

WE HAVE SEEN HIS GLORY

The Exaltation of Christ Among the Nations

INTRODUCTION

The Church will always have battles to face and conflicts to endure. For most, if not all of us this morning the conflict over the deity of the Holy Spirit isn't even on the radar. The discussion of whether Jesus is fully God and fully man, isn't even a question on our minds. Those debates seem so ancient they are hardly relevant. The earliest debate that the Church battled with was whether the Gentiles would be included in God's plan of salvation. That is probably not even a thought in your mind today – for the main reason we are all Gentiles, and we know we are saved.

Paul had to remind the Ephesian Christians of this: *“When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.”* (Ephesians 3:4–6, ESV)

It is hard for us to imagine, in the 21st Century, how anyone could conceive of a notion that non-Jews could not participate in Christ's salvation. Godly, well-meaning people, including Peter himself, struggled with this, though. It's almost beyond one's understanding. A group called Judaizers accepted the fact that Gentiles could be saved, but they believed that had to become “jewish” to be saved and they were not equal in status.

The matter started to be resolved when the Church debated the topic in what we call the Jerusalem Council (recorded in Acts 15). James, the Council chairman, sealed the deal in an amazing way. He quoted from Amos 9:11-12 where the prophet clearly affirms that the rebuilding of the house of David would be evidenced, in part, at a time when Gentiles will be called to the Gospel.

Why is this important to us today?

1. Every human being regardless of race, color, ethnicity, gender and social status is accepted into the Church based on faith in Christ, alone.
2. But there's a second reason why this is important. The passage we are examining is the first tangible sign of the universal scope of Christ's mission; and to make it interesting, Jesus, refers to the same passage in Amos, to support the point.

I love studying the Bible. Let's pray and read the text.

TEXT: John 4:31–42 (ESV)

In this passage, I'd like you to consider with me 3 things:

1. Let us see the passion of Jesus' ministry;
2. Let us reach back and see the prophetic foundation for Jesus' ministry (in Amos 9); and
3. Finally, let us see first hand what the real goal of missions is.

I – CHRIST'S PASSION FOR GLOBAL MISSIONS

We have already seen in John 3 that God's love for the world was such that He sent the world His one and only Savior. Jesus had been ministering in Judea. Now he signals to us that His ministry also extends into Samaria. Jesus was passionate about His universal mission. Here His words again:

"Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work." (John 4:34, ESV)

There is a pattern in John's Gospel that consistently moves from the physical to the spiritual. The disciples were concerned that Jesus had not ate yet. In fact, there's no evidence that he had even had any water yet. Jesus answered his disciples in such a profound way. He implied, there is no greater nourishment and no greater gratification than doing His Father's will and seeing it through to the end.

We should just stop and consider this. We need food and water to live. Jesus is saying that they are of no consequence to our lives compared to doing the will of God. Now we get a sense of what it meant at the beginning of this story where John writes, "And he had to pass through Samaria."¹

Jesus is passionate about taking the Gospel to the whole world – all nations. In this story we have a sign of this occurring. Jesus left Judea (with Nicodemus in John 3) and now moves into Samaria (John 4). Does this not anticipate for us what Jesus will say to His Church in Acts 1:8 (ESV),

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth"?

What's the point? Worldwide global missions is more important to Jesus than food itself.

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 4:4). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

II – THE PROPHETIC REALIZATION OF GLOBAL MISSIONS

The passion of Jesus is obvious, but He also moves onward to show that this isn't some future dream of His. He warns His disciples "Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest?'"² The Bible often uses agricultural metaphors to make a point. In this verse Jesus is showing where these metaphors have limitations. Normally in farming the farmer plants in the spring and waits about 4 months to start to gather the harvest. Jesus teaches us that this doesn't work in the Kingdom. To do this, He reaches back to Amos to make His point. Turn with me to the book of Amos, to chapter 9. You will recall that I said in the introduction that verses 11-12 were interpreted by the early Church in a certain way. James taught that the restoration of Israel included the inclusion of the nations – the Gentiles.

