

**John 12:20-50**  
**October 5, 2025**

**Open with Prayer**

**HOOK:**

Q: What do you think happens when a person starts to resist the light of Jesus? [Let people engage]

**Transition:** It is really mind-boggling that in spite of all the clear evidence that was presented to the crowd, the nation would not believe. The “arm of the Lord” had been revealed to them in great power, yet they closed their eyes to the truth. They had heard the message (“report”) and seen the miracles, and yet would not believe.

When a person starts to resist the light, something begins to change within him; and he comes to the place where he cannot believe. God permits darkness to come over the eyes of people who do not take the truth seriously. (This quotation is found in a number of places in the New Testament. See Matt. 13:14–15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; Acts 28:25–27; Rom. 11:8.) It is a serious thing to treat God’s truth lightly, for a person could well miss his opportunity to be saved. Let’s see how Jesus engages with the crowd -knowing that His death is near.

**BOOK:**

**Jesus Predicts His Death**

Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the Feast. <sup>21</sup> They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. “Sir,” they said, “we would like to see Jesus.” <sup>22</sup> Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus.

<sup>23</sup> Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. <sup>24</sup> I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. <sup>25</sup> The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. <sup>26</sup> Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

<sup>27</sup> “Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. <sup>28</sup> Father, glorify your name!” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.” <sup>29</sup> The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.

<sup>30</sup> Jesus said, “This voice was for your benefit, not mine. <sup>31</sup> Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. <sup>32</sup> But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.” <sup>33</sup> He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.

<sup>34</sup> The crowd spoke up, “We have heard from the Law that the Christ will remain forever, so how can you say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this ‘Son of Man’?”

<sup>35</sup> Then Jesus told them, “You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. The man who walks in the dark does not know where he is going. <sup>36</sup> Put your trust in the light while you have it, so that you may become sons of light.” When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them.

### **The Jews Continue in Their Unbelief**

<sup>37</sup> Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him. <sup>38</sup> This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet:

“Lord, who has believed our message  
and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” (Isaiah 53:1)

<sup>39</sup> For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere:

<sup>40</sup> “He has blinded their eyes  
and deadened their hearts,  
so they can neither see with their eyes,  
nor understand with their hearts,  
nor turn—and I would heal them.” (Isa 6:10)

<sup>41</sup> Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus’ glory and spoke about him.

<sup>42</sup> Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; <sup>43</sup> for they loved praise from men more than praise from God.

<sup>44</sup> Then Jesus cried out, “When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. <sup>45</sup> When he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me. <sup>46</sup> I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.

<sup>47</sup> “As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it. <sup>48</sup> There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day. <sup>49</sup> For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father, who sent me, commanded me what to say and how to say it. <sup>50</sup> I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.”

### **Process Observations/Questions:**

Q: What stood out to you? What questions do you have? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you learn about man? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you learn about God or Jesus or the Holy Spirit? [Let people engage]

Q: What is your takeaway? [Let people engage]

### **LOOK:**

We are the ministers of this reconciliation. If human hatred, cruelty, and injustice could be healed by education or culture it would have been done long since. No, the problem is too deep

in the humankind. A power outside ourselves must bring us together. A person, not a force, must change us.

We, through John, have seen the signs of Jesus. He was Lord of creation, provider of food, source of light, restorer of life. Fragmented mankind is hopeless without his personal touch. To this end we have been entrusted with his message, his good news: “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”

### **Close in Prayer**

#### **Commentaries for Today’s Lesson:**

***Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). The Bible Exposition Commentary (Vol. 1, pp. 341-344). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.***

#### **Jesus and the Gentile Visitors (John 12:20–36)**

Following His entry into Jerusalem, our Lord cleansed the temple for the second time. He quoted Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer’? But ye have made it a den of thieves” (Mark 11:17). Perhaps these Greeks heard that word and were encouraged by it.

One of John’s major themes is that Jesus is the Savior of the world, not simply the Redeemer of Israel. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). “For God so loved the world” (John 3:16). The Samaritans rightly identified Him as “the Savior of the world” (John 4:42). He gave His life for the world, and He gives life *to* the world (John 6:33). He is the Light of the world (John 8:12). The universal emphasis of John’s Gospel is too obvious to miss. Jesus will bring the “other sheep” who are outside the Jewish fold (John 10:16; and see 11:51–52).

