

An Overlooked Martyr

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[0 : 00] The 28th of October, Glimpses of Glory While Jesus was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became shining white.

The two men, Moses and Elijah, were talking with Jesus. Luke 29-30, NCB For most of the time as Jesus went about, he looked just an ordinary man.

We don't have any description in the Bible as to what Jesus looked like. Was he tall? What color of hair did he have? What color were his eyes? But then we see this ordinary-looking man doing amazing things, healing the sick people, even raising to life dead people, stilling a storm on Lake Galilee, and feeding 5,000 people with a few little loaves and fish.

This ordinary man was clearly no ordinary person after all. And then we see why. Peter tells us, But we saw the greatness of Jesus with our own eyes.

Jesus heard the voice of God, the greatest glory, when he received honor and glory from God the Father. The voice said, This is my Son, whom I love, and I am very pleased with him.

[1 : 16] We heard that voice from heaven while we were with Jesus on the holy mountain. 2 Peter 1, 17-18 Jesus, as well as being an ordinary man, is also the glorious Son of God.

While Jesus lived on earth, it was essential that he was in every sense an ordinary man, because he took the place of ordinary people as he died on the cross. A perfect and sinless substitute for us sinners.

But it was also essential that he was God, the eternal Son, to be the perfect mediator between God and man. He is the Lord of glory.

And a prayer. Dear Lord Jesus, we worship you as our Savior and our God. Amen. Amen.

NING The 29th of October, the Glorious Trinity.

[2 : 44] 2 Corinthians 13, 14. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. If you are at all used to going to church, you will be familiar with the above words.

They are usually said at the end of the service, the benediction. Yesterday, we looked briefly at the person of the Lord Jesus. He is the perfect human being, and at the same time is the eternal Son of God.

Today, we look briefly at the Trinity. The word we use to describe how God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit is one God. Not three gods, but one glorious God, living in a perfect harmony of love and fellowship.

One God, yet Father, Son, and Spirit, each a person with his own special characteristics, his own special functions. But always in perfect unity, and always good.

The Old Testament stressed, The Lord our God is one Lord. Deuteronomy 6, 4. That is, he is unique, not just one among many gods.

[3 : 58] He alone is God. But even in the Old Testament, there is mention of the Spirit of God, and even appearances of the Angel of the Lord, who may well have been the Son of God.

See Exodus 23, 23. The New Testament is full of references to God the Father, and to the Son who is considered God. See John 1, 1. And to the Holy Spirit.

There is a mystery surrounding the belief in the Trinity, in the sense that it is nowhere stated as a fact, but in so many places it is assumed as a fact, and gives an explanation for all the wonderful and good activities of God.

And a prayer. Dear Lord, I believe in the one God who exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and who loves me. Amen.

The 30th of October. No backward looks. But Jesus told him, Anyone who puts a hand to the plow and then looks back is not fit for the kingdom of God.

[5 : 19] Luke 9, 62, New Living Translation My father used to plow with horses. I am sure he was proud of the straight furrows that he cut.

The one thing that you don't do when you are plowing is to look back, because it immediately throws you off your straight line, and if you were plowing in a competition, you would be sure to lose.

In Luke chapter 11, from verse 57 to the end of the chapter, Jesus was telling about the cost of being his follower. It is not for cowards or for lazy people.

A Christian needs to be willing to follow Jesus even when it is costly in terms of time, comfort, and relationships. So, if you are a Christian, Jesus expects you to trust and follow him wholeheartedly. No backward looks. Verse 62 And we remember Jesus is Lord, our Lord and Master. One of Charles W. Everest's great hymns goes like this.

[6 : 28] Take up your cross, the Savior said, if you would my disciple be. Deny yourself, forsake the world, and humbly follow after me. Take up your cross and follow Christ, nor think till death to lay it down.

For only those who bear the cross may hope to wear the glorious crown. Yes, there is a cost in being a follower of Jesus, but what a privilege to be a follower of such a Savior.

The one who suffered so much for us, with no backward looks. Let's keep our eyes on him, and follow him faithfully. The 31st of October An Overlooked Martyr About that time Herod the King killed James, the brother of John, with the sword.

And when he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. Acts 12, 1-2 It is one of the great scandals of our present age to see the terrible persecution of Christians in African countries and others, and they are not even mentioned in the news media.

It seems to be unimportant. Persecution and suffering have been there from the very start of the Christian church. The sad story we read in Acts 12, 1-2 tells about the suffering inflicted on the early church under King Herod Agrippa.

[8 : 10] In trying to be a friend of the high priest and his group, Herod harassed the Christians and had James, the brother of John, executed. Poor James does not get much of a mention as the scene moves on to what happened to Peter.

It is similar to today when the media quickly moves on to another story. But let's not overlook James' martyrdom. James was one of the first disciples of Jesus, along with his brother and his friends, Andrew and Peter.

He was probably an outspoken character and may well have drawn attention to himself because of that. We're not told. The fact is, however, that James had become an apostle, one of Jesus' most trusted men, and he paid for it with his life.

We honor him and are challenged by his courage. A prayer. Dear Lord, help me not to forget the faith and the courage of believers like James, but to be ready to be like them.

Amen.