

## **John 66 –The Hour of Glory**

**10/25/2025**

### **Scripture 1: (Jn. 12:20-33 ESV)**

Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."

Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.

And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 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. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 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.

"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. Father, glorify your name."

Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."

The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him."

Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."

He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

### **Sermon:**

During the three primary feasts (festivals), 1<sup>st</sup> Century Jerusalem must surely have been a sight to behold. This was the height of Judaism's public and social influence. This was the public height of visible Jewish devotion, unmatched even by the 20<sup>th</sup> Century expression following the present nation of Israel's establishment in 1948. The Law of Moses declared, "*Three times in the year shall all your males appear before the Lord GOD.*" (Exod. 23:17 ESV), requiring their attendance at the Tabernacle/Temple for the three Feasts of Passover, Weeks, and Tabernacles. Therefore, every year the population of Jerusalem swelled three times as every adult male Jew in Judea and many Hellenistic Jewish men traveled there from all across the Roman Empire.

This exceptional population increase created an extremely volatile situation since there were far too many people in way too little space. These festivals brought an influx of belligerent (and possibly rebellious) men of military age, without the calming presence of their wives and children. The Romans under Pontius Pilate, in response to this cycle, regularly increased their military presence in Jerusalem (Josephus *Antiquities* 18:55-59), reassigning Legionnaires from their principle post in Caesarea Maritima to Jerusalem. They would have been stationed or barracked at the Fortress Antonia (Josephus *Antiquities* 15:292-293), located outside the northwest corner of the Temple Mount, or in the governor's palace that had previously been King Herod's, located in the western part of the city. During these times, Jerusalem was a powder keg, ready to explode, especially during Passover.

Jerusalem was filled with young and angry men: a social group that felt oppressed by foreigners and pagans, who were dreaming about national freedom and Jewish self-rule, and utterly convinced of the singular truth and rightness of their faith and religion. Josephus records an incident that occurred soon after Pilate was appointed, that is helpful to understand how tense the social/religious/political situation actually was, on that day when Jesus entered the city just before Passover.

But now Pilate, the procurator of Judea, moved the army from Caesarea to Jerusalem, to take their winter quarters there, in order to abolish the Jewish laws. So he introduced Caesar's effigies, which were upon the ensigns, and brought them into the city; whereas our law forbids us the very making of images; on which account the former procurators were wont to make their entry into the city with such ensigns as had not those ornaments. Pilate was the first who brought those images to Jerusalem, and set them up there; which was done without the knowledge of the people, because it was done in the night time; but as soon as they knew it, they came in multitudes to Caesarea, and interceded with Pilate for many days that he would remove the images; and when he would not grant their requests, because it would tend to the injury of Caesar, while yet they persevered in their request, on the sixth day he ordered his soldiers to have their weapons secretly, while he came and sat upon his judgment seat, which seat was so prepared in the open place of the city, that it concealed the army that lay ready to oppress them; and when the Jews petitioned him again, he gave a signal to the soldiers to surround them, and threatened that their punishment should be no less than immediate death, unless they would stop disturbing him, and go their ways home. But they threw themselves upon the ground, and laid their necks bare, and said they would take their death very willingly, rather than the wisdom of their laws should be transgressed; upon which Pilate was deeply affected with their firm resolution to keep their laws inviolable, and presently commanded the images to be carried back from Jerusalem to Caesarea. (Ant. 18:55-59 JOE)

The Jews were upset because Pilate had ordered the Legionnaires to carry images of Caesar into Jerusalem and placed them atop their standards. The Jews were upset because such images were considered idols and therefore, a violation of the Second Commandment. Prior Roman authorities had respected this Jewish attitude, but Pilate chose to rule forcefully and provocatively. These Jewish men were willing to follow the political process, first, by petitioning the governor to change his decision. But, after Pilate refused to change his mind and when he threatened their lives, they were willing to accept death rather than to see God's Law broken and the LORD dishonored by the Romans. That is how important the Second Commandment was to them; how far they were willing to go to ensure faithfulness and obedience to God's Law. These Jews were willing to live for their faith and to die for their faith.

