

## **WE HAVE SEEN HIS GLORY**

### **The Glory of the Exclusivity of Christ**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Last Sunday I temporarily extracted the questions of Peter, Thomas and Philip and focused on the instruction of our Lord to the Eleven. He had announced His departure and encouraged His disciples by telling calling them not to be anxious, but to trust Him. Why? Heaven is a gloriously immense place with room enough for all God's people. Christ then promised His disciples that just as sure as He was going away; likewise, it would be as certain that He would return and take them to Himself – forever.

Amid this important conversation, 3 disciples ask 3 important questions. Each question leads to a deeper, more significant answer by our Lord.

- a. Peter asks, "Lord, where are you going?"<sup>1</sup>
- b. Thomas asks, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?"<sup>2</sup>
- c. Philip asks, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us."<sup>3</sup>

Let's read the passage together.

**Text: [John 13:36–38; 14:5–7](#) (ESV)**

*<sup>36</sup> Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward." <sup>37</sup> Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." <sup>38</sup> Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.*

*<sup>5</sup> Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" <sup>6</sup> Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup> If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."*

#### **Exposition**

##### **I - Peter's Question**

"Where are you going?" Peter asks. Jesus had already stated, "Where I am going you cannot come."<sup>4</sup> Jesus answers Peter more specifically, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow

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<sup>1</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 13:36). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>2</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 14:5). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>3</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 14:8). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

afterward.”<sup>5</sup> The Master Teacher is drawing His pupil with profound skill into a deeper truth. Previously Jesus had told the Pharisees that they could not go where He was going (see John 7:34). But to Peter he says, “You will follow me Peter, but not yet.”

The impetuous disciple that we love to watch isn’t going to give up. “Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.”<sup>6</sup> Jesus humbles the over-zealous disciple and tells him that rather than die for His Master, Peter will deny His Master. D. A. Carson rightly concludes that “. . . good intentions in a secure room after good food are far less attractive in a darkened garden with a hostile mob.”<sup>7</sup>

I suggest the deep, significant point to be made from this Q&A is found in the words of Jesus, “Will you lay down your life for me?”<sup>8</sup> Peter’s willingness to die for His Savior betray how desperately ignorant he was at this point as to why Christ must suffer and died. Peter’s understanding had not progressed much further than the day he said to our Lord, “*And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, ‘Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.’*” (Matthew 16:22, ESV). He will still maintain this same mindset at the arrest of Jesus when he draws his sword and cuts off the ear of the high priest’s slave (John 18:10).

Peter, as will many of the disciples, as will countless numbers of men, women, boys and girls will be martyred, as the centuries unfold, for the sake of Jesus, but no human being can ever lay down their lives instead of Jesus. Only Jesus, as the sinless sacrifice for the trespasses of the world, could go to the cross and die. Peter would learn that and remind us of that in his First Epistle:

*“He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.”* (1 Peter 2:24, ESV)

Notice the emphasis, “He himself bore our sins.” Back in the Upper Room, aside from the misplaced, good intentions of Peter, he missed the significant point. Jesus Christ is the one and only Savior of the world. No one else can die in Christ’s place. In a week or more this nation will remember the men and women who gave their lives in times of war for the freedoms we enjoy. Their deaths were important, and it is important to remember them. However not a single person who ever lived, or who will ever live die in our place for our sins. No other person qualifies as the sinless Lamb of God who was sacrificed for the sins of His people. This leads us then to Thomas’ question.

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<sup>4</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 13:33). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>5</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 13:36). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>6</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 13:37). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>7</sup> Carson, D. A. (1991). [The Gospel according to John](#) (p. 486). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

<sup>8</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 13:38). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

### Thomas' Question

Thomas asked our Lord, ““Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?””<sup>9</sup> It is interesting that Thomas would make this statement. In fact, Jesus has just spelled out the destination (vv. 2–3) and advised them that they *also* know the way (v. 4). We are told why he doesn’t get what Jesus is saying. Some commentators place the fault on Thomas’ personality of doubting, but we are not told. In my view it is not unusual for a person not to fully grasp what is clear to others. The question is important because it allows Jesus to be more specific.

