

:I Have Decided to Follow Jesus: The World Behind Me, the Cross Before Me

Scripture Text:

This is the 4th installment in the series examining the invitation song “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus.” Although our verse under examination is not found in every songbook, this verse and the meaning behind it are worthy of our study.

As we think of “the world behind us and the cross before us,” I want us to look at two passages in regards to Jesus and one in regards to Paul.

I. Jesus Going to Jerusalem – Luke 9:53

A. Background

1. From the beginning, God knew when He would send Jesus – Gal. 4:4
2. From the moment Christ came into this world He knew what His job was – Luke 2:48-50; John 4:34

B. Jesus knew what was waiting for Him in Jerusalem!

1. He would have the “triumphant entry” – Lk. 19:25-30
2. He would be betrayed by a friend – Lk. 22:47-48
3. He would be tried (falsely) 6 times – all Gospel accounts
4. He would die on the cross – Lk. 23:46
5. He would rise again – Lk. 24:6

C. Once Jesus set His face to go towards Jerusalem, He knew there was **NO GOING BACK!**

II. Jesus Leaving Heaven – Phil. 2:5-8

A. Background

1. v. 1-2 – Paul is encouraging the Philippian brethren to all be one (unity)
2. v. 3 – look out for others as you would yourself!
3. v. 4 – cf. Gal. 6:1-2

B. Look at everything Christ left

1. Glories of Heaven
2. Being in the presence with God
3. Being equal with God (He was God in the flesh)

C. He left, literally “emptied Himself” of Heaven – why? To fulfill God’s Will!

III. Paul Forgetting His Past – Phil. 3:13-14

A. Background

1. v. 1 – “Finally” – not the end but getting around to the point
2. v. 2-3 – Beware
3. v. 4-11 – Paul’s illustrious pedigree

B. Look at everything Paul left

1. A good name and reputation
2. Respect of his peers
3. The ability & authority to do whatever he wanted to

C. Paul gave all of these worldly things up because he knew he had to leave them behind – Phil. 1:21-16.

Just like Jesus and Paul, we must be willing to leave all of the world behind us and live totally for the cross.

Like Jesus, we know what that entails!

Like Paul, we must leave every worldly pedigree.

Jesus said it best: Luke 14:26

Can you truly sing “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus – the World Behind Me, the Cross Before Me”?

If not, we need to change that!

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August 23, 2020 PM Wood Church of Christ – preached on Facebook