

The Gospel of John

Chapter 12:20-41

August 17, 1997

- **The Gospel of John Outline:**

- Chapter 1 Our Lord is the Word, the Light and the Life
- Chapter 2 The Lord of the Wedding Feast; Zeal for the purity of the temple
- Chapter 3 Spiritual Birth, Belief and Salvation vs. Unbelief and Condemnation
- Chapter 4 The Ministry in Samaria, The Harvest, The Faith of the Nobleman
- Chapter 5 Paralytic man healed on the Sabbath, Unity of The Father and Son
- Chapter 6 The Bread of Life
- Chapter 7 The public debates about Jesus during the Feast of Tabernacles
- Chapter 8 Public debates: Woman caught in adultery; The Son makes you free; Abraham's true children
- Chapter 9 Jesus heals a man born blind.
- Chapter 10 Jesus is the Door and the True Shepherd
- Chapter 11 Our Lord is the Resurrection and the Life
- Chapter 12 Jesus Anointed and Worshipped as King,

- **Review and Introduction**

In the previous section, we saw the Lord anointed by Mary at Bethany and the crowds worship Him as He entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey. That entrance to Jerusalem would be His last and there arose a great multitude of people following Him. In this section, Jesus speaks with the crowd which includes a group of Greeks who desired to speak with Him.

- **Exposition of John 12:20-41**

20 Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast.²¹ Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."²² Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

- It is very difficult to know exactly the identity of the group of Greeks who came to the feast. It may have been Israelites scattered abroad or Jews living in other countries. It could have also been gentile proselytes from Greek speaking countries. Nevertheless, they appear to be included with those who are coming to observe the feast so as to keep the commandment to observe the Passover.
- The news of Jesus had spread even to their countries and they came looking for Him. It may be significant that they spoke with the only two disciples whose names have Greek origins but this is clearly conjecture.

23 But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified."²⁴ "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.

- Jesus knew that the time had come for betrayal, trial and execution. There was no time now to teach these visitors; all He could tell them was to watch and believe. There was no time to perform another miracle; they would need to believe as they watched Him crucified and buried.
- Jesus gives them a brief parable which certainly is applied to His death. If Christ dies by giving Himself up, He would bring about tremendous fruit. It is easy to picture a single seed going into the ground and yield a plant which produces thousands of seeds. But note that the Scriptures declare that Christ died to save the world. We can't say that if a few thousand, or even a few million people dwell in His presence for eternity that this is somehow saving the world. This one death will result in the salvation of such a large multitude of people that it could be said the *world* was saved.

25 "He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life."²⁶ "If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.

- Now Jesus takes the same principle and applies it to His hearers which includes us. Just a Christ gave Himself up and resulted in much grain, as the world strives to keep its life it was assuredly lose it. If we give up the self centered pursuits and seek to glorify God, we will gain eternal life.
- There is also another application to be made here by understanding the similarity between Christ's death producing manifold fruit and our death. There is an expectation in the Scriptures that when our old man dies and we are made new, we should be evidently fruitful. We should expect to see fruit in our lives and in the lives of others. If we don't see the fruit, then perhaps the single seed remains alone and hasn't gone into the ground. Fruitfulness is an indication of the seed going into the ground, giving itself up and yielding much greater fruit beyond itself.

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."²⁸

"Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again." ²⁹ Therefore the people who stood by and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to Him." ³⁰ Jesus answered and said, "This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake." ³¹ "Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.

- o Jesus knows full well the cost He is about to pay. He anticipates the abuse, the humiliation and the excruciating death that He must endure. However, it is probable that the greatest pain will be His separation from the Father and the Father turning His back on Him while on the cross. We can't with our body-count mentality comprehend the significance of this event. Suffice it say though that wrath for the full sin of an innumerable multitude of people was poured out upon Him by His Father. Notice Jesus' primary concern isn't for Himself but for the glorification of His Father's name.
- o Let there be no doubt. When the Father says that He will be glorified it will certainly happen. The Father declares with a loud voice that He has glorified His name and will do so again. There are no schemes that man can devise that can thwart God in His purposes. From our vantage point they can appear as set backs but in all things God glorifies Himself.
- o As though He had already succeeded in the cross, Christ declares that His death will bring the judgement of the world and the casting out of the ruler of the world. But the Scriptures go further than simply declaring that Satan is rejected or cast out. The Scriptures declare his destruction, humiliation and eternal punishment. Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14

32 "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself." ³³ This He said, signifying by what death He would die. ³⁴ The people answered Him, "We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever; and how can You say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?"

- o The term "lifted up" was an idiom regarding crucifixion that the hearers would have understood. Because they understood His meaning, what they heard did not comport with what they thought they knew from the Scriptures regarding the reign of the Christ. Psalm 89:36-37, Isaiah 9:6

35 Then Jesus said to them, "A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going." ³⁶ "While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.

- o Those who saw and spoke with Jesus had a unique and extraordinary opportunity to believe in Him. The exhortation to them was to stop their foolish thinking and walk in the light while the light was there. It was better by far to believe and follow than to depart and wonder. We also have an extraordinary time in which we are granted belief because we have the word of God so easily at our fingertips in different translations and formats. We also have the whole counsel of God revealed to us in such a way that we have everything we need for instruction in righteousness so that we may be complete and fully equipped. Yet, as it has always been, the just shall live by faith.

37 But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, ³⁸ that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke:

"Lord, who has believed our report?

And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"

39 Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again:

40 "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts,

Lest they should see with their eyes,

Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn,

So that I should heal them."

41 These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him. NKJV

- o Despite the many signs performed throughout the ministry of Christ, many did not believe in Him. Notice the reason for this was so that the word of God would not be broken. Notice also that the reason they did not believe was because they could not believe because God blinded them and denied them the vision to see and understand. To some God grants vision and understanding to others He withholds. The arm of the Lord was revealed but He blinded them so that He would be glorified. This is a truth that modern pop theology wants to deny because we fail to see righteous character.