

Lent 2017

"For This Purpose I Have Come to This Hour"

John 12:27-36

Main Idea: Jesus came into the world to accomplish the redemptive purposes of God.



Vs. 27 – John does not include an account of the Lord's agony in Gethsemane, but he alerts us nevertheless, by citing the Lord's words here, to the terrible ordeal that the Lord knew he faced and his human recoil from it. Some have suggested that, "Father, save me from this hour?" should probably be read as an actual prayer, with an exclamation point not a question mark at the end. In that case we would have something similar to the Lord's "Take this cup from me," in Gethsemane [Carson, 440]. The question as to whether Jesus was offering up an actual prayer or asking a question is overshadowed by the fact of his determined obedience to the Father's will.

Vs. 28 – Jesus' chief concern was the glory of the Father. His prayer, "Father glorify your name," will be answered in the cross.

This is one of three instances in the Lord's ministry when the Father speaks with an audible voice. "I have glorified it" is probably in reference to Jesus' entire life and ministry. "I will glorify it," would then be a reference to the Lord's death and resurrection. The Father is glorifying himself in the life and work of his Son.

Vs. 29 – When the Lord spoke to Paul on the road to Damascus, his companions heard the sound but couldn't make out the voice.

Vs. 30 – How are we to understand Jesus' statement that the voice from heaven which the others seemed to not understand was for the crowd's benefit or his disciples' benefit and not for his own? First, it is common in Semitic languages to put a relative contrast in absolute terms. No doubt we should understand the Lord to mean that the voice came more for their sake than for his, not that it was of no benefit to him. But, as with many things that happened during the ministry, later on, when understanding dawned, this would be all very important for the disciples to remember and understand. How important later to know that God himself had said, before the cross, that it would be the means of his own glorification! Finally, that a voice did speak from heaven should lend urgency to what Jesus was about to say in vv. 31-33.

Vs. 31 – Jews thought that they were judging Jesus on the cross, but, in fact, God was judging them by means of the cross. The cross effects a separation from the children of light and darkness, a point already made in the Gospel. So, the cross is both judgment and salvation, depending upon the response of men to it. Again, though the cross might seem to be Satan's triumph, it will, in fact, be his defeat.

Vs. 32 – "lifted up" is used because the Lord was lifted up on the cross physically, but also, by the cross, was lifted up or exalted to glory.

The "all men" is a question, of course, because the Lord has already said that he wouldn't draw everyone to himself and, as a matter of fact, all men do not come to him. The "all" is meant to be taken as "all kinds." That is, through the death of Christ God will save men and women from among all the peoples of the earth.

Vs. 33 – "kind of death" refers to both the physical and spiritual nature of his death.

Vs. 34 – That Jesus would die ("lifted up") was contrary to their expectations of a this-worldly political ruler.

Vs. 35 – "lest the darkness overtake you" – Believe in the light you have so far been given and then the darkness that must come – when Christ is taken from them – will not overwhelm you. It won't be easier to believe in Christ after he is gone from the world.

Vs. 36 – Here the Lord makes explicit that he is speaking of the necessity of their *believing* in him. In Semitic idiom to be a "son of light" is to be a person whose life is characterized by light. You can't be a follower of Jesus and be half-hearted about the Light!

1. Jesus' death was agonizing

Vv. 27-28a

- Jesus words, "Now is my soul troubled," capture his knowledge of what he is facing in the cross. We must remember that in Jesus, God took on human flesh. He became a man. Jesus was possessed fully of a human nature. That means, among other things, that the prospect of execution on a cross was agonizing to him. Jesus understood the pain that awaited him. He also understood the coming agony of bearing the weight of the sin of all God's people. His "troubled" soul was not connected to doubt or unbelief. It was connected to the agony of becoming our sin-bearer.

2. Jesus' death was God-glorifying

Vv. 28b-30

- "Father glorify your name," was Jesus' prayer as he faced the cross.
- This prayer is the articulation of the very thing which had animated Jesus entire life. Jesus' death was not only an act of submission to the Divine will. His death was a positive act of accomplishment. By Jesus' death was the Father glorified. This forces the question: How did the Father glorify his name by the death of Jesus? The following two points help to answer that question.

3. Jesus' death was judgment-bringing

Vs. 31

a) Through the cross God judges the world.

- The cross represents the judgment of the world. The world condemns itself by its treatment of the Son of God. Their own actions testify against them. God's grace demonstrated in the cross puts in great relief the unrighteousness of the unbeliever.

b) Through the cross God judges Satan.

- "The prince of this world" is Satan. So much influence does Satan have over the minds of men that he may be described as their prince. But however much power and influence he may have in this world he is totally lacking before the power of God. Though it may have appeared to be the moment of his greatest triumph, the cross resulted in the final defeat of Satan.

4. Jesus' death was people-saving

Vv. 32-36

- "If we have not much to be saved from, why, certainly, a very little atonement will suffice for our needs." – B.B. Warfield
- By saying he will be "lifted up," Jesus is referring to both the manner and effect of his death. In being crucified he will quite literally be "lifted up." But this lifting up is also the means by which God will save all who believe. That Jesus died on a cross is an historical fact. That he died in the place of sinners is the true significance of that event.
- A period of redemptive history is coming to an end. Those with ears to hear the gospel must repent and believe now while there is still time.