



Sir, We Wish to See Jesus

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Relationships ought to be so simple shouldn't they? Like all mammals, we are born AS the child of parents, which is what makes them parents and makes us their child, or we are adopted and claimed by them. We are born into a family. Likewise, we cannot simply get Baptized like buying a newspaper or meal. We are Baptized INTO Jesus Christ and Baptized into the Church. Speaking with Veterans, each is proud to say I am a Soldier! I am Navy. I am a Marine. I am a Pilot. I am Coast Guard. As opposed to many countries where military service is required of everyone as a right of passage, like High School Graduation. However, relationships are complicated! Identity in relationship to others is messy! Parents, siblings, neighbors, friends, in-laws, boyfriends, girlfriends, husbands and wives, co-workers and children, we try to prevent their suffering, and when we cannot we have a tendency to cut-off knowing what goes on. When controversies and contradictions and conflicts arise, we often take these others for granted. The same is true in our relationship with God. When we do not like what is happening in the world, we just close our eyes trying to create a different reality where we do not have to have a God. We look for something else to satisfy our needs. Chocolate. Wine. Shopping. But those does not satisfy. We can search for other joys, live as if reality did not exist, but we cannot make God stop being God, or life as it is.

The way we begin most relationships in Green Valley is to ask, "Where are you from?" As if being from Texas or Minnesota, makes you different from each other, and from California or Iowa, and that there is an affinity, a secret handshake, the same kind of BBQ, that they are like us. According to John's Gospel, this passage begins: "Some Greeks who came to Jerusalem for the Passover, come seeking Jesus." FIRST, to anyone in that time, this is MORE ODD than anything before! AND the Gospels have described Jesus turning Water into Wine, Walking on Water, curing Leprosy, and in the verses immediately prior to this, raising Lazarus from the Dead! Greeks seeking Jesus would have been ODD because Gentiles and Jews did not ever associate, did not speak to each other. In recent months we have been reminded again that people of color in America feel invisible, taken advantage of, often killed or accused because of the color of their skin. Prior to the 1960s Catholics and Protestants and Jews and Muslims never spoke to one another, people would cross the street to avoid one another. A Presbyterian marrying a Methodist or Lutheran, let alone Catholic, Jew or Muslim, was grounds for being shunned. The Fact stated here that "Some Greeks said 'We would see Jesus'" is intended to make everyone sit up in their seats. The Prophet Isaiah had described that ONE DAY all the nations of the Earth would come to God's Holy Mountain, so this passage is being introduced as WHAT IS ABOUT TO HAPPEN WILL TURN ALL HUMANITY BACK TO GOD.

SECOND, according to Matthew, Jesus was from Bethlehem of Judea. According to Mark he was from Nazareth. According to Luke he was a Galilean. But, according to The Gospel of John, Jesus is not from any of those places... "IN THE BEGINNING THE WORD WAS WITH GOD." The other Gospels begin with Jesus, AS the MAN of Nazareth, of Galilee, the Judean, continually struggling with what it means to be MESSIAH. John's Gospel is different: Jesus is ONE WITH GOD from before there was time and space. Jesus is already DIVINE. Not until Jesus' dead body is taken down from the cross does anyone ever recognize Jesus as being THE SON OF GOD, even accept him as THE MESSIAH (which means the Anointed One). The Title Jesus uses, is an OLD TESTAMENT Identity, as The Representative for Humanity, SON OF MAN. JOHN's purpose of Jesus being the SON OF MAN, is not for Individual forgiveness of sins; is not for a substitutionary atonement in exchange for all the sins of the world. According to John, ever since Genesis there has been a distinction between CREATION and OUR WORLD, between the world as God created it, and the fallen world we inhabit with our Cultural Assumptions, Systems of Behavior, with Rulers of the World who are Not-God. According to John's Gospel, the point of the INCARNATION of Jesus being "the Son of Man who came into the world" WAS not to Preach the Sermon on the Mount; not to Teach Parables; not to Heal People; not even as atonement or forgiveness of our Sins. JOHN's point, is that THE SON OF MAN is to bring about a REAL EXORCISM, in which the System/the Driving Forces of this World/The Ruler of this World is challenged for ultimate and eternal control and will be cast out. I have referenced that repeatedly now, "What does it mean that Jesus is The SON OF MAN?" The SON OF MAN is the INHERITOR of everything that has ever gone before, and also the REPRESENTATIVE for all that is to come. HE IS THE SECOND ADAM, who instead of listening to evil and rejecting God which forced Humanity out of GOD'S CREATION EDEN, will by the CONTEST of THE CRUCIFIXION Return Humanity to GOD.

