

John 12:27-36 – “The Son Must be Lifted Up” (Good Friday)– Mar. 29, 2024

1. One of the themes in the ministry of Christ is the move from dust to glory
 - a. From obscurity to clarity
 - b. Types and shadows to fulfillment
 - c. Old Covenant to New Covenant
2. The Scriptures show that Christ is better in every way (Heb. 8)
 - a. One of the primary ways in which Christ shows His superiority in the way that He reverses the curse of sin
 - b. Where previous covenant heads failed and were imperfect, Christ perfectly heads the new covenant so that it can fully accomplish everything it was intended to accomplish
3. Under the Old Covenant uncleanness spread
 - a. Haggai 2
 - b. When clean and unclean things touch, the clean is polluted by the unclean
 - c. This is why there are so many ceremonies and cleansings and regulations about sores, health, dead bodies, new babies, discharges of blood, etc.
 - d. These unclean things all polluted the clean things until some kind of ceremony took place to reverse the uncleanness
4. Under the New Covenant in Christ, the whole paradigm changes and it is now holiness which becomes contagious
 - a. Mark 1
 - b. Jesus touches the lepers and now they become clean instead of Christ becoming polluted

- c. One of the ways in which the new covenant is better than the old is that it makes holiness contagious; it shows the superior power of light over darkness
- d. This too matches the word pictures of Christ that light ruins darkness in a way that darkness cannot ruin light
 - i. John 1:5 – *“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”*
- e. The superior power of Christ over the powers of darkness allows for some stunning reversals
 - i. Christ died under the curse (Gal. 3)
 - 1. He became unclean for us
 - ii. Yet that uncleanness going onto him means holiness for us
 - 1. Contact with a dead man meant pollution under Moses, but now in Christ it transfers purity
 - 2. John 19:34 describes the soldier’s spear piercing Christ’s side and opening it up so that water and blood came out
 - 3. Such a discharge is the kind of thing that made people unclean in the Old Covenant, and yet here there is a reversal and this becomes the fountain by which we are made clean
 - 4. The Church is the bride of Christ, and just like Eve, the bride of Adam, we come into existence through the sacrifice of our husband
 - a. In both cases, God puts the man to sleep and opens His side so a bride can come out

5. The themes in our passage are the fulfillment or the substance of many shadows in the Old Covenant – we will look at one

6. Numbers 21:4-9

a. *“From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people became impatient on the way. 5 And the people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food.” 6 Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. 7 And the people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you. Pray to the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. 8 And the LORD said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.” 9 So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.”*

- i. The Israelites are grumbling and complaining when they should be thankful and glorifying God
- ii. The Lord afflicts them with fiery serpents, and when these fiery serpents have done their damage, the Lord grants them repentance and provides a way out for them
- iii. The way out is rather curious – Moses fashions a bronze copy of the fiery serpents that are afflicting them and raises it up on a pole for the people to behold if they were bitten

7. John 3:14-15 (Nicodemus, right before the famous John 3:16)
 - a. *“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.”*

8. It is not speculation to see typology between Moses’s bronze serpent and Christ’s crucifixion – it is a connection made explicit by the text of Scripture itself
 - a. But one part of the symbolism doesn’t quite seem to work
 - b. Moses puts a symbol of the curse on his cross, the serpent is the ancient enemy from the garden, he’s the leviathan sea monster, the gliding serpent of Isaiah 27
 - c. But in the crucifixion it is the Lord of glory on the cross, not the serpent-enemy
 - d. We should read again how Jesus describes what is all happening when He is lifted up in His crucifixion

9. John 12:27-36
 - a. *“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. 28 Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” 29 The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” 30 Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not mine. 31 Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. 32 And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” 33 He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. 34 So the crowd answered him, “We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?” 35 So Jesus said to them, “The light is among you*

for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you.

The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. 36 While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.”

- b. The crucifixion is the act in history in which the serpent’s head is impaled
- c. Christ says the world is judged and the ruler of this world is cast out
- d. Like those who were bit by the fiery serpents in Moses’ day, and thus brought to repentance, so too all those who have been afflicted by the curse and brought to repentance are now to look at the Son of Man being lifted up
- e. A change in cosmology is about to happen – the old world ruler is about to die and a new world ruler is about to be raised up
 - i. The old world is going to very literally go dark as it descends into death, and Christ is warning His listeners to catch on while the light is shining on them still
 - ii. The fact that Moses puts a symbol of the curse on his pole is fitting, because in the death of Christ, we have the death of death
 - 1. Satan has walked into his own trap, not knowing that he is committing suicide by plotting to have the Son of Man killed
 - 2. It is the ancient serpent who is cast out in the cross of Christ
 - iii. Jesus uses similar language in Luke 10:17-19
 - 1. *“The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!” 18 And he said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 19 Behold, I have*

given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you.”

2. The subjection of the demons and serpents is connected to Satan *having* (past tense) falling from heaven
- iv. The symbolism of Moses in the wilderness is not imprecise in its detail
1. The detail is meticulous
 2. The curse of the serpent is destroyed on the cross.
 3. The serpent on Moses cross is fitting!
 - a. Moses places the curse upon his cross
 - b. By being forsaken, by being cursed by the Father, God has also placed the curse upon Christ’s cross
 4. In the death of Christ, we have the death of death, the greatest reversal of all
 5. 2 Corinthians 2:6-8 – *“Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not fa wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. 7 But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. 8 None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”*
 - a. the serpent of old has conspired to have the king of glory killed, and Christ can look at it all and say *“They’ve got me right where I want them”*

10. The reversal in fortunes happens because of the Great Exchange which Christ has enacted for us

- a. He is the perfect and final covenant head,
 - i. He takes all the old covenant curses that we have secured upon Himself
 - ii. He gives all the old covenant blessings that He has secured on us
 - iii. The old world with its serpent king is cast down, so that the new world with its Christly king can germinate
 - iv. All our sin onto Him, and all His righteousness onto us
- b. 1 Corinthians 5:21 – *“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”*

11. The reversal shows up in the miracles that happen at Christ’s crucifixion as well

- a. Darkness
 - i. Seen by Diogenes in Egypt – *“Either the Deity Himself suffers at this moment, or sympathizes with one who does.”*
 - ii. As the curse goes down in the darkness of death, the earth is prepared for a new creation when God once again says *“Let there be light”*
- b. Temple Veil
 - i. As thick as a man’s hand and so large and heavy it took 300 priests to carry it
 - ii. Designed to keep people away from the glory and the holiness of God
 - iii. Torn from top to bottom to show that the days of typology, of sacrifices and a temple are over

iv. By tearing the veil from top to bottom, the Father has vindicated Christ, and so the Father starts on His side, tearing this barrier so that all who look upon Christ in faith may enter

c. Earthquake

- i. Transfiguration – Moses and Elijah both experienced the shaking of a mountain
- ii. Both men come with the force and the fury of God’s law and judgment
- iii. God now answers the curse of that law with another mountain top earthquake as His Son has taken the full blow of those curses

d. Resurrection

- i. Matthew records a small scale resurrection in Jerusalem
- ii. A handful of saints are resurrected out of their graves
 - 1. Christ is the first fruits of the resurrection, and so this first resurrection points to the general resurrection of the dead at the end of history
- iii. The early church believed that these were the ancient martyrs who were being vindicated
- iv. But in either case, where the Fall brought death and separation of body and soul as a testimony to God’s uncompromising anger and holiness, here the death of Christ answers that curse by the first taste or the first fruits of the resurrection as ancient saints have their bodies and souls knit back together as a testimony to God’s vindicating mercy

12. COMMUNION

- a. *The theme of reversal has many points of contact between Moses and Christ. As we prepare to take communion, we may consider yet another. Leading up to the Passover, God cursed Egypt by turning their Nile River into blood. This turning of the water was Moses' first plague. The red water is a sign of damnation and impending destruction. When the Greater Moses, Jesus Christ, enters the scene, it is no mistake that His first miracle happens at a wedding where He turns water into wine. The red water is now a sign of blessing and renewal. The Passover marked the victory of God's people over the bondage of slavery, and in His meticulous providence, God saw fit to place the Last Supper and Good Friday on Passover week. This marks the victory of His people over the bondage of sin. The bread and wine take on renewed significance when we see how they are perfected in Christ, the Greater Moses who leads His people home.*
- b. Semi-open communion
- i. Baptized and part of a gospel preaching church
 - ii. Not for children or those under church discipline
 - iii. Clear conscience upon examination
 - iv. Outer ring is wine, inner is grape juice
- c. Liturgy #2