So, on that day when Jerusalem received Jesus like a king, or Caesar, it was like a match being struck.

However, Jewish worshipers and Roman soldiers were not the only ones in Jerusalem at this time, for “...among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.””. The term translated here as “Greeks” is *Ellenes* <eng-en-es>, a term used specifically for people from Greece, although it is sometimes interpreted in the New Testament as “Gentiles” (Romans 1:16 NIV). The presence of these Greeks suggests several things.

- They may have been Greek pagans visiting Jerusalem to offer sacrifices, perhaps thinking to cover their spiritual bases much as their fellows in Athens were with their “altar to an unknown god” (Acts 17:23).
- They could have been wanting to meet with Jesus to philosophically discuss, or compare and contrast His doctrine against the Temple's orthodoxy.
- They might also have been legitimate “God-fearers”, like Cornelius (Acts 10:22), who believed in the LORD but, who had not yet been circumcised. As such, while sacrifices could have been offered on their behalf, they would not have been allowed to eat the Passover meal (Exodus 12:43-49).

But, whoever or whatever these Greeks were, their desire to see Jesus demonstrates that the Holy Spirit was already at work, drawing Gentiles to Christ. Meanwhile, the evangelist also uses this moment to note just how dramatically circumstances had changed around Jesus. Back in John 1:43, Jesus found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.” (Jn. 1:43 ESV). Then Philip went and found his friend Nathanael and told him, “Come and see.” (Jn. 1:46 ESV). But now, Gentiles and Greeks were coming them, respectfully asking, “Sir, we wish to see

*Jesus.*”, whereas before, they had to work and invite people to Jesus. After he received their request, “*Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.*”. The Greeks came to Philip. Philip went to Andrew, Peter's brother. Then together, Philip and Andrew went to Jesus. However, John does not tell us if they actually brought the Greeks with them, but I would expect that they did. So, they came to Jesus, “*And Jesus answered them...*”. I expect that He was probably answering their question about why these Greeks were interested in Him. “*...Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified."*”.

Now, the “*hour*” is something which John has mentioned three times before:

- at the wedding in Cana, when Jesus answered His mother, “*Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.*” (Jn. 2:4 ESV);
- while teaching during the most recent Feast of Tabernacles, “*So they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come.*” (Jn. 7:30 ESV);
- and again, after claiming God as His Father (John 8:16-19), “*These words he spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.*” (Jn. 8:20 ESV).

But finally, Jesus says that now, “*The hour has come...*”, yet the hour for what? “*...for the Son of Man to be glorified.*” The celebration in Cana was not the moment when Christ was meant to be glorified. Christ was not meant to be glorified during the Feast of Tabernacles, nor just shortly thereafter.

- But now was the time.
- Now, during the Passover festival.
  - Now, during the remembrance of the Israelites exodus from Egypt.
  - Now, on the anniversary of Israel being constituted as a people.
  - Now, during the memorial celebration of Israel national freedom; their “Independence Day”.
- Now, that is when, “*The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.*”

Then, Jesus explained what this “*hour*” was, and what it means to be glorified by God. He told them, “*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.*”. The “*hour*” would be his death, and this glory would be the fruit that comes as a result of His death. Although this metaphor, used by Jesus, was easily understandable to His audience, it is less so for us. But, if we re-frame it slightly, by replacing the image of wheat with corn, we have a visual that becomes easier for us to imagine.

Most everyone likes to eat corn, whether it is Sweet, Yellow, or Flint corn. Many of us eat it right off the cob, but we forget that every tasty kernel is itself a seed. We forget that every stalk in our corn fields, reaching for the sky, grew from one tiny kernel. We forget that, if we want to eat corn on the cob next season, then a kernel of corn must first be buried and die, before a stalk can burst forth from the earth carrying with it an abundance of life. A tiny kernel of corn may be ordinary, plain and simple, but a nine foot stalk with golden ears bursting out to the left and right is truly glorious. So,

- Just as a caterpillar “dies”, so that a butterfly may roam the skies, Jesus was just talking about change, right?

