

The Perplexities of the Cross

Scripture: John 12:27–34

Code: 43-64

Let's look at John chapter 12, back to the gospel of John, our ongoing study in this incredible account of the life, ministry, death, resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We come to chapter 12, verses 27 to 34, 12:27-34. Let me read those verses for you. John 12:27, our Lord is speaking here. He says:

“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 Your name.” Then a voice came out of heaven: “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.” So the crowd of people 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. Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am 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. The crowd then 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?”

In this amazing text, our Lord speaks of His crucifixion in very direct terms. In verse 33, it tells us that when He said He would be lifted up, He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die. When the Jews historically executed someone, they threw them down, and then stoned them to death. When someone was lifted up, everybody knew that was a crucifixion. Jesus then is speaking of His crucifixion. They understood that because in verse 34 they say, “What kind of Son of Man must be lifted up,” to die? Isn't the Messiah to live forever?

Apparently, the idea of being lifted up had become synonymous with crucifixion because the Romans had done this to tens of thousands of people around this period of time in the land of Israel as well as in other parts of the Roman Empire. People knew what it was to be lifted up in death. Apparently, He spoke of it frequently enough that His disciples for certain and even the crowds knew what He was referring to. Our Lord is facing the cross. This passage looks at the cross and its impact, the cross and its effect, the cross and its power. Now, the cross hasn't happened, but this is the theology of the cross from the lips of Jesus before He's crucified.

It's a really remarkable portion of Scripture. He had just said back in verse 23 that, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.” Then immediately said, “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.” He was going to be glorified through dying. He said that through an analogy, through an illustration in a little more obscure way, but now He describes it without an analogy in words that everybody understood. He will literally be lifted up, which is a euphemism for being crucified, and they all knew it.

This is why He came, and through His death much spiritual fruit would come. He understood that He had come to die. From His birth, He had been called Jesus because He would save His people from

their sins. He knew that salvation was to be through His death. He knew He was God's chosen sacrifice. The Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost. Yes, but how? Has come to give His life a ransom for many. He was born to die a sacrificial death. He knew that. This was not a surprise. This isn't a good plan gone wrong. This is the plan.

Revelation 13:8 says, "He was the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world." Before He ever came into the world, He knew He would come into the world to be slain. Peter tells us He was the sacrifice to God who would redeem His people with His blood and that this sacrifice was pre-determined from the foundation of the world. He appeared to accomplish what had been planned. The cross and the subsequent resurrection from the dead is the theme of Scripture. The cross and the subsequent resurrection is the great theme of Scripture.

In many powerful ways, the death of the Lord Jesus Christ reigns over all other issues in Scripture. When you go to the Old Testament, you're struck very soon by the reality of sacrifice. It happens early in the third chapter of Genesis. As you flow through the Scripture, sacrifice goes on through the whole Old Testament. It goes on all the way into the New Testament until 70 A.D. None of those lambs, none of those millions of goats or lambs or bulls could ever take away sin, but they all pictured one who would: the Lamb of God.

Ancient, Old Testament prophecies specifically speak about His death. Daniel 9 says, "He will be cut off," a term to describe death. Zechariah 12:10 says, "He will die being pierced." Isaiah 53 describes in detail His substitutionary death. Psalm 22 describes His experience on the cross. There are even scriptures that speak about His betrayer. So, first of all, we can say that His death is the theme even of the Old Testament and the fulfillment of ancient Old Testament predictions. When you come into the New Testament, His death is the theme, the dominant theme of the gospels. As Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John record our Lord's life from His birth on, He talks about His death from time to time, but the volume of their work that focuses on His death is greater than any other category of interest for the gospel writers.

One-fifth of all four gospels is directed at His crucifixion, the events of His death and resurrection. It is their dominant theme as writers of the gospel. Everything in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John moves inexorably toward the greatest of all events, which occupies them most and that is His death. His death then fulfills ancient Old Testament predictions and patterns. His death is the theme of the New Testament gospels. Thirdly, we could say His death is the reason for the incarnation. He came to save His people.

1 John 3:5, "He appeared to take away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." This is the reason He came. He didn't come to be a good teacher. He didn't come to be a philosopher. He didn't come to start a religion. He came to die. His death became the teaching, which dominated His own interest as He moved toward the cross. He said, "I came down from heaven to give my life for the world," John 6:51. The closer He got to the cross, the more He talked about His death. His death then became the theme of apostolic preaching. When you leave the four gospels, and you come into the book of Acts, the apostles begin immediately to preach that the Messiah had to suffer and die, that Jesus was crucified, died, rose again. That is apostolic preaching.

