

Exegesis

Vs. 27-28 – "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour." The Greek word translated as "troubled" is **ταράσσω** (tah-ras-sō), and it refers to "agitation, horror, convulsion, and shock of spirit."¹ John uses this term seven times (cf. 5:4, 7; 11:33; 12:27; 13:21; 14:1, 27). As the Synoptics make clear (cf. Mat. 26:36–46; Mar. 14:32–42; Lu. 22:39–46), so, too, does John make plain that Jesus did not go to the cross "steeped in dispassionate unconcern."² Like a still pool disturbed by the violence of a thrown rock, the Lord's very soul—i.e., his innermost self—was deeply distressed by the cross looming on the horizon. The wrath of God (which was not directed toward Jesus at all but to mankind) unsettled even the Father's own Son. And, under normal circumstances, a child would not be expected to take the place of his father's enemies. Yet, that is precisely what God did, as the Lord says, "for this cause came I unto this hour." *Jesus was born to die*. And this is why Jesus prefaces his hypothetical request, "Father, save me from this hour," with the rhetorical question, "what shall I say?"³ Though Jesus wanted to pray that he would be saved from the cross, he knew such a request would not be granted.⁴ Now that this fateful "hour" had begun to chime, he could not avoid the tolling bell. They would ring on until midnight.

And so, what is this particular Son supposed to do when given a task he does not want to do? Do we see him disobey his Father's will? No. Amidst the turmoil of this moment, with a grizzly death bearing down upon him, Jesus says, "Father, glorify thy name." The *glory* of God's name was a more significant motivator for Jesus than the *agony* that awaited him. This is not to minimize the pain that Jesus would endure. A crucifixion stands as the worst form of execution in all of human history.⁵ If anything, this ought to demonstrate how important God was to Jesus. The value of his Father's name outweighed whatever suffering he would experience. His obedience to God demanded that he ascend his throne atop Golgotha's hill. What's more, it is God's own glory that also compels God to act, as Ezekiel 36:22 says, "Thus says the Lord God: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name,

¹ Beasley-Murray (1999), p. 212.

² Carson (1991), p. 440.

³ Köstenberger (2008), p. 381; Morris (1995), p. 528-529.

⁴ Contra. Carson (1991), p. 440, and Beasley-Murray (1999), p. 212, who say that this was a genuine prayer that Jesus quickly modified in light of God's will. While this interpretation would be accurate in explaining Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane (cf. Lu. 22:42), with John, Jesus is giving voice to his reasoning in vs. 27 and in vs. 28 ("Father, glorify thy name.") he is giving us his actual prayer. It's a hypothetical immediately followed up by the actual petition.

⁵ Few forms of execution can match how a crucifixion balances torment and humiliation over time. A person wasn't simply supposed to die when crucified; it was designed to maximize societal, mental, and physical suffering.

which you have profaned among the nations to which you came."⁶ When the glory of Yahweh's name is at stake, the Lord himself will rise to defend it (cf. Ps. 79:9; Isa. 63:14; 66:5; Ezek. 38:23).⁷

John now cuts in and says, "Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." In Luke, an angel was sent to strengthen Jesus in Gethsemane (cf. Lu. 22:43); in John, it was the voice of his Father.⁸ Everything that Jesus did was to glorify God (cf. 8:49-50). And here is verbal testimony from God himself that his Son accomplished what he set out to do. Not only that, everything that Jesus is *about* to do "will glorify [God's name] name again." Knowing everything from beginning to end, God knows already what he and his Son will do when it is time for them to do it. Jesus will go to the cross; God will glorify himself in that hour. As Klink points out, "the Father's remark, "I will glorify it again," offers confirmation that in this moment of anguish, filled with decision to love or hate life in this world (v. 25), the Father is confident in the service of the Son; so confident that he predicts it—and his predictions never fail!"⁹

Vs. 29-30 – Though John's readership was under no doubts as to who it was that spoke, God's voice was met with confusion: "The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me but for your sakes." It seems that the reason Jesus prayed out loud while standing before Lazarus' tomb (cf. 11:41-42) is the same reason that God responded to Jesus here: *both spoke audibly for the audience's* benefit. Jesus did not need confirmation, but the people did.

That the crowd characterized God's voice as resembling both booming like "thunder" (cf. Ex. 19:16, 19) and heavenly like an "angel" indicates that it is unlikely anyone actually heard what was said.¹⁰ So many things were happening so fast that it was hard to keep up. But even if they had heard the words, one doubts whether the people would've understood their meaning. Nevertheless, whether intelligible or not, the sound was enough to punctuate Jesus' words. Hence, this is why Jesus says, "This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes." The timing alone should've given the crowds an indication that what Jesus was saying had gravitas.¹¹ Jesus had just prayed, "Father, glorify thy name," and the heavens responded in a

⁶ Carson (1991), p. 441.

⁷ Köstenberger (2008), p. 381.

⁸ Kruse (2017), p. 312.

⁹ Klink (2016), p. 553.

¹⁰ As Keener (2012), 2:877, points out, "On theological level, however, this merely testifies to the depth of their incomprehension; even when God speaks from heaven, they cannot understand or believe."

