

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

RISING OPPOSITION TO JESUS' MINISTRY, JOHN 5:1-12:50

INTRODUCTION

- A. Outline of the *Gospel of John* (1:1-4:42)
1. Prologue (1:1-18)
 2. Preparation for Jesus' ministry (1:19-51)
 3. Jesus' early ministry (2:1-4:54)
 4. Rising opposition to Jesus' ministry (5:1-12:50)
 - a. Jesus' second visit to Jerusalem (5:1-47)
 - b. Jesus' ministry in Galilee (6:1-7:9)
 - c. Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem (7:10-10:42)
 - d. The death and resurrection of Lazarus (11:1-57)
 - e. (12:1-50)
- B. Comments on John 12
- Charles Swindoll, *John 12 marks a significant transition in Jesus' life. While no less than three years elapsed in the first eleven chapters, John now slows the pace of his narrative to cover less than a week in this chapter, and then three days in chapters 13 to 20.*
 - Edwin Blum, *John in chapter 12 concluded his record of Jesus' public ministry with (a) the account of Mary's anointing of Jesus (which set the stage for His coming sacrifice), (b) His Triumphal Entry, and © the prediction of His death.*
 - Thomas Constable, *In contrast to the hatred that the religious leaders demonstrated stands the love that Mary demonstrated toward the One she had come to believe in. Her act of sacrificial devotion is a model for all true disciples. This is the climax of belief in this section of the Gospel that records Jesus' public ministry (1:19–12:50). Chapter 12 records Jesus' last teaching before the general public.*
 - William Hendriksen, *This chapter has four sections: a. Jesus is anointed at Bethany (12:1–11). b. He makes his triumphal entry into Jerusalem (12:12–19). c. He is sought by the Greeks (12:20–36). d. He is repulsed by the Jews (12:37–50).*

WHAT TO DO WITH JESUS AND LAZARUS, JOHN 12:1-11

- A. The anointing of Jesus (1-8)
1. Jesus returned to Bethany (1), ***Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.***
 - a. Related verses
 - 1) John 11:55, *Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves.*
 - 2) John 11:1, *Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.*
 - b. Comments
 - 1) William Barclay, *So great were the crowds who came to the Passover that they could not all possibly obtain lodging within the city itself, and Bethany was one of the places outside the city boundaries which the law laid down as a place for the overflow of the pilgrims to stay.*
 - 2) Thomas Constable, *The day when Jesus arrived in Bethany of Judea was evidently Saturday ... At this Passover the Lamb of God would die as a sacrifice for the sins of the world.*
 - 3) Warren Wiersbe, *Our Lord knew that the Jewish leaders were out to arrest Him and kill Him (John 11:53, 57), but He still returned to Bethany, only two miles from the very citadel of His enemies. Why? So that He might spend a quiet time with His dear friends Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.*

- 4) Leon Morris, *“Therefore”* (which NIV omits) ties this section of the narrative to the preceding. The chief priests and the Pharisees were seeking to put Jesus to death. He had no intention of rushing needlessly into danger and accordingly had retired to a quiet spot (11:54). But this Gospel is written out of a deep conviction that Jesus came to die for sinners. It was in the purpose of God that he should lay down his life for others. *“Therefore”* at the set time he came to the city where he would be delivered up to death.
 - 5) Grant Osborne, *Matthew* (26:6–13) and *Mark* (14:3–9) are the same as John, but Luke (7:36–50) has different details and is a different episode ... The hour of destiny has arrived (see discussion at 2:4; 7:30; 8:20), so Jesus comes back to Bethany on the slopes of the Mount of Olives a couple miles east of Jerusalem. When in Jerusalem he likely always stayed with his friends Lazarus and his sisters. The scene is now set for history’s greatest Passover sacrifice, the “Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (1:29). Lazarus was a catalyst for the events, and his death and resurrection provided a prophetic anticipation of the greater death and resurrection soon to come ... It is generally agreed by recent evangelical scholars that John is more chronological, and that is the case here as well. Matthew and Mark have placed it later to contrast the woman's worshipful act with Judas's betrayal, and John places it where it originally took place, the day before passion week began.
2. A dinner was held for Jesus (2), ***So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table.***
 - a. Grant Osborne, *The scene is now set for history’s greatest Passover sacrifice, the “Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world”* (1:29). Lazarus was a catalyst for the events, and his death and resurrection provided a prophetic anticipation of the greater death and resurrection soon to come.
 - b. Edwin Blum, *Mark wrote that the place was Simon the Leper’s home (Mark 14:1–11). The dinner must have been a joyous occasion with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus there. The relationship of this family to Simon is not known, but it must have been close since Martha served.*
 - c. Kenneth Gangel, *Some people struggle with the comment in both Matthew and Mark that the dinner was held in the house of Simon the Leper, but that problem dissolves when we read carefully the text, noting that the location of the dinner was not specified. In fact, the phraseology a dinner was given tends to make us think it was in some home in Bethany other than that of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.*
 - d. Edward Klink, *Jesus is being honored by the Bethany family (and others) for his miraculous and loving response to the sickness and death of Lazarus ... The mention of Lazarus serves to highlight the other “honored” guest, the one whose presence is entirely dependent on the presence of Jesus. What may have begun as a funeral banquet in preparation for his absence had been transformed into a celebratory dinner in his presence.*
 3. Mary anointed Jesus feet (3), ***Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.***
 - a. Craig Keener, *The Roman “pint” or “pound” (NASB, NRSV) may have been roughly 324 grams, about twelve ounces. A normal flask (Mark 14:3) would normally contain not more than an ounce, so Mary is tremendously extravagant here.*
 - b. Thomas Constable, *Its quantity indicates Mary’s great love and high regard for Jesus. The act of anointing often symbolized consecration to a divine work, as it did here. The ointment nard was an Indian oil that came from the roots (i.e., spikes, therefore “spikenard”) of the nard plant ... Only John noted that Mary wiped Jesus’ feet with her hair, which was another act of humility. Normally Jewish women never let their hair down in public, since to them loose hair was a sign of loose morals. Evidently Mary’s love for Jesus overrode her sense of propriety.*
 - c. Edwin Blum, *It was an expensive perfume, imported in sealed alabaster boxes or flasks which were opened only on special occasions. Mary’s lavish gift (a pint) expressed her love and thanks to Jesus for Himself and for His restoring Lazarus to life. The house was filled with the fragrance. This is one of John’s many side comments which indicate that he was an eyewitness of much of Jesus’ ministry.*
 - d. Warren Wiersbe, *Her act of love and worship was public, spontaneous, sacrificial, lavish, personal, and unembarrassed. Jesus called it “a good work” (Matt. 26:10; Mark 14:6) and both commended her and defended her ... When she came to the feet of Jesus, Mary took the place of a slave. When she undid her hair (something Jewish women did not do in public), she humbled herself and laid her glory at His feet (see 1 Cor. 11:15).*

- e. Leon Morris, ... *oil was normally poured on the head. The peculiar thing about this anointing was that Mary poured it on the feet of the Lord. This is probably to be taken as an act of utter humility. Mary is taking the lowliest possible place.*
 - f. William Hendriksen, *One hardly knows what to admire most, the irrepressible character of Mary's devotion or the lavish nature of her sacrifice. The former, of course, produced the latter.*
 - g. Edward Klink, *For just as he is being anointed for his burial (v. 7), so also will he be enthroned as king not with honor but with shame (19:2–3) and not on a throne but on a cross (19:19) ... Evidence from the ancient world suggests that the lowering of one's hair in this manner could be a sign of extreme gratitude and an expression of humility. Thus, Mary was addressing Jesus not as a man but as the King, the one to whom the only appropriate posture was kneeling face down at his feet, anointing him with luxurious and sweet-smelling perfume, and using her own hair to express how much her whole person was in service to the King.*
 - h. William Barclay, *We see love's extravagance. Mary took the most precious thing she possessed and spent it all on Jesus. Love is not love if it nicely calculates the cost. It gives its all, and its only regret is that it has not still more to give ... The house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment' ... Many fathers of the Church and many scholars have seen a double meaning here. They have taken it to mean that the whole Church was filled with the sweet memory of Mary's action. A lovely deed becomes the possession of the whole world and adds to the beauty of life in general, something which time cannot ever take away.*
4. Judas objected to what Mary did (4-5), ***But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, 5 "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?"***
- a. Thomas Constable, *Judas Iscariot, as well as some other disciples who were present (Matt. 26:8; Mark 14:4), objected to what seemed to be an extravagant waste ... Mary, like David, would not give to the Lord what cost her nothing (cf. 2 Sam. 24:24). Real worship always costs the worshipper; it always involves a sacrifice.*
 - b. William Hendriksen, *Wherever Mary looked she met angry glances, looks of shocked disapproval. Only one comes to her defence, but that One was the greatest of all! See on 12:8, 9.*
 - c. Edward Klink, *He does not speak in anger or rage, but with reasoned pretentiousness asks a question that directly rebukes Mary and indirectly (that is, more politely) rebukes the just-anointed King himself.*
 - d. Warren Wiersbe, *Of course, she was misunderstood and criticized; but that is what usually happens when somebody gives his or her best to the Lord ... It was Judas who started the criticism, and, sad to say, the other disciples took it up. They did not know that Judas was a devil (John 12:4), and they admired him for his concern for the poor. After all, he was the treasurer; and especially at Passover season, he would want to share with those who were less fortunate (see John 13:21–30). Until the very end, the disciples believed that Judas was a devoted follower of the Lord.*
 - e. Edwin Blum, *According to Mark (14:4–5) the other disciples picked up his criticism and rebuked her harshly. Evil quickly spreads, and even leaders can be carried along by Satan's tools.*
 - f. William Barclay, *To help the poor was something that could be done any time. To show the heart's devotion to Jesus had to be done before the cross on Calvary took him to its cruel arms. Let us remember to do things now, for the chance so often never comes again; and the failure to do them, especially the failure to express love, brings bitter remorse.*
5. John revealed with Judas' motive (6), ***He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it.***
- a. Thomas Constable, *John knew Judas' real motive ("he was a thief") for objecting to Mary's sacrifice (cf. 10:13). Judas' selfish materialism helps us understand why he was willing to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver ... Evidently the other disciples learned of their treasurer's financial mismanagement after he betrayed Jesus.*
 - b. Edwin Blum, *John with the hindsight of history was able to state why Judas said this. Judas, evidently the group's treasurer (cf. 13:29), would pocket some of the benevolence money for himself. Whereas Mary gave openly and sacrificially, Judas wanted to hoard money for himself secretly and selfishly. He even betrayed Jesus for money—30 pieces of silver (the price of a gored slave; cf. Ex. 21:32; Zech. 11:12–13).*

- c. Kenneth Gangel, *John developed a biography of Judas throughout this book, and he wanted his readers to understand the motive behind the intervention—greed and robbery, not concern for the poor. This is the only place in the four Gospels where Judas shows himself, but John had been building the evidence already which, when complete, would look something like this: He was a devil (6:70–71). He was an outwardly moral person (12:5). He was a selfish thief (12:6). He was a hypocrite (13:18). He was the son of perdition (17:12).*
- d. Leon Morris, *These two Evangelists speak of Judas as going away to the chief priests and making his agreement with them immediately at the close of this incident. The impression left is that Judas, seeing one source of personal enrichment lost, hastened to create another. And if this is the character of the man, we may well feel that he was dissatisfied with the way the mission of Jesus was turning out. Certainly he would have hoped for better pickings when he first attached himself to the little band.*
- e. William Barclay, *Judas had a gift for handling money and became so fond of it that he became first a thief and then a traitor for its sake ... We see how a person's view can be warped. Judas had just seen an action of surpassing loveliness; and he called it extravagant waste. He was an embittered man and he took an embittered view of things. Our sight depends on what is inside us.*
6. Jesus rebuked Judas (7-8), **Jesus said, “Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. 8 For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me.”**
- a. *Jesus said, Leave her alone ...*
- 1) Thomas Constable, *By saying “Leave her alone” Jesus probably meant that the disciples should permit Mary to keep the custom of anointing for burial, since Jesus’ burial was not far off. There is no indication that Mary realized that Jesus would die soon any more than the other disciples did, though she may have. However, she was anointing Jesus out of love, as mourners anointed the bodies of loved ones who had died ... It is a good idea to express our love for people that we appreciate to them before they die. Flowers at a funeral are nice, but flowers before the funeral are even better.*
 - 2) Edwin Blum, *Normally anointing was something festive. But in this case the anointing was in anticipation of His burial. Living by God’s Word, Jesus knew that as the suffering Servant, He must endure pain, die, and be buried (cf. Isa. 53:9).*
 - 3) Kenneth Gangel, *A loose paraphrase capturing Jesus’ intended meaning might go like this: “Leave her alone. In God’s great plan, suffering and death for sin has already begun and this woman shows her love for me at a time when I am already headed for the tomb.*
 - 4) Leon Morris, *A remark about a burial is not at all what we would have expected. We must take this as a measure of the extent to which the Passion was in Jesus’ mind at this time. It loomed large in his thoughts and therefore an action that at another time might arouse very different associations he immediately linked with his death.*
 - 5) There are several interpretations concerning Jesus’ statement. I believe the best understanding is expressed by William Hendriksen. The following is his recommendation but he does deal with all of them in his book. *Mary knew what she was doing. She actually believed that before long Jesus would be put to death by his enemies. Would his friends be given the opportunity to anoint his body? Yet, this honor must not be withheld. Mary owes so much, so very much, to Jesus! To him she owes her salvation, and ... the recovery of her brother Lazarus from the very realm of the dead. Hence, she had decided to keep the ointment for the day of her Lord’s burial. Not, however, in the sense that she literally wanted to keep the jar tightly closed until that day had actually arrived, for that might be too late; but thus, that she would keep it until a good opportunity would present itself, and then she would anoint him in anticipation of his burial. It was now or never! ... It is in harmony with the clear statement found in Matthew 26:12: “She has done it to prepare me for burial,” and in Mark 14:8, “She has anointed my body in advance for burial” ... It is also in harmony with the fact that Mary, perhaps more than any other disciple of Jesus, must have been convinced that the day of Christ’s death and burial was rapidly approaching...*
 - 6) John Hart, *This act of anointing perfume as burial preparation indicates that Mary was probably one of only a few who realized Christ was soon to die (cf. Mt 26:12; Mk 14:8).*
 - 7) Charles Swindoll, *We cannot know for certain what was in Mary’s mind as she worshiped the Lord with her aromatic treasure, but the Lord gave it profound theological purpose. The first step in preparing a body for burial was to rinse with water and anoint with perfumed oil. Jesus used her expression of devotion to signal the coming of His own death.*