The original text indicates that these Greeks “were accustomed to come and worship at the feast.” They were not curious visitors or one-time investigators. No doubt they were “God-fearers,” Gentiles who attended the Jewish synagogue and sought the truth, but who had not yet become proselytes. Gentiles came to see Jesus when He was a young child (Matt. 2), and now Gentiles came to see Him just before His death.

These men “kept asking” Philip for the privilege of an interview with Jesus. Philip finally told Andrew (who was often bringing people to Jesus), and Andrew gave the request to the Lord. No doubt there were many people who wanted private interviews with the Lord, but they were afraid of the Pharisees (John 9:22). Being from out of the country, the Gentile visitors either did not know about the danger, or did not fear the consequences.

We can commend these Greeks for wanting to see Jesus. The Jews would say, “We would see a sign!” (Matt. 12:38; 1 Cor. 1:22) but these men said, “We would see [have an interview with] Jesus.” There is no record that Jesus did talk with these men, but the message that He gave in response contains truths that all of us need.

The central theme of this message is the glory of God (John 12:23, 28). We would have expected Jesus to say, “The hour is come, that the Son of man should be crucified.” But Jesus saw beyond the cross to the glory that would follow (see Luke 24:26; Heb. 12:2). In fact, the glory of God is an important theme in the remaining chapters of John’s Gospel (see John 13:31–32; 14:13; 17:1, 4–5, 22, 24).

Jesus used the image of a seed to illustrate the great spiritual truth that there can be no glory without suffering, no fruitful life without death, no victory without surrender. Of itself, a seed is weak and useless; but when it is planted, it “dies” and becomes fruitful. There is both beauty and bounty when a seed “dies” and fulfills its purpose. If a seed could talk, it would no doubt complain about being put into the cold, dark earth. But the only way it can achieve its goal is by being planted.

God’s children are like seeds. They are small and insignificant, but they have life in them, God’s life. However, that life can never be fulfilled unless we yield ourselves to God and permit Him to “plant us.” We must die to self so that we may live unto God (Rom. 6; Gal. 2:20). The only way to have a fruitful life is to follow Jesus Christ in death, burial, and resurrection.

In these words, Jesus challenges us today to surrender our lives to Him. Note the contrasts: loneliness or fruitfulness; losing your life or keeping your life; serving self or serving Christ; pleasing self or receiving God’s honor.

I read about some Christians who visited a remote mission station to see how the ministry was going. As they watched the dedicated missionary team at work, they were impressed with their ministry but admitted that they missed “civilization.”

“You certainly have buried yourself out here!” one of the visitors exclaimed.

“We haven’t buried ourselves,” the missionary replied. “We were planted!”

Our Lord knew that He was facing suffering and death, and His humanity responded to this ordeal. His soul was troubled, not because He was questioning the Father’s will, but because He was fully conscious of all that the Cross involved. Note that Jesus did not say, “What shall I do?” because He knew what He was ordained to do. He said, “What shall I say?” In the hour of suffering and surrender, there are only two prayers we can pray, either “Father, save me!” or “Father, glorify Thy name!”

In one of my radio messages, I made the statement, “God does not expect us to be comfortable, but He does expect us to be conformable.” No sooner had the program ended than my office phone rang, and an anonymous listener wanted to argue with me about that statement.

“Conformable to what?” the voice thundered. “Haven’t you read Romans 12:2—‘Be not conformed to this world’?”

“Sure I’ve read Romans 12:2,” I replied. “Have you read Romans 8:29? God has predestined us ‘to be conformed to the image of His Son.’”

After a long pause (I was glad he was paying the phone bill), he grunted and said, “OK.”

*Comfortable or conformable:* that is the question. If we are looking for comfortable lives, then we will protect our plans and desires, save our lives, and never be planted. But if we yield our lives and let God plant us, we will never be alone but will have the joy of being fruitful to the glory of God. “If any man [Jew or Greek] serve Me, let him follow Me.” This is the equivalent of Matthew 10:39 and Mark 8:36.

The prayer, “Father, glorify Thy name!” received a reply from heaven! God the Father spoke to His Son and gave Him a double assurance: the Son’s past life and ministry had glorified the Father, and the Son’s future suffering and death would glorify the Father. It is significant that the Father spoke to the Son at the beginning of the Son’s ministry (Matt. 3:17), as the Son began His journey to Jerusalem (Matt. 17:5), and now as the Son entered the last days before the Cross.