Now Jesus gives another characteristic of this Messianic Kingdom. Let's read verse 13:

"Behold, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "when the plowman shall overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him who sows the seed; the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it." (Amos 9:13, ESV)

What is Jesus saying? He's saying that one of the evidences that my Kingdom has come; that the Gospel is going out to all the nations, is that "the treader of the grapes overtakes the sower". Let me say that a different way: the person sowing and the person reaping work together. Let me be more specific: Jesus is saying that there is no sowing, waiting 4 months and the harvesting. In the Kingdom of Jesus sowing and reaping go on together. Let's go back to John and see that for ourselves:

"Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.'" (John 4:36–37, ESV)

This is so encouraging on a couple levels.

1. "Jesus is then saying, 'You think a certain gap must exist between sowing and harvest, but I am telling you that I have just sown the seed and the harvest is already taking place' (referring either to the Samaritan woman or to the people of Sychar who are approaching)."³ "God's harvest is not like the earthly harvest. There is no gap between planting and harvest. When the gospel seed is planted, harvest begins immediately."⁴

² [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 4:35). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

³ Carson, D. A. (1991). [The Gospel according to John](#) (p. 229). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

⁴ Osborne, G. R. (2018). [John: Verse by Verse](#). (J. Reimer, E. Ritzema, D. Thevenaz, & R. Brant, Eds.) (p. 112). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

2. Secondly, Jesus says that “that sower and reaper may rejoice together.”⁵ There is equality in value and equality in joy between those who sow and those who reap. There are those who use their opportunities to sow seeds. Concurrently there are those who lead people to Christ. One is not more important than the other. Those who embrace the passion of Christ are promised great joy.

III – THE GOAL OF GLOBAL MISSIONS

In the story we read: “Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me all that I ever did.” So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.”” (John 4:39–42, ESV)

This mission of Christ is now displayed for everyone to see. “The woman had given her testimony in verses 28–29, and the townspeople had started out to see Jesus in verse 30.”⁶ The villagers ask Jesus to stay. Stop and think about that. The Gospel eliminates racism. The Gospel eliminates gender inequality. The Gospel eliminates issues of injustice.

And all this culminates in the confession of the Samaritan believers: “we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.”⁷ Not just of Jews. But as I said earlier, this mission among the Samaritans is the first signal marking Christ’s worldwide saving mission.

These Samaritan believers concluded that their Messiah was Jesus, the Jew from Nazareth and He was the “one and only Son” sent by God to save sinners from every nation. That is the goal of missions: to see everyone, from all nations exalt Christ.

I want to ask you? Is Christ going to fail? The answer is a resounding “no”. Turn with me to Revelation 5:9–10 (ESV)

⁹ *And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, ¹⁰ and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”*

⁵ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 4:36). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁶ Osborne, G. R. (2018). [John: Verse by Verse](#). (J. Reimer, E. Ritzema, D. Thevenaz, & R. Brant, Eds.) (p. 114). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

⁷ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 4:42). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

APPLICATION

The salvation of souls is more important than food itself. Those who plant and those who water are no less significant than those who harvest. The goal of missions is not social justice, not racial reconciliation, not gender equality, not education and food (all these being very important). The goal of missions is to proclaim Christ as the only Savior and see Him exalted among the nations.

One missionary is quoted as saying this: “Who wouldn’t like to end each day, putting our heads on our pillows, confidently saying, ‘I know this day my life has counted strategically for Christ’s global cause, especially for those currently beyond the reach of the gospel?’”

Everyone who plays a part is important. Some of you pray daily and specifically. Others of you give financially, give through encouragement, to send and sustain global missions. Some of you keep the fires burning by reading good missionary biographies. We all can play a part. May God enable us to do what He has enabled us to do. Hear these words from Scripture:

“He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.” (2 Corinthians 9:10–11, ESV)