In fact, it was so dominant among the apostles that Paul could say on behalf of all of them, "I'm determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. We preach Christ crucified." That was the apostles calling. It is then the theme of the Old Testament, the theme of the

gospels, the reason for the incarnation, the theme of our Lord's own teaching and the theme of apostolic preaching. As you come to the epistles of the New Testament, starting after the book of Acts, the New Testament is filled with epistles all the way to the book of Revelation. The death of our Lord Jesus Christ and His subsequent resurrection is the theme of those epistles. Sometimes it is explicit. Sometimes the epistles talk particularly about His death and about His cross.

You find that dominant theme in Romans, for example, chapter 5. You find it in Galatians chapter 3. You find the emphasis on the cross, however, all through the epistles. You find it in the book of Hebrews. It dominates the wonderful, really incredible book of Hebrews, just one illustration, chapter 5 and verse 9. "He became to all those who obey Him, the source of eternal salvation." How did He become the source of eternal salvation? Chapter 2, verse 9, "By suffering death, by suffering death."

So the writers of the epistles look at the cross explicitly and describe its meaning and its significance. It also is implicit in the epistles. In fact, all the implications of obedience, behavior, life in the church, godliness, virtue, spiritual living are all implications of the cross. If He died for us, how can we not live for Him? That kind of implication. So you will, as you read through the rest of the New Testament, going through the epistles, find yourself confronted with the cross and the implications of the death of Christ to give us new life that we might live to His honor and His glory.

His death is also the theme of worship in the church.

It's the theme of worship in the church. Two ordinances the Lord gave to the church. One is baptism. The other is Communion. In Baptism, we identify with the death of Christ and His resurrection in a symbolic way. In the Lord's Table, we gather to eat the bread and the cup, which are representative of His body and blood given for us. The only two ordinances the church has, and they both point at His death and His resurrection. This is the heart and soul of the worship of the church. The cross occupies us. That's why in churches there are crosses because from that cross radiates the essence of all biblical emphasis.

If you were to leave earth and go to heaven, you would find that the death of Jesus Christ is also the theme of heaven. It is not only the theme of worship on earth. It is the theme of worship in heaven. We see a glimpse of that in the fifth chapter of the book of Revelation. Revelation chapter 5 takes us to heaven. We've now come to the end of the New Testament. We have seen the cross in the Old Testament, the gospels, the ministry of Jesus, the reason that He came, the apostolic preaching in the book of Acts. It is the theme of the epistles of the New Testament and when the book of Revelation lifts us into heaven, this is what we read: "The Lamb Himself, the Lamb of God, Christ, comes out of the throne and He is a Lamb - " verse 6, " - standing who had been slain."

Down in verse 7, "He takes the book out of the right hand of God." The book is the title deed to the earth that He's about to take over the earth. "When He had taken the book, the four living creatures - " who are angels, " - the twenty-four elders - " who represent redeemed saints, " - fall down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sing a new song." This is heaven's song. This is the song of heaven. What is it? "Worthy are You to take the book and break its seals; for You were slain and purchased for God with your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign on the earth." Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads upon myriads - " tens of thousands times tens of thousands, " - and thousands of

thousands.” What are they all saying? “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.”

The cross becomes the theme of heavenly worship. It is the theme of redemptive history here. It is the theme of heavenly worship. Now, all of that leads us to our text starting in verse 27 and going down to verse 34. Our text today is a depository of profound truth, expansive truth and reality regarding the death of Christ.

Let me just set the stage for you a little bit. We don't know exactly the day that Jesus said this or this happened. Probably it is Wednesday, maybe Thursday of the final week of our Lord. The year is 30 A.D. The Lord has entered the city of Jerusalem. He came in on the previous weekend. He stayed with His friends in Bethany. There was a feast for Him there. You remember that at the house of Simon, who was a healed leper. Monday, He came into the city in what we call the triumphal entry. He came in. The people had heard about His raising Lazarus from the dead, a man who had been dead for four days. Everybody knew he was dead, and yet Jesus raised him from the dead.

They knew the history of what He had done, healings all over the land, casting out demons all over the land, incredible miracles, creating food to feed tens of thousands of people. Surely, this must be the Messiah. Now the capstone miracle on His life is the raising of this man, who had been four days dead. This must be the Messiah. They're ready, and so when He comes into the city, massive crowd converges on Him and hundreds of thousands of people gather around Him saying, “Blessed is the Son of David, and the One who comes in the name of the Lord.”

They give Him all the Messianic attribution, and they expected that if He was the Messiah and they were right about this, that He would assault the oppressive, pagan, invading, occupying Romans who dishonored God with their idolatry and were the enemies of God. But He came back in on Tuesday after going back to the Bethany for the night with His friends. He came back in on Tuesday and instead of attacking the Romans, He attacked the Jewish temple. He attacked them at the pinnacle of their religion. He attacked the elite. He attacked the agents of the true and living God. His attack was so fierce and so forceful that the people fled out of the entire temple.

There were tens of thousands of people there, and all the money changers and buyers and sellers who were extorting the people, basically grabbed what they could, left what they couldn't and fled. He emptied the place just by the sheer power of His person. This is a warning. This is a preview of what is coming by the judgment of God on Jerusalem, and it came in 70 A.D. about 40 years later at the hands of the Romans. This was a shock.

When He came in on Monday, they would have expected Him to attack the Romans. Fort Antonius, the Praetorium, where the Romans were, where the Roman governor was. Instead, He attacks the temple. He calls it a den of thieves, a house of robbers. Then He comes back on Wednesday into that temple, which is not yet fully recovered from the evacuation that He created, and He takes over the place. Now that it is for the moment cleaned of its corruption, He spends the day teaching. Possibly on that day, this happened here. The timing isn't important, except to say that it was before His death. It reminds us that He knew everything about His death before it ever happened. This was not a surprise.

Whatever day it is during that week, He's fixed on Friday. Friday is the day He will be crucified. He's thinking here about the meaning of His death. He's thinking about what's going to happen. The

words that He speaks are just amazing, far-reaching. Here is Jesus' theology of His own death before it happened.

So John starts recording in verse 27, and He tells us the things that Jesus said as He looked at His own coming death. He opens up mystery to us. I would like to think of this as the enigmas of the cross, the enigmas, a word for mysteries that are revealed here. There are three of them, and they're far-reaching and profound. Number one, as our Lord looks at the cross, there is the enigma of the Son's anguish, the enigma of the Son's anguish.

Verse 27, "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 Your name." That is a startling, enigmatic, puzzling statement. His soul is troubled? How can His soul be troubled? He is God. Oh, you say, well, that's His humanness. Really? That's His humanness, and you're telling me His deity can't suppress that? Is He more man than God? How can He be troubled as He looks at His coming death? Martyrs seem to pull this off better than He does. If you read *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, you find so many martyrs who went calmly to their death – burned at the stake, killed some other way – who seemed to be impervious to what is going on, who are praying to God, proclaiming the gospel, singing hymns. How is it that the Son of God, the incarnate God is a troubled soul?

Well, we already know that was possible because back in chapter 11, verse 33, when He arrived at the tomb of Lazarus, it says He was there watching Martha and Mary and all the weeping, and He was deeply moved in His Spirit and was troubled. We see that in chapter 13, verse 21. He became troubled in spirit over the realities of betrayal.

So He could be troubled in spirit. He was troubled when He faced the consequences of sin in the death of Lazarus and the shattering of the family, and the breaking up of that unity. He was troubled to think about the betrayer and where he was headed. So we know He could be troubled. What does the word "troubled" mean? It's a Greek word *tarassō*, *tarassō*. It literally means "to shake or to stir up." That's what you would use if you were doing something in the kitchen. You'd use that word. But it had figurative significance as well. In a figurative sense, it could be translated anguish. He was anguished. He was agitated. He was deeply disturbed. He was upset. He was unsettled.

Sometimes it can be translated terrified, frightening, horrified. A very strong word, very strong word. It's so strong that it's used, for example, in Matthew 2:3 of the troubling of Herod, who was so profoundly troubled by the thought that a king was being born in Bethlehem, that he ordered his men to go there and massacre every baby boy/child in the area. That's being seriously troubled when you become a mass murderer.