*“<sup>6</sup> Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup> If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.””*

Remember the question “How can we know the way?” Jesus answers “I am the Way”. First, we note that Jesus Himself is “the way” to the Father. There He answers both questions: the destination is to the Father and He is the Way. But there is a second thing we should note, that is, He is the Way because His is the Truth and the Life. The ideas that Jesus is the Truth and the Life serve a supporting role to His answer: I am the Way. As John MacArthur comments: “Jesus declared that He is the way to God because He is the truth of God (1:14) and the life of God (1:4; 3:15; 11:25).”<sup>10</sup> Carson agrees, “Only because he is the truth and the life can Jesus be the way for others to come to God, the way for his disciples to attain the many dwelling-places in the Father’s house (vv. 2–3), and therefore the answer to Thomas’ question (v. 5).”<sup>11</sup>

Because he is the way, the truth, and the life, he is the only means of reaching the Father. “No one comes to the Father except through me.”<sup>12</sup> Then Jesus says something that the next questioner will pick up: “*If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.*”” (John 14:7, ESV)

### Conclusion

We are thankful this morning for the questioning hearts of Peter and Thomas. Christ’s answer to both is clear; and clearly provocative. It can be summarized by 2 points:

1. Jesus is the only Savior.
2. Jesus is the only means of reaching the Father

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<sup>9</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 14:5). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>10</sup> MacArthur, J., Jr. (Ed.). (1997). [The MacArthur Study Bible](#) (electronic ed., p. 1613). Nashville, TN: Word Pub.

<sup>11</sup> Carson, D. A. (1991). [The Gospel according to John](#) (p. 491). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

<sup>12</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 14:6). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Both thoughts are supporting of each other. "Jesus alone is able to provide access to God because he alone paid the penalty for our sins (Is 53:5; Heb 1:3)."<sup>13</sup>

That's the answer to the questions of many people. Why is Jesus the only way? Answer? Because He is the only Savior. That is why Jesus is "the savior of the world". That is not to say everyone will be saved. It means as Peter finally realized, "*And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*" (Acts 4:12, ESV). "Jesus is the only authorized revelation of God in human form and he is the only authorized representative of humanity to God."<sup>14</sup>

## Application

503 years ago, yesterday, Martin Luther, a monk, and a scholar, had struggled for years with his church, the church in Rome. But why was Luther so vexed on this date, October 31<sup>st</sup>? It was because on November 1<sup>st</sup>, called All Saints Day, a massive exhibit of newly acquired relics would be on display at Wittenberg, Luther's home city. Pilgrims would come from all over. They would kneel and worship before the relics. They were told that this would take hundreds, if not thousands, of years off time in purgatory. For Luther this was wrong.

So, the day before Luther took his pen and paper and wrote out what became known as his Ninety-Five Theses on October 31, 1517. These were intended to spark a debate, but it did far more than that. It revealed 2 things: One, The Roman Catholic Church was beyond rehabilitation. It needed Reformation.

From that day the light of God's truth shone upon a darkened church. From it the Reformers re-established the truth that the Bible is God's Word and it alone is our authority – not popes and councils. From that date the glorious Gospel of "faith alone in Christ alone." The truth of the priesthood of believers, corporate worship, congregational singing and the expository preaching of God's Word soon found their way into the life of the Protestant church.

The 62nd of Luther's Ninety-Five Theses simply declares, "The true treasure of the church is the most holy gospel of the glory and grace of God." Christ alone was the only Savior not the Church, or purgatory, not good works – not even Mary referred to by the Church of Rome as "co-redemptrix". Christ alone was the only mediator between God and man, not the priest, not dead saints, not Mary. Five hundred and three years ago the Gospel was re-discovered and released.

The truth that Jesus alone will provide access to God because he alone paid the penalty for our sins, is our only hope and glory.

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<sup>13</sup> Wellum, S. J. (2017). [Incarnation and Christology](#). In E. A. Blum & T. Wax (Eds.), *CSB Study Bible: Notes* (p. 1695). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

<sup>14</sup> *Expositor's Bible Commentary, The*, Pradis CD-ROM:John/Exposition of John/III. The Private Ministry of the Word (13:1-17:26)/B. The Last Discourse (13:31-16:33)/1. Questions and answers (13:31-14:31)/c. The question of Thomas (14:5-7), Book Version: 4.0.2