

The Savior of The Entire World

John 12:20-36

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Introduction: Jesus has just entered Jerusalem to begin His final week on earth. God has stirred up Israel to acknowledge their King. But in five days their own religious rulers will kill Jesus with their consent. This spectacle was planned by God since the foundation of the world. It's very date was predicted precisely by Daniel.

Daniel 9:24-26 ²⁴ "Seventy weeks [490] have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy *place*. ²⁵ "So you are to know and discern *that* from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince *there will be* seven weeks [49] and sixty-two weeks; [434] it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. ²⁶ "Then after the sixty-two weeks [483] the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end *will come* with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.

Other prophets spoke of the foal of the colt, the shouts of the worshipers [Save us we pray] and even the branches. It is an predestined event... right down to the shouts of the worshipers. This is why Jesus could say.... "I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!"

All this was predetermined by Jesus and His Father. Both knew the hearts of the people were as cold as those stones and were not turned to God, but to their own programs and desires. They would betray Jesus as soon as they perceived that He would not give them what they wanted. This is not a particularly Jewish problem. It is the human condition. This is why Jesus wept for them. I believe He weeps for the state of humanity everywhere.

Luke 19:41-44 ⁴¹ When He approached *Jerusalem*, He saw the city and wept over it, ⁴² saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes.

Jesus is the Savior of Israel, but they will not see it because they are only looking for a champion and warrior King. He has come to save them from their sins. His coming confirms the literal nature of the prophecies about Him. He did really come exactly as Daniel, Micah, Isaiah and Zachariah all said. John tells us that

John 12:16-19 ¹⁶ His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things **were written of Him**, and that they had done these things to Him. ¹⁷ So the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, continued to testify *about Him*. ¹⁸ For this

reason also the people went and met Him, because they heard that He had performed this sign. ¹⁹ So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are not doing any good; look, the world has gone after Him."

As Jesus enters the temple mount there was a lot of buzz. Many were testifying to what they had seen Him do. People who had not yet heard about Him started gathering around Him and His enemies were beside themselves yet again. Not far from where Jesus stood were some Greeks. Only Hebrews were allowed past a certain point on the temple mount. Let's read the account

John 12:20-36 ²⁰ Now there were some Greeks among those who were going up to worship at the feast; ²¹ these then came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and *began to ask him*, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." ²² Philip came and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip came and told Jesus. ²³ And Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵ "He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal. ²⁶ "If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him. ²⁷ "Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour '? But for this purpose I came to this hour. ²⁸ "Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." ²⁹ So the crowd *of people* who stood by and heard it were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, "An angel has spoken to Him." ³⁰ Jesus answered and said, "This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sakes. ³¹ "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. ³² "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself." ³³ But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die. ³⁴ The crowd then answered Him, "We have heard out of the Law that the Christ is to remain forever; and how can You say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?" ³⁵ So Jesus said to them, "For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. ³⁶ "While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light." These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them.

Greek culture and language had really taken hold in Israel in the day of Christ. It started at the time of Alexander the Great and was now entrenched by the Roman occupation, but it was not accepted by the very religious. These men came from the West during the last days of His life on earth. It is hard not to notice that men came from the East during the first days of His life. Jesus had just presented Himself as the Savior of Israel. Now that emphasis will shift to fulfill the remainder of the predetermined purpose of Christ. **He is the Savior of the entire world.**

Jesus uses their appearance to offer Himself to the rest of the world. Not as the Hero / King the Jews so desperately desire, but as the Humble Servant / Savior that all men so desperately need. Jesus takes a request for an interview as an opportunity to reveal His purpose in coming into the world.

Now there were some Greeks among those who were going up to worship at the feast; ²¹ these then came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and began to ask him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." [20-21]: They wanted a face to face with Jesus. Jesus was a Jew and the festival was the highest feast of the Jews. But...there were gentiles there and they were worshipers of God. We will never know exactly what they wanted because John does not record any response. Instead, Jesus begins to reveal the exact purpose, timetable and means of the Salvation of all men.

And Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. [23]: The Glory of God is God. What He does! Who He is! His nature! His works! His mercy, grace and love! Anytime God reveals Himself, his purposes and works to men they see the glory of God. Even the evil in the day of judgment....will behold the Glory of God. This is what God means when He says....