It's the same word used in Matthew 14:26 for the attitude of the disciples when they see Jesus walking on the water. Some of the translations say they were terrified. It's a highly disturbing emotion. It is the word that is used to describe Zacharias the priest when an angel came to him in Luke 1 to tell him that he and Elizabeth who were barren and in their 80s certainly, had never been able to have children. An angel comes and announces that they will have a son, and Zacharias is terrified by an angel. Angels didn't appear to people.

It is the same word used to describe the attitude of the disciples who were in the upper room the night of the resurrection, Luke 24:38, and Jesus comes through the wall with the door being shut,

stands in their midst. It says they're terrified. Jesus actually used this word on Thursday night in the upper room with His disciples when He said in John 14:1, "Stop letting your heart be troubled." How can He be troubled? How can He be so agitated? How can He be so distressed? Isn't He less than a martyr? Why this distress? Many martyrs seem calm facing death. Why is this going on? Was this weakness in Him? Was this sin? No, no.

This is not the anguish of – listen carefully. This is not the anguish of anticipated physical suffering. This is not that. This is not the anguish of anticipated physical suffering. This isn't being agitated. This isn't being horrified at the thought that He will be flogged. This isn't horror at the thought that He would be nailed, the thought that He would be crucified, not that. Oh, He felt all that. He really, really died and really felt the nails and the piercings in His head. The spear in His side came after His death, but he felt it all. He felt the whipping. Yes, He must have felt it 10,000 times before He ever actually felt it, right? In anticipation. How did He know? Because He knew everything that was to come. He knew exactly what was going to happen to Him.

He detailed it out. They're going to arrest me. They are going to take me. They are going to spit on me. They are going to beat me. They are going to crucify me. He knew all of that, and if you know all of that, you live that before it ever happens, don't you? You do that when you're going to the dentist.

He had felt every pain, every aching muscle, every torn piece of flesh, every thorn piercing His blessed brow, every dislocation of bones and organs, the stifling suffocation, gasping for breath, the flies, the dripping blood that He couldn't wipe away, the naked shame, the dried mouth, the cracked lips. He had felt that in anticipation because He knew it was coming. But that is not the real suffering. That's not what troubles His soul. He could go calmly to a martyr's death and accept that. That's not what troubles Him.

His death had been the focal point of His whole life. He must have thought it over and over thousands of times in His mind before He ever got there through the years of His life when He came to an understanding of it. Maybe that's why He never laughed, that's why the Bible never says He laughed. It says He cried, but He never laughed. Were there not moments of joy? Of course there were, but there was this looming reality hanging over His conscious mind of the agonies to come. That was always there.

Was He afraid to be beaten? Was He afraid to be nailed? Was He afraid of the cross? No, no. That wasn't what tormented Him. People seem to think, well, isn't this an evidence that His humanity was more powerful than His deity? No. This is an evidence that His deity is more powerful than His humanity. Why? Listen, His trouble came not from anticipating physical suffering, but anticipating divine wrath, spiritual suffering. That was a terrifying reality. Though the nails must have gone through His hands and feet thousands of times as He thought about it, the agony of the sinless Son of God was not that He would be nailed, but that He would be judged by the wrath of God. Not that He would be stained with blood, but that He would be condemned for sins He did not commit, the sins of all who would ever believe. Those tortured His soul with a fierceness.

Let me tell you something, if He didn't become troubled by that, He wouldn't be God. God should be troubled by the prospect of bearing sin. The Son of God should be troubled by the prospect of divine wrath and alienation from His eternal Father. Yes, He's troubled, but it's not the physical part that troubles Him. It's the spiritual reality.

So, in His trouble, He asks, "What shall I say? Shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour?'" Is that what I should say? Hypothetically, should I say, "Save me from this hour?" Chapter 7, verse 30, He said, "My hour hasn't come." Chapter 8, verse 20, He said, "My hour hasn't come." Now, My hour has come. Chapter 13, verse 1, "Jesus, knowing that His hour had come." I'm now at that hour. Shall I say, "Father, save Me from this hour?" If I wanted to, I could, He said in Matthew 26:53, I could call 72,000 angels. I could call 72,000 angels like that, but that kind of prayer would deliver Me and damn everyone. No, I can't say that, "But for this purpose I came to this hour." This is the reason I came. This is why I'm here.

