



The Hour Has Come (John 12:23-50)

Today we hear Jesus' last words to the people of Jerusalem, just before He is arrested and crucified. The hour has come to demonstrate the love & justice of God.

John 12:23-24 (CSB) ²³ Jesus replied to them, "**The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.** ²⁴ Truly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains by itself. But **if it dies, it produces much fruit.**

As we noted a couple of weeks ago, John's Gospel often notes that Jesus **hour had not yet come** (John 2:4, 7:3, 8:20). But now...**The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified** - Jesus is about to accomplish the mission He has come for, to give His life as a ransom for many. That DEATH would **produce much fruit** - bringing LIFE to millions of people who will be forever changed.

And just as Jesus was about to sacrifice Himself, followers of Jesus would be called to sacrifice as well.

John 12:25-26 ²⁵ The one who loves his life will lose it, and the one who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ If anyone serves me, he must follow me. Where I am, there my servant also will be. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

Just as Jesus gave His life for the eternal life of others, his disciples are called to **follow Him** and His sacrificial example, making daily decisions with eternity in mind. That means that we must deny our desires when they differ from what Jesus wants.

Those who say they serve Jesus must **follow Him** - it's in our job description - **followers of Jesus follow Jesus**. Those who claim to be followers of Jesus who DON'T follow Jesus...aren't. And those who follow and serve Him, can trust they will be in the Presence of Jesus and receive **honor** from **the Father**. Can you imagine THAT!? To be FACE TO FACE with our Lord, and hear the encouraging words, "**Well done faithful one!**"

John 12:27-30 ²⁷ "Now my soul is troubled. What should I say—Father, save me from this hour? But **that is why I came to this hour.** ²⁸ Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." ²⁹ The crowd standing there heard it and said it was thunder. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." ³⁰ Jesus responded, "This voice came, not for me, but for you.

Jesus knows what's coming, and He's prepared for it. Instead He prays, "**Father, glorify your name.**"

Then a voice came from heaven. When God spoke, the people weren't sure what just happened, but it was too well timed to just be coincidental. Here is one more powerful proof that Jesus was not a masquerading messiah.

* The Father speaks audibly only 3 times: at Jesus' baptism, His transfiguration, & now, just before His crucifixion.

Judgment Looms

John 12:31-33 ³¹ Now is the judgment of this world. Now the ruler of this world will be cast out. ³² As for me, if **I am lifted up from the earth I will draw all people to myself.** ³³ He said this to indicate what kind of death he was about to die.

The people listening to Jesus don't know what loomed just over the horizon, but it sounds like the end is near! And this judgment would happen when Jesus was **lifted up from the earth**. And, according to Jesus, this is a time of **judgment**.

1. **Judgment of this world.** Many at this point had judged Jesus as a false messiah (e.g. 6:14, 42, 60; 7:15; 8:48, 52–53; 9:29; 10:19; 11:37). **The cross communicates that our sin is serious and our God is gracious.** *The sinless One gives Himself for sinners. Those who reject Jesus also reject the payment for their sins, and are JUDGED GUILTY.*
2. **Judgment of the ruler of this world.** At the wilderness temptation, Satan said: "*To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will.*" (Luke 4:6)

Hebrews 2:14-15 (CSB) Now since the children have flesh and blood in common, Jesus also shared in these, so that **through his death he might destroy the one holding the power of death—that is, the devil**—and free those who were held in slavery all their lives by the fear of death.

Jesus' death on the cross would judge His enemies guilty, but it would also **draw all people to Himself** as their sacrificial substitute. **What Jesus did on the cross would become THE PRIMARY PICTURE of God's love and justice.**

This is what Jesus meant by this **lifted up from the earth** language, but it seems that many simply thought Jesus was saying He would be leaving them, caught up into heaven, because they expected the Messiah to stick around.

John 12:34 ³⁴ Then the crowd replied to him, “**We have heard** from the law that **the Messiah will remain forever**. So how can you say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this Son of Man?”

It is very clear that the people recognize the term **Messiah** and **Son of Man** to be synonymous. Of course, “Son of Man” is a term borrowed from Daniel 7 where we read these words:

Daniel 7:13-14 (CSB) ¹³ I continued watching in the night visions, and suddenly one like a **son of man** was coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was escorted before him. ¹⁴ He was given dominion, and glory, and a kingdom; so that those of every people, nation, and language should serve him. **His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away**, and his kingdom is one that will not be destroyed.

If His dominion **will not pass away**, then it makes sense that **the Messiah will remain forever**. He would set up His kingdom on the earth to rule and reign from that point forward. So, they wonder who Jesus is talking about. How is it that Jesus is going to be **lifted up from the earth** (v.32)? Is it possible that Jesus is referring to someone different than the Son of Man in Daniel’s writing? Of course, they didn’t realize there would be 2 visitations, the **first** as SUFFERING SERVANT and Prince of Peace; the **second** as the CONQUERING KING.

But rather than give a straight forward answer, to their question about the Messiah remaining forever, Jesus gives a veiled response where He refers to Himself as “the light”.

“The Light” is Leaving?

John 12:35-36 (CSB) ³⁵ Jesus answered, “**The light** will be with you only a little longer. Walk while you have **the light** so that darkness doesn’t overtake you. The one who walks in darkness doesn’t know where he’s going. ³⁶ While you have **the light**, believe in **the light** so that you may become children of **light**.” Jesus said this, then went away and hid from them.

These will be the last words the people of Jerusalem will hear Jesus say before He is arrested. Jesus then pulls away in preparation for the crucifixion.

