

## 125. The Gospel of John—13:31-32

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*“But God!!”*

(12/6/20)

As we have entered into John chapter 13, we have entered into the day of our Lord’s crucifixion—roughly 15 hours from the cross.

The evening (and this final day) began in the upper room where Jesus and His Apostles were celebrating the Feast of Passover together.

As the evening progressed, Jesus dropped a bombshell revelation that one of them would betray Him—

**John 13:24-30 (NKJV)**

**<sup>24</sup> Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke. <sup>25</sup> Then, leaning back on Jesus' breast, he said to Him, "Lord, who is it?" <sup>26</sup> Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it." And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. <sup>27</sup> Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly." <sup>28</sup> But no one at the table knew for what reason He said this to him. <sup>29</sup> For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, "Buy those things we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor. <sup>30</sup> Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night.**

One author summed it up—

*“The instant Judas was gone, the atmosphere was cleared, and Jesus began to instruct His disciples and prepare them for His crucifixion and His ultimate return to heaven.*

*It was after Judas’ departure that He instituted the Lord’s Supper, something that Judas as an unbeliever certainly could not share. Judas was out in the night, controlled by the prince of darkness, Satan; but Jesus was in the light, sharing love and truth with His beloved disciples. What a contrast!”*

**John 13:31-32 (NKJV)**

<sup>31</sup> So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. <sup>32</sup> If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately.

At first glance, this statement by Jesus seems a little confusing, a little hard to understand—let's break it down.

**“So, when he [Judas] had gone out, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man is glorified.”**

The word **“Now”** indicates that the events that will lead to Jesus being glorified (the crucifixion and resurrection)—have now been set in motion!

And like a pregnant woman entering the beginning of labor pains—once they start, nothing will stop her baby from coming.

Even so with the historic and monumental events of the next 3 days, now that they have been set in motion (Judas' betrayal of Jesus)—nothing will stop these final events from coming to pass leading up to the ‘new birth’ of Christ from the grave.

**Acts 2:22-24 (NKJV)**

<sup>22</sup> "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know-- <sup>23</sup> Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; <sup>24</sup> whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.

The word translated **“pains”** means *“birth pangs,”* suggesting that the **tomb** was a *“womb”* out of which Jesus was “born” with a glorified resurrection body.

And so, the events that would transpire over the next few days would glorify Jesus—even though most people don't think of the crucifixion of Christ in terms of glory—but rather in defeat.

One author—

*“His death might have seemed like defeat, yet it was the means by which lost sinners could be saved. It was followed by His resurrection and ascension, and He was greatly honored (and glorified) in it all.”*

**John 13:31-32 (NKJV)**

<sup>31</sup> So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. <sup>32</sup> If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately.

This statement was, first and foremost, Jesus way of saying (once again) that He and the Father were One (stressing His divinity)—and that whatever glorified the Son would also glorify the Father and vice versa.

One author put it well—

*“God is glorified in the work of the Savior. It proclaimed Him to be a holy God who could not pass over sin, but also a loving God who did not desire the death of the sinner; it proclaimed how He could be a just God, yet be able to justify sinners. Every attribute of deity was superlatively magnified at Calvary.”*

This author introduces something I’d like to spend the rest of our time on this morning, because in a nut shell, it is the theme of the entire Bible—the problem of sin and the redemption of mankind!

The problem of sin was no small problem to deal with—it was really the problem of the ages:

*“How can a holy God ever have fellowship with fallen sinners?”*

You see, most people don’t realize how desperate a condition sin has put them in—Paul described it this way in Ephesians 2:

**Ephesians 2:1-3 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup> And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, <sup>3</sup> among whom also we all once conducted ourselves

in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

Here in these verses Paul tells us that before we knew Jesus 4 things characterized our lives—we were:

1. *Dead in trespasses and sins—v.1*
2. *In bondage to Satan—v.2*
3. *Controlled by the lusts of our flesh (fallen nature)—v.3a*
4. *Under God's Wrath (doomed to spend eternity in hell)—v.3b*

Now, even though this is true of all people before they come to Jesus for salvation—let's be honest—it isn't a message the world wants to hear.

It isn't politically correct to tell people that they are sinners and that no amount of good works is going to make them right with God and *good* in His eyes (if they even believe in the God of the Bible at all!).

And yet, this is where 'religion' makes its entrance into people's lives.

Religious people have come to believe that if they go to church and offer God rituals, ceremonies, the lighting of candles, the praying of rosaries and other assorted *religious* good works—these things *will* cleanse them of their sins and earn them a place in heaven someday.