John 10:17, "For this reason, the Father loves Me, because I laid down My life so that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me. I lay it down on My own initiative." He's not unwilling. He is totally willing. I will not say, "Father, save Me from this hour." This is the reason I came. I came willingly. No one is doing this to Me; not God, not man. This is completely voluntary, completely voluntary. Does that mean there's no anguish? No. The anguish is palpable and beyond comprehension. If you listen to Him in Luke 22, He says in verse 42, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me." This is later on Thursday night. "If You are willing, remove this cup from Me."

What's this cup? The cup of divine wrath. That's a concept that comes from the Old Testament. The cup of God's wrath. He's not talking about nails. He's not talking about physical pain and suffering. He is saying, "Father, what terrifies Me is the cup of wrath. Yet not My will, but Yours be done." The battle is so fierce, listen to how fierce it is. "An angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him." An angel strengthening the Son of God? Wasn't the first time. Angels came and ministered to Him after His 40 days of temptation. Here, an angel comes to strengthen Him because He is in agony. He is in such agony, Luke 22 says, he was praying very fervently, "And His sweat became like drops of blood falling down on the ground."

His capillaries began to disintegrate under the pressure and tension of His own fervency, and blood begins to drip through His skin. This is intense struggle. Yes, He was born to die. Yes, He came to die. Yes, He willed to do this. Yes, He was not forced into this, but that doesn't lessen the overwhelming trouble of the reality of a sinless one becoming sin for us.

In Hebrews 10:5, there is some insight. "Therefore, when He comes into the world – " speaking of Christ, " - He says, 'Sacrifice and offering You have not desired.'" That is, the Old Testament system of animal sacrifices. "But a body You have prepared for Me." Body prepared for Me. "Then He said, 'Behold, I have come to do Your will.'" By the offering of that body, Jesus sanctified all who would believe forever. You gave Me a body so I could be a sacrifice.

Yes, the battle is profound. The battle is actually beyond our imagination, beyond our comprehension. But He doesn't lose the battle. Verse 28, "Father, glorify Your name. Glorify Your name." The purpose Jesus said He came for was to glorify the Father. "I only do what the Father tells Me to do, what the Father wills for Me to do, what the Father shows Me to do. I only do what glorifies the Father." We read that all through the gospel of John. This, He knows, will glorify the Father.

His love for the Father is divine. It is perfect, righteous love. He will do what His love demands.

Love for the Father demands that He glorify the Father. This will glorify the Father. How does the cross glorify the Father? The cross glorifies the Father in several ways. First of all, the cross puts on display all God's attributes. God is glorified when we are made aware of who He is. On the cross, you see God's love in action. You see His grace in action. You see His mercy in action, His justice, His wrath, His judgment. You see His wisdom. You see truth being vindicated. You see prophecy being fulfilled. His Word is affirmed. You see righteousness declared. You see power declared. All of that is on the cross. God is putting on display more of His attributes in a concentrated form at the cross than any other event in redemptive history.

God is glorified in the event itself. The event of making Christ the substitute for sinners who bears our justice, our wrath, God's vengeance on us in our place. But the glory of God is further displayed at Calvary in the fact that it is by the death of Christ that God is able to redeem humans from all human history, bring them to heaven to forever glorify Him. It was the death of Jesus Christ that formed the hallelujah choir that occupies heaven.

So the Father will, by means of His revelation in the Son, cause the radiance of His own majestic attributes to become publicly displayed at the cross in order that He might redeem people from all human history, who will forever gather into His presence and give Him glory by ascribing to Him the honor that He deserves.

So our Lord Jesus, troubled as He is, anguished as He is, victorious over that struggle and does what He wills to do, what He loves to do, what the Father desires Him to do, and what glorifies the Father. This is good comfort for us. This is great comfort for us. Listen carefully, conflict with sin is not sin. Conflict with sin is not sin. There was agony in the tortured soul of Christ over the thought that He would have to bear this sin, which means He was fighting through to obey God, fighting through strong, strong forces. That's not sin because He was without sin, a lamb without blemish and without spot.

Be encouraged. This is what Paul's talking about as a believer in Romans 7 when he says, "I don't do what I want to do. I do what I don't want to do, O wretched man that I am." But He is a believer. He is a believer. It is the true experience of every Christian to live in this conflict. The true experience of every Christian to live in this conflict. We who are holy, we who are holy are confronted by evil all the time around us and in us, and that war goes on all the time. Let me encourage you with this: your genuineness as a believer, your authenticity as a believer is as much manifest by your conflict as it is by your joy. I'll say that again. Your authenticity, your genuineness as a Christian is as much manifest by your conflict as it is your peace, your joy.

