

## He Must Be Lifted Up

In recent polls, 97% of the American population say that they have a positive opinion of Jesus Christ. If you were to interview most of those people, however, you would find that they have a positive view of Christ only because they don't know Him very well! When they encounter His teachings on marriage and divorce or on God's judgment upon those who refuse to repent and believe or His teaching on the exclusive nature of the Christian faith, they often will either change their opinion or challenge the veracity of the Scriptures. This should not surprise us. Such was the case in Jesus' own day, revealed in today's text.

### John 12: 17-36

**17** The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. **18** The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign. **19** So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him."

**20** Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. **21** So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." **22** Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. **23** And Jesus answered them, "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** Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. **26** If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

**27** "Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. **28** Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." **29** The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." **30** Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not mine. **31** Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. **32** And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." **33** He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. **34** So the crowd answered him, "We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?" **35** So Jesus said to them, "The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. **36** While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light."

When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them.

### I. There are some things that can deter us from the cross (vv. 17-22)

Jesus could easily have been deterred from His cross by the frenzy of the crowd (vv.17,18) or the fury of the clergy (v. 19) or the fascination of the curious (vv. 20-22). We are tempted by these and many other people and things to neglect or avoid our mission.

### II. Jesus refused to be deterred from His cross (vv. 23-33)

Jesus took the request of the curious Greeks as a prompt to say that now "the hour has come....". What He means, of course, is that the hour of His great sacrifice has come, and He gives five accomplishments of His death on Calvary which compel Him to the cross.

#### 1. His Own Glory (vv. 23-26).

Jesus did many things recorded in John's gospel, which brought Him glory, but the very essence of His glory was to submit Himself to the Father's will. At the cross was the sublimest, the grandest act of His lifetime of loving submission to His Father. Jesus was thereby greatly glorified.

2. The Father's Glory (vv. 27-30)

Paul describes in Romans 3:25,26 how Both God's justice and also His grace were satisfied perfectly by Christ's death on the cross. He was greatly glorified by the death of His Son.

3. The Judgment of the World (vv. 31a)

All the evil and sin of the world was judged and condemned at the cross. One day, we will see with our own eyes in the new heavens and the new earth the amazing cosmic accomplishment of Calvary's cross.

4. The Defeat of Satan (v. 31b)

It would look to the untrained eye as though Satan had one a gigantic victory on the day of Jesus crucifixion; but now, through the apostles, we know what both Christ and Satan knew on that day: Christ triumphed over the principalities and powers of hell (Col. 2:14,15). He destroyed death, Satan, and his nefarious kingdom (Heb. 2:14). "Now will the ruler of this world be cast out."

5. The Salvation of Sinners (vv. 32,33)

By His being "lifted up" on the cross, Jesus will draw people from all over the world to Himself. This is His ultimate answer to the Greeks, who said, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." (v. 21) If they fail to see Him lifted up on the cross, they will not really see Him at all.

**III. We must not be deterred from the cross (vv 34-36)**

In verse 34, the crowd had a legitimate question: how can the true Messiah die, when multiple OT texts say that He will reign forever? In their epistles, Christ's apostles answer this question, but at this point, Jesus is more concerned to address the ultimate issue, which is a matter of the heart.

1. Don't squander the opportunity you have right now (and perhaps only now) to receive the light of the gospel and to walk securely in that light. (v35). The one who doesn't have the light is truly lost—he "does not know where he is going." Unless you embrace Christ's cross, you do not have light.

2. If you receive Christ crucified for you, you become "sons of light," which means that the light of Christ actually lives within you.

Jesus pled with His hearers to walk in the light of His sacrificial love by receiving His love and His light. Won't you receive Him today? Won't you tell others of His great love?

**Discussion Questions**

1. How does our popularity, or our desire for it, sometimes deter us from our submission to the Father? How does opposition sometime do the same?
  
2. Why was Christ's cross necessary for our salvation?

3. What did the cross of Christ achieve? What is the most amazing thing to you about the cross of Christ?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Why is it urgent that we and others receive the light of the gospel right away?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What are some of the benefits of being a "son of light?"