

## The Hour of Christ's Death

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John 12:20-26

A Hebrew woman had anointed the Lord, and he had interpreted this act as relating to his death and burial. Upon the Lord's arrival in the city of Jerusalem, a great crowd had shouted out the Lord's praises and had called him their king, the rightful heir to David's throne. Then a group of Gentiles appeared with a request to meet Jesus. This request caused the Lord to talk about his death and resurrection, and the consequences of those events.

The death of the Lord would bring deserved glory to him. *The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.* (23b) The kings of the earth strive to appear glorious by wearing certain garments, by riding in the best means of transport available, and by sitting in state, in very opulently appointed rooms. Not so with the Lord of heaven and earth. He had already made manifest the glory of God by becoming incarnate. John said, *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.* (1:14)

When God shows forth his radiant glory, he does so in a most peculiar way, by human standards. He reveals the truth about God and man. This shows the great contrast between man as sinner, and God as perfect in righteousness.

And, he then reveals his grace which is an amazing thing. Instead of casting sinners into the fires of hell for all eternity, God provides a way of escape through the blood of Christ. His death bore much fruit. (12:24) Isaiah had long ago prophesied this. *Out of the anguish of his soul, he shall see and be satisfied, by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.* (Isaiah 53:11)

The death of the Lord would also become the pattern for becoming a Christian and for living as a Christian. Self sacrifice, the very opposite of self glorification as we know it in this world, would become the goal of true Christians. We bow before Christ as our Lord and Master, and discover that the only way to honor him properly is to imitate his lowly service of others.

Three times the heavenly voice rang out in confirmation of the work of our Lord, at his baptism, on the mount of transfiguration, and in this, the last week of his public ministry. Now the focus would be on his role as king of kings, and on the cross which would reveal him as the true sovereign of salvation. Satan would be defeated and "cast out." The back of satanic power would be broken, and the cross would mean the "drawing" of all people to the salvation of the Lord.

It was no accident that it was at this time that the "Greeks" came with their request to see Jesus. God had blessed and used the Jews as a unique or peculiar people to reveal his word and will in the world. Now he would use the true Son of God to save people from every race and tribe and nation. The apostle Paul tells us that it

was the eternal purpose of God to unite all things in the Lord Jesus Christ, both things in heaven and things in earth. In fact one day heaven and earth will be united, the dwelling place of man and the dwelling place of God brought together as the result of the atoning work of the Son of God. The beginning of this would be the union of strangers in Christ. *And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.* (12:32)

But this kind of king was not what the people of this world were expecting. They certainly did not expect him to be lifted up, that is to die on a Roman cross. In our day that would be like saying that the true king has come, and that he would prove himself to be the Messiah by dying at the hands of executioners. No, their idea of the Messiah would be one who was victorious over all his foes from the very start. He would establish himself as lord, and force everyone to do his will.

How different the work of Christ! He would willingly give himself up to death on behalf of people who were at enmity with him. He would conquer sin, death, and the powers of darkness by doing the unexpected thing. He would love the undeserving sinner, and die in his place. He would thereby bring Jew and Gentile together in the one body of Christ. His church would be composed of people from every tribe, and would be made known as the true body of Christ by a willingness to follow the Lord Jesus into the service of those who do not deserve such love.

by Joe Nesom