8) F. F. Bruce, *Jesus' reply suggests that the outpouring of the ointment should be regarded as an anticipation of what might have been reserved for his burial. Unusual expense at a funeral was not regarded as unseemly. Why should anyone object if the ointment which would otherwise have been used to anoint his dead body in due course was poured over him while he was still alive and able to appreciate the love which prompted the action?*

b. *For the poor you always have with you ...*

- 1) Thomas Constable, *Unless Jesus was the Son of God who was due the same honor as His Father (5:23), Jesus' statement here would have demonstrated supreme arrogance. Jesus was not encouraging His disciples to regard poverty as inevitable and, therefore, to avoid doing anything to help those in need. He was comparing the unique opportunity that His impending death presented with the continual need that the poverty of some will always present (cf. Mark 14:7).*
- 2) Craig Keener, *Jesus' reply alludes to Deuteronomy 15:11, which urges generosity to the poor, who will always be in the land; the context promises that God will bless his people if they care for the poor. Jesus thus does not play down giving to the poor but emphasizes his impending death; he must always be his followers' first commitment.*
- 3) Edwin Blum, *So He immediately defended Mary's act of love and devotion. You will always have the poor among you is not a divine endorsement of poverty or an encouragement to do nothing about poverty. Instead, Jesus was saying that the causes of poverty are many and people will always have occasions to help the poor (Mark 14:7). But the opportunity to show love to Jesus on earth was limited. You will not always have Me, that is, here on earth (cf. John 12:35; 13:33; 14:3–4).*
- 4) Kenneth Gangel, *As for the poor, taking care of them is a good and biblical act of righteousness and you should do it. However, you'll have ample opportunity to demonstrate that concern; I'll be gone within a week.*
- 5) Leon Morris, *Opportunity is to be seized while it is there. The poor are always present (cf. Deut. 15:11). But Jesus is not. He will not live to old age but will soon be taken from among them. The time for actions of devotion toward him is much shorter than those at table think. Jesus accordingly welcomes Mary's action.*
- 6) William Hendriksen, *Jesus, in defending her action, adds: "... for the poor you have always with you, but me you have not always." Note the fact that you is plural ... Jesus, then, is speaking not only to Judas but to all the disciples; in fact, to all those who listen to him that day. He is telling them that just now anointing him in anticipation of his burial is more important than the care of the poor. By implication, however, he is saying to the church of all the ages that the care of the poor is its responsibility and privilege ... As a reward for Mary's golden deed Jesus adds a beautiful promise. See Matt. 26:13 Mark 14:9.*
- 7) John Hart, *Charitable opportunities will never cease until Christ returns. But you do not always have Me referred to His death just six days away.*
- 8) William Barclay, *To help the poor was something that could be done any time. To show the heart's devotion to Jesus had to be done before the cross on Calvary took him to its cruel arms. Let us remember to do things now, for the chance so often never comes again; and the failure to do them, especially the failure to express love, brings bitter remorse.*
- 9) Gary Burge, *Jesus' final words in 12:8 place in tension pure personal adoration and social responsibility (also in Matt. 26:11; Mark 14:7). To acknowledge the endless needs of the poor was not unusual (Deut. 15:11). Jesus' presence among them, however, is unique. This is not to deny our responsibility to the poor, but it alerts us to the wonder of who Mary and Martha are hosting that day.*

B. Mixed interest toward Lazarus (9-11)

1. Many came to see Jesus and Lazarus (9), ***When the large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there, they came, not only on account of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead.***
 - a. Thomas Constable, *Jesus had disappeared after Lazarus' resurrection and had not yet shown Himself in Jerusalem for Passover (11:54–57). But now the news came that He was in Bethany. The appearance of the resurrected Lazarus intensified the curiosity of many Jerusalem residents and pilgrims who traveled to Bethany hoping to see both men. They were the subjects of much controversy.*
 - b. William Hendriksen, *These Jews of whom mention is made here are not the religious leaders, hostile to Jesus (the sense in which the term is so often used in the Fourth Gospel; see on 1:19), but the common people, the thrill-seekers.*

- c. Edward Klink, *Clearly the resurrection of Lazarus (the sixth sign) had become known, and people wanted to see the evidence for themselves. The narrator thus depicts how the public reputation of Jesus is beginning to grow (cf. 12:17–18).*
 - d. Charles Swindoll, *Undoubtedly, genuine believers could be found among the crowds, but in this case, the motivation appears to be mere curiosity. And their presence revealed Jesus' location, which He had previously kept discreet.*
 - e. F. F. Bruce, *Apart from the mourners, few people had seen him on that occasion. But the news of the raising of Lazarus spread quickly and aroused great excitement, so next time he came to Bethany a great crowd came to see him, and to seize the opportunity of seeing Lazarus too. Lazarus was perhaps shielded by his sisters from vulgar curiosity after he was restored to them, but this supper would have been something of a public occasion.*
2. The chief priests plotted to kill Lazarus (10-11), ***So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, 11 because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.***
- a. Related verses
 - 1) John 11:45, *Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him,*
 - 2) John 12:18, *The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign.*
 - b. Comments
 - 1) Thomas Constable, *To make the contrast between belief and unbelief even more striking, John returned from Mary's love to the chief priests' hatred (cf. 11:47–57) ... The huge numbers of people that were heading for Bethany to see Jesus and Lazarus led the Sanhedrin members to conclude that they would have to kill Lazarus as well as Jesus. Many of the Jews believed on Jesus when they heard about Lazarus' resurrection and/or saw him. The man born blind, whom Jesus had healed earlier, had also become a problem for the Sanhedrin. They had dealt with him differently (excommunication rather than execution) because Jesus' popularity then was not as great (9:34).*
 - 2) Craig Keener, *Irony was a common ancient literary device: those who receive life by Jesus' death must be ready to die for it, and religious leaders plot murder.*
 - 3) Warren Wiersbe, *... the fact that Lazarus was a walking miracle put him into a place of danger: the Jewish leaders wanted to kill him as well as Jesus! Our Lord was right when He called them children of the devil, for they were murderers indeed (John 8:42–44). They threw the healed blind man out of the synagogue rather than permit him to bear witness to Christ every Sabbath, and they tried to put Lazarus back into the tomb because he was leading people to faith in Christ. If you will not accept the evidence, you must try to get rid of it!*
 - 4) Leon Morris, *John now records the effect on the high priests. They took counsel in order that they might kill Lazarus ... This seems a strange desire since death had not been able to hold him in the face of Jesus' command. But the "as well" is significant. They wanted to destroy both Lazarus and the Man who had raised him. Perhaps, too, they felt that the raising had not been genuine so that if they could really secure Lazarus's death it would be an end to the mischief that the reports of his raising were causing ... For the Sadducees Lazarus was a double embarrassment. Not only did he cause people to go over to the side of Christ, but he was also a standing condemnation of their doctrine. They denied that there would be a resurrection and here was a man who had lived through death.*
 - 5) William Hendriksen, *Lazarus, enjoying excellent health, walking around as usual, left an indelible impression upon the multitude, for they knew that this same man had been dead and in his tomb for four days! As a result of what they had now seen with their own eyes many, in departing from Bethany, were believing in him ...*
 - 6) John Hart, *One sin leads to another. Not only did the chief priests plot to kill Jesus, they now planned to put Lazarus to death also. Lazarus stood as a living testimony of Christ's messianic power, and He had to be eliminated also. Too many Jews were going away and were believing in Jesus.*
 - 7) William Barclay, *In order to maintain their own place and their own influence, the priests and the Sadducees were prepared to destroy the evidence for the truth. Things have come to a sorry pass when people are afraid of the truth and set their personal prestige and profit before it.*

SUMMARY

- Thomas Constable, *Both the intensity of the hatred of the Sanhedrin for Jesus, and the intensity of the love of Mary for Jesus, were feelings that many other people shared, and they suggest the inevitability of a major conflict soon in John's story.*
- Warren Wiersbe, *This quiet evening of fellowship—in spite of the cruel way the disciples treated Mary—must have brought special encouragement and strength to the Saviour's heart as He faced the demands of that last week before the Cross. We should examine our own hearts and homes to ask whether we are bringing joy to His heart by our worship, work, and witness.*
- Gary Burge, *... the Sanhedrin determines that Lazarus must likewise die ... They wish to return Lazarus to the place he belongs (the grave), and no doubt from Lazarus' perspective, it is a plot that has been emptied of its threat. Lazarus now knows the power of Jesus over the grave.*

INTRODUCTION TO JOHN 12:12-19

- Jesus' triumphal entry is recorded in Matthew 21:4-9; Mark 11:7-10 and Luke 19:35-38.
- Thomas Constable, *The importance of this incident in Jesus' ministry is evident from the fact that all four Gospel evangelists recorded it. Matthew and Mark placed this event before Mary's anointing of Jesus in Simon's house (vv. 1-8). However, John's order is probably the chronological one, in view of his time references, plus the fact that Matthew and Mark frequently altered the chronological sequence for thematic purposes.*

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY OF JESUS, JOHN 12:12-19

- A. A large crowd shouts out praises to Jesus (12-13), ***The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. 13 So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!"***
1. John Hart, *The attention aroused by the resurrection of Lazarus (chap. 11) intensified the celebration.*
 2. Thomas Constable, *This was the only public demonstration that involved Jesus that He allowed during His earthly ministry ... The "next day" would have been Sunday (cf. v. 1). The large crowd that had come to Jerusalem for the Passover feast undoubtedly included many pilgrims from Galilee, where Jesus had His greatest following ... "Hosanna" is the transliteration of a Hebrew phrase that means "Give salvation now." The Jews commonly used this word in their praise at the feasts of Tabernacles, Dedication, and Passover. It was part of the Hallel (Ps. 113-118) that the temple choir sang at these feasts (Ps. 118:25) ... The Jews of Jesus' day regarded the phrase "the one who comes in the name of the LORD" as referring to Messiah (cf. 11:27).*
 3. Edward Klink, *Since the events of the previous day occurred on the Jewish Sabbath, Saturday, the arrival of Jesus to Jerusalem must be occurring on Sunday, what Christians now celebrate as Palm Sunday ... The picture being painted would involve the large crowd "welcoming the person [Jesus] in an elaborate and festive procession accompanied by songs and praises.*
 4. William Barclay, *Many among these crowds were greeting Jesus as a conqueror. That, in fact, is the predominant atmosphere of the whole scene. They greeted him with the words: 'Hosanna! Blessed is he who is coming in the name of the Lord!' The word Hosanna is the Hebrew for Save now! And the shout of the people was almost precisely: 'God save the King!'*
 5. Charles Swindoll, *Upon His arrival, they lined His path to the city with palm branches and clothes, shouting "Hosanna!" which means, "Save us." Their shouts included words from a messianic psalm (Ps. 118:26) ... Jesus had entered the city of Jerusalem many times during His ministry, but this "triumphal entry" to the capital city of the Hebrew nation differed in one primary respect. He no longer visited as a worshiper; this day He claimed it as King.*

6. Grant Osborne, *A huge crowd of Passover visitors pours out to see the sight, waving palm branches to welcome Jesus (v. 13). These branches were a Passover tradition stemming from the Maccabean revolt, when the Jewish people welcomed Judas Maccabeus (“the Hammer”) into Jerusalem for the rededication of the temple (the Feast of Dedication; see 10:22–39). They were also used at both Tabernacles and Passover to signify victory and new life for the community (1 Maccabees 13:51; 2 Maccabees 10:7). Here they demonstrate national hope for liberation and are a sign of messianic fervor ... The crowd also shouts out their high expectations. The titles are also messianic. They stem from Psalm 118:25–26, a royal psalm used in the processions of the king, stressing his rule under the authority of Yahweh. They are also part of the Hallel Psalms (113–118) sung by pilgrims in procession to festivals like Passover. At Tabernacles the temple choir would sing the Hallel every morning, and when they reached the Hosanna prayer of 118:25 the people would wave the lulab (branches of willow and myrtle tied with palm) and repeat the prayer three times ... The “Hosanna” that begins the cry in the psalm is a prayer, “Lord, save us,” and that could be the thrust here ... Then in verse 13 the pilgrims call down divine blessing on the one “who comes in the name of the Lord” from Psalm 118:26, which was understood in the first century as referring to the Messiah. They wished God’s blessing on their messianic liberator, which many hoped Jesus was ... Finally they cry, “Blessed is the King of Israel,” a title ascribed to Jesus by Nathanael in John 1:49 and found also in 18:33, 37, 39; 19:19, 21. This does not stem from Psalm 118 but is used here as a concluding hope for their royal Messiah, the conqueror descended from David. Their understanding of Jesus was primarily as a political leader. Still, they were centered on the messianic king and deliverer.*