So Jesus, in anguish, is totally obedient. The enigma of the anguish of the Son. A real struggle, a real battle in His soul, but perfect, willing, loving obedience. The establishment of the kingdom of heaven, the introduction of new life, the forgiveness of sin, the populating of heaven: all of this was dependent on Jesus being obedient; even though the idea of sin bearing was totally alien to His holy soul. That's what troubled Him.

So the enigma of the Son's anguish. Then we see the enigma of the Father's answer. This too has a kind of a mysterious reality to it, unveiled. Jesus prays the prayer, "Father, glorify Your name," and gets an immediate answer. "Then a voice came out of heaven, 'I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.'" So the crowd of people who stood by and heard it were saying that it had thundered. Other were saying, 'An angel has spoken to Him.' Jesus answered and said, 'This voice has not come for

My sake, but for your sakes.” Jesus explains the mystery, the enigma of the Father’s answer. The Father speaks from heaven. The voice out of heaven is the Father. Jesus says, “Father glorify Your name,” and the Father responds, “I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.”

Now, the Father did speak from heaven in a couple of very, very significant times in the life of our Lord. At His baptism, Matthew 3:17. The voice came out of heaven, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” At His transfiguration, Matthew 17, the Father spoke again. Christ is affirmed at the beginning of His ministry in His baptism in Mathew 3. He is again affirmed in that marvelous scene of His exaltation in Matthew 17, where He is seen with Moses and Elijah, which means He is the living fulfillment of the Old Testament.

The Father has validated Him on those two occasions. This is the third. This is the third. This day, maybe it’s Wednesday of that week, God speaks out of heaven to validate and affirm the cross, the cross. The hour was the hour of His death, the purpose for which He came. “Father, glorify Your name,” through My obedience unto death. And the voice said, “I have both glorified it.” What does that mean? What do you mean you have glorified it? What He means is that I have already glorified My name through you. I’ve already done that through you.

Go back to chapter 21, verse 40. He did it through His whole ministry. He validated Him by His miracle power. Power over demons, power over disease, power to create food. He did it recently through the resurrection of Lazarus, that capstone miracle, verse 40 of chapter 11. Jesus is at the tomb, tells them to remove the stone, and then says to Martha, “Did not I say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?” which is to say, the glory of God is on display through the miraculous power of Jesus. That marks His entire life and ministry.

So when the Father says in verse 28, “I have both glorified it,” He means throughout your whole ministry I have put My power and glory on display through You. “And will glorify it again,” meaning I will glorify My name through your death. I did it through your life. I will do it in your death. I did it through your life. I will do it in your death. Now, verse 30 says that, “Jesus spoke and said, ‘This voice hasn’t come for My sake.’” I knew this. I know all this, “But for your sakes.” Who is He talking to? Most likely the disciples. They’re having such a hard time with the fact that Jesus is going to die. The people who are maybe in a dilemma of whether to believe or not believe, this is divine heavenly affirmation of the death of Christ.

There was affirmation of His ministry at His baptism, affirmation of His deity at the transfiguration, and here is affirmation from God verbally at His death; which is to say this, the union of the Father and Son is unbroken. The union of the Father and Son is intact. There is no separation. He didn’t die because He displeased God. He didn’t die because something went wrong. He died to glorify God and God will glorify Himself through His death. This is the most important affirmation of the death of Jesus Christ.

So the Father has been glorified in the past through the Son’s life and miracles. He will be glorified in the near future on Friday, in fact, through the Son’s death and far beyond through His resurrection, the salvation He provides. This voice was for the sake of those who had ears to hear. On the other hand, there was the crowd, verse 29. “The crowd of people who stood by and heard it were saying that it had thundered.” They thought it was a weather event, but then we wouldn’t expect them to recognize the voice of God, would we? Of course not.

Some others had a different idea. They thought it was a supernatural event, and they were saying, "An angel has spoken to Him." So some more naturally-inclined said, "It's a natural event. It's the weather. There's thunder somewhere." Others said, "It's a supernatural event. It's an angel." You can understand why they were saying those kinds of things. This is the mixed crowd, which would be some Jews, maybe still the Greeks who came to Jesus. Maybe, of course, including leaders in the temple. They were trying to figure out what had just happened. They had no capacity to know the voice of God or hear the voice of God, and they weren't about to acknowledge the voice of God if He did speak.

