

Sermon Notes & References

Why Must Jesus Die?
John 12:20-36

October 16, 2016

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^A John 5:18, 8:48-49, 11:50, 53; Mark 8:31, 9:31, 10:33

^B Philippians 3:10

^C 2 Corinthians 5:21; Matthew 27:46

^D Luke 10:18

^E Psalms 110:4; Isaiah 9:7; Ezekiel 37:25; Daniel 7:14, 13; Matthew 26:64

^F John 1:9

A. Introduction

1. A Thought in Common

a. The Jewish rulers had for some time come to a decision

- (A) It is found when Jesus healed the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda: "For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God." (John 5:18)
- (B) It surfaced again when, "Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple." (John 8:58-59)
- (C) and it was voiced by Caiaphas who said, "... it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish." (John 11:50) ... "So from that day on they planned together to kill Him." (John 11:53)

b. Christ also had long made this known to His disciples

- (A) While He was in Galilee, "And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again." (Mark 8:31), and later,
- (B) "For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, "The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later."" (Mark 9:31)
- (C) "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, and will deliver Him to the Gentiles." (Mark 10:33)
- (D) and now during Passion week, He again speaks of the necessity of His death

c. these antagonists agree

- (A) "Jesus must die!"
- (B) the rulers, that the nation be saved
- (C) Christ, that mankind be saved

B. The Salvation of the Gentiles

12:20-26

1. The Coming of the Greeks (20-22)

- a. Now there were certain Greeks among those who were going up to worship at the feast; these therefore came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and began to ask him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip

*came and *told Andrew; Andrew and Philip *came, and they *told Jesus.

- b. this word for Greeks in the NT is a general term for Gentiles
 - (A) Greek being the lingua franca of the eastern Roman empire
 - (B) being of a gentler nature than calling them uncircumcised
- c. how they knew that Philip – that’s a Greek name – would be able to understand them we are not told, but we can surmise that they may have heard him speaking in the Galilean accents
 - (A) that region of Palestine was known as “Galilee of the Gentiles”
 - (B) Andrew – also a Greek name, and also coming from Galilee - was Philip’s confidant in this matter:
 - (C) should, would Jesus give an audience to these Gentiles?
- d. At this time, Jesus was in the Temple, probably in that inner part of the court of the Women which was near the Treasury (that is where we find him speaking at other times as when the widow cast in her two mites)
 - (A) to this place the Gentiles could not approach
 - (B) so Jesus would have to come out to them
 - (C) they went and related the request to Jesus
 - (D) it does not say that He came out, but His words that follow are especially attuned to the Gentile’s need

2. The Son’s Hour Has Come (23-24)

- a. And Jesus *answered them, saying, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.”
- b. the term “glorified” when applied to Jesus, the Son of God
 - (A) includes His death, His resurrection and His ascension
 - (B) Jesus ,throughout His ministry, workrf according to God’s time-table
 - (C) He has said “my hour is not yet come”, “my hour is coming” and now, his “hour has come”
 - (D) God’s plan has come to fruition, and Jesus is to be glorified
 - (E) in a few short days He will be crucified
- c. His death will bring life – not to Jews alone but to the whole world
 - (A) He is the grain of wheat: to die, to be buried
 - (B) and with His own resurrection, to bring forth life
 - (C) that is why Jesus must die in God’s plan of salvation
 - (D) that death and life will give forth life to others as does a buried seed
 - (E) these Greeks will benefit if they themselves become disciples

3. The Involvement of Discipleship (25-26)

- a. "He who loves his life loses it; and he who hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall My servant also be; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honour him."
- b. Here is an invitation by Jesus
 - (A) and in it there is given an illustration of saving faith
 - (B) saving faith abandons hope in one's own abilities, one's own strength, even one's own life
 - (C) to put ones reliance fully and wholly upon Jesus' life, and death, and His living again and now
- c. the result of such faith is servant-hood – discipleship
 - (A) serving Him eternally
 - (B) in a never ending relationship where He is ever present
 - (C) where the servant follows – imitates, is made like – the Master
 - (D) even if that following means, as was Paul's desire, "that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;" (Philippians 3:10)
- d. and it is promised that God the Father honours such a person
 - (A) think of the magnitude of that statement of Jesus
 - (B) "follow Me and God will honour you" – no mere mortal is Jesus

C. The Glorification of God the Father

12:27-30

1. Jesus' Prayer (27-28a)

- a. "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. Father, glorify Thy name." ...
- b. His troubled soul
 - (A) "And when the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time." (Luke 4:13)
 - (B) those words instruct us that Satan never left off tempting Jesus
 - (C) so here, and in the upper room, and in the garden of Gethsemane, Satan would return and trouble Jesus
- c. Jesus Christ's Human-Divine nature
 - (A) not two natures, but one perfectly blended nature of Him who is truly God and truly man
 - (B) we can perhaps to some degree relate to what humanly speaking Jesus was facing in being put to death on the cross

- (C) but there may come unspoken the thought that, "well, as God He could stand all that pain," but in doing so we do an injustice to the Son of God, that He used supernatural power to overcome pain
- (D) moreover, we also can thereby overlook His spiritual suffering
 - (1) "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21)
 - (2) that the infinitely pure one should be accounted as sin
 - (3) "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46)
 - (4) that the sin He bore for us, in some fashion that we cannot imagine, nor properly express, brought a separation of those eternally united