B. Jesus rode a donkey into Jerusalem in fulfillment of Zechariah’s promise (14-15), ***And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, 15 “Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt!”***

1. Related verses

- a. Zechariah 9:9, *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*
- b. Isaiah 40:9, *Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, “Behold your God!”*

2. Comments

- a. Charles Swindoll, *Jesus had entered the city of Jerusalem many times during His ministry, but this “triumphal entry” to the capital city of the Hebrew nation differed in one primary respect. He no longer visited as a worshiper; this day He claimed it as King. Unlike a conquering warrior king, however, Jesus entered the city on a symbol of peace. He rode on a humble donkey rather than sitting high in the saddle of a prancing white steed or riding in a stately chariot behind a team of horses.*
- b. Thomas Constable, *The Synoptic writers gave more detail than John did about Jesus securing the young donkey. John simply reported that He entered Jerusalem riding on it, and thereby fulfilled Zechariah’s prophecy about how Messiah would present Himself to the nation (Zech. 9:9) ... “Do not fear” comes from Isaiah 40:9, which addresses those to whom good news about Zion comes. “Daughter of Zion” is a common Old Testament description of the people of Jerusalem as the oppressed people of God (cf. Isa. 1:8; Jer. 4:31; Lam. 2:4; Mic. 4:8; Zeph. 3:14; Zech. 2:10; et al.). The context of Zechariah 9:9 is worthy of examination, since it describes more about Messiah’s reign. Even though Messiah had appeared, His earthly reign would not begin then. He would not “give salvation now” (“Hosanna”) to the nation because of Israel’s rejection of her King.*
- c. Kenneth Gangel, *The key to much of this type of New Testament text is the phrase that appears at the end of verse 14—as it is written. Everything about Jesus’ life and ministry fulfilled Old Testament promises. This triumphal-entry event forced people to make a decision, fulfilled what the Bible promised, and offered the Passover Lamb—the only lamb in the city that day riding on a ceremonial donkey.*
- d. William Hendriksen, *Having found and mounted a donkey ... Jesus is proceeding toward Jerusalem. What he did was a clear fulfilment of prophecy, and the people of Jerusalem should have seen this immediately.*
- e. John Hart, *Unfortunately, many in the crowd thought of Jesus only as a political deliverer and not a spiritual Savior. Instead of riding in on a horse like a warrior, Jesus chose a donkey ... a symbol of peace and humility (2Sm 19:26).*

- f. Grant Osborne, *Jesus is accepting their messianic hopes but correcting them by demonstrating that he is not coming as the conquering king but as the lowly Messiah, the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 ... Jesus' procession into Jerusalem on a donkey was a prophetic act to counter the desire of the Jews for a nationalistic Messiah. His universal kingship would not be brought about by his military victory but by his death. Jesus would be royal King at his first advent and conquering Messiah at his second coming.*
- C. His disciples did not understand the messianic significance at that time (16), ***His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him.***
1. Related verses
 - a. John 13:7, *Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand."*
 - b. John 12:23, *And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified."*
 2. Comments
 - a. Thomas Constable, *Jesus' disciples did not realize all the implications of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem at this time ("at the first"). After Jesus' resurrection and ascension, when He was glorified, then they did (cf. 2:17, 22) ... they did not then understand the true nature of His messiahship, the necessity of His death, or the plan for His kingdom. For example, they may not have understood the significance of His riding a donkey's colt rather than a war-horse. John's statement here helps the reader understand the difference between the disciples' understanding (and comments) before the Cross, and their conduct (and teaching) after that event.*
 - b. Kenneth Gangel, *The disciples still had not grasped Christ's nature and work, even as long as they had been with him. Writing many years after these events, John admitted that only after the glorification of Jesus (probably a reference to both resurrection and ascension) did they really grasp what had happened to them.*
 - c. Leon Morris, *what John appears to be saying is that the disciples did not understand the real significance of these events. They did not comprehend the nature of Jesus' kingship (though they may well have thought of him as in some sense the messianic King). John is not affirming that the multitude correctly evaluated the Person of the Lord. They thought of him as King in a wrong sense. After the glorification the disciples thought of him as King in a right sense. There is no contradiction.*
 - d. William Hendriksen, *When Jesus was glorified by means of his cross and resurrection, and had sent forth his Spirit (16:12, 13), all this became clear to them. They recalled everything, and saw what it meant. They understood that Zech. 9:9 referred to him, and that these things had been done to him.*
 - e. George Beasley-Murray, *This understanding of the significance of Jesus' action did not come to the disciples until Jesus was "glorified," i.e., after his death and resurrection. Then it was that they grasped the nature of the kingship of Jesus, as he himself had revealed it: the king of peace and salvation brought to the world the kingdom of peace and salvation precisely through his dying and rising.*
 - f. John Hart, *... afterward the Holy Spirit assisted them to recall the details of Jesus' life and to match them with the OT prophecies that were written of Him (Jn 16:13–14).*
 - g. Edward Klink, *... as Jesus entered Jerusalem that day, only he knew that the throne he was heading toward had a coronation involving a cross and that his "lifting up" was in order to receive shame not honor.*
 - h. Grant Osborne, *The disciples join the crowd in their failure to understand what the triumphal entry was all about. The full realization did not take place until "after Jesus was glorified." As Jesus will state in 14:26, it is the Spirit who is to remind them of everything Jesus has told them, even of those things they fail to understand at first. The mention of Jesus glorified is significant, emphasizing the passion as the time of glory. It was the glorified Lord along with the Spirit who enabled them to understand (as is also the case with us).*

- D. The crowd followed Him Jesus because He raised Lazarus (17-18), ***The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. 18 The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign.***
1. Related verses
 - a. Luke 19:37, *As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen,*
 - b. John 12:9, *When the large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there, they came, not only on account of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead.*
 2. Comments
 - a. Edwin Blum, *The size of the crowd kept increasing. The news of the great miraculous sign—Lazarus raised from the dead—spread through the city, and other groups surged out to meet Him. It was a day of great popular acclaim, but sadly the people had little spiritual perception.*
 - b. Thomas Constable, *John noted another witness to Jesus’ person, namely, the people who had observed Jesus’ resurrection of Lazarus and had accompanied Jesus from Bethany to Jerusalem. The multitude that had come out of Jerusalem to welcome Jesus joined the other people—both physically, and as witnesses to Jesus’ identity as Messiah. The raising of Lazarus was a miracle that very many people regarded as a sign that Jesus was the Messiah (cf. Dan. 12:1–2).*
 - c. Leon Morris, *In the middle of the scenes of enthusiasm, with Jesus being hailed on all sides as king, those who had seen the stupendous miracle were moved to tell others of what they had seen ... What John evidently means is that those who had seen the miracle bore their witness as a result of which those who had not seen it but now heard of it went out to meet him. They wanted to see for themselves the one who had done such a stupendous thing.*
 - d. F. F. Bruce, *The former crowd bore loud testimony to what they had seen and heard, and the others voiced their appreciative response. One who could summon a dead man back to life would certainly be able to deliver the holy city from the yoke of Caesar.*
 - e. Grant Osborne, *Note that here the raising of Lazarus is called a “sign” miracle, the seventh and last of these great events around which chapters 2–12 have been organized ...*
- E. The Pharisees were dismayed that people followed Jesus (19), ***So the Pharisees said to one another, “You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him.”***
1. Related verses
 - a. John 11:47, *So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, “What are we to do? For this man performs many signs.*
 - b. John 3:26, *And they came to John and said to him, “Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness—look, he is baptizing, and all are going to him.”*
 2. Comments
 - a. Thomas Constable, *The Pharisees looked on in unbelief, frustrated by Jesus’ popularity and unable to do anything to stop Him at the moment ... It seemed to them that everyone was acknowledging Him as the Messiah.*
 - b. Warren Wiersbe, *The statement, “Behold, the world is gone after Him!” (John 12:19) was both an exaggeration and a prophecy. In the next section, we meet some visitors from outside Israel.*
 - c. Kenneth Gangel, *Surely John wanted his readers to grasp his use of the word kosmos to include many beyond the numerous pilgrims crowding Jerusalem for the Passover feast. For him the word describes lost and blind people on a planet in rebellion against its Maker.*
 - d. F. F. Bruce, *The crowd which acclaim Jesus as King anticipates all mankind which is to be united under his sovereignty.*
 - e. George Beasley-Murray, *... it was in the post-Easter period that the “world” of nations was “going after” Jesus through the preaching of the gospel, and the endeavors of the Pharisees to nullify the witness of the Church were proving to be as unsuccessful as their opposition to Jesus himself.*
 - f. Gary Burge, *It is no accident that the next episode records characters from that larger Mediterranean world, namely, some Greeks who are eager to see Jesus.*

SUMMARY

- Thomas Constable, *The Pharisees' unaware prophecy* (cf. Caiaphas' unaware prophecy in 11:50) received a partial fulfillment almost immediately in the request of some Greeks to see Jesus (vv. 20–22). The Pharisees later found it just as impossible to curtail the spread of Christianity as they did to restrict Jesus in Person (cf. Acts 3–4).
- Charles Swindoll, *The events of this day wouldn't make any sense to the disciples until after Jesus ascended to heaven and they received the Holy Spirit. The Pharisees, however, understood the meaning of the event all too well ... Because the arrival of the Messiah would shift the loyalty of the people away from them, leaving them powerless, they had no other option but to eliminate Jesus.*

INTRODUCTION TO JOHN 12:20-50

- Thomas Constable, *One example that Jesus was attracting people from other parts of the world follows. These individuals contrast with the Pharisees. Westcott noted that as the Magi brought Jesus into fellowship with the Gentile world at the beginning of His life, so these Greeks did the same at the end of it.*
- Warren Wiersbe, *One of John's major themes is that Jesus is the Saviour 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 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 MINISTRY OF JESUS IN JERUSALEM, JOHN 12:20-50

- A. The world came calling for Jesus (20-26)
1. Greeks went to worship at the feast (20), ***Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks.***
 - a. Related verses
 - 1) 1 Kings 8:41-43, *"Likewise, when a foreigner, who is not of your people Israel, comes from a far country for your name's sake 42 (for they shall hear of your great name and your mighty hand, and of your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this house, 43 hear in heaven your dwelling place and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to you, in order that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your people Israel, and that they may know that this house that I have built is called by your name.*
 - 2) Acts 8:27, *And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship*
 - 3) Acts 17:4, *And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women.*
 - b. Comments
 - 1) William Barclay, *None of the other gospels tells of this incident, but it is very fitting to find it in the Fourth. The Fourth Gospel was the one written to present the truth of Christianity in a way that the Greeks could appreciate and understand; and it is natural that in it the first Greeks to come to Jesus should find a place.*
 - 2) Edwin Blum, *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).*
 - 3) Kenneth Gangel, *Some interpreters have speculated that Philip may have been a Greek since he had a Greek name, but that cannot be confirmed. Furthermore, we are not surprised that some Greeks came to worship at the Passover.*
 - 4) George Beasley-Murray, *The approach of Greeks to see Jesus was a confirmation of the Pharisees' exclamation in v 19 ... Their interest in Jesus will have been stimulated by his entry into Jerusalem, and possibly also by his cleansing of the temple (the latter will have taken place in the court of the Gentiles, which was the one part of the temple area open to them).*

- 5) John Hart, *It is unlikely that they submitted to circumcision (as proselytes) because they would then have been fully accepted as Jews and not called Greeks.*
 - 6) Thomas Constable, *They could have lived in one of the predominantly Gentile areas of Israel such as northeastern Galilee or the Decapolis, or they could have come from farther away (cf. Matt. 2:1–12). These were God-fearing Gentiles who worshipped Yahweh along with the Jews (cf. the Ethiopian eunuch, Acts 8:27) ... These Gentiles were permitted to participate in synagogue worship and the annual feasts, and they would have worshipped in the temple court of the Gentiles.*
 - 7) Warren Wiersbe, *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.*
 - 8) Leon Morris, ... *The “God-fearers” were people who were attracted by the lofty morality and the monotheism of Judaism, but who did not care to become full proselytes by circumcision.*
 - 9) F. F. Bruce, ... *like Cornelius of Caesarea (Acts 10) or that other centurion of Capernaum who loved the Jewish people and built them a synagogue (Luke 7:5). They belonged, that is, to the class of Gentiles who attached themselves to the Jewish way of life and synagogue worship without becoming full proselytes or converts to Judaism.*
 - 10) Gary Burge, *Even Paul distinguishes them in his public addresses: “Men of Israel and you Gentiles who fear God, listen to me” (Acts 13:16, 26).*
2. They wanted to see Jesus (21-22), ***So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” 22 Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.***
- a. Related verses
 - 1) John 1:44, *Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.*
 - 2) Mark 13:3, *And as he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately,*
 - b. Comments
 - 1) Edwin Blum, *Since crowds of people probably wanted to speak with Jesus, the disciples may have tried to do some screening (cf. Luke 18:15–16).*
 - 2) Thomas Constable, *It may have been Philip’s Gentile name, or the fact that he was from Bethsaida (1:44) in a Gentile area of Galilee, specifically Gaulanitis, that attracted these Gentiles to him. The Pharisees had said, “the world has gone after Him” (v. 19). Now certain Greeks were saying, “we wish to see Jesus” (cf. Hag. 2:7) ... Philip, who was a Jew, appears to have had some hesitation about introducing these Greeks to Jesus at first ... Perhaps Philip sought Andrew’s help because introducing Gentiles to Jesus was difficult for these Jewish disciples, and Philip needed encouragement to do so. Another possibility is that Philip remembered Jesus’ earlier instruction to His disciples, when He had sent them on a preaching tour throughout Galilee, forbidding them to go to the Gentiles (Matt. 10:5).*
 - 3) Warren Wiersbe, *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.*
 - 4) Kenneth Gangel, *Not until we open the Book of Acts do we really grasp the significance of how Gentile salvation will glorify Jesus and fulfill God’s plan. But at various places in the Gospels we find the foundations of this grand plan of the evangel for all nations, and this is one of them.*
 - 5) Leon Morris, *John says that they “came with a request” (the tense of the verb is continuous, “they kept asking”) ... They wanted to talk to him and get to know him ... Until this point John has given no indication that Jesus’ reputation was such that Greeks would have heard of him (though, of course, in a place like Decapolis this would not have been difficult). But the general tone of his Gospel leaves us in no doubt as to the point of the inquiry. Jesus was the Savior of the world, and this group of Gentiles symbolically represents the world seeking its salvation from Jesus.*