God always gives that word of assurance to those who willingly suffer for His sake.

The people heard a sound but did not know the message that had been conveyed. Yet if the voice was for their sakes and they could not understand it, what good was it? In that the voice assured Jesus, who was to die for their sakes, the voice was for their good. They heard Him pray and they heard a sound from heaven in response to that prayer. That should have convinced them that Jesus was in touch with the Father. We might translate John 12:30, “That voice came more for your sake than for Mine.”

Jesus then openly spoke about the Cross. It was an hour of judgment for the world and for Satan, the prince of the world. The death of Jesus Christ would seem like a victory for the wicked world, but it would really be a judgment of the world. On the cross, Jesus would defeat Satan and his world system (Gal. 6:14). Even though he is permitted to go to and fro on the earth, Satan is a defeated enemy. As we serve the Lord, we overcome the wicked one (Luke 10:17–19). One day Satan shall be cast out of heaven (Rev. 12:10), and eventually he will be judged and imprisoned forever (Rev. 20:10).

We have met the phrase “lifted up” before (John 3:14; 8:28). Its basic meaning is *crucifixion* (note John 12:33), but it also carries the idea of *glorification*. “Behold, My servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up, and greatly exalted” (Isa. 52:13, NASB). The Son of man was *glorified* by being *crucified*!

The phrase “all men” does not suggest universal salvation. It means “all people without distinction,” that is, Jews and Gentiles. He does not force them; He draws them (see John 6:44–45). He was “lifted up” that men might find the way (John 12:32), know the truth (John 8:28), and receive the life (John 3:14). The cross reminds us that God loves a whole world and that the task of the church is to take the Gospel to the whole world.

The people did not understand what He was teaching. They knew that “Son of man” was a title for Messiah, but they could not understand why Messiah would be crucified! Did not the Old Testament teach that the Messiah would live forever? (See Pss. 72:17; 89:36; 110:4; Isa. 9:7.)

But that was no time to be discussing the fine points of theology! It was an hour of crisis (see John 12:31, where the Greek word *krisis* means judgment) and an hour of opportunity. The light was shining and they had better take advantage of their opportunity to be saved! We have met this image of light and darkness before (John 1:4–9; 3:17–20; 8:12; 9:39–41). By a simple step of faith, these people could have passed out of spiritual darkness and into the light of salvation. This marked the end of our Lord’s public ministry as far as John’s record is concerned. Jesus departed and hid Himself. It was judgment on the nation that saw His miracles, heard His messages, and scrutinized His ministry, and yet refused to believe on Him.

### **Jesus and Unbelieving Jews (John 12:37–49)**

The key word in this section is *believe*; it is used eight times. First, John explained the unbelief of the people. They *would not* believe (John 12:37–38, with a quotation from Isa. 53:1); they *could not* believe (John 12:39); and they *should not* believe (John 12:40–41, with a quotation from Isa. 6:9–10).

In spite of all the clear evidence that was presented to them, the nation would not believe. The “arm of the Lord” had been revealed to them in great power, yet they closed their eyes to the truth. They had heard the message (“report”) and seen the miracles, and yet would not believe. When a person starts to resist the light, something begins to change within him; and he comes to the place where he cannot believe. There is “judicial blindness” that God permits to come over the eyes of people who do not take the truth seriously. (This quotation is found in a number of places in the New Testament. See Matt. 13:14–15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; Acts 28:25–27; Rom. 11:8.) It is a serious thing to treat God’s truth lightly, for a person could well miss his opportunity to be saved. “Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near” (Isa. 55:6).

There were those who would not believe, and there were those who would not openly confess Christ even though they had believed (John 12:42–43). Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea belonged to this group initially, but they eventually came out openly in their confession of Christ (John 19:38ff). In the early church, there were numbers of Pharisees (Acts 15:5) and even priests (Acts 6:7). It was the old struggle between the glory of God and the praise of men (John 12:25–26). It was a costly thing to be excommunicated (John 9:22), and these “secret believers” wanted the best of both worlds. note John 5:44 in this regard.

In John 12:44–50 we have our Lord’s last message before He “hid Himself” from the people. Again, the emphasis was on faith. A number of the basic themes in John’s Gospel run through this message: God sent the Son; to see the Son means to see the Father; Jesus is the Light of the world; His words are the very words of God; faith in Him brings salvation; to reject Him is to face eternal judgment. In fact, the very Word that He spoke will judge those who have rejected it and Him!

It is an awesome thought that the unbeliever will face at the judgment every bit of Scripture he has ever read or heard. The very Word that he rejects becomes his judge! Why? Because the written Word points to the Living Word, Jesus Christ (John 1:14).

Many people reject the truth simply because of the fear of man (John 12:42–43). Among those who will be in hell are “the fearful” (Rev. 21:8). Better to fear God and go to heaven than to fear men and go to hell!

The word *judge* is repeated four times in the closing words of this message, and a solemn word it is. Jesus did not come to judge; He came to save (John 3:18; 8:15). But if the sinner will not trust the Savior, the Savior must become the Judge. The sinner is actually passing judgment on himself, not on the Lord!

As you have studied these twelve chapters of the Gospel of John, you have seen Jesus Christ in His life, His ministry, His miracles, His message, and His desire to save lost sinners. You have considered the evidence. Have you come to the conviction that Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of God, the Savior of the world?

Have *you* trusted Him and received everlasting life? “While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light” (John 12:36, NKJV).

**Blum, E. A. (1985). *John*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 317-319) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books**

### **3. The Greeks at the Feast (12:20–36).**

12:20. The mention of **Greeks** is significant. They were the wanderers of the ancient world and the seekers of truth. These Greeks were probably God-fearers who attended Jewish synagogues and feasts. Their coming was symbolic of the coming of Gentiles **to worship** God through Christ (cf. 10:16).

12:21–22. Why did the Greeks approach **Philip** about seeing **Jesus**? Perhaps because Philip had a Greek name. Or he may have had some contact with Greeks from the Decapolis area. **Philip went to ... Andrew, and Andrew and Philip ... told Jesus**. Since crowds of people probably wanted to speak with Jesus, the disciples may have tried to do some screening (cf. Luke 18:15–16).

12:23–24. **Jesus** had been moving toward His decisive hour (cf. 2:4; 4:21, 23; 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20). The coming of the Greeks confirmed that **the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified** (cf. 12:23; 13:1; 17:1). For most people death is their humiliation. But for Jesus death was His means of entry into glory. His willingness to die for others’ sins in obedience to the Father (Isa. 53:10, 12) brought Him renown (glory; cf. John 12:16; 17:1, 5). **I tell you the truth** introduces a solemn affirmation. The analogy of **a kernel of wheat “dying” in the ground** and producing **many seeds** teaches that death is necessary for a harvest.

12:25–26. The wheat analogy (v. 24) illustrates a general paradoxical principle: death is the way to life. In Jesus’ case, His death led to glory and life not only for Himself but also for others. In the case of a disciple of Jesus, the principle is similar. A disciple must hate **his life in this world**. To “hate his life” means to be so committed to Christ that he has no self-centeredness, no

concern for himself. On the other hand **the man who loves his life will lose it**. Anything in life can become an idol including goals, interests, and loves (cf. Luke 12:16–21; 18:18–30). A believer should undergo a spiritual death to self (Rom. 6:1–14; 2 Cor. 5:14–15; Gal. 6:14). Being a servant of Jesus requires following Him. Many of Jesus’ original servants *did* follow Him—in death. According to tradition, the early disciples died as martyrs. Jesus’ word was thus a prophecy and also a promise. His true disciples (those who serve Him) **follow** Him in humiliation and later in **honor** or glory (Rom. 8:17, 36–39; 2 Tim. 2:11–13).

12:27–28a. Jesus instructed His disciples on the cost of commitment to the Father’s will by disclosing His emotions. He was in turmoil (*tetaraktai*, “stirred, agitated”; cf. 11:33; 14:1) because of the prospect of being made sin (2 Cor. 5:21) in His death. In view of His turmoil, should He shrink back and ask for deliverance **from this hour**? Certainly not, for His Incarnation **was for the very** purpose of bringing Him **to this hour** (cf. John 12:23; 13:1; 17:1). Jesus willingly expressed His submission to the will of the Father in the words, **Father, glorify Your name!** So also believers in difficulty should stand and embrace His will—desiring that His name be glorified—in spite of conflicting emotions.

12:28b–29. The Father then spoke **from heaven** in a thunderous **voice**, confirming His working in Jesus both in the past and in the future. The voice was audible but not all understood it (cf. v 30; Acts 9:7; 22:9).

12:30–31. The **voice** from heaven confirmed faith in the spiritually perceptive but to the unspiritual it was only a noise (1 Cor. 2:14). Jesus’ death on the cross was a **judgment on the world**. Evil was atoned for. The world’s goals, standards, and religions were shown to be folly. The Cross was also the means of Satan’s defeat (Rev. 12:10). **The prince of this world** (i.e., Satan; cf. John 14:30; 16:11), **Jesus** said, **will be driven out**. His power over people by sin and death was defeated and they can now be delivered out of his domain of spiritual darkness and slavery to sin (Col. 1:13–14; Heb. 2:14–15).

12:32–33. Jesus’ words, **When I am lifted up from the earth**, refer not to His Ascension but to His crucifixion (cf. 3:14; 8:28). He knew how He would die—by being “lifted up” on a cross. Jews, however, normally stoned those they considered worthy of death (cf. Stephen’s death, Acts 7:58–60).

Jesus said that at the cross He would **draw all men** to Himself. He did not mean everybody will be saved for He made it clear that some will be lost (John 5:28–29). If the drawing by the Son is the same as that of the Father (6:44), it means He will draw indiscriminately. Those saved will include not only Jews, but also those from every tribe, language, people, and nation (Rev. 5:9; cf. John 10:16; 11:52).

12:34. **The crowd** was puzzled. If the Messiah is **the Son of Man**, then He should be here **forever**, they reasoned. Daniel 7:13–14 spoke of the Son of Man’s everlasting dominion. Perhaps the people wondered if He was making a distinction between the Messiah (**Christ**) and **the Son of Man**. Did He use the term “Son of Man” differently than its sense in Daniel 7:13? They seemed to understand that Jesus was predicting His death, but they could not see how that was possible, if He was the Messiah.

12:35–36. The crowd thought on intellectual difficulties, but **Jesus** confronted them with the fact that the issue was moral. Their time of opportunity was limited. He is **the Light** for the world (1:4, 9; 8:12; 12:46), but the day of His public ministry was almost over (v. 23). The **darkness** of night was coming in which evil powers would hold sway over people. **The man who walks in the dark** means an unbeliever who stumbles through life without knowing what life is all about and **where** it is headed (cf. 3:19; 8:12; 1 John 1:6). Their privilege was to **trust in the Light** (i.e., in Jesus) and **become sons of Light** (i.e., His disciples; cf. Rom. 13:12; Eph. 5:8, 14; Col. 1:13–14; 1 Thes. 5:5; 1 John 1:7; 2:10). Once again **Jesus** supernaturally vanished **from them** (cf. John 5:13; 8:59; 10:39).

#### ***H. Jewish national unbelief (12:37–50).***

##### **1. John's Explanation (12:37–43).**

12:37. John from the beginning of his Gospel (1:11) had sounded the theme of national unbelief. John now explained that in spite of **all** Jesus' **miraculous signs** (*sēmeia*), **they still would not believe in Him**. Their unbelief was irrational, as sin always is.

12:38. The Jews' national, irrational unbelief had been predicted by **Isaiah the prophet**. The clearest Old Testament passage concerning the suffering Servant (Isa. 53:1–12) began by stating that Israel would not perceive God's revelation in and through the Servant. **Who has believed our message and seen His arm ... revealed?** implies that only a few have believed (quoting Isa. 53:1).

12:39–40. Then John again quoted from **Isaiah** (6:10) to explain that the nation as a whole was *unable* to believe. Because they constantly rejected God's revelation, He had punished them with judicial blindness **and deadened ... hearts**. People in Jesus' day, like those in Isaiah's day, refused to believe. They "would not believe" (John 12:37); therefore, **they could not believe** (v. 39). Similar illustrations of God's punishing of persistent sin by hardening are common (Ex. 9:12; Rom. 1:24, 26, 28; 2 Thes. 2:8–12).

