

SUNDAY MESSENGER



AND I, WHEN I AM LIFTED UP FROM THE EARTH, WILL DRAW ALL PEOPLE TO MYSELF. HE SAID THIS TO SHOW BY WHAT KIND OF DEATH HE WAS GOING TO DIE.

Drawing to Himself

When the ruler of this world heard the news that the Son of God came to this world he could not believe it. In his rage, he annihilated the messengers of the news. For days no demon dared to approach him.

All was so great in his realm. He smiled at the memory of his first encounter with those credulous beings. Disguised as a snake, he made them believe that by eating the fruit they could be as God. Yes, he was the master of deception. He knew how to present Sin as something positive. Since then, this tiny planet was his and he enjoyed watching people hurting each other. War was his favorite show. He loved to see his demons controlling the minds of those in power and under his influence making decisions to attack, to destroy, to bomb, and to blow.

Now, the Son of God was here. Were his days numbered? What greatly puzzled him was the fact that he came as one of them. Why? Where were those mighty forces always at the disposal of the Almighty? What was he up to?

The Prince of this world was observing and pondering every move of God's Son. For years nothing really happened. This

"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

"Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out.

(John 12:23-31)

Jesus was living and acting as any human would. He was even working with his own hands. Unimaginable. This gave him a time to work out a plan.

At first, he tried to buy him but it did not work. When he offered him all the kingdoms of this world for a simple worship, Jesus declined. So stupid. They could do great things together. They could turn all the stones into bread and entertain the world with all sorts of miracles. Then disaster struck. His forces were being routed. First, at the synagogue in Capernaum his unclean spirit was sent back to hell, then in the evening Jesus continued to expel more demons. The mighty Prince was fuming. Jesus was spoiling his house. He sent the scribes from Jerusalem to accuse him of being possessed but it did not work either. The ordinary people loved to listen to the Son of God and kept bringing the sick and possessed to him. Then, he decided to eliminate him.

He blinded the minds of the leaders in Jerusalem and the ruling Romans. To the former, he presented him as blasphemous and irreligious Jew. To the latter, he portrayed him as a rebel and trouble maker. He also succeeded in getting the heart of one of his own disciples and scared to death the rest of them.

The plan was working perfectly and in less than two weeks he would have the Son of the Almighty nailed to the cross as a common criminal. He was rejoicing. He would prove God wrong. He would not strike the heel of that woman's offspring. He would strike His head (cf. Gen 3:15). That would be the final victory. The banquet in hell was being prepared.

Little did he know that the Almighty also had a plan. Little did he know that his victory would spell his end. Little did he know that the Crucified would conquer his dominions and liberate all those who slaved under his power. Nobody reported to him the words spoken by the Son of God: "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself" (John 12:32).

Jesus' death on the cross is the greatest tragedy of humanity. "He came to his own, and his own did not receive him" (John 1:11). Yet, the cross is also our greatest victory. "Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery" (Heb 2:14-15). Through the cross, God "disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in Jesus" (Col 2:15).

A Hindu temple is painted with images depicting some of the thousands of gods and goddesses in the Hindu pantheon. A mosque is characterised by a minaret pointing skyward toward Allah. A Buddhist temple contains a statue of the Buddha with a sly smile on his face. A Christian church, however, is marked by a cross stretched between heaven and earth. Jesus' words have come true. Since His tragic death on Calvary, Jesus keeps drawing people to himself. In Him is our freedom. We are no longer slaves but God's children and heirs with Christ. "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" (Luke 10:18). The ruler of this world has been cast out.

May God bless all of us