2. The Father's Answer (28b-30)

- a. ... There came therefore a voice out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." The multitude therefore, who stood by and heard it, were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, "An angel has spoken to Him." Jesus answered and said, "This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sakes."
- b. The testimony to Jesus (and His disciples)
 - (A) these words confirm that the path on which Jesus is set
 - (B) is the path according to the will of God
 - (C) that the very human troubling of his soul
- c. The testimony to the multitude
 - (A) though they could not or did not make out the words
 - (B) was a Divine sign that God had responded to Jesus' prayer

D. The Conquest of Evil

12:31-33

1. Satan Is Defeated (31)

- a. "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out."
- b. the ministry of Jesus was accompanied by defeats of Satan
 - (A) His unscathed emergence from the 40 days wilderness temptation
 - (B) His overcoming of the effects of sin: sickness and death
 - (C) His casting out of demons, freeing those so possessed
 - (D) When the seventy returned from their travels, "... He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning." (Luke 10:18)

- c. but now the crisis battle has come
 - (A) the world, that part of mankind who are not God's people
 - (B) has made its judgement of Jesus, and is thereby itself judged
 - (C) for in putting Jesus to death on the cross
 - (D) they accomplish the work that brings Satan's defeat

2. Real Victory in Apparent Defeat (32-33)

- a. "And I, if I be 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.
- b. the religious rulers looked at Jesus on the cross and mocked him
 - (A) where were all His miraculous powers now?
 - (B) let Him come down from the cross and we shall believe him!
 - (C) Satan seemed triumphant as darkness covered the land for 3 hours
- c. but all this took place according to God's deliberate foreknowledge
 - (A) when Christ cried out from the cross, "it is finished"
 - (B) then the penalty of our sin was paid in full.
 - (C) this is why Jesus must die, that there should be victory over sin

E. The Proclamation of the Gospel

12:34-36a

1. The Crowd's Question (34)

- a. The multitude therefore 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?"
- b. this people knew the law – here meaning the OT Scriptures – the kingdom of Messiah as foretold in prophecy was to be forever
 - (A) 'The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind, "Thou art a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."' (Psalms 110:4)
 - (B) "There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this." (Isaiah 9:7)
 - (C) "And they shall live on the land that I gave to Jacob My servant, in which your fathers lived; and they will live on it, they, and their sons, and their sons' sons, forever; and David My servant shall be their prince forever." (Ezekiel 37:25)

- (D) "And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations, and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed." (Daniel 7:14)
- c. Jesus used the term "Son of Man" to refer to Himself
 - (A) it echoes back to Daniel's words: "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him." (Daniel 7:13 NAS)
 - (B) Whereby Jesus claims His office as Messiah: "You have said it [yourself]; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you shall see the son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." (Matthew 26:64 NAS) – in this sense there follows

2. Jesus' Answer (35-36a)

- a. Jesus therefore said to them, "For a little while longer the light is among you. Walk while you have the light, that darkness may not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. While you have the light, believe in the light, in order that you may become sons of light."
- b. for that crowd and for a few days, Jesus, the Christ
 - (A) the Light of the world – "There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man." (John 1:9)
 - (B) was going to be with them
 - (C) but His time of public ministry was almost over
 - (D) and the multitude is told to take heed, because for them the darkness is coming
 - (E) those days were days of especial grace to them
- c. We, too, live in days of grace
 - (A) the Christ who died, is risen, and is ascended into the heavens
 - (B) we have the written Word bearing testimony to the living Word
 - (C) but those days are of limited duration – to be terminated by death for some, and by Christ's return for everyone
 - (D) in that time, we have the opportunity to put our trust in that Light to discern and to follow the Way of salvation
 - (E) those who do so become "sons of light" – little lights themselves, reflecting the Light of Jesus Christ.
- d. this is why Jesus must die, that we should believe in Him and become for Him, lights in this dark world, spreading the gospel

F. Conclusion

1. The Greeks' Request

a. I do not know the author of the poem which says:

'We would see Jesus,' for the shadows lengthen
Across this little landscape of our life;

'We would see Jesus,' our weak faith to strengthen
For the last weariness—the final strife.

'We would see Jesus'—the great rock foundation,
Whereon our feet were set by sovereign grace;
Not life nor death, with all their agitation,
Can thence remove us, if we see His face. —{2}.

b. We would see Jesus ... Come, see this Jesus: Is He not the Christ?

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ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version of 1769
NAS	New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation (usually the 1995 edition)
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NLT	New Living Translation © 1996 Tyndale Charitable Trust
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version © 1989 National Council of Churches of Christ
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Some of the commentaries and resources used in the preparation of this message are identified as follow:

- Bruce – *The Gospel & Epistles of John*, by F. F. Bruce, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI; 1983
- BM – *Biblical Museum*, Editor James Comper Gray, ca 1870
- NICNT – *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*
The Gospel according to John, by Leon Morris
- NTC – *New Testament Commentary*, by William Hendriksen; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI; 1954
- RWP – *Robertson’s Word Pictures of the New Testament*, by Dr. A. T. Robertson
- TTBC – *Thru the Bible Commentary Series*, by J. Vernon McGee; John 11-21; Thomas Nelson Publishers; 1991

2. Quoted in BM, *in loc.*