**THE GOAT**

***The True Meaning Of Greatness***

On February 7, 2021 the Tampa Bay Buccaneers defeated the Kansas City Chiefs in Super Bowl LV (to the football illiterate that means there as been 55 championship games in the National Football League). In those 55 games Tom Brady has played in ten of them, and won an amazing seven! No other QB (i.e. quarterback) has won more than four (that’s Joe Montana and Terry Bradshaw for you *Trivial Pursuit* buffs). For his achievements many are now calling the 43-year old Brady the G.O.A.T. of the N.F.L.

I know, I know, acronyms can drive you crazy, making sports sound like the military. While calling someone a GOAT used to mean he had blown the game and was worthy of being booed, now it means **G**reatest **O**f **A**ll **T**ime. He has reached the pinnacle of the American sports world, standing alone at the top of the mountain. He is the envy of millions, being drop-dead handsome (according to supermarket tabloids), married to a gorgeous supermodel, rich beyond imagination (Forbes says he and his wife - Gisele Bundchen - are worth $600 million), and certain to be inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Surely he is incredibly happy, right? Not so fast.

CBS did a special *60 Minutes* interview with Brady after he won his third Super Bowl back in 2005. He was only 27 years old. Steve Kroft, the interviewee for 60 Minutes, asked Brady, “This whole experience – this whole upward trajectory of winning so many Super Bowls so young – what have you learned about yourself? What kind of effect does it have on you?” His reply is interesting, and eye-opening. “Why do I have three Super Bowl rings and still think there’s something greater out there for me? A lot of people would say, ‘Hey man, I reached my goal, my dream, my life.’ But me, I think, ‘There’s gotta be more than this. This can’t be what it’s all cracked up to be. What else is there for me?” Kroft then asked, “Tom, what’s the answer?” Brady replied, “I wish I knew. I truly wish I knew.”

That was 16 years ago. He has since played in 7 more Super Bowls and won 4 of them. I would be curious to know if at the ripe old age of 43 (a dinosaur by NFL standards) he has found his answer. Is there more to life, is there more to fame and fortune, is there more to greatness than the applause of men, a fat checkbook, a rich and beautiful wife, and the title G.O.A.T.?

Greatness. How do you define it? Perhaps if we did a survey of all “The Great” people of history we might find our answer. Cyrus the Great (expanded his Persian Empire but was killed in battle and beheaded). Alexander the Great (died at age 33 depressed that he had no more worlds to conquer). Herod the Great (he who massacred the infants of Bethlehem – ‘nuff said). Peter the Great (Czar of Russia who murdered his own son).

No one worthy of the GOAT title there.

So we look at those in the Bible who might be considered “The Great.” Wasn’t Solomon called this by the Queen of Sheba? Look what she said in 2 Chronicles 9:1-7,

​1 Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to Jerusalem to test Solomon with hard questions, having a very great retinue, camels that bore spices, gold in abundance, and precious stones; and when she came to Solomon, she spoke with him about all that was in her heart. 2 So Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing so difficult for Solomon that he could not explain it to her. 3 And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, 4 the food on his table, the seating of his servants, the service of his waiters and their apparel, his cupbearers and their apparel, and his entryway by which he went up to the house of the LORD, there was no more spirit in her. 5 Then she said to the king: “It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. 6 However I did not believe their words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half of the ***greatness of your wisdom*** was not told me. ***You exceed the fame*** of which I heard.”

Yes, Solomon was “great,” but Jesus put that into perspective when He said, “*Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these”* (Matt. 6:28-29). A lily is greater than Solomon.

Christ then explained further, *“The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed* a ***greater than Solomon is here****.”* (Matt. 12:42). That means he can’t be the GOAT.

When the apostles clamored among themselves as to who among them would be “*greatest*” in the kingdom of heaven, Jesus forever settled the matter by announcing to them, and to the world, His nomination for G.O.A.T.

“*Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is* ***the greatest*** *in the kingdom of heaven*” (Matt. 18:1-4).

He then told the massive crowds who came to see and hear the Messiah: *“But he who is* ***greatest*** *among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted”* (Matt. 23:11-12).

In spite of His teaching it seems the crowds, and the apostles, continued to covet the title of GOAT. As He made His way toward His rendezvous with Calvary Jesus again heard them disputing who would be crowned “*The Greatest*” (Lk. 22:24). Once more He defined for them, and for us, who God would crown The GOAT. “*He who is* ***greatest*** *among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? … yet I am among you as the One who serves!*” (Lk. 22:25-30).

Tom Brady, the sports world’s G.O.A.T., is still saying, “There’s gotta be more than this.” I would love to interview him, for I know the answer he is searching for. The poor widow, with her two donated mites, knows the answer too. And now, so do you.

Be a servant and take home the GOAT. – Rick