

To see Jesus Who He was (is)

Luke 19: 3

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Such a desire calls for clarity of vision, for much more than mere curiosity is involved; there is a deep desire to understand something of the Person in view. This clearness of sight necessitates the removal of all that would tend to obscure one's outlook, and I am venturing to suggest that this is the moral gain of the teaching in the previous chapter. Let it be said at once that there is in the blessed Lord that which is completely beyond human apprehension. "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father" (Matthew 11: 27). There are things predicted of Him which are not yet manifest — "But now we see not yet all things put under Him. But we see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honour" (Hebrews 2: 8, 9).

In Luke 18 things which would hinder our true appreciation of the glories of Christ are dealt with, each having its own peculiar moral voice to our hearts. In the J.N.D. translation these matters are, in general, placed in distinctive sections — the first from verses 1-8. Here the question of our *need* is evidenced. How often the sense of need tends to self occupation! But God has all in hand and help will come, may be more speedily than we expect, if we call upon Him. Perhaps verse 8 would indicate the remedy as faith in God. Verses 9-14 show the danger of pride and self-exaltation. How these things dim our appreciation of the preciousness of Christ! Again the remedy is at hand — "he that humbles himself shall be exalted." Precious lessons learned as we contemplate the movements of the more precious Christ (cf. Philippians 2). In verses 15-17 slowness of heart to appreciate the movements of Divine compassions is seen in the actions even of those who were nearest to Christ. The Holy Spirit of God would direct our gaze to the blessed Man of whom it is repeatedly said — "He saw and had compassion." He was ever occupied in His Father's business — "the Father of compassions." A brief reference to verses 18-29 manifests the falsity of man's ambitions and efforts, and his inability to perceive the value of God's Word and obedience to it as infinitely greater than the things of earth. Meditation upon verses 31-34 presents the one blessed Person, the Christ of God, who in suffering and rejection and death could and would remove from before God the features of the man unable to appreciate the thoughts and movements of divine grace, and in resurrection to establish the basis for the blessed God to move in sovereign mercy, opening blind eyes to see the glories and perfection of His own beloved Son. This glorious truth was beyond the understanding of His disciples, but in this, the Spirit's day, the full import to our hearts of this momentous transaction, and the joy which results from its reception, may be the portion of all whose eyes are opened to the glories and worth of Christ. Lord, let nothing of the greatness of this be "hidden" from us!

It was a truly remarkable moment when "the sun stood still" at the voice of Joshua; how much more wonderful when "Jesus stood still" (v. 40) at the cry of a poor blind beggar! the Mighty Creator, yet here in humility as Jesus of Nazareth, found in the place of the curse, in order that the eyes of the blind might be opened to see Himself — to "follow Him" and to yield glory to God. Amazing grace indeed! With what exceeding joy Luke would turn from the need, the self-exaltation, and all the features of failure seen in man, and as inspired by the Spirit of God record this delightful incident. Setting forth with "accuracy" (Luke 1: 3) the moral conditions depicted in Luke 18, and then delighting in the perfection of compassionate grace and power in Christ. Precious study indeed for our hearts.

But Luke has more to relate. In the place which has lain under the curse of God, there was a man

of whom remarkable details are given. Physically he was of little account; he was mistrusted and regarded as "a sinful man" by others, and he was engaged in the service of the enemy — the oppressors of God's heritage. Yet God had evidently touched his heart, and he desired "to see Jesus who He was" (is). Graciously his desires were met, the Lord entered into his house and Zacchaeus "received Him with joy." Seeking to see who Jesus was, Zacchaeus discovered Him to be the Bringer of salvation (v. 9). Beloved, we, as once in the same moral condition as that in which Zacchaeus was, have also found salvation in our Lord, but there is infinitely more to discover. In John 9 the erstwhile blind man, replying to the Lord's question "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" asked, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe on Him?" Blessed indeed to have such a vision of Christ! Paul on his way to Damascus asked "who art Thou Lord?," and the subsequent result of that encounter with Christ so affected the apostle's outlook that, with his eyes opened, he "straightaway in the synagogues" (the places where He was disowned) "preached Jesus that *He is the Son of God*". In Mark 4 the disciples, having witnessed His power in quelling the sea and the wind, exclaimed, "Who then is this." John Baptist "looking upon Jesus as He walked" testified — "Behold the Lamb of God." The martyr Stephen said — "I see the . . . Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." Peter speaks in his epistle of being amongst those who "were eyewitnesses of His glory." The word "glory" or "majesty" is the same word used in Luke 9: 43 where the crowds were astonished at the display of the "glorious greatness of God" in the Lord casting out the demons. On the mount, at the foot of the mountain, "Who He is" shines forth in all its power and compassion and glory. Herod in curiosity sought to see Him; Pilate in wonderment could say "whence art Thou," the pious Greeks (John 12) said "we desire to see Jesus." The infallible word of God declares that every eye shall see him — *blessed the moment when He shall be seen and owned as Lord by all.*

In 1 Samuel 25, Nabal in his foolishness and in his complete lack of appreciation of all he owed to David (vv. 15, 16) could ask in disdain, "Who is this son of Jesse?" On the contrary Abigail (source of delight) addresses David some 13 times as "my lord." She rejoices in the knowledge of his conquest; of his intimacy with his God; and looks on to the day of his exaltation (v.30). Precious indeed to the heart of Christ as He looks upon the affections of those, who in the scene of His rejection, rejoice in the value of His work and of His Person and anticipate with joy the moment of His universal praise, exalted over all things by God.

"What is thy Beloved more than another?" — "My beloved is . . the chiefest amongst ten thousand" — "Yea He is altogether lovely" (Song of Songs).

Beloved as we ponder upon these things so well known to us, do we not rejoice in the promise — "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as *He is*". May we all in true bridal affection seek to know more and more of the One who is coming "to meet us" (Genesis 24); His glories occupy the pages of God's Word; His beauty (not recognised by His earthly people) is sufficient to fill to the full every true heart; soon His glories will eclipse all else and fill the universe with praise and worship to God Himself. Soon in glorified bodies we shall be conformed to His own image; in the meantime our eyes may feast, in the Spirit's leading, on His present glory at God's right hand.

May our eyes be opened to see more clearly the excellencies and beauty of the One of whom the blessed God exclaimed — "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

"Who is this that cometh . . .

He is the King — crowned -

Rejoicing in the day of His gladness."

(Song of Songs)