And yet God's Word makes it clear that fallen, sinful people can't do *anything* (not even in the way of *religious* works) to cleanse themselves of their sin in the eyes of God:

**Proverbs 20:9 (NKJV)**

<sup>9</sup> Who can say, "I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin"?

**Jeremiah 13:23 (NKJV)**

<sup>23</sup> Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? *Then* may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil.

You see we can't change what we are by *nature*—even though we may modify our *behavior*.

In other words, unbelievers can stop drinking, smoking, and sleeping around.

They can and often do change their *outward* behavior but that doesn't mean in the eyes of God they are clean on the *inside*.

Jesus called the Pharisees '*whitewashed tombs*'—clean on the outside but filthy and defiled on the inside. (Explain)

At this point most people would protest by declaring—“*But I'm a good person!*”

**Proverbs 20:6 (NKJV)**

<sup>6</sup> Most men will proclaim each his own goodness...

And yet in Matt.19:17 Jesus said that “*no one is good but God.*”

Notice Jesus didn't say that “*no one is as good as God*”—He said, “*no one is good but God.*”

You see the Bible defines goodness as '*moral perfection*'—and only God is morally perfect.

Most people will say, “*I know I'm not perfect—but I think I'm good enough to get into heaven.*”

But God is telling us in His Word that if you're not morally perfect (in thought and deed)—you're not good enough to get into (earn) heaven! (James 2:10)

Again, God's Word is clear that no human being (apart from Jesus) is perfect—

**Romans 3:23 (NKJV)**

<sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (sinless perfection) ...

**Romans 6:23 (NKJV)**

<sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin *is* death (eternal death—hell) ...

And that is basically what Paul is saying here in the first few verses of Ephesians 2—that fallen man is *hopelessly* lost.

And after lowering us deeper and deeper into the pit of hopelessness and despair by reminding us of our predicament—how that we were separated from God by Adam's sin, we were slaves of the devil and doomed to spend eternity apart from God in hell.

Paul suddenly takes us from the pit of despair and skyrockets us to the heights of absolute joy by proclaiming—“**But God!!**” (Eph.2:4)

In other words, “*We were doomed to spend eternity in hell—But God intervened!! But God came to our rescue!!*”

**Ephesians 2:4-5 (NKJV)**

<sup>4</sup> But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

Until a person sees themselves as a sinner and realizes the utter hopelessness of their predicament, they will never see their need for a Savior.

Which means—they will never cry out to Jesus to save them!

Now this is where the preaching of the true gospel comes in.

- The gospel isn't a 'pillow' to make a person's life more comfortable—it's a 'life-preserver' designed to rescue people who are drowning in the destructive power of sin and headed for an eternity of condemnation of hell!
- The gospel isn't 'happy talk'—a positive message that is designed to make people feel good or happy about themselves—it's a brutal indictment of our sinful lives and how only by Jesus dying for us on the cross is there hope of escaping the fires of hell.

In that regard, the gospel is a *warning* for people to flee judgment by running into Christ for salvation and safety—kind of like a tornado siren today (no one feels comforted or happy when a tornado siren begins to sound!)

Too many pastors and preachers have stopped urging people to receive Jesus as the One Who will save them from hell.

Instead, they have turned Him into a sanctified 'butler' whose job it is to save them from all the discomforts of life.

As one pastor put it—*"For these folks, prayer then becomes 'ringing a little bell', calling for Butler Jesus to bring them up another pillow."*

John the Baptist and Jesus Himself were both '*hell-fire and damnation preachers*.'

The whole point in preaching the gospel is to tell people that they are lost and hell-bound—but God loves them and gave His Son to save them!

To save them from hell and to bring them into His family so that He can have blessed fellowship (communion) with them.

And so when Jesus said He would be glorified by going to the cross—He was talking about solving the greatest problem facing the human race—

*“How can a holy God ever have fellowship with fallen sinners when He clearly said through the prophet Habakkuk that He can’t even bear to look upon sin let alone have fellowship with sinners?”*

The Holy Spirit writing thru the Psalmist touches on this very issue—

**Psalm 85:10 (NKJV)**

<sup>10</sup> Mercy and truth have met together; Righteousness and peace have kissed.

This verse deals with the cosmic problem of the ages—

- How can God show *mercy* to fallen man by not sending him to hell and still be *true* to His Word—*“The soul that sins shall surely die?”*
- How can a righteous God ever have *peace* with unrighteous sinners so as to enter into *fellowship* with them?

