

THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

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My Hour Has Not Yet Come

Joshua Riggins

Throughout the gospel of John, the author points to Jesus' hour. Consider the following passages.

John 7:4-8 presents an incident in which Christ's brothers mockingly suggest He go to the feast with them and hinted that they believed Jesus lusted for attention. Jesus responded that his time had not yet fully come. In the context of **verse 1**, "*for he did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill him,*" we gather that the "time" spoken of was his impending death.

John 7:28-30 points to an event that took place after Jesus arrived at the Feast of Tabernacles. Jesus spoke in such a way that the religious leaders sought to take him, "*but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.*" Again, the passage points to the hour of Christ's death.

John 8:19-20 highlights this same hour. Jesus defended his witness (see **verse 13**), and "*no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come.*" John implied that an hour would come when they would lay hands on him, but that time had not yet arrived.

Beginning in **John 12**, the phrasing changes a bit. We're told in **verse 1** that this section is a little less than one week before the crucifixion. In **John 12:23**, Jesus declared, "*The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.*" He repeated this statement in **verse 27**, "*Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour?' But for this purpose, I came to this hour.*" With his day coming quickly, we see his mental anguish. He was no less human than we, troubled by the tremendous pain and humiliation awaiting him. But the hour had come, and he was ready to fulfill his purpose. For the joy, he was willing to endure the hour (see **Hebrews 12:2**).

John 13:1 addresses the specific time in which Christ's hour would arrive, "*Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come that he should depart from this world.*" Passover marked the arrival of his hour, at which he would depart from this world.

In **John 16:21-22**, Jesus explained to his disciples that his departure would be like a woman in labor, "*A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come...Therefore you*

now have sorrow, but I will see you again." The sorrow Jesus' disciples experienced consumed them for three days. It began with the hour of Christ's departure into the hands of the mob.

John 16:32 notes Jesus' prediction that his disciples would scatter at the impending hour. His prophetic words came true shortly after that, as all the disciples forsook him (see **Mark 14:50**)

John 17:1 begins Jesus' prayer to his Father, saying, "*Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that Your Son also may glorify you.*" Christ's glorification came at the cross. (see **Luke 23:47** and **Revelation 5:5-10**)

This pattern begins with the words of Jesus to his mother in **John 2**. Jesus joined his mother and disciples at a wedding in Cana. The feast nearly came to a halt as the wine had run out. Mary turned to her Son, explaining that the bride and groom ran out of wine.

The bridegroom's responsibility was to supply the feast with all provisions necessary for a lengthy, often longer than a week, celebration. To run out would be an embarrassment, and under the right circumstances could result in financial liability.

Jesus, though, did not respond favorably to his mother's plea. In **verse 4**, he said, "*Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.*" Though he performed his beginning of signs to the increased faith of his disciples, he initially hesitated due to his hour.

In the greater context of John's gospel and the pattern we've established, Jesus meant the hour of his glorification through death. That hour hadn't come. Therefore, it was not yet his time to become the bridegroom (see **Isaiah 54:4-8**, **Ephesians 5:23-27**). An hour would come in which he would provide wine overflowing, but it had not yet come.

When Jesus began his signs, he did so with the end in mind. Before he ever used the Spirit of God to work wonders and provide evidence of his divine nature, he thought about the hour coming. Every work, including this work at the wedding in Cana, was done with his glorification and the glorification of the Father in mind.

There is an hour coming for us.

"Watch, therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready,

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for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Matthew 24:42-44)

Like our Lord, let us live with the end in mind. Consider what you desire to accomplish by the end and live for that purpose today. Focus on how your life in the present will bring glory and honor to your Father in the future.

"And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed" (Romans 13:11).

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The next article addresses a sensitive topic of growing relevance. Over the course of the past decade, rates of gender dysphoria have increased exponentially in Western societies, especially among adolescent girls. Please carefully consider what Tad has written. Your editor believes his article accurately portrays both the times we live in and the timeless truths of God's word.

Sex, Gender, and God's Will

Tad Morris

Until recently, we used the terms "sex" and "gender" interchangeably. Males were men, and females were women. A large portion of American society now rejects this idea.

