

## The Lord Uplifted

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Gruesome thoughts of crucifixion seem unlikely to attract. Stunned observers stare, transfixed. Dumb-struck friends may steal a glance, though fully horrified. A stable mind will likely find a sight such as this unsettling. Some stood by at Calvary's spectacle: people stunned with dread and awe. Our vantage point in history sees all of this as panoramic "narrative." As when a tale is sometimes told, we lose part of the starkness—and all of the immanence—that overwhelms the witness. Can we comprehend this event? Our Savior said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me," (John 12:32 KJV). Verse 33 records, "This he said, signifying what death he should die."

What was the true attraction then? What is it for us now? No other death of Roman days more vilified its victims. Its public stage inscribed one's name onto a banner of infamy. People asked, "What has he done? Why should he die?" Jesus, knowing human hearts, understood that this lurid death could never be ignored. Uplifted He would be!—and remembered for the fact.

The crucifixion captivates us; but the Lord's allure comprises more than execution, like a martyr's unjust death. He was no victim, but a volunteer. The outcome of this barbaric deed blazes the mind with the worthiness of the Lord more than when the angels sang and filled the heavens with glorious word of His birth (Revelation 5:12; Luke 2:13).

A little baby—a dying "criminal"—they are poignant but common. The personage present in each of these defines the depth of Divine compassion. Nothing common can be found in the Christ of God. No ordinary human life can match His own. This is the "Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world," (John 1:29). He did it on and by the cross.

Why should this drama, filled with horror, interest our race? We find attraction in the Lord Himself. "Behold the man," Pilate pronounced (John 19:5). He could not know the implications of his snide

command. Had Inspiration moved his mouth, he could have said no phrase more prescient. Since that day, humanity has contemplated these: both the Man and plan that climaxed in culmination of the atonement scheme. What God accomplished at the cross has brought us life from death (Ephesians 2:1).

The beauty of the Lord transcends the view of human eye. Incomparable, it beckons for appreciation deep within the soul. The prophet wrote, "...he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him," (Isaiah 53:2 KJV). Not to say that He was ugly to behold; but neither did He gather followers by shallow externalities. The spirit of this God-man draws us as no other could. Someone may try to imitate; but nobody can match the virtues of our risen King. He inspires us all with something wondrous, but not easy to distill.

Neither social nor academic standing eased His way. Wealth and riches left in Heaven stay unseen by fleshly eye (Philippians 2:5ff). His power to draw us, like water from the rock of old, flows from perfection of His character. It radiates unto the world (Hebrews 1:3; John 1:14). In essence, He is Deity (John 20:28). Morally He is perfect (Hebrews 4:15). Yet, knowing well our fatal flaws, He gave His life and Heavenly home to rescue us from loss (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 8:9; Romans 5:6ff). His words resound through history—matchless teachings. His purpose and persona unfold in prophecy fulfilled, in powers unleashed, in spirit unequalled.

***Hebrews 2:9-10 (KJV) But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings...."***

What would we lift in our own day to glorify this Prince? ***Uplift the Lord*** in character, so humble, good, and pure. ***Lift up*** His sacrificial soul that for our sakes embraced the poverty of our plain (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 8:9). ***Herald*** the wonders that He worked, the deliverance that He brings. ***Advertise*** His principles as taught and lived and given for our good. He leads in light. He shows the path of "soberness

and truth" (Acts 20:25; John 8:31f). In His own life one sees the way to live, and then to die. His care and His compassion must evoke our deepest thanks.

**Lift up** the Lord of Calvary, not method nor mere men. **Lift up** the Word, the Living Word, the wisdom of our God (John 1:1ff; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 1:24). The deepest insight of this Earth disintegrates with time (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 1:19ff; 2:4). And though the winds of change with turbulence may roil the sea of life, thank God, the One who calms the waters rules our wicked world. Yes, **lift up** the Lord!

***1 Corinthians 1:30f ... Christ Jesus, ... of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.***