Philippians 2:10-11 ¹⁰at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

This revelation of Glory is converging on Jesus, the only Son of the Living God. It is time! It is days away now! The Universe has been desperate to see it. For a brief moment the earth will behold it and then it will be quenched and snuffed like a candle plunged into a pot of water. His Glory is only alive today because of two things; The Word of God and The Holy Spirit who reveals Christ to us.

The Glory of God is totally counter intuitive. [24-26]

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit [v. 24]: All people want their lives to count for something. They want to look at their own life and have others look at it and say..."he or she was a wonderful person who did a lot of good!" This is our glory. WHAT PEOPLE SEE WHEN THEY LOOK AT US!

Jesus is going to turn this notion on its head by using the well known example of planting a seed of wheat. You could eat that one seed of wheat, but if you put it in the earth and it dies it becomes much more. If you give it up now for the promised harvest it bears much fruit.

Jesus is not speaking of His own death and resurrection here. He is talking about how a man....any man.... makes his life count for something.

"He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal. [25]: This is a typical Jewish way of expressing things. We would say it this way, "He who loves his own glory will lose that entirely, but he who does not seek his glory in this world will actually keep what is dear to him for all eternity." In other words, The person who lives for themselves and for the recognition, wealth and standing that they can achieve in this life will lose that when they die.....and everyone

dies. BUT...The person who lives for Christ will retain the very thing we all so dearly want....reward, recognition, purpose and meaning. AND....He will keep it for eternity.

You can let your life consist of what you can get for yourselves in this life and that will be the sum total of it. When it is over, it is over and you have had your good things in this world. But, if you live for God you will have what you desire for all eternity. Purpose, meaning, fulfillment, joy, love, satisfaction and yes...even comfort.

Does this mean that we then should give up all these good things in this world and live in misery and poverty for the hope of Salvation and eternal blessing? No! Not at all! It means that we must recognize the incomplete and temporary nature of what we can do for ourselves in this world. That this world can provide what it is we most desire. We need to put our lives, both physical and spiritual into the hands of Christ. He has said that God will take care of us and here He says that care will endure throughout eternity.

Matthew 6:31-34 ³¹ "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' ³² "For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. ³⁴ "So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

This loving care in this world is what Christ mean when he says...

John 12:26 ²⁶ "If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.

Now we cannot follow Christ to heaven now. We follow Him by pursuing His purposes and desiring and loving what He loves.

The Holidays are upon us and we will all have to see people we do not like. Many of them have done more than just annoy us. They have hurt us, offended us and will probably do it again. How do you apply what Jesus is saying to Thanksgiving and Christmas gatherings?

By beginning with your own sin. The times you have hurt someone, lied to someone, offended someone or let someone down. Then you ask yourself how many times you have disobeyed God, said that you would follow Him, but did not and so on. Christ has forgiven you, loved you and died in your place for those very sins and He did it all knowing you would disappoint and fail Him again and again.

Now you are ready to follow Christ when you encounter that person who has done all that to you. Jesus said....lose your own glory for mine. Give up your offense, the way I have given up mine toward you. Defer your satisfaction for another day and follow me in sacrificial love and care....."**because if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him!"**

The Glory of God is most perfectly seen in Christ. [27-33]

"Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour '? But for this purpose I came to this hour [27]: The exact hour of Christ death was planned. His coming into the world to die for your sin personally and as a church....was PLANNED! It was His chief purpose. There are those who have reduced Jesus to a glorified role model. We should be like Jesus...He came to set us an example of how to live. True and true!...BUT his purpose was the cross. His means to transform any man to follow him and His example was to go to the Cross to be washed clean. You cannot wash your own sins away. You cannot be successful enough to buy your salvation.

Psalm 49:5-8 Why should I fear in days of adversity, When the iniquity of my foes surrounds me, ⁶ Even those who trust in their wealth And boast in the abundance of their riches? ⁷ No man can by any means redeem *his* brother Or give to God a ransom for him - ⁸ For the redemption of his soul is costly, And he should cease trying forever—

Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." [28]: What is the Father saying? The same thing John says about Jesus the Living Word....