¹¹ Morris (1995), p. 530, "Clearly John wants us to think of a sound audible to all, even if the meaning was not."

thundering disembodied angelic voice.¹² As such, the people had better pay attention. Interestingly, every time God speaks in the N.T., he does so to emphasize Jesus' importance to others. In his baptism, God declares Jesus to be his Son before all in attendance (cf. Mat. 3:17). In his transfiguration, God ensures Jesus' disciples focus their attention on his Son, not Moses and Elijah (cf. Mat. 17:5).

Vs. 31-33 – Jesus unpacks the significance of this moment by explaining, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die." Given that "now" is repeated twice, Jesus is emphasizing that particular moment in human history. And, contextually, he's harkening back to the arrival of the Greeks (cf. vs. 23). Little did the group know that when they asked Philip, "Sir, we would see Jesus," they would trigger the "judgment of this world" whereby the "prince of this world" would "be cast out" and they would be brought in. Hence, Jesus welcomes not only the Greeks but any and all who would willingly come to "see" him.¹³

And who, exactly, would be able to stop Jesus? No one. "Prince of this world" is, of course, a reference to Satan (cf. 8:44; 13:2, 27; 14:30; 16:11; 17:15; 1 Jn. 5:19; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2).¹⁴ So, through Jesus' death, the Devil's power will break; through his own plans, the Devil will damage himself.¹⁵ The phrase "will be cast out," is language used most often in the context of demon possession.¹⁶ So, the Devil will be, quite literally, *exorcised* from this world through the cross. "Satan fails, because with the crucifixion he has lost all grounds of appeal against sinful humanity; redemption has been achieved through Jesus' vicarious sacrifice."¹⁷ Or, as Paul put it in Rom. 8:31, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" The Devil's dethronement and Christ's enthronement coincided on Calvary.¹⁸ It was the point at which Jesus was exalted, and Satan humiliated.¹⁹

And with Satan's expulsion comes the inclusion of many. Jesus said if he "be lifted up," he "will draw all men unto" himself. The phrase "lifted up" would've immediately been understood as a reference to the act of crucifixion, as it was a common euphemism for that particular form of

¹² Beasley-Murray (1999), p. 212.

¹³ Carson (1991), p. 444, "This is the implicit answer to the Greeks: the hour has come for him to die and be exalted, and in the wake of that passion/glorification they will be able to approach him as freely as do the children of the old covenant."

¹⁴ Kruse (2017), p. 313.

¹⁵ Keener (2012), 2:880.

¹⁶ Klink (2016), p. 555.

¹⁷ Köstenberger (2008), p. 385; Job 1:9-11; 2:3-5; Rev. 12:10.

¹⁸ Klink (2016), p. 555.

¹⁹ Carson (1991), p. 443, "Although the cross might seem like Satan's triumph, it is in fact his defeat."

capital punishment.²⁰ Meaning the very act of Jesus' body being hoisted on a cross will be the same thing that attracts humanity to God. Though, to be sure, not everyone will get it.²¹ For some, the cross will be a stumbling block and an embarrassment, while for those who understand the true meaning of the crucifixion, it will be a beacon leading wayward vessels home (cf. 1 Cor. 1:22-25; Heb 2:14-15). But the lesson here is that God does the drawing when his Son is exalted. Lifting the name of Jesus Christ will captivate the hearts of captives, liberating them from bondage by the power of the gospel. And sheep of many different pastures will become one flock when they hear the voice of their shepherd calling (cf. 10:16; Rev 5:9; 13:7). All of this will be accomplished through a Roman execution. Who would've thought such a horrible device would be used to bring about something so good and so beneficial?

²⁰ Beasley-Murray (1999), p. 214; Keener (2012), 2:881, "An ancient audience would readily grasp the wordplay involved...A writer could also tell that Alexander promised that whoever had killed Darius would be rewarded by being "lifted up"; when the murderers came forward, he fulfilled his words literally by crucifying them. More importantly, the Hebrew Bible already played on the double meaning of exalted or hanged (Gen. 40:13, 19-22)."

²¹ Klink (2016), p. 556, "While the drawing is not universally applied (not all are drawn), it is universally effective for those who are drawn."

VIDEO DESCRIPTION

Wednesday Night Live | John | Week 35

Text: John 12:27-33

Jesus felt real, human emotion. The Lord was no stranger to anger, joy, or even dread. For instance, Jesus did not stoically grapple with the idea of his crucifixion. As he neared Golgotha, he gave voice to his anxiety and unease. Luke describes how the Lord was so stressed his sweat turned to blood (cf. Lu. 22:44)! John, too, made sure to mention Jesus' agony. Like a still pool disturbed by the violence of a thrown rock, the Lord's very soul—i.e., his innermost self—was deeply distressed by the cross looming on the horizon. The wrath of God (which was not directed toward Jesus at all but to mankind) unsettled even the Father's own Son. Yet, despite his sorrow, the Lord will not avoid Calvary. Why? Because the *glory* of God's name was a more significant motivator for Jesus than the *agony* that awaited him.

Pastor's manuscript can be found here: