History of Interpretation Paper

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**"And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself". (John 12:32)**

There are numbers of interpretations about the above-mentioned scripture (John 12:32). Taking into account this scripture, it could be said that the pronouns being used are emphatic. The use of "And I" depicts that he is the prince of the world in opposition to the evil. The Gospel of John is written by gathering information from four biographies of Jesus Christ being preserved in the New Testament. In this study, various historical interpretations are made by different theologians. Historic interpretation about the Gospel of John is chosen from the **Sacra Pagina** and **Anchor Bible Passages**.

One of the interpretations that have been mentioned in Sacra Pagina, is that in contract to the vanquished prince of the world (devil) only Jesus is capable of drawing people towards heaven. In Sacra Pagina, it has been interpreted that not the devil but only death of Jesus would bring many sheep who needed to be saved into one-fold (v.32). As already mentioned, interpretations being made by different theologians vary likewise a theologian, Calvin has given the historic interpretation about the Gospel of John. According to Calvin's interpretation, "**If I be lifted up**" gives an indication about being lifted up on the cross and he would lift all men up to the sky. This scripture also points towards the manner of the death of Jesus Christ. Cross would be a source for connecting men to Father (God). Calvin interprets that his (Christ) death won't be his separation from men rather his death would serve as a mean of drawing earth upwards to the heaven (Calvin,et,al,2018). As per his interpretation, all men belong to Christ's flock and "all" was used as many Jews believed in him where were presented there when Christ was pointing towards his crucifixion. One of the main similarities that could be witnessed in the interpretation, being given by Calvin's and Sacra Pagina is, both interpretations claim that "lifted up" points towards his crucifixion.

Augustine is another theologian who has given his interpretation of this selected scripture. According to Augustine's interpretation like other scriptures, **John 12:32** divides the society into two parts, godly and ungodly. Augustine claims that the readers need to categories both societies while reading the holy scriptures. He rejects the idea that Jesus used "all" for the whole mankind. Augustine claims that there are two cities, one, a city of God and the other, city of the devil so before considering and understanding Gospels, readers must give due consideration to the class or men that are being referred by the scripture.

Augustine's interpretation of John 12:32 claims that by "all" Christ meant, all those would be lifted to the heaven who fall. He interprets this scripture as being for the elected ones only. There could be seen an obvious similarity in the selected scripture and interpretation of Augustin, in this given text, it has been mentioned that there were some Jews, in the place where Christ made this announcement and by "all" he meant all those who would become the believers as non-believers would not be lifted up to the heaven with him (Stewart,et,al,2018). According to Sacra Pagina, only those would be gathered and lifted up who are associated with the crucifixion of Jesus, which could be seen as a similarity between Augustine's interpretation and selected scripture. So, as a whole, it won't be wrong to say that Augustine's interpretation of this scripture claims that Jesus is not going to lift up with him, everyone rather only believers would be there in heaven with Father and Christ.

Another famous theologian, Origen who was Father of a Church, has also interpreted the given scripture, John 12:32. According to the interpretation of Origen about the selected scripture it is the love of Christ that he sacrificed his life for all the men. It is the extreme form of love that Christ showed, as he took the burden of our sins and was crucified on the cross (Berglund,et,al,2019). "**If I shall be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me**". As per the interpretation of this scripture, love is the only power that leads souls to the lofty heights of heaven from earth. Origen claims that this God-dynamic is dangerous as well as difficult to understand so he exhorts his readers to pray and ask for God's help so that word of God (Bible) could be interpreted and understood easily, without making any mistake.

Like other theologians, there could be found a similarity between the interpretation of Origen and selected scripture (John 12:32). One of the most obvious similarity is that both (interpretation and selected scripture) points towards the crucifixion of Christ which is the purest form of love that he showed for men. So, as a whole, it won't be wrong to say that there are various interpretations of the biblical scriptures being presented by various theologians. All the interpretations being discussed above points towards the crucifixion of Jesus on the cross for reconnecting man to his Creator. The connection was restored, that was lost because of the sin of Adam and Eve by the sacrifice being made by the Christ on the cross. Salvation leads men to heaven.

References

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