John 1:14-18 ¹⁴the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth..... ¹⁸ No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*.

Jesus Christ is the revealer of the Glory of God to men. It is not that men did not see some of the Glory of God before this. They always knew something, just not His love for sinners.

Romans 1:18-20 ¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹ because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

God caused them to know He is angry about the ungodliness and wickedness. Men have consciences....Where do you think those came from? Men can go against them for so long they become useless. They know His eternal and invisible power and that something bigger than themselves created the universe....They just do not want it to be God. They think nature or aliens make more sense. The Father says... **"I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."**

"And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself." But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die. [32,33]: [33] God is going to glorify Himself [reveal His true character and nature even more fully] at the

Cross. Who would ever think that the God, whose Son created all things, would send that Son to become one of their own creatures and to die for the sins that their own creatures had committed so that they could restore their relationship and live together for eternity. Who would imagine it. It is Glorious....isn't it? Even the angels think so.

1 Peter 1:12-13 ¹² It was revealed to *the prophets* that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven-- things into which angels long to look. ¹³ Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober *in spirit*, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

The Glory of God is also reflected from His people. [34-36]

The crowd then answered Him, "We have heard out of the Law that the Christ is to remain forever; and how can You say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?" [34]: They are only interested in a King. They are not hearing anything Jesus says about being a Savior who dies in their place. He has said to them....I know you have bread to keep you alive, but I am the bread that will give you eternal life. I know you have water so that you will not die, but I am the water that will keep you from ever dying. I know you have lamps so that you will not have to walk in the dark, But I am the light of the entire world.

They **did** know that He was talking about being crucified. The Jews hated this death. It was particularly humiliating, which was why the Romans thought it up. It exposed you and de-humanized you. They could not accept that the Son of Man....The Messiah.....would be killed at all, much less in such a disgusting way. They were rejecting His miracles and His Words about salvation and eternal life. They wanted only a ruler to make their lives....their short, temporary, empty lives to be what they thought would satisfy them. Jesus responds...

"For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes [35]: Have you ever been outside as the sun is setting. Ginny and I once went for a walk in Italy and as the sun went down a fog rolled in that was so thick we could not see any lights from any direction. The darkness had overtaken us and we did not know where we were going.

"While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light." These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them. [36]: Any light would have been welcome that day. But a flashlight would have been useless. I needed a light outside myself. Something to walk toward...to follow as it were. I needed a light I could trust to get me home.

CONCLUSION: What do you hope will satisfy your life...your precious life? And it is precious....make no mistake about it. It is the only one we get. Because it is precious we want it to be purposeful? What will satisfy the deepest longings of our souls? The world offers wealth, pleasure, comfort, standing and pride of accomplishment. These are wonderful things but are temporary. They all perish with your life. At the end of life many, many rich men say with Solomon....

Ecclesiastes 2:17-20 I hated all the fruit of my labor for which I had labored under the sun, for I must leave it to the man who will come after me. ¹⁹ And who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will have control over all the fruit of my labor for which I have labored by acting wisely under the sun. This too is vanity.

Jesus made it pretty clear that this was His definitive word on the question of life and its meaning when he just **“went away and hid Himself from them.”** He did not answer their questions because they all tried to avoid the ultimate point Christ is making in His earthly ministry. Your life comes from God and is very temporary and unfulfilling until it returns to God by trusting in Jesus.

This is not a call to missionary service or poverty. It is not a call to die physically or to not enjoy your life, your spouse, your family your job and your home. IT is none of these! It is an appeal to your heart....your inner man that says....”You know.....that nothing in this world will fulfill you! Your immaterial, God given life, cannot be satisfied by the material world. It is only here to sustain you and satisfy you for a time and then you pass out of the world. Trusting Christ will let you see that clearly. It will cause you to find what you truly long for in Him. Human, physical life does have meaning, but it is only discovered, grasped and brought to fruition through trust in Christ who is the light of the world. Faith in Christ is like this and not the anemic substitutes of many religious people. Saving faith trust Christ with your life and that includes now.

Making this contrast still again...Jesus said....

John 10:10-11 ¹⁰ "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have *it* abundantly. ¹¹ "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.