The modern views on sex and gender originate in feminist ideologies, starting with Simone de Beauvoir in 1949. She believed that the traditional role of women in society was not natural nor beneficial. She concluded that a woman's role as a loving mother and supportive wife was artificial – it was the product of forced cultural norms. Her views represent the beginning of the idea that your "gender" and your biological "sex" are not the same. You may be born with female reproductive organs, but you can choose your identity and your role in society. She famously said, "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman."

It's helpful to understand the definition of terms as used in our current culture.

Sex is defined as the state of being male or female according to a person's biology, specifically his or her DNA, hormones,

and most importantly, his or her reproductive organs. The current world view says that the definition of sex ends here. It is strictly biological and not necessarily the same as one's expressed gender.

Gender is defined based on feelings and behavior. The emerging secular view is that a person is born as male or female, but they decide how they will express themselves. Gender describes how a person fits the mold or defined role in society.

Gender dysphoria occurs when a person's expressed gender is different than their biological sex. The world uses related terms such as non-binary, gender non-conforming, gender fluid, androgynous, bigender, and agender to describe people with transgender feelings or behaviors.

These are confusing times. How does the Christian respond to all this? It's helpful to observe five points in the Bible.

God created two biological sexes.

Genesis 1:27: *"So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."* Every person is either male or female. Even people born with ambiguous genitals are genetically male or female. If there are exceptions to this, the exceptions should not become the rule.

God designed the sexes to be different.

Genesis 2:18: *"And the LORD God said, 'It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.'" When we see differences between men and women, don't be ashamed of that. Embrace God's design. Men and women are substantially the same, but there are some essential God-given differences.*

God assigned some gender-specific responsibilities.

In other words, it's not appropriate to completely separate gender from sex. From the very beginning, God separated the roles of men and women. These distinct roles are especially apparent in marriage. God designed the husband to be the provider and leader. God created the wife to be the homemaker.

We see elements of this in **Genesis 3:16-19** after Adam and Eve sin:

To the woman, He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain, you shall bring forth children [her role is especially in child-rearing]; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you [she will have a submissive role]" Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake [referring to his role in providing for the family]; In toil, you shall eat of it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread

Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return.

Our God-given gender roles are substantially identical, with only a few differences that are especially important in marriage. Other than these roles, the Bible says very little about how men and women should express themselves. Remember that cultural-defined gender roles and behaviors do not necessarily align with God's will for us.

God forbid transgender behaviors.

God expects men to behave like men and women to behave like women. This is addressed in the Mosaic Law in **Deuteronomy 22:5**, "*A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so are an abomination to the LORD your God.*" Interestingly, the specific attire is not defined.

On what grounds could we demonstrate that God still cares about transgender behaviors in the Christian era? Consider **1 Corinthians 11:14-15**: "*Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given to her for a covering.*" Our physical appearance does matter to God. He's even planted in our nature an understanding that men and women should look different. What's more important in the New Testament is the responsibilities given to men and women in the church and in the family. Claiming the duties assigned to the opposite gender is to reject God's design for humanity.

God allows for a wide range of personalities within the sexes.

Cultural definitions of gender are often more limiting than God designed. It's okay to be a man and be interested in things stereotyped as female, but you're still a man. Consider Jacob and Esau (**Genesis 25:24-28**). They were both men, but they had different interests and different personalities. This is normal and completely acceptable.

What do we conclude from all this? Evolving terminology in the last seventy years cannot undo God's perfect design for humanity. How we feel does not change who we are. We are men and women created in the image of God.

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The Life is in the Blood

Isaac Rude

The Bible has a lot to say about blood. The first time the word appears in the King James version is **Genesis 4:10**, where God

says that the blood of Abel cried from the ground. Before this, in **Genesis 3:21**, we read that after Adam and Eve sinned, God made coats of skins to clothe them. While blood is not mentioned, it seems very likely that this was the first case of death and bloodshed since the creation of a perfect paradise. God told Adam and Eve that their disobedience would result in death which, of course, it did. They did not die immediately, but they ushered in sin and death, claiming their earthly lives eventually. The animals, however, died much sooner, becoming the first of many animal sacrifices to cover for sin. This is where we can see the idea of life and blood in our world. In a physical sense, we all realize that if an animal or a person loses enough blood, they lose their life.