- 6) William Hendriksen, *Did they wish to see Jesus: a. because the wisdom of the Greeks had suffered shipwreck, having failed to satisfy the deepest longings of the soul? And b. because on the basis of what they had heard about Jesus they had become hopeful that he might be able to supply that spiritual peace of mind which they had not been able to find anywhere else? That is not at all improbable ... Just what was the attitude of Jesus toward Greeks: would he welcome them or would he refuse to give them audience?*
 - 7) George Beasley-Murray, *Their contacting a disciple rather than Jesus reflects uncertainty as to whether Jesus would receive Gentiles, an uncertainty probably shared by Philip; hence his consultation with Andrew (cf. Matt 10:5–6).*
 - 8) Edward Klink, *Nothing is suggested as to why they want to spend time with Jesus or how they heard about him. In fact, we hear nothing further of the Greeks or even whether their request was granted. The significance is to be seen in their presence not their persons; in this moment the “world” had come to Jesus (12:19).*
 - 9) William Barclay, *There is no need to be surprised to find a detachment of sightseeing Greeks even in Jerusalem ... It was no unusual thing to find a Greek who had passed through philosophy after philosophy, and religion after religion, and gone from teacher to teacher in the search for truth. The Greeks were people with inquiring minds.*
 - 10) Gary Burge, *These God-fearers represent the “scattered children of God” of 11:52. They are the “other sheep” of 10:16. The question they ask in 12:21 is reminiscent of the language of discipleship we have seen earlier in the gospel. They want to “see” Jesus. On one level it refers to an opportunity to talk with Jesus and ask questions (cf. “see” in Luke 8:20; 9:9). However, the verbs of seeing often mean far more. They are invitations to belief; these are foreigners who now stand ready to join the flock of Christ.*
3. Jesus responded that His time had come (23), **And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.”**
- a. Related verses
 - 1) John 17:1, *When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you,*
 - 2) Mark 14:41, *And he came the third time and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough; the hour has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.*
 - 3) John 12:16, *His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him.*
 - b. Comments
 - 1) Thomas Constable, *Jesus’ visit with these Gentiles was the occasion of His revelation that the time for His death, resurrection, and ascension was at hand (cf. v. 27; 13:1; 17:1). Until now, that “hour” had not been near (cf. 2:4; 4:21, 23; 7:30; 8:20). As mentioned earlier, Jesus’ references to His glorification in the fourth Gospel are references to His death, resurrection, and ascension ... The title Son of Man was Jesus’ favorite title for Himself. It connoted suffering and glorification, and it avoided the misunderstanding that the use of some other messianic titles entailed ... Their presence at the announcement of Jesus’ impending death hints at the union of Jews and Gentiles in the benefits of that death and in the body of believers after that death.*
 - 2) Edwin Blum, *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).*
 - 3) Warren Wiersbe, *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).*

- 4) Leon Morris, *His words are apparently addressed to Andrew and Philip, but it is impossible to confine the reference to them. Clearly the words are addressed to a wider audience, possibly including the Greeks. Plainly their coming is important. Jesus views it as evidence that his mission has reached its climax and that he is now to die for the world, Greeks included ... He is not to be dishonored; he is to be glorified ... and that by the way of the cross. "The Son of Man" is Jesus' way of referring to himself, especially in connection with his mission.*
 - 5) William Hendriksen, *Apart from this voluntary sacrifice Jesus could do nothing for these Greeks. Did they understand that? Did they realize that an earthly Messiah, no matter how famous (think of the praise he received at the occasion of the Triumphal Entry!) would avail them not at all? Did they fully understand that it was only by means of his substitutionary atonement that he, as spiritual Messiah, would be able to save them? ... The Father, in giving up the Son to die on the cross, and in granting him the promised reward, exhibits the divine attributes (love, justice, omnipotence, faithfulness, etc.) in all their majestic and indescribable beauty. They are displayed publicly for all who have eyes to see.*
 - 6) John Hart, *Up to this point in the Fourth Gospel, Jesus' "hour" was said to be future. Now the "hour" is said to have arrived. At the height of Jewish rejection of Jesus, Gentiles were seeking Him. The coming of the Greeks was a sign that the hour of Jesus' death had now come (cf. 7:33–35)—possibly because finally, at this point, the door was cracked open a bit for the inclusion of the Gentiles, something not seen clearly in John's gospel prior to this.*
 - 7) Edward Klink, *The paradox of "the hour" is explained even further by the title "Son of Man" ... As we saw earlier ... the title echoes its earlier use in Daniel 7:13–14 and incorporates all power, glory, and rule—all of God—into one person and is manifested throughout one life and ministry. This is the grand irony of the Gospel. The hour of the glorification of the Son of Man (i.e., the King, Creator, and Ruler of all) is made manifest on the cross (i.e., the place of suffering, humiliation, and shame)!*
 - 8) Charles Swindoll, *Throughout His ministry, Jesus had been anticipating the time when He would be "glorified" (2:4; 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20), which He defined as suffering death, rising again, and then ascending to heaven (7:39; 12:16, 23; 13:32). The Lord's response appears to be directed to the wider audience, while ignoring the proselytes completely. It's likely that Jesus met with the "Greeks" and dealt with them extensively in private, and that John chose to highlight the significance of their coming to Him rather than the details of their conversation.*
 - 9) Gary Burge, *The "hour of glorification" points to his return to the Father through his death on the cross, his resurrection, and his exaltation. Therefore something has changed; the Greeks signal the closing of a chapter for Jesus. His ministry in Judaism is finished and he now belongs to the wider world.*
4. A metaphor on evangelism - Jesus declared that fruit comes through death (24), ***Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.***
- a. Related verse, 1 Corinthians 15:36, *You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.*
 - b. Comments
 - 1) ... *unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies ...*
 - a) Thomas Constable, *Jesus announced another important revelation with His characteristic introductory clause. He described His body as a grain of wheat that falls into the earth. By dying, He would produce a great harvest. His death was necessary for that harvest ... Jesus' sacrificial death would result in eternal life for many other people (cf. 1 Cor. 15:36–38).*
 - b) Edwin Blum, *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.*
 - c) Warren Wiersbe, *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.*
 - d) Leon Morris, *The grain of wheat introduces us to a paradox, namely, that the way of fruitfulness lies through death. Unless the wheat falls into the ground and "dies" it will not bear. It is only through "death" that its potentiality for fruitfulness becomes actual. This is a general truth. But it refers particularly to Jesus.*

- e) William Hendriksen, *Apart from the cross there is no spiritual harvest. (On the necessity of Christ's substitutionary death see also Gen. 2:16, 17; Luke 24:26; Rom. 3:23–25; 5:12–21.) ... The illustration was very clear, especially at the moment when it was spoken, not more than a few days before ... the harvest feast of Passover ... If a seed is not sown, it remains alone, producing no fruit. So also if Jesus does not die, he will remain alone, without spiritual fruit (souls saved for eternity). His death, however, will result in a rich, spiritual harvest.*
 - f) George Beasley-Murray, *These vv provide an exposition of the law of the kingdom of God: life is given through death. The principle enshrined in v 23 is illustrated by the short parable in v 24. No explanation of it is given, but its meaning is transparent: so surely as a grain of wheat must be buried if it is to yield fruit for man, so the Son of Man must give himself in death if he is to produce a harvest of life for the world.*
 - g) Edward Klink, *... since the natural function of a seed is the production of "much fruit" ... it must do what might be considered unnatural; it must die ... When applied to Jesus, the illustration offers a remarkable explanation of the paradox of the glorification of the Son of Man (v. 23). Three things can be highlighted. First, the illustration serves to make a direct connection between the death of Jesus, the Son of Man, and the life which springs from his death ... Second, the illustration serves to explain the purpose of Jesus's person and work, culminating in his death on the cross ... Third, the illustration offers a significantly different perspective of death. While death is normally unnatural and entirely unproductive, this death (of seed or Son) is quite the opposite in that it becomes the means by which natural things are produced and in great quantity!*
 - h) Grant Osborne, *If Jesus had not died on the cross, his life would have affected no one but himself—but his sacrificial death has affected the whole world, a huge harvest of souls.*
5. The call to discipleship - those who serve Jesus must follow Him (25-26), **Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26 If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.**
- a. Related verses
 - 1) Matthew 10:39, *Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.*
 - 2) John 11:25, *Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,*
 - 3) Luke 14:26, *"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.*
 - b. Comments
 - 1) *Whoever loves his life loses it ...*
 - a) Thomas Constable, *Jesus now applied the principle in the illustration for His followers. This was a principle that He had taught them on at least three separate occasions previously (cf. Matt. 10:39; Mark 8:36; Luke 14:26) ... Jesus contrasted the worthlessness of what one sacrifices now with the infinite value of what one gains by describing the sacrifice as something temporal and the gain as something eternal ... Obviously Jesus did not mean that we gain salvation by living sacrificial lives ... but we can experience that life to a greater or lesser degree depending on our obedience to God (cf. 10:10; 17:3) ... The general principle is a paradox: Death leads to life ... Over the centuries the church has observed that the blood of Christian martyrs has indeed been the seed of the church.*
 - b) Edwin Blum, *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).*
 - c) Warren Wiersbe, *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.*

- d) Kenneth Gangel, *Presumably this call to obedience is predicated on the demonstration that Christ would do anything the Father asked. Those who wanted to follow him (whether disciples or inquiring Greeks) had to follow that same pattern.*
 - e) Leon Morris, *The application of the analogy from the grain of wheat is made plain. Anyone who loves his life loses it (cf. Mark 8:35 and parallels). By the very fact of his love for it he loses the possibility of real life ... People whose priorities are right have such an attitude of love for the things of God that all interest in the affairs of this life appear by comparison as hatred. Such people will keep their life “for eternal life”—unto the life of the age to come ...*
 - f) William Hendriksen, *The solemn truth stated in verse 24 applies to Christ, to him alone! He alone dies as a substitute, and in doing so bears much fruit. Nevertheless, there is an analogous principle which operates in the sphere of men. It is the one stated in verses 25, 26. The relation between the two laws (the one applying to Christ, the other to his disciples) may be summarized as follows: 1. As to Christ: If there is to be fruit, he must die (verse 24) ... 2. As to his disciple: he must be willing to die for the cause of Christ (verses 25, 26). Of course, he cannot do this in his own strength.*
 - g) George Beasley-Murray, *The “law” to which the Son of Man submits is then applied generally in v 25, a saying which has parallels in the synoptic Gospels (Mark 8:35 par.; Matt 10:39; Luke 9:24;*
 - h) John Hart, *Jesus applied to His followers the principle of dying to self. Anyone who lived life for himself (loves his life) destroyed the potential of his earthly life for eternal reward (cf. Mt 16:24–27; Mk 8:34–38; Lk 9:23–26). But if he hates his life in this world, i.e., rejects self-centered choices, his life will be rewarded in eternity.*
 - I) Edward Klink, *Jesus’s explanation now connects the seed with the fruit, that is, the death of the Son with the life of the children of God. After defining the natural expression or purpose of the seed, Jesus now defines the natural expression or purpose of the “much fruit” ... According to Jesus, the seed (the Son) establishes a precedent or an example for the fruit (the disciples) to follow. Just as a seed that loves its own life would fail to produce fruit but also then would fail to understand its true purpose, so also must the fruit know its purpose, one that extends beyond its perceivable self. The children of God owe their life to the Son, which means that the value of their lives is now owed to the Son (the seed); they are not their own, they have been bought for a price.*
 - j) Grant Osborne, *The harvest metaphor is used for evangelism in 12:24, and then this principle segues into discipleship in 12:25–26. To put it another way, Jesus moves from the seed to the crops that are produced. This is a guiding principle of Jesus’ teaching. True disciples are Christlike, shaping their lives after the pattern of Jesus. As he proclaims in Mark 8:34, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” As Jesus’ redemptive death produces life, so his disciples will not begin to live until they die ... The imagery of loving and hating life is found in five Synoptic passages (Matt 10:39; 16:25; Mark 8:35; Luke 9:24; 17:33),*
 - k) F. F. Bruce, *The principle stated in verse 24 is of wide application. In particular, if it is true of Jesus, it must be true of his followers. They too must be prepared to renounce present interests for the sake of a future inheritance. This is a Johannine counterpart to the Synoptic saying about the disciple’s obligation to take up his cross and follow his Master (cf. Mark 8:34–38). To love one’s life here means to give it priority over the interests of God’s kingdom. Similarly to hate one’s life is to give priority over it to the interests of God’s kingdom.*
- 2) *If anyone serve me, he must follow me ...*
- a) Thomas Constable, *For disciples of Jesus self-sacrifice does not just mean putting others before themselves. It also means putting Jesus first (cf. 10:4). The disciple who wants to serve Jesus must follow Him. He or she must go where Jesus goes and do what He does. True servants stay close to their masters.*
 - b) Edwin Blum, *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.*

- c) Leon Morris, *The outcome of all this is the service of Christ. Throughout this verse the first person pronoun is used with emphasis. Personal relationship to Christ is important. The servant must follow his Lord and be where his Lord is. This must be understood in the light of the previous verse: being where the Lord is entails suffering. It means losing the life for the Master's sake. There is no other way of Christian service.*
- d) John Hart, ... *to serve the Lord Jesus, the disciple must walk closely and attend to Him, so that wherever Jesus leads, there His servant will be also.*
- e) Edward Klink, *The Christian is the one who knows his or her true value and purpose and lives accordingly by following and serving beside the Son. The fruit (Christians) is so organically joined to the seed (Christ) that its very existence is directed by the interrelationship. Hating life—which means to love it rightly (v. 25)—is to live according to the sequence, death-life-obedience ... Self must be displaced by another; the endless, shameless focus on self must be displaced by focus on Jesus Christ.*
- f) Grant Osborne, *Those who love Jesus and embrace the life of a Christ follower willingly accept the life of serving him rather than the world. Note the progression of thought: love and commitment to Jesus produce servanthood, which in itself centers on “following” him in every way, with the end result that our very existence is caught up in him (“where I am, my servant also will be”). Remember that Jesus is saying this on his way to the cross. The cross is the basis of Jesus’ glorification, and dying to self and this world is the anchor of our new life in him. Think on this; dwell on this; orient your life to this!*
- 3) *If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him*
- a) Thomas Constable, ... *His servants, who follow Him, could then and can now count on death, figuratively if not literally. But beyond that they can anticipate honor from the Father (cf. 17:24).*
- b) Edwin Blum, *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).*
- c) Leon Morris, *But the verse concludes on a different note. Anyone who serves Christ in this fashion will be honored by the Father.*
- d) John Hart, *The rewards God’s servants will receive include commendation and honor from the Father (Mt 25:21, 23), resulting in leadership responsibilities in the world to come (Lk 12:44; 19:17; Rv 2:26, 27).*
- e) Grant Osborne, *Jesus received glory through the cross, and we receive “honor” from the Father when we yield ourselves to him. This is the imagery of baptism in Romans 6:4–5, “buried with him through baptism into death” and “united with him in a resurrection like his.” We disciples define our life as a continual reliving of the life and ministry of Jesus.*
- f) F. F. Bruce, *The Father who glorifies the Son (8:54), will honor those who serve the Son and give them a share in his glory (cf. 14:3).*

SUMMARY

- William Barclay, *Jesus came to the Jews with a new view of life. They looked on glory as conquest, the acquisition of power, the right to rule. He looked on it as a cross. He taught men and women that only by death comes life; that only by spending life do we retain it; that only by service comes greatness. And the extraordinary thing is that when we come to think of it, Christ’s paradox is nothing other than the truth of common sense.*
- Charles Swindoll, *Jesus knew that once this final element of the Father’s plan had fallen into place, nothing stood between Him and the cross. His dreadful hour had arrived. In celebration of that moment, Jesus outlined the rest of Christian history. In just three sentences, He explained the theological basis of His substitutionary death on behalf of sinners (v. 24), articulated a primary principle of the kingdom that He will apply personally (v. 25), and called for believers to follow His example through discipleship (v. 26).*

B. From darkness to light (27-36)

1. Jesus was glorified by the Father (27-29)

- a. He prayed to the Father (27-28a), **Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. 28 Father, glorify your name.**

1) Introductory notes

- a) Grant Osborne, *The "now"-ness of his hour of destiny (12:23) is upon him, and he is experiencing great distress. Jesus is both God and man, and here his humanity comes to the fore.*
- b) William Barclay, *In this passage, John shows us both Jesus' tension and his triumph, and shows us what turned the tension into the triumph ... John does not tell us of the agony in Gethsemane. It is here that he shows us Jesus fighting his battle with his human longing to avoid the cross. No one wishes to die at thirty-three; and no one wishes to die upon a cross ... Real courage does not mean not being afraid. It means being terribly afraid, and yet doing the thing that ought to be done. That was the courage of Jesus.*

2) Related verses

- a) John 11:33, *When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled.*
- b) John 13:21, *After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, "Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me."*
- c) Mark 14:35, *And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.*
- d) John 18:37, *Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice."*
- e) John 12:23, *And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.*

3) Comments

- a) A. T. Robertson, *Here as in Gethsemane the soul of Jesus instinctively and naturally shrinks from the Cross, but he instantly surrenders to the will of God in both experiences.*
- b) Thomas Constable, *Anticipation of the death that had to precede the glory troubled Jesus deeply ... It troubled Him because His death would involve bearing God's wrath for the sins of the world ... Immediately Jesus voiced His continuing commitment to His Father's will: "But for this purpose I came to this hour." We see here the conflict that Jesus felt between His desire to avoid the Cross and His desire to obey the Father completely.*
- c) Edwin Blum, *Jesus instructed His disciples on the cost of commitment to the Father's will by disclosing His emotions. He was in turmoil ... 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.*
- d) Warren Wiersbe, *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.*
- e) Charles Swindoll, *The realization that nothing stood between Jesus and the cross led to a poignant glimpse of His humanity. In a particularly transparent moment, we see the Lord overcome by dread; He knew He would face agony on a cosmic scale, far more than the physical pain of crucifixion.*
- f) Leon Morris, *The whole structure of the verse points to a hypothetical rather than an actual prayer; the words are a rhetorical question, the words of a prayer Jesus looks at but refuses to pray. He asks whether he should pray to be saved from this hour and immediately answers that this is the very reason for which he has come. This "hour" must be faced and passed through. The words express the natural human shrinking from death.*

b. A response from heaven (28b-29)

1) Words from the Father, (28b), ***Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.”***

a) Related verses

- 1] Matthew 3:17, 17 *and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”*
- 2] Mark 9:7, *And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, “This is my beloved Son; listen to him.”*
- 3] Luke 9:35, *And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!”*

b) Comments

- 1] Edwin Blum, *The Father then spoke from heaven in a thunderous voice, confirming His working in Jesus both in the past and in the future.*
- 2] Thomas Constable, *The Father answered Jesus’ petition out of heaven audibly. The Gospels record three instances of God doing this. The other two were at Jesus’ baptism (Matt. 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:21–22) and transfiguration (Matt. 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35) ... In the first instance, apparently only John the Baptist and Jesus heard the voice. In the second instance, only three disciples and Jesus heard it. And in the third instance, a multitude and Jesus heard it. In all of these cases the purpose of the voice was to authenticate Jesus as God’s Son in a dramatic way, and in all cases the voice had some connection with Jesus’ death ... The people present could not understand the words clearly, though Jesus could (cf. Acts 9:7; 22:9).*
- 4] J. Vernon McGee, *We tend to whimper and cry and complain and ask God why He lets unpleasant things happen to us. With Christ, we should learn to say, ‘Father, through this suffering and through this pain, glorify Thyself.’*
- 4] Warren Wiersbe, *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 ... In the hour of suffering and surrender, there are only two prayers we can pray, either ‘Father, save me!’ or ‘Father, glorify Thy name!’*
- 5] William Hendriksen, *Jesus had asked that the Father would glorify his name; i.e., that the Father by means of his revelation in the Son would cause the radiance of his majestic attributes to become publicly displayed, in order that men might ascribe to him the honor due unto his name ... By means of direct voices from heaven (at baptism, Mark 1:11; at the transfiguration, Mark 9:7) and by means of the mighty miracles which Jesus performed, the Father had already glorified himself in the Son. Here he promises that in and by means of the further humiliation and subsequent exaltation of the Son he will do this again.*
- 6] Edward Klink, *The work of the Son is a direct reflection of the Father. The work of the fruit (the Christian) gives glory to the seed (the Son), just as the Son gives glory to the Father ... in this moment of anguish, filled with the decision to love or hate life in this world (v. 25), the Father is confident in the service of the Son; so confident that he predicts it—and his predictions never fail! The last remark by the Father, therefore, points not only to the cross but also to the resurrection.*

2) Confusion from the crowd (29), ***The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.”***

a) Related verse, Acts 23:9, *Then a great clamor arose, and some of the scribes of the Pharisees’ party stood up and contended sharply, “We find nothing wrong in this man. What if a spirit or an angel spoke to him?”*

b) Comments

- 1] Thomas Constable, *Some of those present gave a supernatural explanation for what had happened. Others gave a natural explanation.*
- 2] Edwin Blum, *The voice was audible but not all understood it (cf. v 30; Acts 9:7; 22:9).*

- 3] J. Vernon McGee, *That is the same reaction many people still have today. They say God's Word is full of errors and the miracles recorded can't be accurate. Because they don't believe in them, they say it just 'thundered.'*
- 4] William Hendriksen, *Just as in the case of Paul's experience on the road to Damascus those who were with him, though hearing a sound, failed to hear the distinct words (Acts 9:7; 22:9), so also here the multitude hears a noise coming from above but is unable to understand the message. Accordingly, most of the people standing around were saying that it had thundered. Perhaps they knew better but were trying to give a natural explanation to a super-natural happening, like the skeptics of today! Others, however, were willing to admit that what had occurred was of an extraordinary nature. These said, "An angel has spoken to him."*
- 5] Leon Morris, *Those who thought it was thunder had Old Testament precedents where thunder is sometimes understood as the voice of God (e.g., Ps. 29:3). Others thought an angel had spoken to Jesus. Clearly John wants us to think of a sound audible to all, even if the meaning was not ... We are reminded of the various accounts of the heavenly voice that spoke to Saul of Tarsus, from which it seems clear that Saul's companions heard a sound but did not understand what was said (Acts 9:7; 22:9).*
- 6] Edward Klink, *What is important for the narrator is not the understanding of the people but their incomprehension. The people could not make sense of the "voice" of God the Father, even as they did not understand the Word of God, his Son.*
- 7] Grant Osborne, *The crowd (12:29) cannot tell what has taken place and fails to understand the message. In this they are similar to Paul's traveling companions on the Damascus road (Acts 22:9). Some focus on the power of the voice, saying "it had thundered." Others focus on its origin, mistakenly thinking "an angel had spoken to him." Thunder is often associated with messages from heaven (2 Sam 22:14; Ps 18:13; Rev 6:1; 10:3-4; 14:2). The fact is, they are confused.*

2. Jesus proclaimed the necessity of His death (30-34)

- a. Jesus responded to the crowd (30), **Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not mine.**
 - 1) Related verse, John 11:42, *I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me."*
 - 2) Comments
 - a) Thomas Constable, *Jesus explained that the heavenly voice had sounded for the people's benefit more than for His. They probably did not appreciate that it was a confirmation of Jesus until after the Resurrection. The more spiritually sensitive among them must have sensed that it signaled something important. Jesus proceeded to explain the implications of what God had said in the next two verses.*
 - b) Warren Wiersbe, *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."*
 - c) William Hendriksen, *Another question which suggests itself but is easily answered is this: "If the multitude was not even able to understand the words, how can it be said that the voice had occurred for their sake?" The answer is: the sound coming from above (even though it was not understood) and coming immediately upon the prayer, was a clear indication that the Father had heard the Son's request (namely, the request that the Father might be glorified in the Son). If anyone still refused to admit this, it was his own fault.*
 - d) John Hart, *He needed no proof that the Father would glorify Him (v. 28). But the Father graciously provided to the crowd further confirmation of Jesus' authority and Sonship. Yet they missed its significance.*
 - e) Grant Osborne, *Several point out that this is a "Semitic contrast" (a softer contrast than it comes across in English), meaning the voice is more for them than for Jesus, not that it was only for them. They may not have understood it then, but they would later, and even here they catch that the "voice" originated from heaven, and that is very significant. Once more, God is authenticating Jesus as his Son on his mission.*

- b. All humankind will be accountable to Jesus (31-32)
- 1) For judgment (31a), **Now is the judgment of this world;**
 - a) Of mankind
 - 1] Edwin Blum, *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.*
 - 2] Thomas Constable, *Jesus' passion would constitute a judgment on the world. The Jews thought that they were judging Jesus when they decided to believe or disbelieve on Him. In reality their decisions brought divine judgment on themselves. By crucifying Jesus they were condemning themselves. Jesus was not saying that this would be the last judgment on the world. He meant that because of humankind's rejection of Him God was about to pass judgment on the world for rejecting His Son (cf. Acts 17:30–31).*
 - 3] Warren Wiersbe, *The death of Jesus Christ would seem like a victory for the wicked world, but it would really be a judgment of the world.*
 - 4] Leon Morris, *The world will condemn itself by its treatment of the Son ...*
 - 5] William Hendriksen, *When Jesus died on the cross it seemed as if the world was victorious and the Christ defeated. The world appeared to be the winner! ... Little did the world realize that by means of this very action it had condemned itself.*
 - 6] Edward Klink, *What is important to notice is that the judgment of this world is directly connected to the cross. The cross is simultaneously the "glorification" of Jesus and the "judgment" of the world. It is the throne upon which the King of kings is crowned—his glory. Yet it is also the point of decision for the world, either as the place of their salvation, in which the cross is the sacrifice of the Lamb of God on their behalf, or the place of their judgment, by which they stand already condemned (3:18).*
 - 7] Grant Osborne, *We saw earlier (John 3:17; 8:15) that Christ came to save the world, not judge it, but at the same time he became judge of all who reject his offer of salvation (5:22, 30; 8:16; 9:39). In fact, God made Jesus judge over the world (3:35–36; 5:22–23, 29–30).*
 - b) Of the ruler of this world (31b), **now will the ruler of this world be cast out.**
 - 1] Related verses
 - a] John 16:11, *concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.*
 - b] John 14:30, *I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me,*
 - c] 2 Corinthians 4:4, *In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*
 - d] Luke 10:18, *And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.*
 - 2] Comments
 - a] Arthur Pink, *We believe, then, the first stage in the 'casting out' of Satan occurred at the Cross, the next will be when he is 'cast out' of heaven into the earth (Rev. 12:10); the next, when he is 'cast into the bottomless pit' (Rev. 20:3); the final when he is 'cast into the lake of fire and brimstone' (Rev. 20:10).*
 - b] Thomas Constable, *Jesus' passion would also result in the casting out of the ruler of this world. This is a title for Satan (14:30; 16:11; cf. Matt. 4:8–9; Luke 4:6–7; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2; 6:12). The death of Jesus might appear to be a victory for Satan, but really it signaled his doom. The Cross defeated Satan. Satan only functions as he does now because God permits him to do so. His eternal destruction is sure even though it is still future (Rev. 20:10). God will cast him out of His presence, and out of the earth, into the lake of fire forever (cf. Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30).*
 - c] Edwin Blum, *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).*

- d] Warren Wiersbe, *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).*
- e] Leon Morris, “*The prince of this world*” is, of course, Satan (the expression recurs in 14:30; 16:11 and cf. 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2; 6:12). So much is he the ruler of people’s minds that he may be spoken of as their “prince.” But if the expression stresses his power in this world, it may also be meant to convey a hint of his powerlessness in the other world. And just as the cross represents the judgment of this world, so it represents the defeat of Satan ... Satan was defeated in what appeared outwardly to be the very moment of his triumph. “Driven out” is not the verb that we expect here. It probably contains a reference to something like being thrown into the outer darkness of which we read in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30).
- f] William Hendriksen, “*And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.*” The drawing of all men to the Christ is the casting out of the devil. He loses his power over the nations.
- g] Edward Klink, ... *what is clear is that the cross is not merely the final work of Jesus’s mission, but the ultimate work of God—the mission of God. The ruler of this world is cast out and replaced by a new ruler, the rightful King. The “hour” of the cross is therefore “the dethronement of the Devil from his tyranny over men,” and at the same time (“the hour”) the enthronement of the true King, the glorification of the Son of Man.*
- h] Grant Osborne, *At the cross judgment does not just fall on the sin-sick world; at that time also “the prince of this world [is] driven out.” Jesus calls Satan “the prince [ruler] of this world” also at 14:31; 16:10; Paul calls him “the god of this age” (2 Cor 4:4), the “ruler of the kingdom of the air” (Eph 2:2); and John calls him “the great dragon” and “ancient serpent” (Rev 12:9; 20:2).*

2) There is life for those Jesus draws to Himself (32), ***And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.***

a) Related verses

- 1] John 3:14, *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,*
- 2] John 8:28, *So Jesus said to them, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me.*
- 3] John 6:44, *No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.*
- 4] Romans 5:18, *Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.*
- 5] Romans 8:32, *He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?*
- 6] 2 Corinthians 5:15, *and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.*
- 7] 1 John 2:2, *He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.*

b) Comments

- 1] Gary Burge, *As he is lifted up from the earth in crucifixion (en route back to heaven), he is visible to all. Like light shining in darkness with all of its radiance, so now every hidden darkness will be exposed.*
- 2] Leon Morris, *Jesus is not affirming that the whole world will be saved; he is affirming that all who are saved are saved in this way. And he is speaking of a universal rather than a narrowly nationalistic religion.*

- 3] Kenneth Gangel, *Certainly the Lord had no intention that we should read into this text the idea that everyone would be saved because we know only believers find eternal life.*
 - 4] Thomas Constable, *Jesus' passion would involve His enemies lifting Him up on a cross, but it would also involve His exaltation to God's presence. The Cross would bring people to faith in Him, and His exaltation would involve others coming into God's presence around Him. Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension would draw all people without distinction (ethnic or social), not all people without exception, to Himself. It would make all people savable in the sense that His death would reconcile the world of humanity to God (cf. Rom. 5:18; 2 Cor. 5:15; 1 Tim. 2:6; Heb. 2:9; 1 John 2:2). It would remove the barrier of real guilt that made people inaccessible to God.*
 - 5] Edwin Blum, *Jesus' words, When I am lifted up from the earth, refer not to His Ascension but to His crucifixion (cf. 3:14; 8:28) ... 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).*
 - 6] Leon Morris, *But I" (the Greek means "And I") is emphatic; this is a work for Christ and no other. In this Gospel "lifted up" refers to the cross (see on 3:14), and here the meaning is made indisputable by the next verse. In this one Jesus is concerned with the effect rather than the simple fact of his death. "Draw" is used elsewhere in this Gospel to bring out the truth that people do not naturally come to Christ. It is only as God works in one's soul and draws one that one can come to Christ ...*
 - 7] Edward Klink, *While the drawing is not universally applied (not all are drawn), it is universally effective for those who are drawn. The agent of drawing is universal in that the Son of Man, with the Father and the Spirit (through whom the exalted Lord continues his work of judgment and salvation in the world), draws the "children of God" to himself. With the Greeks now coming to Jesus (vv. 20–22), "all" the world had truly come.*
- c. John reflected on the way in which Jesus died (33), **He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.**
- 1) Related verse, John 18:32, *This was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken to show by what kind of death he was going to die.*
 - 2) Comments
 - a) Thomas Constable, *John explained that Jesus was speaking of the kind of death that He would die—crucifixion—so his readers would not think only of His exaltation to heaven.*
 - b) Kenneth Gangel, *Once again the reference to Jesus being lifted up centers not on exaltation but death. The cross forms the centerpiece of the gospel. And verse 33 shows us that John had no intention of drawing his readers' focus anywhere else.*
 - c) Leon Morris, *John adds a typical explanatory note. These words of Jesus are to be understood as indicating the kind of death he would die. This, of course, does not mean that his exaltation is excluded.*
 - d) William Hendriksen, *... his death would be a being lifted up on the cross, as a means of glory for himself and for the elect from all the nations.*
 - e) Edward Klink, *In case the reader was confused in thinking the "glorification" of the Son of Man was to be expressed with splendor, the narrator explains to the reader that the "lifting up" of the Son of Man would occur by means of Roman crucifixion ... The focus here is still on what had to be accomplished; before glory must come suffering and death—the seed must die (v. 24).*
 - f) Grant Osborne, *"Lifting up" was not some great Roman triumph but in reality depicted the horrible Roman crucifixion that Jesus would undergo. This is the great paradox: glory through suffering. In fact, there could be no glory without the suffering.*

- d. The crowd did not understand (34), ***So the crowd answered him, “We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?”***
- 1) Related verses
 - a) Ezekiel 37:25, *They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children’s children shall dwell there forever, and David my servant shall be their prince forever.*
 - b) Luke 1:33, *and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”*
 - c) John 12:32, *And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.”*
 - 2) Comments
 - a) Leon Morris, *We should not overlook the fact that this is the last mention of the crowd in Jesus’ ministry. To the end they remain confused and perplexed, totally unable to appreciate the magnitude of the gift offered to them and the significance of the Person who offers it.*
 - b) Kenneth Gangel, *This business of being lifted up did not fit with the first-century idea of the Messiah who will remain forever. How does this “Son of Man” prophecy fit in with our religion? Jesus favorite name for himself threw the crowd into consternation. How could a dead prophet throw out the Romans and restore the kingdom? Indeed, though the title occurs sixty-nine times in the Synoptics and twelve times in John, they could not grasp the connection. They asked, Who is this “Son of Man”? Intellectual and religious confusion had set in.*
 - c) Thomas Constable, *Jesus’ prediction of His death puzzled His listeners. They were probably thinking of the passages in the Old Testament that spoke of Messiah and/or His kingdom enduring forever (e.g., 2 Sam. 7:12–13, 16; Ps. 89:26–29, 35–37; Dan. 7:13–14). How could Jesus be the Messiah and die? What kind of Son of Man was Jesus talking about?*
 - d) William Hendriksen, *They are aware of the fact that Jesus considers himself to be the Son of man, i.e., the Christ, but they are amazed about the statement which he has just made with reference to this Christ or Son of man, a statement which, so it seems to them, is in sharp conflict with the teaching contained in the law ... Jesus probably used this self-designation in order to indicate his own heavenly, transcendent nature. He is the One who comes from above, the One to whom the final judgment has been committed, who will come with the clouds in great glory. He is, accordingly, not at all the political, earthly, nationalistic Messiah of Jewish expectation. He is not only king of Israel but king of kings. He stands in connection with the whole human race, being the Son of man.*
 - e) Charles Swindoll, *Their challenge reflects a theological problem concerning the Messiah, which persists among Jews today. The Messiah described in the Old Testament is a warrior king, who will vanquish Israel’s foes, lead them into prosperity, and rule from the throne of David forever. Yet He is also a suffering servant who will die on behalf of His people. How can a dead man vanquish any foe and rule from any throne? ... many Jews theorized—as many still do today—that the Messiah would be two individuals acting in concert. The Jews in Jesus’ day hadn’t considered the possibility that a single individual might die on behalf of His people and then rise from the grave to become their everlasting king.*
 - f) Edward Klink, *For the crowd, a crucified Messiah is not only nonsensical, but abhorrent and heretical—even unbiblical. The scandal of the cross is meaningless to them, and the paradox that the Christ must suffer “puts an end to their welcome of Jesus as the Messiah of the Jews.*
 - g) F. F. Bruce, *They were wrong in supposing that his words, as they understood them, contradicted the teaching of Scripture, and they were wrong because they failed to grasp that the Son of Man’s being “lifted up” would be the decisive inauguration of Messiah’s endless reign.*

3. Jesus exhorted the people to come to the light (35-36a), **So Jesus said to them, “The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the 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.”**

a. Related verses

- 1) John 12:46, *I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.*
- 2) John 1:4, *In him was life, and the life was the light of men.*
- 3) John 8:12, *Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”*
- 4) John 7:33, *Jesus then said, “I will be with you a little longer, and then I am going to him who sent me.*
- 5) Ephesians 5:8, *for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light*
- 6) Isaiah 9:2, *The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.*
- 7) 1 John 1:6, *If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.*
- 8) John 11:10, *But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.”*

b. Comments

- 1) Kenneth Gangel, *John’s key word life in just a few verses now changes to light—hardly a new concept since John introduced it early in the first chapter. He expected his readers would understand that Jesus was talking about himself as the light of the world. But the immediate crowds on that day still struggled ... Again, he warned that the light would soon be gone, but individual torches can be lit from the original flame and go on burning in the darkness, even when that flame is withdrawn.*
- 2) Gary Burge, *Jesus denies them an answer (12:35–36a), refusing to enter into speculation about the theological role of the Messiah in popular thought. Instead he appeals to them to believe.*
- 3) Warren Wiersbe, *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.*
- 4) Thomas Constable, *Jesus did not answer their question. He already had done so when He explained that He and the Father were One (cf. 5:18). The paradox of His dying and living forever would become clear with His resurrection ... Instead of answering, Jesus urged His hearers to walk while they had the Light (Jesus) among them. Walking is a metaphor for living. Jesus meant that they should live in His light, the light of His presence and self-revelation. If they would do that, the darkness would not overpower them (cf. Isa. 50:10). If they did not do that, they would be lost. They needed to believe in Him as soon as possible, before the Cross. After the Cross, when the Light was no longer present with them, it would be harder for them to believe. If they believed, they would become sons of Light, namely, His spiritual children who display the qualities of the Light (cf. Eph. 5:8; 1 Thess. 5:5) ... These last recorded words of Jesus to the world were an exhortation and a promise.*
- 5) Edwin Blum, *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).*
- 6) Leon Morris, *There is an interesting change of tense. “Believe” (NIV, “Put your trust”) in the present tense gives the thought of a continuous belief, whereas “become” in the aorist points to a once-for-all becoming sons of light. While faith is an activity to be practiced without ceasing one does not become a “son of light” by degrees. One passes decisively out of death into life (5:24).*

- 7) William Hendriksen, *The closing admonition is very touching and beautiful*: “While you have the light (Christ in your midst, as the source of truth and salvation), believe—exercise saving faith, by God’s sovereign grace; see on 1:8; 3:16; 8:30, 31a—in the light, in order that you may become sons of light, i.e., lights (a Semitism; cf. Matt. 5:14), having the light of Christ not only round about you but within your hearts and minds (cf. Eph. 5:8; 1 Thess. 5:5).
- 8) Edward Klink, *Jesus first declared a nearly identical invitation-warning in chapter 8* (see comments on 8:12), defining not only his mission (which he is doing again here) but also his judgment against the world for “walking in darkness.” Thus, Jesus speaks past their Jewishness and their first-century Palestinian context and declares himself to be the Light (of the world!) shining in the darkness. He is the one who can see their condition (their sin) and the one who can save them from it (as their Savior).
- 9) F. F. Bruce, *Here, as his ministry to the “world” is almost at an end*, Jesus warns his hearers to avail themselves of the light while they have the opportunity. In daylight men see clearly and can walk about safely; when darkness overtakes them they stumble and lose their way. Now is their opportunity to believe in him who is the true light. If they do so, they will themselves become “sons of light” ...

