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Beholding Christ

Scripture Reading: John 6:35-40

As bread gives life and strength to the eater, so Christ is like heavenly bread that gives life and strength to our souls for all eternity. We know how to eat earthly bread, but how do we eat the heavenly bread? We behold Him! Notice John 6:40. Everyone who *“sees / beholds / looks upon”* the Son and believes on Him will have everlasting life. In John 6:36, Jesus told a group of Jewish people that they had seen Him but believed not. The Greek word in verse 36 is a simple word for seeing with your eyes. In verse 40, the Greek word is different. It means *“to see carefully, noting detail.”* Saving faith comes by an intelligent understanding of who Jesus is and what He has done, is doing, and will yet do. Romans 10:17 tells us that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. We do not physically see Jesus today, but we may observe Him, carefully noting detail, as we receive the testimony of Scripture.

This lesson is meant to encourage us to behold Christ – for the sake of our own souls and for the sake of those who might hear us.

Behold the Lamb / Behold the King! – John 1:29

John the Baptist / Baptizer was given the task of announcing the coming of the Christ / Messiah to Israel. He would call people to repentance and then baptize those who repented. He was not trying to create his own following. He was preparing people to follow Jesus Christ (John 3:26-36). Among many things that he testified, John told people to behold the Lamb of God; One who has great power and authority, yet He will be meek and submissive, like a lamb. As lambs were used for sacrifices, here is One who will make a one-time permanent sacrifice for sin – not just the sins of one person, or the sins of the nation Israel, but the sins of people throughout the whole world (I Peter 1:18-21; Hebrews 9:24-28; 10:1-14; I John 2:1-2).

In John 1:35-39, John again tells others to behold the Lamb of God. As people begin to do that, Jesus receives them and invites them to *“come and see”* the details of his life. Later, in John 1:43-49, Jesus calls Philip to follow Him. Philip, in turn, goes to get his brother Nathaniel. Nathaniel is doubtful. So, Philip compels him to *“come and see.”* As Nathaniel beholds Jesus Christ, he proclaims Him to be *“the Son of God... the King of Israel”* (John 12:12-15).

The testimony of Pilate – John 19:1-16

Here we have the testimony, not of one of God's servants, but a servant of the Roman government. Pilate has been thrust into a situation that he did not want. The Jewish leadership has presented Jesus to Pilate and accused Christ of insurrection and rebellion. The group is turning into a mob. No matter how Pilate tries to defer back to the Jews to handle Jesus themselves, they insist that He should be crucified by Rome. Let's notice three statements by Pilate:

- **“Behold... I find no fault in Him!” – John 19:4**

Jesus was not guilty of the charges laid against Him. It was sheer spite and religious zeal that caused the Jews to present Him to Pilate as a criminal. See II Corinthians 5:21.

- **“Behold the man! – John 19:5**

Hoping to appease the cruel anger of the Jewish mob, Pilate had Jesus beaten severely and presented to them, wearing a crown of thorns and a purple robe. But there was no pity with that crowd. Pilate presented an innocent man. A man that was nevertheless despised (Isaiah 53:1-6). A man that could suffer and die (though no one could kill Him unless he allowed them – John 10:17-18).

- **“Behold your King!” – John 19:14**

Despite the rage and unbelief of the Jewish people, despite the ignorance and vulnerability of Pilate, despite the iron fist of Roman authority, Pilate declared Jesus the King of Israel! He indeed is the King (Psalm 2). He is the King of kings (Revelation 17:14; 19:16).

Where is your testimony?

We are instructed to keep our eyes on Jesus (Hebrews 12:1-3) This must be done with the mind's eye through reading Scripture. It will have a transforming effect on us (II Corinthians 3:18 cp. John 17:21-23). That which you behold of Christ, that which God shows you about His Son, go and tell others. See Matthew 28:5-7. Notice the words *“Come see”* and *“go quickly and tell.”*

Forever Behold the glory of your Savior! – John 17:24

The Scriptures reveal so much of Christ's glory, but so much more is yet to be revealed when we see Him face-to-face! See I Corinthians 13:12; I John 3:2-3; Philippians 3:20-21 cp. Titus 2:11-13. See also Isaiah 25:8-9.