

THE SON OF MAN LIFTED UP

March 6, 2016

John 8:28-59

“Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. “

John 8:28

The scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day prided themselves in being the preservers of biblical orthodoxy. They included Old Testament scholars who scrupulously examined, copied and maintained the hand-written text of Scripture. They had developed a detailed system of ethics, built upon the Old Testament, and rigorously enforced. Their religion was merely rule-oriented traditions. True to the oft-repeated pattern, traditions and interpretations had higher prominence than Scripture.

Jesus exposed their religious façade. They could not match His miracles. The hearing He received from the common people was a prize they could not win. Their envy soon morphed into hatred. Neither did Jesus match the misconceptions they had for the long-expected Messiah, so they rejected Him, seeking at every turn to destroy Him.

Jesus confronted them with His union with God, whom they professed to serve. He told them, “**I am** the light of the world” (8:12), using the title “I am,” well-known to them as the name Jehovah used for Himself (Exodus 3:13, 14). As they objected, Jesus warned, “if ye believe not that **I am**, ye shall die in your sins” (8:24). “Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that **I am**” (John 8:28). Simply put, Jesus foretold what they were going to do to Him, and what they would learn as a result.

They were going to crucify Him. This is the meaning of His phrase, “when ye have lifted up the Son of man.” Once committed to this extreme, they would never turn from it. Yet therein they would provide proof that Jesus is everything He claimed to be. By His death, the salvation they needed but rejected would be accomplished for everyone who would ever enter heaven.

Let God's people take heart in the midst of oppression for their faith: the work of redemption was wrought by the instrumentality of enemies' efforts to terminate Christ's work. God's enemies will accomplish His purposes. “The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands” (Psalm 9:16). “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper” (Isaiah 54:17a).

Let everyone take heed in the midst of his religious practice. The most religious men, who rigorously embraced the Scripture and the strict practice of their religion, were the ones who rejected the only Savior, Jesus Christ. While maintaining biblical infallibility, we must be on guard against an “infallibility complex.” It was this that doomed the scribes and Pharisees.

Let all give honor to Jesus Christ. Those who crucified Him now know that He is Lord of Lords and King of Kings. “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess

that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:9-11).