- As the Greek philosopher, Heraclitus<sup>1</sup>, said “You cannot step into the same river twice.”, since the water is constantly moving, changing and transforming the river, Jesus was talking about how we grow and change through life, right?
- Just as who we are today, is not the same as who we were ten years ago, right?

Wrong. Jesus continued, “*Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.*”. Whoa! Who said anything about {losing their life}? Nobody wants to sign up for that, do they? But, if you are confident enough in the truthfulness of your faith, then you will be willing to live and die for it.

The distinction which Jesus was making, concerns whether we prefer a life of wicked worldliness to righteous faithfulness; whether we prefer the domination of the usurper Satan or obedience to our heavenly Father. Jesus was saying that anyone, everyone, who prefers the slight joys experienced within a life dominated by sin's corruption, will lose even the little good and enjoyment that they have (Matthew 25:29). Whereas those who recognize the wickedness of the world, who confess and repent of their own personal sins, who turn to the LORD (Christ) in absolute faith, will be saved, persevered, and preserved into living life eternal with God.

- What do you want more: the fallen world as it presently is or the redeemed and restored world that is to come?
- Which do you want more: Satan's sinfulness or Christ's righteousness?

Then, Jesus declared, “*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.*”, concluding with a train of logic uniting His prior statements.

- *If anyone serves me, he must follow me;*”
  - Jesus's use of “service” (Greek: *diakoneo*) carries the same connotative sense as the Hebrew *evad*; the sense used to describe the religious service of the Levites (Numbers 3:7) and God's command to Adam {to work and keep} the Garden and all creation (Genesis 2:15).
    - This is also another, more subtle, divinity claim by Christ, echoing the obligation of God's people from Leviticus 22:55, “*For it is to me that the people of Israel are servants. They are my servants whom I brought out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.*” (Lev. 25:55 ESV). Therefore, our Christian service is to be obedient work.
  - Jesus's use of “follow” (Greek: *akolouthéo*) is interpreted in the sense of discipleship, giving us the word *acolyte*, because the term used literally describes a sequential or routine following. It describes the same kind of echo or copying that is done by dance students learning a new routine from their instructor. Jesus's use of “follow” means “to do as He does”. So, if we are serving Christ rightly, then we will be doing what He does, in the same way that He does.
    - This is where we generate the ideal of “Servant Leadership”; of leaders leading by example and leading for the good benefit of their followers.
- *...and where I am, there will my servant be also.*”
  - This statement actually makes logical sense to us because, if we are going to serve someone, then we need to be with them. But, it is also an expression concerning humanity's possession of the image of God and of a Christian's union with Christ.

<sup>1</sup><https://philosophy.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/122/2013/10/Heraclitus-Poetic-Ideas.pdf>

- Since Jesus Christ is both God and man, He is both God and God's image (representative). So, through our charitable and merciful service to others: those who also possess God's image; we are also serving Christ (Matthew 25:40).
- Since we, as Christians, are united into and united with Jesus Christ, whenever we do merciful and charitable works of service, we are doing them alongside Christ, as His image (Romans 8:29).
- *If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.*”
  - Therefore, if we are truly obedient followers of Jesus Christ:
    - then, we will love the LORD more than we love the world;
    - then, we will gladly “die” to ourselves and live for Christ;
    - then, we will be willing to suffer oppression, persecution, and even a martyr's death, like Jesus died, because of what we believe, because of the courage in Christian conviction and confidence in God's promises.
  - Therefore, we trust and believe that God our Father will also glorify us, as He has glorified God the Son: Jesus Christ, the *Logos* who is *Theos* and *Andros*. We believe that
    - we shall be glorified in our bodies, as Christ was glorified in His physical, resurrection body (1 Corinthians 15:42-44);
    - we shall be glorified in the fruitfulness of our works, as Christ's work is fruitful (as Galatians 1:24; John 15:8; 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12);
    - we shall be glorified as we glorify God, as we share in Christ's glory because it is our Father's glory (Romans 8:16-17; see also John 17:5, 10).