In the recent past, we had a patient with an internal bleed at work. The patient seemed reasonably stable and was being monitored closely in the ICU. During the last few hours of the shift, the nurse who cared for this patient called me to his room. While being new and inexperienced, I immediately felt that something was wrong when I entered the room. The patient's skin color had changed. He was sweating and seemed less responsive. It was as if his life was draining away before my very eyes. That was, in fact, the case as this gentleman was hemorrhaging internally. Usually, when we administer blood intravenously at the hospital, it is done very slowly over several hours due to the risk of a reaction. In this case, my coworker injected three units of blood and a few bags of normal saline into him in the last two hours of our shift to save his life. While I understand how blood works in our bodies and how vital it is, this became a perfect image of the truth of life being in the blood.

Think of all the blood shed by sacrifices over the years. When preparing for the first Passover, God told the children of Israel in **Exodus 12:13**, "*when I see the blood, I will pass over you.*" On the day Solomon dedicated the temple in **1 Kings 8:63**, he offered 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep. That alone is more blood than I can imagine. Think of all the sacrifices for sin: peace offerings, the evening sacrifice, and countless thousands of animals that shed their blood over the years. Yet we read in **Hebrews 10:1-4** that the blood of these animals could not take away sin and make the sinners perfect. Verse three states explicitly that there is a remembrance of sin every year in those old sacrifices. It seems that the blood of all these animals acted much as the covering of skins did for Adam and Eve and the blood on the doorposts and lintel in Egypt. The blood helped to cover their sins while it could not remit them. Remission came only through the blood of the perfect son of God (**Hebrews 10:16-18**).

This brings us back again to the thought of life being in the blood. Jesus spoke a "*hard saying*" in **John 6**. Verse 53 says,



Please check your expiration date!

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"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." Those listening had a hard time with this idea. Eating blood is one law that applied to every dispensation. It was forbidden in the patriarchal age when God spoke to Noah. It was forbidden to Israel under the Mosaic covenant: **Leviticus 17:14** "Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof." And it was also one of the things that the apostles said was forbidden to Christians in **Acts 15:20**. How strange this statement of eating flesh and drinking blood would have sounded to those listening to Jesus. Remember how Peter reacted in Joppa when hearing a voice tell him to eat unclean animals in **Acts 10:14**. Of course, we understand that Jesus was talking in a spiritual sense, not literally. We do this each Lord's Day in remembrance of the fact that Jesus gave his life/blood on Calvary so that we might have life through his blood. I dare say that without the blood of Christ, we are as dead spiritually as we would be dead physically without our blood.

How would you feel if you had some of that animal blood slung onto you or placed on your ear, thumb, and toe (**Exodus 29:20, Hebrews 9:19**)? **Revelation 1:5** and **7:14** mentions being washed in blood. What a strange thought that is to me. And yet, we are told that when bathed in the blood of Christ rather than staining as physical blood does, we become white as snow. What a great thought! May we never forget or take for granted that God gave us life through blood.

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Glory to God!

The **Rock Creek Church of Christ, Ottawa, KS** rejoiced when **Sandra and Bonnie Romig; Pearl Jordan; David, Kelly, Cody and Charity Wright; Jim and Juanita Edington** all placed membership.

The **Riverside Road Church of Christ, Ozark, MO** welcomed **Ashley Sheets** as a new member of the congregation.

The **Chapel Glen Church of Christ, Indianapolis, IN** rejoiced when **Casey McKinney** was buried with Christ on May 9.

Special Meetings

2021 Meetings

June 12-13.....Vandalia, IA
July 5-9.....Midwest Bible Campout, Eminence, MO
July 17.....Family VBS, Old Lamine, Rural Blackwater, MO
September 4-5.....Labor Day Meeting, Pleasant Hill, IA
September 18-19.....Brookfield, MO

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