C. Jewish national unbelief in Jesus (36b-50)

1. Jesus departed (36b), **When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them.**
 - a. Thomas Constable, *Jesus had just told His hearers that the Light would not be with them much longer. He withdrew from them again, giving them a foretaste of what He had just predicted* (cf. 8:59; 11:54). His departure should have motivated them to believe on Him. So ends John’s account of Jesus’ public ministry.
 - b. Warren Wiersbe, *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.*
 - c. Leon Morris, *When he had completed the discourse Jesus went away and was hidden. The previous narrative has made it plain that he will certainly die. But he will die when he wills. He will not be seized before the right time for his death.*
 - d. William Hendriksen, *“These things” covers the entire public ministry among the Jews. Having completed his work among them, he departed ... it seems probable that his final departure from the Jewish multitude, his withdrawal from the nation of Israel, took place when he left the temple on Tuesday-afternoon ... The public will not appear again until he is being led away to (and is standing before) Pilate who will sentence him to be crucified. During his trial, however, he never addresses the public. With 12:36b his public ministry is entirely finished.*
 - e. John Hart, *That Jesus went away and hid Himself from them* (cf. 10:40; 11:54) anticipates symbolically the blindness that is about to come on Israel for their unbelief (vv. 37–40).
 - f. Charles Swindoll, *After Jesus completed His revelation, He retreated to the safety of seclusion, not to avoid death—He came to earth to die—but to spend His final hours preparing His disciples.*
 - g. Grant Osborne, *His hiding has two thrusts here: Jesus has been awaiting the final “hour” God has established (7:30; 8:20), and it signifies God’s judgment on those who reject him. He had been warning them and giving them chance after chance to repent and be forgiven, but their time was almost up.*
 - h. Gary Burge, *The public revelation of Jesus is now complete. His signs have been displayed in full. Men and women must come to terms with the revelation that has been placed in the world. Yet this is the mystery of Jesus’ life: Even though “light has come into the world ... men loved darkness instead of light” (3:19).*
2. Why there was such widespread unbelief (37-43)
 - a. Their unbelief was prophesied by Isaiah (37-38), **Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him, 38 so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: “Lord, who has believed what he heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”**
 - 1) Related verses
 - a) Matthew 1:22, 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:
 - b) Romans 10:16, *But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?”*

2) Comments

- a) Edwin Blum, *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 (semeia), 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).*
- b) George Beasley-Murray, *This opening sentence summarizes the paragraph of vv 37–43: the response to the ministry of Jesus by his people was persistent unbelief. It climaxed the rejection of the Logos throughout Israel's history (1:11), including the word through the prophets, and specifically fulfilled words written in the Book of Isaiah ... The question in Isa 53:1 expresses the astonishment of the nations concerning the Servant of the Lord, rejected of men but exalted by God (it follows directly on Isa 52:13–15).*
- c) Thomas Constable, *John again attributed Israel's unbelief to God's will, though he balanced that again with the Jews' human responsibility in verse 43. He viewed Isaiah 53:1 as predicting Israel's rejection of her Messiah. The verse originally referred to the Gentiles' rejection of Israel, the servant of the LORD. However, in another sense it predicted Israel's rejection of the Servant of the LORD Messiah, whom God would send. The "report" or message that the people had rejected was Jesus' teaching, and the evidence of the LORD's "arm" or power was Jesus' miracles.*
- d) Warren Wiersbe, *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.*
- e) Leon Morris, *Unbelief is now seen to be foreshadowed in prophecy. John has already made it clear that it is only as God draws us that we can believe. Now we have the further thought that what is written in prophecy must be fulfilled. The prophecy cited (Isa. 53:1) speaks both of failure to believe and of a revelation of "the arm of the Lord." In other words, faith and the divine activity are connected. And even unbelief has some place in the purpose of God.*
- f) William Hendriksen, *The signs, which so clearly testified to the exalted character of the One who performed them and which should have been an aid to the development of genuine faith, were not considered in their true significance. Though there were exceptions here and there, and though all of these exceptions taken together constituted a sizable group (12:11), on the whole Israel grew more and more callous spiritually, insensitive to the works and the words of Christ. Though many were convinced that he was, indeed, the Messiah, even this knowledge did not issue in genuine faith.*
- g) John Hart, *John cited (v. 38) a well-known messianic passage about God's Suffering Servant (Is 53:1) as now fulfilled in Christ. The ARM OF THE LORD is a figure of speech for God's power, displayed in Jesus' sign-miracles (v. 37). The rhetorical questions of the OT prophecy suggest that only a remnant in Israel would believe the message of the Messiah.*
- h) Edward Klink, *Not believing in the signs is tantamount to not believing in God himself. It is likely for this reason that the narrator makes such a sweeping generalization about the people (i.e., "the world") for the first time since the prologue.*
- i) C. K. Barrett, *Signs do not suffice if God does not give men eyes to see.*
- j) Charles Swindoll, *John quoted two passages from Isaiah to explain the unbelieving response on the part of Israel's religious leaders. Both support his explanation that the nonbelievers were "blinded" and "hardened" by God and therefore could not believe. While this sounds patently unfair—How can someone be prevented from believing and then be justly punished for unbelief?—one must understand the nature of divine "hardening." In the case of Jesus, truth became the means by which hearts were either softened to the point of surrender or hardened in their chosen state of rebellion.*
- k) Grant Osborne, *Even after all these wondrous demonstrations of divine power, these former people of God still refuse to embrace Jesus. This was a quandary so significant that Paul addresses it in Romans 9–11, responding to the question: If Jesus is indeed the Messiah and God is just, why have so few Jews been converted to him? Has God been faithful to his promises? Paul answers by pointing to the sovereign will of God and the guilt of the Jewish people (Rom 9–10); John answers that Old Testament prophecy pointed to this unbelief.*

- l) Gary Burge, *John 12:37–38 is a watershed in the theology of the Gospel of John. Jesus’ public work is completed; his signs have been displayed in the world; his discourses have been delivered. And yet, the signs have been rejected. His own people have failed to believe the messenger sent by God. We were warned that this would happen in John’s opening prologue, “He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him” (1:11) ... How does John explain this? How can the Christians in John’s church (many years later) interpret the story of Jesus’ life that leads to rejection? Has God failed? Has unbelief triumphed? ... John echoes the thinking of other New Testament writers when he leads us first to Isaiah 53:1. Isaiah 53 provided the earliest Christians with a poignant description of the Suffering Servant, whose image helped interpret the anguish and suffering of Jesus. And Isaiah 53:1 sums up the Servant’s rejection: Neither his words (“our message”) nor his deeds (“the arm of the Lord”) has found any reception in Israel. John then takes us to Isaiah 6:10, which became the classic New Testament explanation for Israel’s rejection of Jesus. Paul cites it in his final speech in Acts (Acts 28:26–27), and the Synoptic Gospels use it to explain why the people cannot comprehend the parables of Jesus (Matt. 13:13–15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10).*
- b. God kept them from belief (39-40), ***Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said, 40 “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them.”***
- 1) Related verses
- John 5:44, *How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?*
 - Isaiah 6:10, *Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.”*
 - Matthew 13:14-15, *Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: ““You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive.” 15 For this people’s heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.’*
 - Mark 6:52, *for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.*
- 2) Comments
- Thomas Constable, *John again affirmed that most of the Jews did not believe on Jesus because “they could not.” God had judicially hardened their hearts because they had refused to believe Him previously (cf. Exod. 9:12; cf. 2 Thess. 2:8–12) ... Isaiah 6:10 is the prophecy that predicted this hardening (cf. Acts 28:26–27). Originally God had told Isaiah that the people to whom he ministered would not welcome his ministry because God would harden their hearts. Now John explained that this verse also revealed the reason for the Jews’ rejection of Jesus’ ministry. Prophecy not only described Israel’s unbelief (v. 38), but it also explained it. The apostle Paul gave the definitive answer to the problem of God’s fairness that His predestination poses in Romans 9–11.*
 - Edwin Blum, *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).*
 - Warren Wiersbe, *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.)*

- d) Kenneth Gangel, *As we read verse 40, we are reminded of God's dealings with Pharaoh centuries before. Indeed, Isaiah himself begged God to show his merciful side to the people to whom he sent his prophet (Isa. 63:15–19). But how can we understand the human responsibility of those whose eyes had been blinded and whose hearts had been deadened by God himself?*
- e) Leon Morris, *God's purposes are not frustrated by the opposition of evil people. They are accomplished. In this particular case, while there is certainly an element of the mysterious it is also true that we can discern a little of the divine purpose. Had the Jews accepted the gospel it is difficult to understand how it could have gone out to all the nations. But when the Jews rejected it, it became a world religion. We cannot think that all this took place apart from the will of God.*
- f) William Hendriksen, *Any attempt to change the clear meaning of a text in order to bring it into harmony with one's particular theology is reprehensible. We should let the passage stand just as it is, and not tamper with it in any way ... He is not a cruel monster who deliberately and with inward delight prepares people for everlasting damnation. On the contrary, he earnestly warns, proclaims the Gospel, and states—as Jesus did repeatedly during his earthly ministry—what will happen if people believe, also what will happen if they do not. He even urges them to walk in the light. But when people, of their own accord and after repeated threats and promises, reject him and spurn his messages, then—and not until then—he hardens them, in order that those who were not willing to repent may not be able to repent.*
- g) John Hart, *The interchange between divine sovereignty over sin (in this case unbelief) and human responsibility is mystifying, but one does not cancel out the other. Both doctrines are equally true, and one passage may well emphasize one over the other. Here John emphasized God's sovereignty over their unbelief, but in other places their moral responsibility is foremost. For the relationship between God's sovereignty and human sin, see the comments on Rm 9:22–23, and the comments introducing Rm 9:30.*
- h) Edward Klink, *God is the cause of the unbelieving response to Jesus, not merely the judge of it. If the depiction of God as the cause of unbelief makes God look unjust, we must look not for resolution in the doctrine of God alone but in the presentation of God provided by his Son, Jesus Christ, who perfectly exemplifies the mercy and grace of God. Jesus is "the unique mirror of the divine grace" (to use Calvin's phrase), and he suspended his own rights for ours and took our shame upon himself.*
- l) Grant Osborne, *The second passage cited (12:40) is Isaiah 6:10, the primary passage quoted in the New Testament to explain Jewish unbelief (Mark 4:10–12; Acts 28:26–27; Rom 11:8). Leading into the citation, John further emphasizes God's sovereignty (12:39), telling us "they could not believe" because Isaiah had prophesied just that. Once more God's will is seen in his judicial hardening of Israel's hearts. It is the same issue as Pharaoh in Exodus, with God's hardening of his heart a judicial response to his hardening of his own heart. Divine sovereignty and human responsibility are intertwined in Israel's unbelief.*
- j) F. F. Bruce, *Not one of them was fated to be incapable of belief; it is made plain below (verse 42) that some did in fact believe. But the Old Testament prediction had to be fulfilled, and fulfilled it was in those who, as a matter of fact, did not believe. From the New Testament writers' point of view, the unreceptive hearing which Isaiah was promised was not exhausted in the circumstances of his personal ministry; it was experienced by one prophet after another ...*
- k) Gary Burge, *In John's Gospel, God's sovereignty and human responsibility are held together consistently. Jesus calls for people to believe (12:36), and we learn that many do indeed make this choice (12:42). Throughout the Gospel John never compromises the demand Jesus makes for decision and faith.*

- c. John confirmed that Isaiah's prophecies concerned Jesus (41), **Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him.**
- 1) Related verse, Isaiah 6:1, *In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple.*
 - 2) Comments
 - a) Thomas Constable, *In the vision that Isaiah recorded in Isaiah 6, the prophet wrote that he saw God's glory (Isa. 6:3). Now John wrote that Isaiah saw Jesus' glory and spoke of Jesus. Obviously John regarded Jesus as God (cf. 1:18; 10:30; 20:28; Col. 2:9). Isaiah had spoken of Jesus in that he had revealed many messianic prophecies. Earlier Jesus had claimed that Moses had written about Him (5:46) and here it is clear that Isaiah also had written about Him.*
 - b) Edwin Blum, *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).*
 - c) Leon Morris, *The words of Isaiah 6:3 refer to the glory of Yahweh, but John makes no hard-and-fast distinction between the two. To him it is plain that Isaiah had in mind the glory revealed in Christ.*
 - d) William Hendriksen, ... *Isaiah, in the glorious vision recorded in the same chapter from which the quotation was taken (chapter 6, verses 1–5 the vision; verses 9 and 10 the quoted words), saw the glory, the transcendent majesty (not restricted to but certainly including the moral quality of holiness) of the Lord Jesus Christ (in whom the glory of Jehovah reflects itself) and was conscious of the fact that he was speaking of him, he did not criticize or protest, but recorded faithfully what he had seen and heard.*
 - e) George Beasley-Murray, *The glory of God that Isaiah saw in his vision (Isa 6:1–4) is identified with the glory of the Logos-Son, in accordance with 1:18 and 17:5.*
 - f) John Hart, *When Isaiah saw His glory, and he spoke of Him, the prophet was referring to Yahweh, the God of the OT (Is 6:3). But John revealed that the glory of Yahweh was also the glory of the preincarnate Christ (cf. 1:1, 14; 8:58; 10:30; 20:28).*
 - g) F. F. Bruce, *Isaiah, like Abraham before him, rejoiced to see the day of Christ (John 8:56), for, like John and his fellow disciples in the fulness of time, he too was permitted to behold his glory (cf. John 1:14).*
 - h) Gary Burge, *The link with Isaiah is further reinforced in John 12:41, "Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him." This brings us back to Isaiah's vision in Isaiah 6:1–4, where the prophet saw the Lord "high and exalted" and surrounded by "his glory." Isaiah had seen the Messiah (cf. John 8:56 and Abraham), and the glory witnessed there glimpsed something of the glory Jesus will presently reveal in his "hour."*
- d. Many Jews believed in secret (42-43), **Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; 43 for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.**
- 1) Related verses
 - a) John 7:13, *Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of him.*
 - b) John 9:22, *(His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.)*
 - c) John 5:44, *How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?*
 - 2) Comments
 - a) Thomas Constable, *Even though most of the Jews rejected Jesus, many believed in Him (cf. 1:10–13). Even some of the rulers did. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea seem to have been such people (cf. 7:50–52; 19:38–39). Some of the believers did not admit that they believed in Him, however, because of fear of exclusion from synagogue worship (cf. 9:22).*
 - b) Warren Wiersbe, *Better to fear God and go to heaven than to fear men and go to hell!*