But still, what is “glory”? What does it really mean to be “glorified”?

Worldly glory is found in fame and fortune or, in power and influence, but, Godly glory is found within the Father's love and in Him being well-pleased.

After His initial response to Andrew and Philip, Jesus next pensively states, “*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. Father, glorify your name.*”. John shows us another glimpse into Christ's humanity, Jesus being “troubled”. He was nervous, concerned, or perhaps even worried about everything that He knew was soon to happen. Wondering whether He should ask and pray, “*Father, save me from this hour*”, as if God the Son could step away from His chosen path; one bound by an eternal covenant with God the Father {The Covenant of Redemption implied in Ephesians 1:3-14 and John 10:28-29, 17:9-11}. But, no. Jesus knew that He would do what He needed to do, explaining that “*...for this purpose I have come to this hour.*”. This “hour” has been the whole point and purpose of His entire ministry. Every miracle. Every moment of teaching. Every word He spoke and every action He took was done in anticipation and in support this “hour”; of this {hour of glory}.

Then, Jesus concluded His response with “*Father, glorify your name.*”, reminding us all, and perhaps comforting Himself, that everything would be purposefully done to and for God's glory.

Amazingly, “*Then a voice came from heaven: 'I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.'*”, as God the Father spoke. The Gospels record the LORD speaking three times during Jesus's life and ministry:

- following His baptism, “...and behold, a voice from heaven said, *“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”*” (Matt. 3:17 ESV; see also Mark 1:11 and Luke 3:22);
- following His transfiguration, “...and a voice from the cloud said, *“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.”*” (Matt. 17:5 ESV; see also 2 Peter 1:17-18);
- and now this.

While no reaction of the crowd is recorded following His baptism, after His closest disciples heard the voice on the mountain, they “...fell on their faces and were terrified.” (Matt. 17:6 ESV). Now, “*The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.”*”. Those who heard it either had {ears to hear} and believed, or they did not, excusing the voice as merely being a natural phenomena. Explaining what just happened, “*Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not mine.”*”. Jesus was, and is the eternal God. He did not need divine affirmation, but those around Him needed divine confirmation. The LORD spoke to testify to Jesus's truth.

{This occasion echoes Exodus 19 and 20, when the LORD initially gave the Law to Moses, “*And the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe you forever.”*”

*When Moses told the words of the people to the LORD, the LORD said to Moses, “Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments and be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. And you shall set limits for the people all around, saying, ‘Take care not to go up into the mountain or touch the edge of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death. No hand shall touch him, but he shall be stoned or shot; whether beast or man, he shall not live.’ When the trumpet sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain.”*

*So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and consecrated the people; and they washed their garments. And he said to the people, “Be ready for the third day; do not go near a woman.”*

*On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled. Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder.”* (Exod. 19:9-19 ESV)

AND

*“Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off and said to Moses, “You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die.”*

*Moses said to the people, “Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin.”*

*The people stood far off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was.”* (Exod. 20:18-21 ESV). God spoke to Moses from within the clouds covering the mountain for the people's benefit, not Moses's. The LORD spoke to Moses in Israel's hearing so that they would know and believe that God spoke to, and would speak through Moses. The people who saw and heard the awesome majesty of the LORD's voice at Mount Sinai believed, and they became justly terrified with reverent, righteous fear.}

Finally, Jesus concluded, “*Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.*”<sup>2</sup>. This was not the first time that Jesus spoke about this. This is the judgment<sup>2</sup>: the *krisis*. This was the decision point that Jesus had described earlier to Nicodemus. It was not the moment of decision, but the time of the eternal decision's implementation. Jesus had told Nicodemus, “*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.*”

***And this is the judgment:*** *the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.*” (Jn. 3:16-21 ESV)

- The *Logos* who is *Theos* and *Phos* had come into the world, not to condemn it but to save it.
- The “*ruler of this world*” would be cast out as the darkness flees before the light.