It would be really easy to get political here: TAKING ON THE RULER OF THIS WORLD, EXORCIZING SYSTEMS, AND that is not the point! For over a year now, we have lived in CHAOS, whether we were to wear masks or not to do so; whether to be present with one another or stay distant, whether we wash our hands or not, a minimum of 6 feet apart or 3 feet,... these ARE NOT POLITICAL ISSUES, but it has been CHAOS, as we have lived in FEAR. We have a good friend who has developed severe panic attacks, where she hyperventilates because of all the changing rules-imposed, and not being able to just BE IN RELATIONSHIP.

Human culture as we have evolved through each different civilization have developed subtle myths about relationships, and how we find CONTROL & ORDER. As a child of the mid-20th Century, I loved Saturday morning cartoons, watching Tom & Jerry, Road Runner, Bugs Bunny and Popeye literally for hours. But looking back, while these were funny, and you knew that even when blown up or flattened by a steam roller, they ALWAYS got up again. Originally created because of the technology of Motion Pictures, it seems as though whenever the WORLD became CHAOTIC: World War II, 1960's CIVIL RIGHTS, the turn of the CENTURY there were new applications for CARTOONS. When their relationships got out of Order, when Bluto made Olive Oil uncomfortable; when the Sea Hag captured Popeye, Popeye would eat Spinach that gave him power to BEAT UP their enemies, restoring

tranquility, for them to live happily ever after. The HUMAN RESPONSE to CHAOS, even if through CARTOONS, is VIOLENT DESTRUCTION of the Other. Wyle E. Coyote used every technology available through THE ACME, Co. to destroy the Road Runner, but invariably the technology backfired on the Coyote. So it is no real surprise, in these times, that a new TOM & JERRY Movie was just released. Whether you know the Comic strip or not, the NATURE of our World is that MICE try to get away with things, the nature of CATS in our Fallen World is to blame all their problems on this scapegoat, destroying the world to kill mice. And for good measure, ALL DOGS are so offended by CATS they have to chase them. This is portrayed as natural instinct.

HOWEVER, in one of the most VIOLENT, SADISTIC, CHAOTIC civilizations in history, the Roman Empire after Julius and Augustus Caesar, the SON OF MAN knew that following the Natural Order of events he would be ARRESTED. He would Not Only Die, he would be Abandoned by those he loved, Whipped and Beaten, crucified on the CROSS which was Public Shame and Degradation/ as well as Strangulation over hours and Days as the weight of your own flesh tortured you to death. AND YET, the point of this passage is with his knowing, the SON OF MAN chooses to follow a new, different means of challenging humanity. Instead of the old Covenant with an Eye for an Eye and a Tooth for a Tooth, instead of fighting back or blaming; instead of Sin and Atonement; The SON OF MAN appeals directly to the inner DIVINITY in each person, of our deciding differently because of our Faith in God. For the SON OF MAN to follow through means he will suffer and be tortured to VIOLENT Death; but there is a larger purpose at stake here, to the SON OF MAN, if he can remain FAITHFUL, the CRUCIFIXION is the EXORCISM of the Evil of this world.

Increasingly our WORLD has had “every different -ISM” questioned and challenged as Systemic. SYSTEMIC RACISM, SYSTEMIC CHAUVENISM... As a man of 62, these are not new issues to me, and I would estimate they are not to you. But perhaps what is at stake are not HOW SENSATIONAL we can make every accusation. What is at stake is not what can be proven on which charges, but an EXORCISM of what is evil in the world, and once again to wonder: of what it would be to live in relationship in The Kingdom of God. At which point, not only would WE, as different from Ancient Judaism as an extreme, COME WANTING to SEE THE MAN: JESUS, but WINESSING THE DIVINE ADAM ,to SEE ONE ANOTHER and the Divinity in each other.

BUT let us not deceive ourselves, what Jesus describes in John’s Gospel is Suffering that COMES as part of that EXORCISM, of our CLAIMING RELATIONSHIP TO ONE ANOTHER as Holy and Divine.