Thunder, often in the Old Testament, is the voice of God. Exodus 19, "God thundered." Second Samuel 22:14, "The Lord thundered from heaven and uttered His voice." Job 37:5, "God thunders with His voice wondrously." You see that also in Psalm 18, Psalm 29. Job 40:9, "Can you thunder with a voice like His?" So thunder was associated with the voice of God, but for them, this was just a weather event. They weren't thinking of it in a divine way. Then for the others, it was an angelic event, which gets a little closer to reality, but in both cases, they missed the point.

Again, the natural man understands not the things of God, right? Jesus says to them, "You don't get the truth, and because I speak the truth, you don't understand what I'm saying." Remember that back in chapter 8? So they have a way to explain it that is short of the reality. The bottom line is that God had spoken, and God had validated, authenticated, affirmed the death of His Son.

So we see the enigma of the Son's anguish, the enigma of the Father's answer, and then a final one: the enigma of the cross as accomplishment, the enigma of the cross as accomplishment. What began as anguish, torture, terror in the soul of Jesus, all of the sudden turns to triumph, all of the sudden turns to anticipation. The blessedness of His Father's voice and the presence of the Father has strengthened Him, has reminded Him that glory is coming through His death, glory is coming to the Father and to Him because they share glory equally. Now, rather than viewing the suffering of sin-bearing on the cross, He focuses on the salvation through that suffering and He turns from being troubled in verse 27 to words that are triumphant in verse 31. He goes from troubled to triumph. He states the consequence of His death, the accomplishment of the cross, the mystery of the cross unfolded in three massive far-reaching statements.

Number one, "The judgment is on the world." Number two, "The ruler of this world will be cast out." Number three, "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth will draw all men to Myself." These are sweeping, far-reaching realities. He goes from that very personal, intimate agony of verse 27 to this global, historical reality of verses 31 through 32. Three anticipated accomplishments in the cross. Number one, the world was judged. The world was judged. Sin's empire was judged. Sin's system was judged. The crisis had come. The probation of the world was over. The doom was sealed by the rejection and murder of the Son. This flips the whole event on its head.

The Jewish people thought they had judged Him. In reality, He had not only judged them, but He had judged the entire world. They thought that they had brought Him into their court and rendered their verdict on Him. In reality, He had brought them into His court and rendered His verdict on them. The cross would condemn and judge the world, meaning the Jewish people who rejected Him, the leaders who condemned Him, Judas who betrayed Him, the Roman soldiers who mocked and executed Him, Pilate who sentenced Him, the whole society of evil men alienated from God who crucified Him. And extending beyond that, all the world of people who are caught up as children of

Satan in an anti-God, anti-Christ attitude.

What looked like the judgment of Christ was, in fact, the judgment of the world because at the cross, He won the victory and was ascended and at the right hand of the Father became the Lord and Judge of all. The whole Christ-rejecting world was judged by the cross of Christ. The verdict is in. The sentence is waiting. Every time a person dies, that sentence is executed, but for the whole world, that sentence will be fully executed in the day that He appears a second time to judge, Acts 17:31. The world said, "We tried Christ and judged Him." How wrong they were. He condemned the world. The world, every man in it from now on, is condemned. They're born condemned to death unless they repent and embrace Christ.

Second thing, massive effect: the ruler of this world will be cast out. Who's that? Satan, the prince of the power of the air, the ruler of this world. Satan was dethroned at Calvary. Again, this is a reversal of what you might think. It looked like Satan won. It looked like Satan triumphed, and the devils of hell thought there was a triumph. Satan had conquered Christ at Calvary, but in reality, Christ had crushed his head, dealt him the deathblow. Now, Satan fights from death row. He is a vanquished enemy. He had nothing on Christ. He has nothing on us. He is a conquered, defeated foe.

To the disciples on Thursday night, John 14:30, Jesus said, "Satan has nothing on Me. I crushed his head at the cross. Took away his power. He is cast out." You can see the progression of his being cast out. If you go to Revelation chapter 12, he's cast out and eventually chapter 20, he's cast out. Finally, he's cast into the lake of fire, which burns forever and ever. Satan is totally defeated by Christ at the cross. Hebrews 2:14 says that, "Through death He rendered powerless him who had the power of death - " that is, the devil, " - so that He might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives."

