

Two Predictions

John 13:18-38

Our Lord and King demands faithfulness. That is his right. He has died in our place on the cross. He has done all that is required for our pardon and justification. He is our true sovereign, and he deserves our utmost obedience. But not all who confess him publicly are among those whom he has chosen, (13:18).

The First Prediction

The Lord predicted his betrayal and as usual his disciples were left confused. His death on the tree, and subsequent resurrection followed by a period of instruction prior to his ascension, would help them come to understand the purposes of God. But now they were perplexed and simply wondering who he meant by the accusation of treachery.

The Lord identified Judas Iscariot. It is remarkable that Judas is said to have become possessed by the arch enemy himself. Many have been the object of demonic activity, but Satan himself entered into Judas to impel him toward an act which would lead to the cross. Judas had been the “treasurer” for the tiny group of apostles. He was a thief, only interested in selfish pursuits. Now he would betray the Lord from heaven, for money. This would fulfill Psalm 41:9. King David had said, “Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.”

May we, who have been saved by grace, dedicate ourselves to faithful obedience before our King. And, may we resolve to examine all of our thoughts and actions with a will to resist anything that would bring dishonor to our Lord and Master. And, again shall we resist as well any disobedient behavior which is embraced for monetary gain. Christ has died in our place. We owe all to him.

The Second Prediction

The Lord also predicted that the Son of Man would be “glorified.” And which this prediction came these words, “Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going you cannot come.’”

It is tempting to interpret the words of the Lord to mean that he would return to heaven and his disciples would be unable to find him after his ascension. But that is to miss the point, and misunderstand the context. He will return to heaven. But he would go back to the Father by way of the cross. It is the way of the cross that only Christ could go down. We can die. The Lord would tell Simon Peter that he could not follow him “now,” but would do so “afterward.” We can, and by grace will, arrive in heaven one day. We may even arrive there after suffering martyrdom. But we could never have

accomplished what the Son of Man did by his death on the tree. That was an experience that only the Lord Jesus Christ could endure.

He alone was the perfect sacrifice. He alone was without sin. He alone had the commission of the Father. He alone could withstand the assault of Satan. He alone could atone for the sins of his people.

The cross is the greatest manifestation of the love of God the world has ever seen. And so, as he came near the day of his death, the Lord commanded his disciples to love one another just as he had loved them. This would be the the true ongoing profession of faith in Christ.

In Baptism we profess Christ as our redeemer. We, without saying a word profess, by entering the watery grave that we believe in the Savior who died and was buried for our sins, who because of love sacrificed himself for us. Then, as we live our lives, we show forth the integrity of our profession by loving others, and even showing love to our enemies. “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (13:35)

by Joe Nesom