12:41. In a vision **Isaiah ... saw** "the Lord Almighty" (lit., "Yahweh of hosts," or "Yahweh of armies"; Isa. 6:3). John wrote that this glory Isaiah saw was **Jesus' glory**. The implication is startling: Jesus is Yahweh! (Cf. John 1:18; 10:30; 20:28; Col. 2:9.) Jesus in His nature is God (but God the Son is distinct in person from God the Father and God the Spirit). Isaiah **spoke about Him**, for many of Isaiah's prophecies predicted the coming Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth (e.g., Isa. 4:2; 7:14; 9:6–7; 11:1–5, 10; 32:1; 42:1–4; 49:1–7; 52:13–53:12; 61:1–3). Earlier Jesus had said that Moses wrote about Him (John 5:46).

12:42–43. In spite of massive national unbelief, the situation was not hopeless. God always has a remnant. **Many** individuals in high places did believe **in** Jesus, but **for fear** of being **put out of the synagogue** they did **not** openly **confess** Him. They feared men's opinions and **loved** men's **praise ... more than** God's **praise**.

2. Jesus' exhortation (12:44–50)

When and where Jesus spoke these words is not indicated. This seems to be a general summary of Jesus' manifestation of Himself to the nation.

12:44–46. **Cried out** (*ekraxen*, “called out,” *not* wept; cf. 1:15; 7:28, 37) indicates the importance of the issues before the nation. **Jesus** is the perfect manifestation of God, **the One who sent Him** (1:18; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3), so that to **believe in Jesus** is to believe in God. People do not have two objects of faith: God and/or Jesus. When one sees Jesus, he **sees the Father who sent Him** (cf. John 12:41; 14:9). Jesus came to lead people out of Satan's kingdom of **darkness** into God's kingdom of love and **light** (cf. 1:4, 9; 8:12; 12:35; Col. 1:13–14).

12:47–50. Since Jesus is God's Word (*Logos*) to people, God **spoke** decisively and finally in Him (Heb. 1:1–3). The issue is the command of **the Father**. To obey **the Father** is to come **to eternal life** (John 12:50). To reject the Father's word—which is Jesus' **very word** (v. 48; cf. v. 50b; 7:16; 14:10, 24)—is to abide in death. Moses predicted the coming of the great Prophet (One who would speak for God). Moses said, “You must listen to Him” (Deut. 18:15). Condemnation **at the last day** is the penalty for rejecting the One whom the Father sent (Deut. 18:18–19; John 3:18, 36; 5:24).

The purpose of God's revelation in Jesus is positive: He came **to save**, not **to judge** (12:47; cf. 3:17 and comments on 9:39). But rejection of God's Revelation inevitably brings a hardening in sin and ultimately God's judgment.

In speaking of Jewish national unbelief John balanced his theological explanation with Jesus' serious exhortation to the nation to repent. In the words of Moses, these “are not just idle words for you—they are your life” (Deut. 32:47).

**White, J. E. (1998). *John*. In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), *Holman Concise Bible Commentary* (pp. 481-482). Broadman & Holman Publishers.**

### **The Hour Is Come (12:20–36)**

The request of some Greeks to interview Jesus occasioned a lengthy response from Jesus regarding the road that lay before Him. Throughout the Gospel, Jesus had avoided situations that would hasten His death. But now the “hour” had come for “the Son of Man to be glorified.” Jesus' death and subsequent resurrection is what is in mind by the term “glorified.” Jesus presented Himself as a role model for our perspective on life. Life should not be loved from a temporal perspective but hated as that which represents our sinful separation from God our Creator. This is not, as the life of Jesus demonstrated, a rabid asceticism but an attitude that puts more importance on the world to come.

Jesus understood that His death would bring life to many. Nonetheless, Jesus' heart was “troubled,” which is all John wrote in relation to the Gethsemane passages of Jesus' final hours recorded in the Synoptics. Jesus' troubled heart surely came more from the idea of bearing the weight of the sin of the world as a sinless Being than the mere physical and emotional agony that awaited Him. While Jesus contemplated praying to God for deliverance from that which awaited Him, He remained on the course God had willed for His life.

Not only would Jesus' death offer liberation to men and women from the bounds of sin, but it would bring judgment upon the world and drive the prince of the world from its midst. The cross achieved salvation for those who would believe, brought judgment upon the world for the refusal to believe, and defeated Satan's rebellion once and for all. The lifting up of Jesus on the cross would be the beacon that would draw all persons—meaning without regard to sex, race, social status, or nationality—to Himself for deliverance from sin.