He destroyed the one who had the power of death. Death, for us, has no fear because in Christ we go right through death into everlasting life. This doesn't mean Satan is not around gasping like an animal with its head cut off. He flails around aimlessly, aimlessly, randomly, vilely, and wickedly, but he is a defeated enemy, who was defeated at the point at which it looked like he had won. The world thought they won over Christ. They lost. Satan though he won. He lost.

Finally, positive note of triumph, verse 32. "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth," if I am crucified. That's what that means. He's not talking about preachers lifting Him up, which we should do. He's not talking about people who should point to the cross and lift up Christ, which we should do. That's not what this is about. He is saying, "If I am crucified, I will draw all men to myself." All men, meaning all Jews, Gentiles, people from every tongue, tribe, nation of the planet. I will draw them all to myself. He, at the cross, provides the work by which all can be saved. Children of God from all over the world.

This is the fruit of the grain going into the ground and dying, as He said back in verse 24. It is because He is crucified that He can draw men to Himself. It is in death that He gives life. Everything is an enigma. Everything is reversed. The world thinks it judged Him. It was judged. Satan thinks it condemned Him. He was condemned. You look at Christ and you assume He is completely defeated. The truth is He is triumphant at the cross and has done a work by which He can gather the elect throughout all history. He was talking about, verse 33 says, the kind of death He would die: His crucifixion, His crucifixion.

So His anguish becomes anticipation. His trouble becomes triumph. As He sees in the cross the glory of God, the overthrow of evil, the end of Satan, the drawing of all men to Himself. He weighs the gain and because He can see the joy that is before Him, He despises the shame. He will gladly pay the purchase price because the gain of the glory of God, the overthrow of evil, the end of Satan, the drawing of all men is worth the price.

So what was the reaction to this incredible moment where He describes His death? The crowd then answered Him, "We have heard out of the law that the Christ or Messiah is to remain forever. And how can you say the Son of Man must be lifted up?" Again, they know what that means. "Who is this Son of Man?" Ah, this is a turning folks. On Monday, they were hailing Him as the Messiah. That begins to go downhill on Tuesday when He attacks the temple. It's really going downhill now because they all know He is saying, "I will be crucified," and they are saying, "Wait a minute. The Son of Man?" that Old Testament term from Daniel chapter 7, the Son of Man, the Messianic term. "The Son of Man is to remain forever." And they were right about that. He is the everlasting Father in Isaiah 9. He has an everlasting kingdom in Daniel 7. So who is this Son of Man who will be crucified?

Because they don't understand Isaiah 53, they don't believe Isaiah 52. They don't understand Daniel 9, that He would be cut off, Zechariah 12:10, that He would be pierced. They only see a Messiah who sets up an everlasting kingdom, and so the cross, Paul says 1 Corinthians 1 is to the Jews a what? Stumbling block, stumbling block. "What Son of Man is this?" So we're starting down from Monday to Friday pretty fast, aren't we? This is Wednesday, maybe even Thursday. By Friday, they're convinced this man needs to die. Perhaps, they didn't even think about the fact that in His crucifixion, He was fulfilling exactly what He said. This is the scope of the death of Christ in His own simple words before the cross. Staggering.

Father, we thank you for the greatness of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank you that the results of the cross have been going on ever since the event, and even before; how that the cross reaches back in history and forward in history to gather all who believe. We thank you for the majesty of the cross. We thank you that in His dying, His willingness to go through the troubling reality of horrible darkness and alienation from you and the bearing of fury over sin that He didn't commit, and the willingness to be the substitute and the sacrifice. He judged the world, condemned the arch enemy, and has drawn all the redeemed from all history to Himself. What a glorious cross. What a glorious cross.

Thank you, Lord, that He was in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin. He who wept, He who was troubled, tortured by the obvious realities of sin, and most troubled by having to bear sin was triumphant in the trouble. He shows us that the conflict is not sin and that triumph brings you glory. May we so live to follow our Master and triumph over our own temptations to be disobedient to you. Give us victory through the pattern of our Lord in His cross, as you have given us salvation through His cross. We ask these things in His name. Amen.

END

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