- c) Edwin Blum, *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.*
- d) Kenneth Gangel, *The second element of faith in this section is faith in the Father. How sad that even those leaders who wanted to trust in Jesus felt they could not—a fear not unlike that of many people today. Even those who escaped the divine blinding insisted on being at best “closet Christians” not for fear of their lives, but because they loved praise from men more than praise from God.*
- e) Leon Morris, *The ministry of Jesus was not without its effect even in the highest circles. But by now the opposition to Jesus on the part of the Pharisees was so great that it meant excommunication to confess him. 121 So they were silent ... The glory of Christ sets the standard. To love the glory of people above the glory of God is the supreme disaster.*
- f) William Hendriksen, *Day in, day out (note imperfect tense: were not confessing) they kept their opinion to themselves. How did John get to know about it then? Perhaps Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathea told him about it afterward.*
- g) John Hart, *The “rulers” were members of the Sanhedrin. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea are two of the rulers identified in John as believing in Jesus as the Messiah (3:1; 19:38–39). In this early stage of their new faith, these rulers were not confessing Christ publicly for fear of being excluded from the synagogue (cf. 9:22). Their love for human approval (v. 43) subverted their witness.*
- h) Edward Klink, *If only they would see themselves in light of the “glory of Christ” as Isaiah did (see Isa 6:5)! This serves as a fitting conclusion to the public rejection of Jesus, offering a penetrating analysis of the human condition first introduced in the prologue (1:5).*
- i) William Barclay, *In one vivid phrase, John diagnoses their position. They preferred to be in good standing with the community rather than with God. No doubt they thought themselves wise and prudent; but their wisdom did not extend to remembering that while the opinion of others might matter for the few years in which they lived upon this earth, the judgment of God mattered for all eternity. It is true wisdom and prudence to prefer the good opinion of God to the good opinion of others; it is always better to be right for eternity than to be right for time.*
- j) Grant Osborne, *There is no reason to think they were not true believers; they simply were afraid, without the courage of their convictions. There are all too many just like them in our churches as well. John shows us that there are several levels of faith, and it is difficult to determine where to separate seekers who are not believers from weak Christians who are. The task of church leaders is to continue to disciple all in the church to keep growing in Christ, and to leave many of these questions with the Lord.*
- k) F. F. Bruce, *... they aligned themselves with the men rebuked by Jesus in 5:44 as those “who receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory which comes from the only God,” and excluded themselves from the blessing which he held out in 12:26: “If any one serves me, the Father will honor him.”*

3. Jesus' final appeal for Israel to believe (44-50)

a. Introductory comments

- 1) Thomas Constable, *John added Jesus' words that follow as a climactic appeal to his readers to believe on Jesus. This exhortation summarizes and restates some of the major points that John recorded Jesus teaching earlier. These themes include faith, Jesus as the One sent by the Father, light and darkness, judgment now and later, and eternal life ... He probably delivered it during His week of teaching in the temple during the Passover season.*
- 2) Leon Morris, *John finishes off his account of the public ministry of Jesus with one last appeal to people to believe. He has had some stern things to say about the Pharisees and their ilk. but his last word is not one of condemnation; it is one of tender appeal. Jesus came that people might believe and be saved.*
- 3) John Hart, *Although it is not clear when or where Jesus delivered these words, they are placed here as the culmination of Jesus' proclamation to Israel. Afterward, the book will shift to the private ministry of the Messiah to His disciples (Jn 13–17).*

- b. To believe Jesus is to believe the One who sent Him (44-45), **And Jesus cried out and said, “Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. 45 And whoever sees me sees him who sent me.**

1) Related verses

- a) John 13:20, *Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.*
- b) John 14:1, *Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.*
- c) John 5:24, *Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.*
- d) John 14:9, *Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”*

2) Comments

- a) Thomas Constable, *The fact that Jesus shouted out these words shows their importance. Jesus again claimed to be God’s representative and so closely connected with God that to believe in Jesus constituted belief in God. There is both a distinction between the Son and the Father in their subsistence, and a unity between them in their essence (cf. ch. 5).*
- b) C. K. Barrett, *Precisely because Jesus is the obedient Son and envoy of the Father, to see him is to see the Father, just as to believe in him is to believe in God. Cf. 1.18; 14.9.*
- c) Edwin Blum, *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).*
- d) Leon Morris, *The closeness of the Father and the Son is brought out: anyone who trusts Christ trusts not simply the Man of Galilee but God the Father. The two are so close that to trust the one is to trust the other.*
- e) Edward Klink, *The “cry” of Jesus here is the cry of the merciful and gracious God, calling the reader—the world—to repentance. Such a call matches the purpose of the entire Gospel (see 20:30–31) ... The Father and the Son are so intimately connected that Jesus is not only the access point to the Father but also the visible manifestation and presence of God. The prologue has already announced such a relationship (see comments on 1:1, 14), and the entire Gospel has depicted the ministry of the Trinitarian God in the person of Jesus Christ in the world.*
- f) Charles Swindoll, *Jesus is one with the Father; to believe in one is to believe in the other (vv. 44–45).*
- g) Grant Osborne, *The first emphasis (vv. 44–45) brings together the twin aspects of believing and seeing. Since Jesus is the divine agent, to believe or see him is to believe or see God. They are one (10:30), and to know one is to know the other ... He is the voice of God and the presence of God. He is the only way to God (14:6), and we can neither see nor believe in God without believing in his Son.*

- c. Jesus came as light for those in darkness (46), **I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.**

1) Related verses

- a) John 12:35-36, *So Jesus said to them, “The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the 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.*
- b) John 1:4-5, *In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*
- c) John 1:9, *The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.*
- d) John 8:12, *Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”*

2) Comments

- a) Edwin Blum, *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).
 - b) James M. Boice, *When the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world and shone as God's light, he exposed the darkness of the world as no one had ever done previously. And of course, those who had a vested interest in things as they were hated him for exposing their darkness and eventually had him crucified.*
 - c) Leon Morris, *"I" is emphatic (and this is repeated in vv. 47, 49, and 50). Whatever be the case with others, Christ's own activities and purposes are clear. "Have come" in the perfect tense denotes a coming forth and remaining. For Christ as "the Light" see on 8:12. Darkness is the state in which people find themselves naturally, but Jesus came to deliver us from this state. It is not his purpose that we should continue in darkness. In view of the preceding section with its strong emphasis on the hand of God even in the unbelief of sinners this verse is important. The purpose of Christ's coming was salvation. He came to deliver us from darkness, not to imprison us within it.*
 - d) William Hendriksen, *God's promises are for those who believe* (cf. 3:16). *To be sure, the Gospel is proclaimed to a wider circle, but the illumination of those who do not accept Jesus by faith is merely outward. In their hearts the darkness remains. In fact, it becomes even more intense.*
 - e) Grant Osborne, *Through Jesus as the light of God (1:4, 7, 9; 8:12), we "see" the truth and come to belief. He shines in this dark world to expose its sin and rebellion, but the purpose is redemptive rather than punitive, bringing salvation rather than judgment (3:17). The light shines so sinners can find forgiveness and trust Jesus to light the way so they can overcome and leave the darkness behind (1:5).*
 - f) F. F. Bruce, *To believe in Jesus is to come to the light. It has already been asserted that men pass judgment on themselves by their response to the true light, and hence the theme of light is followed here naturally by the theme of judgment.*
- d. Jesus did not come to judge but His word will judge those who reject Him (47-48), ***If anyone hears my words and does not 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 does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.***

1) Related verses

- a) John 8:15, *You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one.*
- b) John 3:17, *For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.*
- c) Luke 10:16, *"The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me."*
- d) Deuteronomy 18:18-19, *I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. 19 And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.*
- e) Romans 2:16, *on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.*

2) Comments

- a) Thomas Constable, *Disobedience to Jesus' words may indicate the absence of saving faith* (cf. 3:36). *The same message that brings life to those who believe it will result in condemnation for those who reject it. The "last day" is the day in which unbelievers will stand before God in judgment, namely, at the great white throne judgment (Rev. 20:11–15). God's purpose in the Incarnation was essentially positive, however. He wanted people to believe and experience salvation, not condemnation.*
- b) Edwin Blum, *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.*

- c) Kenneth Gangel, *What will be the basis for judgment of the final day? That is the issue as this chapter comes to a close with a focus on faith. The answer, centers not in the person of the Lord Jesus; he came into the world to save it, not to judge it. The focus of judgment will be the actual Word of God. God's words through Jesus as well as through the prophets and other biblical writers form the final authority for obedience. They are the message of faith.*
 - d) Leon Morris, *Those who have an intelligent understanding of Jesus' teaching and yet do not keep it are certainly condemned. But Jesus can say, "I do not judge him." We are not to think of him as standing over people as a judge. There is indeed a sense in which he judges (5:22, 27, 30; 8:16, 26; 9:39), but in a very real sense people judge themselves (3:18–19).*
 - e) George Beasley-Murray, *Here we learn that the word spoken by Jesus is the standard of judgment by God, the giver of the word, and that such a judgment faces any who persist in rejection of the word, including its proclamation after the cross and offer of forgiveness.*
 - f) John Hart, *All future judgment has been given to Jesus (5:22, 27). But Jesus' purpose in coming to the world was not to judge it at that time, but instead to save the world (3:17; 8:15). Final judgment is self-imposed and fixed in this life by a person's response to the gospel message (3:18; 5:24; 12:48). Therefore, if anyone (v. 48) does not receive Jesus' sayings, His word will judge him at the last day (the final judgment; cf. 6:39–40). Jesus' "words" tie into His identity as the Word (1:1, 14).*
 - g) Edward Klink, *What initiated the sending of the Son was love (3:16), not judgment, even if judgment is the inevitable result of darkness.*
 - h) Charles Swindoll, *Jesus did not come to condemn anyone but to present Himself as truth to be believed; those who fail to believe in Him condemn themselves (vv. 47–48).*
 - I) Grant Osborne, *Jesus identifies two groups here: the first group is characterized by the one who "hears my words but does not keep them" ... this second group both rejects Jesus and refuses his words. The first group is on the path to true faith and partially accepts Jesus and his teaching. The second group is completely opposed, so as Jesus says, "the very words I have spoken will condemn them on the last day," meaning at the final judgment.*
- e. Jesus spoke the Father's words of eternal life (49-50), ***For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. 50 And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.***
- 1) Related verses
 - a) John 5:19, *So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.*
 - b) John 5:30, *"I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.*
 - c) John 15:10, *If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. With respect to the word as judge see on 5:24; 5:45–47; 8:31, 37, 51; and 14:23, 24. Cf. Matt. 7:21–27; Luke 11:28.*
 - 2) Comments
 - a) Thomas Constable, *Jesus did not deliver a message that He had devised, but one that He had received from the Father (cf. Deut. 18:18–19). What God had commanded Him to say resulted in eternal life for those who believed it. Consequently Jesus was careful to convey this message exactly as He had received it. "What to say" may refer to the content of His teaching, and "what to speak" to the manner of its delivery.*
 - b) Edwin Blum, *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 ... In the words of Moses, these "are not just idle words for you—they are your life" (Deut. 32:47).*
 - c) Charles Swindoll, *Everything Jesus does is necessarily the will of the Father because they are of the same essence (v. 49) ... The Father sent the Son to earth to provide humanity the ability to receive eternal life by grace alone, through faith alone (v. 50).*

- d) William Hendriksen, *The instruction given to Jesus was to procure, to reveal, and to proclaim everlasting life. Hence, that instruction issues in everlasting life for his people ... Jesus utters only that which the Father has given him, and he utters it exactly as he received it.*
- e) John Hart, *Jesus made it clear repeatedly that He did not speak by His own authority or initiative (5:30; 8:28, 42; 12:49; 14:10). So his message about eternal life is the Father's message as well. His commandment is eternal life (v. 50) means that God commands everyone to believe, and believing leads to eternal life.*
- f) Edward Klink, *The Trinitarian nature of Jesus's work and ministry is further articulated here; everything Jesus has said in his public ministry is rooted in God himself, just as the faith he intended to produce had God as its object (v. 44). To pit Jesus against God is to misunderstand Jesus and to misunderstand God ... This closing exhortation is not harsh but gracious. It is an invitation to life, even more, to eternal life ...*

SUMMARY

- Kenneth Gangel, *Amid the swirl of relationships in this chapter, we learn that the central crisis is one of faith. John has called us to faith in the prophets, faith in the Father, and faith in the message of Jesus. Faith leads to eternal life—and that is what this Gospel is all about.*
- Charles Swindoll, *Once Jesus had proclaimed the good news to the world and had fulfilled all of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah, He concluded His public ministry. In the next section, Jesus will prepare His disciples in seclusion for His departure and their future work of evangelism and disciple-making.*
- Warren Wiersbe, *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 Saviour 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).*