### **God or the World (12:37–50)**

How could the Jews have witnessed so many miraculous deeds and remain in unbelief? The answer is found in prophecy. Jews both would not and could not believe. They would not believe when they should have according to what they had witnessed. They could not believe, not because they had freedom of choice removed from them, but because they had purposely rejected God and chosen evil. Thus God turned them over decisively to their choice. Those who had chosen to believe were afraid to make their decision public for fear of excommunication. Even these believers were indicted for caring more for the approval of others than for the approval of God.

What is Jesus' relation to those who reject Him? John made clear that it is not judgment (12:47). It is not that judgment for unbelief will not take place (12:48), only that the primary mission and role of Jesus was not judge, but Savior (12:47b). Again, the close relationship between God and Jesus is clearly exhibited in regard to thought and deed (12:44–45, 49–50).

A word should be given regarding the difference between “last day” and “last days.” The latter refers to the current period of time, begun when Christ entered the world (Acts 2:17; Heb. 1:2; 1 Pet. 1:20; Jude 18). The “last day” (singular), however, refers to the consummation of time and history when the great resurrection and judgment will occur of all persons (1 John 2:18).

***Allen, J. P. (1972). John. In H. F. Paschall & H. H. Hobbs (Eds.), The Teacher's Bible Commentary (pp. 678-679). Broadman and Holman Publishers.***

### **The End of Signs (John 12:1–50)**

***The passage***—This chapter closes what was called, in the Introduction, Act 1 of John's drama of redemption. Until now the author has presented a selection of “signs.” Each was chosen by John to offer testimony that Jesus was indeed the Christ. Each produced belief or unbelief in those who saw.

From this point on, however, Jesus discloses himself in private. The signs are concluded. Indeed, the word occurs twice in the chapter, but not again except in summary. The transition is clearly marked by two significant sentences. “He departed and hid himself from them” (v. 36, RSV). It was a symbolic statement. He had been available for light if anyone would see. The verdict is tragic. “Though he had done so many signs before them, yet they did not believe in him” (v. 37, RSV).

***Special points***—Three incidents are featured here. All of them reveal the relation to Jesus which has been developed during his ministry. The anointing in Bethany (vv. 1–11) depicts the

devotion of those who loved him. The triumphant entry into Jerusalem (vv. 12–19) shows him to be the popular idol of the multitudes. The inquiry of the Greeks (vv. 20–36) suggests the longing for truth by the hungry Gentile world.

As always, each episode results in belief or rejection. The discontent of Judas in the first scene, the anger of the rulers in the second, and the reply of Jesus in the third are typical. They prepare us for the coming tragedy of unbelief.

The banquet was for Jesus—and Lazarus (v. 2). That was fitting. Although Martha served, as usual, the supper was not in their home but in the house of Simon the Leper (Mark 14:3). One may be certain that he also had been touched by the power of Jesus. The occasion drew a crowd. Both guests of honor were great curiosities (v. 9).

Mary's devotion was an offense to Judas. It tested his own coolness and deceit. Jesus' verdict left no doubt, "Let her alone" (v. 7); it was symbolic to him. See how conscious he was of the end. John discloses something not found elsewhere. Amid the splendor of the triumphal march, John gives the reason for the crowd (vv. 17, 18).

The writer of the Gospel also knows the visit of "certain Greeks" (v. 20) is significant. Not only was there popular excitement among the Jews, the word had spread beyond. These Greeks may have been converts to Judaism, but John wrote late enough to know that many Gentiles turned willingly to the gospel.

It was this barrier of distrust between Jew and Gentile that caused the agony of Jesus in verse 27. He understood that only an event of the magnitude of the death he was about to die would crumble the wall. This was why Jesus responded with such emotion to the simple request of Greeks to see him.

Thus, the cross appeared in prospect (v. 32). By his sacrifice "all men," regardless of race or nation, could stand on common ground with him. Nothing else would avail.

***Truth for today***—We are the ministers of this reconciliation. If human hatred, cruelty, and injustice could be healed by education or culture it would have been done long since. No, the problem is too deep in the humankind. A power outside ourselves must bring us together. A person, not a force, must change us.

We, through John, have seen the signs of Jesus. He was Lord of creation, provider of food, source of light, restorer of life. Fragmented mankind is hopeless without his personal touch. To this end we have been entrusted with his message, his good news: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

**The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). John 12:20-50. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.**