his death upon the cross as our Substitute and Redeemer, has overcome the world, conquered Satan (the prince of this world) and cast him out, and vanquished death, hell and the grave, since he has put away our sins by the sacrifice of himself, we are more than conquerors in him (Romans 8:32-39). We have nothing to fear in this world or from this world. As the children of Israel looked upon Pharaoh and the Egyptian army slain by God in the Red Sea and sang praise to him, so we ought to look upon all that opposes us in this world as dead and sing praise to God our Savior who has “*triumphed gloriously.*” Let us neither love the world, nor the things that are in the world, but look upon them as

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dead things. The gospel of the grace of God experienced in the soul teaches us to despise the riches, honors and applause of the world. — The profits, pleasures and praises of dead men are as worthless as dung. That is exactly how they are to be looked upon and counted by all who seek Christ (Philippians 3:7-15).

But, as Paul uses the term “world” here in the book of Galatians, he is specifically referring to “the weak and beggarly elements of the world” (Galatians 4:3-9), the carnal ordinances and ceremonies of the law. He is declaring that since “*Christ is the end of the law*” (Romans 10:4), the law’s sabbath days, sacrifices and services are to be looked upon by us as dead things (Romans 6:15; 7:4; Galatians 2:19-20). Our all-glorious Redeemer took “*the handwriting of the ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, out of the way, nailing it to his cross*” (Colossians 2:14).

(Romans 6:15) “We are not under the law, but under grace!”

(Romans 7:4) “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, [even] to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.”

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(Galatians 2:19-20) “For **I through the law am dead to the law**, that I might live unto God. 20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

“**The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.**” — As the world had no more attraction for Paul than a dead corpse, so he had no attraction for the world, but was despised by it for Christ’s sake. So it shall ever be with those who follow Christ. As the law was dead to him and had no power over him, so he was dead to the law by the sacrifice of Christ. He had nothing to do with those weak and beggarly elements of bondage.

SATAN CAST OUT

The *second* result of Christ’s death is this: — The prince of this world is cast out! While it is certain that by crucifying the Lord of Glory, men by their wicked hands cast out Christ, the only true Prince of this world. They cast out the Creator! — But, here, our Savior is describing his accomplishments, not the imagined accomplishments of his foes. He is telling us that he, the woman’s Seed, has crushed the serpent’s head!

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Christ has answered Satan's accusations against the believer (Revelation 12:7-10). The Lord Jesus Christ, by his cross, spoils Satan of his universal monarchy.

- a. He casts Satan out of the hearts of believers.
- b. Satan still roars as a lion, but his power is crippled. We are no longer under his dominion.
- c. Christ Jesus will bruise Satan under your heels shortly (Romans 16:20).
- d. Our Savior will, one day soon, thoroughly destroy our enemy.

Thank God for the bruising of the Savior's heel, for it was the crushing of the serpent's head!

THE GREAT ATTRACTION

The *third* result of the Savior's death is this: — The cross has become the center of attraction. — “*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all [men] unto me!*” —

That by which sinners are attracted to the Savior is the preaching of the cross!

(1 Corinthians 1:17-25 AV) “For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. 18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that

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perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. 20 Where [is] the wise? where [is] the scribe? where [is] the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. 22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: 23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; 24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

(1 Corinthians 2:2 AV) “For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”

Not only is the preaching of the cross the center piece of all true Christianity, the revelation of the gospel and the center of attraction in God’s Church, by the death of Christ upon the cursed tree **the scope of God’s mercy was manifestly widened** to include Gentiles. **This is the grand display of**

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God's amazing, infinite love (John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 1 John 3:16, 4:9).

(John 3:16 AV) “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

(Romans 5:6-8 AV) “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

(1 John 3:16 AV) “Hereby perceive we the love [of God], because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down [our] lives for the brethren.”

(1 John 4:9 AV) “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.”

Through the cross, by the death of Christ as our sin-atoning Substitute, we have all blessings of grace.

- Forgiveness and Justification
- Sanctification and Reconciliation

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- Acceptance and Preservation
 - Eternal Life and Heavenly Glory
-

“In evil long I took delight,
Unawed by shame or fear;
Till a new object struck my sight,
And stopped my wild career.

I saw one hanging on a tree,
In agonies and blood;
Who fixed his languid eyes on me,
As near his cross I stood.

Sure never to my latest breath,
Can I forget that look
It seemed to charge me with his death,
Though not a word he spoke.

My conscience felt and owned by guilt,
And plunged me in despair;
I saw my sins, His blood had spilt,
And helped to nail him there.

Alas! I knew not what I did,
But now my tears were vain;
Where shall my trembling soul be hid?

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For I the Lord have slain.

A second look he gave, which said,
‘I freely all forgive,
This blood is for thy ransom paid,
I died that thou mayst live.’

Thus while his death my sin displays
In all its blackest hue;
Such is the mystery of grace,
It seals my pardon too.

With pleasing grief and mournful joy,
My spirit now is filled;
That I should such a life destroy
Yet live by his I killed.”

Second, consider briefly, the significance of our Savior’s declaration (vv. 32-33).

(John 12:32-33 AV) “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all [men] unto me. 33 This he said, signifying what death he should die.”

Our Lord Jesus Christ went to his death with a clear view of what it was. He fully knew what it meant.

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- He went to his cross knowing that his cross was the means of his exaltation (Philippians 2:5; John 17:2).
- Our blessed Savior knew that his cross would supply our every need.

From the cross, Jesus draws sinners like a magnet draws steel.

- He draws sinners who cannot come to him.
- He draws sinners who will not come to him.
- He draws sinners.
- He draws them to himself.

The preaching of the cross will attract sinners. We need no other attraction. The preaching of the cross is God's means of saving sinners (Romans 1:15-16; 10:17; 1 Peter 1:23-25).

(Romans 1:15-16 AV) “15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

(Romans 10:17 AV) “So then faith [cometh] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

(1 Peter 1:18-25 AV) “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, [as] silver

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and gold, from your vain conversation [received] by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, 21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. 22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, [see that ye] love one another with a pure heart fervently: 23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. 24 ¶ For all flesh [is] as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: 25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”

The Lord Jesus knew that he would live to exercise his dominion (Psalm 16:9-10; Isaiah 53:10-12).

(Psalms 16:9-10 AV) “Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. 10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”

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(Isaiah 53:10-12 AV) “Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put [him] to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see [his] seed, he shall prolong [his] days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. 11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, [and] shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore will I divide him [a portion] with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

Our blessed Redeemer knew that one day he would be surrounded by a mighty company, who would overcome by his cross. Lift your eyes yonder to Glory, and behold the power of the preached cross!

(Revelation 7:9-17 AV) “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; 10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. 11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and [about]

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the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, 12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, [be] unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. 13 ¶ And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. 16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. 17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

“God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (Galatians 6:14). — By the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ the world is judged, Satan is vanquished, sinners are drawn to the Savior and Christ our Lord is exalted.

Live by the cross for...

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“The way of the cross leads home!
There’s no other way but this.
I shall ne’er get sight of the gates of light,
If the way of the cross I miss.”

Amen.