The answer of course is the CROSS! (Comment)

Someone has written in response to Eph. 2:1-4—

**“But God...”** is the answer to the greatest dilemma the human race has ever faced—

*‘How can a holy and righteous God, who cannot bear to look upon sin, ever have fellowship with sinners and allow them into heaven?’*

The answer—*“But God sent His Son to die for our sins and offer us heaven as a free gift.”*

**“But God...”** is where life—real life, eternal life begins.

People say, “I have made a mess out of my life, I have hit the bottom, I have tried to change, to live a good life but I keep falling back into the same old habits, I can’t change”— *“But God has promised that through His Son He can change me and give me a new life.”*

**“But God...”** is the solution to any problem we face in life—



“My marriage is so bad that I believe it’s impossible for me to fix it”— **“But God** *can fix it, for with God nothing shall be impossible.*”

“I’ve just been told that my company has to lay me off and because of my age I don’t know who’s going to hire me or how I’m going to provide for my family”— **“But God** *has promised to take care of me and my family because I am His child.*”

“I have been diagnosed with terminal cancer, the doctors say there is nothing more they can do, it’s hopeless”— **“But God** *can heal me and if He chooses not to He will take me to heaven to be with Himself forever because I’ve received Jesus as my Lord and Savior.*”

The atheist doesn’t say **“But God”** he defiantly rails, **“No God”**—“*There is no God, but man...*” or “*There is no God, but science...*” or “*There is no God, but human government, or modern medicine, or “... ”* The atheist cries out—“**No God**”!

The religionist confidently cries, **“And God”**— “*It is me, my goodness, my religious works and God that will get me into heaven!*”

But like Paul all true Christians shout, **“But God!”**— “*I was helpless and without hope in this world, doomed to spend eternity in hell—But God came to my rescue!*”

Jesus said, “*I have come to seek and to save those who are lost*”—but only those who acknowledge their lost, who acknowledge their guilt and need for a Savior can be saved.

Only those who acknowledge the hopelessness and helplessness of trying to earn heaven and cry out to Jesus to save them will find forgiveness and eternal life.

Only those who are ‘poor in spirit’ (bankrupt to do anything to earn salvation) can be saved—even as Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount—“*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs (and theirs alone) is the kingdom of heaven.*”

Only those who acknowledge the predicament sin has put them in—can cry out (and will cry out) to Jesus to save them.

Only then will you be able to say—“*I was lost. I was dead in trespasses and sin. I was doomed to spend eternity in hell—“But God!! Who is rich in mercy, who gave His Son for me has saved me!!!”*”

And so when Jesus said He would be glorified by going to the cross—now you understand more fully what He was talking about!

**John 13:31 (NKJV)**

<sup>31</sup> So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him.

How did Jesus glorify the Father?

1. *By obeying Him fully—"I always do those things that please My Father."* (John 8:29)
2. *By representing Him perfectly—"If you've seen Me you've seen the Father..."* (John 14:9)
3. *By finishing His ministry—"the work the Father gave Him to do."* (John 17:4b)

That is also how we glorify the Father.

**John 13:32 (NKJV)**

<sup>32</sup> If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately.

**"If God is glorified in Him,"** (and He is), **"God will also glorify Him in Himself"—**

God the Father will see that appropriate honor is given to His beloved Son—

**Psalms 2:7-9 (NKJV)**

<sup>7</sup> "I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You *are* My Son, Today I have begotten You. <sup>8</sup> Ask of Me, and I will give *You* The nations *for* Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth *for* Your possession. <sup>9</sup> You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.' "

**Isaiah 9:6-7 (NKJV)**

<sup>6</sup> For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His

shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.<sup>7</sup> Of the increase of *His* government and peace *There will be* no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

That will be the glory the Father will give to the Son *someday* (at His Second Coming, when He comes to establish His Kingdom upon the earth).

But Jesus said the Father will “**glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately** [without delay].” (v.32)

God the Father fulfilled this prediction of the Lord Jesus by raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His own right hand in heaven.

God would not wait until the Kingdom was ushered in—He would **glorify** His Son **immediately**.

**Psalm 110:1 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup> The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."

The future glory of Jesus will be when He reigns over all the earth during the Millennial Kingdom Age.

If you want to be part of that Kingdom *then*—you must bow the knee to Jesus *now*! (Elaborate)

As we have entered the Christmas season—this is ultimately what we’re celebrating.

The Baby Jesus lying in that manger was the very embodiment of the words—“**BUT GOD!!**”