

“But This Is Your Hour...”

by Wayne Goff

In Luke 22 we have the record of the chief priests, captains of the temple, and the elders coming to arrest Jesus in the middle of the night in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus points out their wickedness and hypocrisy by saying, *“Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs? When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me...”* (vv. 52-53). This was because they feared the people who viewed Jesus as a Prophet, if not the Messiah. Their actions were evil, contrary to law, and unfit for those practicing true religion.

At this same time Jesus commented to them, **“But this is your hour, and the power of darkness”** (v. 53). What did He mean by this statement? A.T. Robertson comments on this in his book, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*:

“So Jesus surrenders. The moral value of his atoning sacrifice on the Cross consists in the voluntariness of his death. He makes it clear that they have taken undue advantage of him in this hour of secret prayer and had failed to seize him in public in the temple” [vol. II:274].

“Your hour” is the hour in which God permitted those Satan-led enemies of God to do their dirty work. Jesus voluntarily surrendered to this mob because He had come to give His life a *“ransom”* for many (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45; 1 Tim. 2:6). If this were not acceptable to God and Jesus, then the mob would have been powerless against Him! Matthew elaborates on this situation and records Jesus’ additional words at this time: *“Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?”* (Matt. 26:53-54). It is abundantly obvious that God and Jesus could have prevented His capture, arrest, trial and crucifixion, but that this would be contrary to God’s eternal scheme of redemption!

Jesus’ crucifixion came at God’s appointed time, and the *“hour”* of darkness was necessary to accomplish His purposes. Previously the Jewish authorities had tried to arrest Jesus, and could not. John records: *“Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come”* (Jn. 7:30). Jesus had the ability to *“get lost in the crowd”* whenever He so chose (Jn. 6:15)!

God planned redemption in Christ **before** the world began, and knew exactly when His Son would be given as a sacrifice. *“But when the **fullness of the time** had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons”* (Gal. 4:4-5). The world of sinners, both Jews and Gentiles, were brought back to God by the death of His Son, and were united in one body (the church) by the cross, Ephesians 2:11-16.

On the day of Pentecost, the inspired apostles likewise pointed out God’s eternal plan when they said: *“Him, being delivered by the **determined purpose and foreknowledge of God**, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death”* (Acts 2:23). *“Known to God from eternity are all His works”* (Acts 15:18).

The **hour of darkness** was both a terrible time and an important time in human history! The sins of the world rested upon the Son of God, Who took them to the cross that we might be saved. May we never view our sins lightly, nor esteem the price paid for them as an inexpensive thing! Salvation is the **free gift** of God (Rom. 6:23), but it is not cheap! Thankfully, the hour of darkness did not last forever. This is our Father’s world and He remains in charge though He may, from time to time, permit evil to act in order to accomplish His greater purposes.

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