

JESUS OF NAZARETH IS PASSING BY
An Opportunity to See Jesus
John 12:20-29

TEXT: *Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the Feast. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus." Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus. Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me. "Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!" Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.*

In Jesus' name, my fellow redeemed:

Look up the word "glory" in the dictionary and you will read something like this: **the fame, admiration, and honor that is given to somebody who does something important.** Look up some synonyms and here are some suggestions: magnificence, splendor, beauty, wonder, grandeur, brilliance, fame.

Sometimes that glory, admiration and fame comes from something ghastly and terrible, like war. They speak of the glory of war, but those who are glorified as war heroes receive that admiration and fame at the expense of bloodshed, suffering and death. We should, for example, offer our admiration and support of those are willing to sacrifice their very lives to serve God and country as God's sword in protecting our nation. They should be glorified by a grateful nation.

As Jesus was passing through on His way to where He was about to engage the greatest conflict in this world's history, He passed by many unsuspecting souls. They were told that God's Savior was coming into the world, and many who were following Jesus believed that He was the One sent by God. But as the time for this great battle drew ever closer, those who were following Jesus seemed to be growing ever the more dense in their thinking. They had seen the miracles and what glorious miracles they were! Feeding thousands by multiplying small portions of food, healing the blind, the lame the demon-possessed, and even raising the dead. After Lazarus had been raised from the dead Jesus' enemies got together. The Bible says: ***Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin. ... Here is this man performing many miraculous signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." ... So from that day on they plotted to take his life.*** Jn 11

The Bible says that a few days before His crucifixion, two Jewish converts were in Jerusalem to observe the Passover. The Bible says: ***They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus." Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus. Jesus***

replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. What an opportunity to see Jesus! He was about to fight that most glorious battle! Would they understand? Would they see what we are to see? I. God's glory in Jesus' cross; and II. God's glory in the crosses all who follow Him are called to bear?

Recently a new Hollywood movie produced by two professed Christians has opened in theaters. I haven't seen it yet, but those who have say that it is a better depiction of the crucifixion than even the very graphic production of ten years ago by Mel Gibson. It was so graphic there were many who did not want their children to see it. Many who did were emotionally moved.

The Gospels were written to people who had witnessed actual crucifixions. Whether these two Greeks who had come to see Jesus were eyewitnesses of his crucifixion or not we aren't told. But if they did, what did they think? What glory would there be in such an inglorious death? Would they be as devastated as were our Lord's closest disciples? Would they lose hope like those two Emmaus disciples who confessed: *we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel.* Lu 24 Hope will always be dashed to pieces whenever we look for Jesus to be our Savior only for this life. Hope is dashed when our covetous hearts want life in this sinful world to one of comfort and ease. As Paul writes: *If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.* 1 Co 15 We should be pitied because the Glory of God in Christ is not in making our lives easy, but to pay for the sins of all so that all who believe in him might have forgiveness of sins, life and salvation!

We must keep this in our minds and hearts so that we do not lose heart in this sinful world. We live among a people that see no value in the forgiveness of sins. They love their sinning and urge us to join them. If and when we do not they quickly mock and ridicule you. This is very difficult. Persecution is not a pleasant thing to endure. We live in this world with our own personal Old Adam that loves the world when our Savior warns us not to love it. He declares: *The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.* What glory is this? It's contrary to all that is purported to be "The American Dream." We want to live and to live life to the fullest! We want our children to have everything we can give them; every advantage there is to be had! Instead we see a man who to this day is despised by men and like one from whom men turn their faces and hearts.

We don't know if these two Jewish converts ever got their wish to see Jesus, for all we are told is that Jesus said: *Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!" Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.* Jesus Himself was troubled because of the horror that He was about to willingly endure to save the world. When suddenly the Father's voice was heard it seems that what was said went through one ear and out the other.

Let this not happen to us. Rather let us see the glory that is in the cross of Christ and with hearts of faith be able to see the glory that is ours in those crosses our Heavenly Father wisely gives us to carry in Jesus' name!

It wasn't until Easter Sunday that the full glory of the cross would be seen. After Jesus rose from the dead, then the Christian Church was able to piece together the great

victory cry of Jesus when He declared: ***It is finished!*** And then, "***Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.***" When the world did not see is what Scripture reveals in regard to Jesus' time in the tomb. As soon as He rose from the dead and before He came out of the tomb, the Bible reveals that He descended into hell.

Here, in hell, the glorious victory of the cross is seen! It is seen by the countless unbelievers who had died since Cain first murdered his brother Abel. They had despised their opportunities to see the Lord's promised Savior through the word of the prophets God had sent. They were now assured more than ever before that their suffering would indeed be eternal and never ending. This was the Jesus these people did not want to see. Nor will they want to see Him when He returns in glory on the Last Day when their bodies will be reunited with their souls only to spend eternity in hell, both body and soul.

On Easter Sunday, Jesus stepped out of the tomb. The glory of His victory is now seen by the world in His resurrection. Were these Jewish converts there to see that? We they among the more than 500 men, women and children Paul said saw the resurrected Christ that one day before He ascended into heaven? Scripture doesn't tell us. But Scripture has indeed told us that Christ is risen so that we know that our resurrection from the dead is assured!

What does this mean for us who have seen Jesus and who know that our sins are paid for and that because He lives so shall we? That meaning for us is in these words: ***I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.*** It means that even our crosses and hardships of this life work for our future and eternal glorification. We are the seeds He has produced. He has told us what to expect and encourages us to trust Him. Forget this world and its fleeting treasures and wait for the day of your glorification. It will come and you won't be disappointed.

As surely as our Savior lives, so shall we! Amen.