Meanwhile, “*...as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness (Numbers 21:1-9), so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.*” (Jn. 3:14-15 ESV)

- Everyone who loves the darkness, who belong to the darkness, shall flee from the beneficent presence of the Son of Man, condemning themselves before God the Son.
- Everyone who loves the light, who belong to the light, shall be drawn closely into the beneficent, loving presence of God.
  - The Greek of 12:32 reads, “*pantas elkuso pros emauton*”. Our translation of “*all people*” is an interpretive choice, historically repeated in most translations. It is really best understood as {“*all people*” whom Christ shall draw to Himself} rather than {“*all people*” in all times and places}. This is not an affirmation of universalism. Salvation continues to remain limited to the Elect. This use of “*all people*” refers to those people described in John 6:39 and 10:29 and 17:12.
  - Meanwhile, the {drawing} spoken of, is an indicative future active verb, referencing Christ is the sole actor and “*all people*” as being those acted upon. This rejects the semi-Pelagian “choice” for salvation, and rejects the idea of “potential salvation”. Instead, this reaffirms salvation, the drawing of the Elect to God, as being a monergistic divine work.

Through this conclusion, Jesus “*...said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.*”. Christ prophesied about a time coming soon:

- when He would be “*lifted up from the earth*”;
- a time like when “*Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness*”;
- a time when He would “*draw all people to [Himself]*”;
- and, a time when “*whoever believes in him may have eternal life.*”

However, when Jesus said, “*when I am lifted up from the earth*”, the disciples and the crowd heard {when I am exalted} rather than {when I am crucified}. But afterwards, when the Holy Spirit came, they remembered and they were caused to understand.

<sup>2</sup> See sermon John 20 – This is the Judgment (07/14/2024)

After repeatedly noting that it was not yet Jesus' hour, when Jesus finally declared that now, “*The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.*”, we may be surprised to discover that the hour of His glory was not during His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, but was His death upon the cross. Christ's “hour” of glory was the crucifixion: the work He came to do, for the purpose of our salvation; to save sinners, a status which we are all in competition to be the foremost (1 Timothy 1:15).

What a great and glorious piece of Good News! Finally, after now connecting these dots, we begin to better see how all the threads of redemptive history converge at the cross. Our redemption and merciful deliverance by Jesus Christ, as the only atoning substitute, is such glorious news that it is worth living for. The Joy and gracious benefit we receive in the forgiveness of our sins and our justification as righteous, through repentance and faith in Christ. We now get to enjoy loving fellowship with God. That glorious news is worth dying for over surrendering and compromising its truth.

While other religions command a person to die for their faith, Christianity is the only religion that commands we live for it. Yet also, since the Christian life is a life lived in consequence of our faith: we do the things we do because of what we believe Jesus has done for us; we risk dying for living our Christian faith. So, we may live confidently in hope, because it is also the only religion worth dying for, because of God's promises.

So, love the light and come into it. Repent of all your past sinfulness and wicked deeds. Trust Jesus Christ and believe that He has done what Scripture records, and that He will do all the Scripture promises. Trust Christ and serve Him by obeying Him. Love Christ and God our Father by loving others. Share this wonderful, good and glorious news with everyone you can!

Proclaim how one death on a Roman cross, something that the world considers to be the greatest shame, was the hour of God's glory. Show all the world what has happened to you because the Son of God, God the Son, lived and then died on that cross so that you would be forgiven of your sins; so that all of your shame would be washed away; so that you could experience joy and hope, all because God love you.

*“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”*

**AMEN**