John 12:37-38 (CSB) ³⁷ Even though he had performed so **many signs** in their presence, they did not believe in him. ³⁸ This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet, who said: *Lord, who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?*

This comes from Isaiah 53 (Suffering Servant passage written 700 years before Jesus’ death). The answer to the question **who has believed our message?** *Answer:* Very few. Despite the demonstration of the **many signs** done in front of their eyes, **they did not believe in Him**. John loosely quotes **Isaiah 6:10** (the famous passage where Isaiah sees the Lord high and lifted up and asks, “*Who will I send?*” - Is. 6:8) Isaiah asks for the task, and the Lord tells him that the people will not listen his message as they consistently have not listened to God’s message.

John 12:39-40 ³⁹ This is why they were unable to believe, because Isaiah also said: ⁴⁰ *He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, so that they would not see with their eyes or understand with their hearts, and turn, and I would heal them.*

So, were they **UNable** to believe unless God **ENabled** them to believe? Has GOD caused them not to believe? NOPE. Throughout the Scripture there is a balanced relationship between God’s work in **REDEEMING** people and people **RESPONDING** to God’s work.

★ Scripture 10 times says that God hardened Pharaoh’s heart (Ex. 4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8, 17). But the Scriptures also say 10 times that Pharaoh hardened his own heart (Ex. 7:13, 14, 22; 8:15, 19, 32; 9:7, 34, 35; 13:15).¹

🕒 God **hardening hearts** and **blinding eyes** is biblical language used when God is fed up with those who refuse to believe and gives them over to their own sinful desires. This is what happens throughout Isaiah’s writing as God calls people to Himself, but they stiff-arm and disobey Him.

- Paul writes something similar in Romans 1 (see vv. 24, 26, 28) as God gives them over to the sin they desire more than they desire Him. They have refused to turn to “the light” so God allows the **blind, hard-hearted** people to drift off like a boat whose ropes have been cut from the dock. **They float away from the light** and out into the darkness.

¹ John F. MacArthur Jr., *John 12-21, MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2008), 54.

☀ **St. Augustine** wrote, "For God thus blinds and hardens, simply by letting alone and withdrawing His aid."²

☀ **C.S. Lewis** famously wrote in his book - **The Great Divorce**: "There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, "Thy will be done," and those to whom God says, in the end, "Thy will be done."³

Those who don't want to be near to God will have their request honored...forever.

But here's the most intriguing part that John notes regarding Isaiah's writing:

John 12:41 ⁴¹ **Isaiah** said these things because **he saw his glory** and spoke about him.

This comes from **Isaiah 6:1**, and this is truly amazing. Remember that Jesus was *in the beginning, with God, and was God, and all things were created through Him* (John 1:1-3). And now John, quoting from Isaiah (who wrote 700 years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem), says that **Isaiah** saw HIM - that is Jesus - **he saw his glory and spoke about him.**

Isaiah 6:1-3 (CSB) ¹ In the year that King Uzziah died, **I saw the Lord** seated on a high and lofty throne, and the hem of his robe filled the temple. ² Seraphim were standing above him; they each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. ³ And one called to another: Holy, holy, holy is the LORD [Yahweh] of Armies; **his glory fills the whole earth.**

Jesus is about to be exalted - "lifted up" on the cross - this pivotal event that will declare the difference between those judged GUILTY and those judged INNOCENT. While many refuse to listen, *with blinded eyes and hardened hearts*, some do believe, yet not without the tension and terror of being persecuted.

John 12:42-43 ⁴² Nevertheless, **many did believe in him** even among the rulers, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, so that they would not be banned from the synagogue. ⁴³ For **they loved human praise more than praise from God.**

Joseph of Arimathea is one of these who is later described as "*a disciple of Jesus—but secretly because of his fear of the Jews*" (Jn. 19:38).

🕒 Imagine your epitaph: "[Your name] believed in Jesus...but **loved human praise more than praise from God.**"

• We ALL want to be loved by others. We all appreciate affirmation from others. There's nothing wrong with that...UNLESS we desire the applause of others rather than the applause of God.

But what if we were to reverse this? What if this passage said:

They loved the praise from God more than they loved human praise.

Think about that for a moment. **Have you ever considered the claim that GOD...yes GOD...will praise YOU!? Why? Because He's proud of you for obeying Him!** Oh that we would live for the One who we be our final judge!

And now John summarizes the message of Jesus. These words will close the book on the public teaching of Jesus.

John 12:44-50 ⁴⁴ Jesus cried out, "The one who believes in me believes not in me, but in him who sent me. ⁴⁵ And the one who sees me sees him who sent me. ⁴⁶ I have come as light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me would not remain in darkness. ⁴⁷ If anyone hears my words and doesn't keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. ⁴⁸ **The one who rejects me** and doesn't receive my sayings has this as his judge: **The word I have spoken will judge him on the last day.** ⁴⁹ For I have not spoken on my own, but the Father himself who sent me has given me a command to say everything I have said. ⁵⁰ I know that his command is eternal life. So the things that I speak, I speak just as the Father has told me."

Jesus is the image of God the Father, the ambassador who speaks HIS words. The teachings and miracles of Jesus have demonstrated that He is the long awaited Messiah. But sadly, many refuse to believe, as is the case today.

What about YOU? Will YOU follow Jesus, even if it costs you?

Will you live for the praise of people OR for the praise of God?

* **Want to talk further?** Please contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Justin** (704-618-6144), **Christy** (673-9764), or another follower of Jesus soon! Or call our **deacons & wives**: Tom & Martha Waddail, Steve & Debbie Bass, Freddy & Joyce Howard, Jere & Darlene Burnette, Alan & Christy Androski, Willy & Melissa Gamalero.

² Augustine of Hippo, "Lectures or Tractates on the Gospel according to St. John," in St. Augustine: Homilies on the Gospel of John, Homilies on the First Epistle of John, Soliloquies, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. John Gibb and James Innes, vol. 7, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1888), 293.

³ C.S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce*