

24 Jesus is...a grain of wheat

John 12:20-50

I The end of Jesus' mission to the Jews – John 12:20-22, 37-40

- A Greeks seeking Him – 12:20-22. The arrival of some Greeks [Gentiles- non-Jews] signals to Jesus that his mission to the Jews is about to come to an end. But before Jesus can reach out to the Gentiles, he first must die & resurrect. ESV
- B The rejection of the Jews – 12:37-40
 - 1 Prophesied in Isaiah 53 “Who has believed what he heard from us? To whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? (Isa. 53:1) Unbelief...because he [Messiah-Christ] was an obscure, outwardly unimpressive person in a failed culture. ESV John cites Isaiah 53:1 & 6:10 to indicate Jews' rejection of Jesus as Messiah was predicted by Scripture & thus confirms (rather than thwarts) God's sovereign plan. Isa. 53 refers to the LORD's Servant rejected by the people but exalted by God; Isaiah 6:1 attributes people's hardening ultimately to God himself (like Pharaoh's in Exodus). John emphasizes both divine sovereignty & human responsibility. [1] People should have believed & are held guilty for disbelieving (“they still did not believe in him,” 12:37). [2] God blinded their eyes so they couldn't believe (Jn. 12:39)
 - 2 Although some Jewish authorities believed, they would not confess because of fear. “*Many of the authorities believed in him.*” However, their *fear of the Pharisees* was still strong, hence they did not confess Jesus publicly. In 12:43 John penetrates the human heart, showing again that the desire for human commendation [approval] kept them from following Jesus in a public way. They were secret (hidden) believers.
 - 3 Viewed from a human-perspective Jesus' mission to the Jews was a dismal failure! But God used that rejection to fulfill a higher purpose—to offer salvation & life to the world
- C The rest of Isa. 53 showing the rejection of the Servant, Jesus, and his death and bearing of the sins of the whole world.
- D The Jews rejected Jesus because He did not fit their concept of what the Messiah came to do. Although the authorities believed, they would not confess because of fear. Their belief was weak. Note: “They could not believe” of v 39 is no cast-iron fate from which people cannot break out; if “many” of the rulers believed, one may be sure that many more of the ordinary people did also. The statement is likely to reflect the situation of many in the synagogues of [John's] day, & it make a silent appeal that they too should count honor in the sight of God of greater consequence than honor in the sight of men, & so be bold enough to confess Jesus as the Christ. [George Beasley-Murray, *John*, p. 217]

II The glorification of the Son of Man

- A The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified – 12:23 **Note:** The reply of Jesus indicates that the coming of the Gentiles heralds the climax of his ministry; his “hour” has at last arrived, and it will witness his glorification. It is tacitly assumed that then will be the time for the Gentiles to come under the sovereignty of God. The connection between v 23 and vv 27-28, to say nothing of the intervening vv 24-26 shows that the hour of the “glorifying” of Jesus relates to his death; yet 13:31-32 and 17:1,5 as clearly indicate that the glorifying includes his exaltation and return to the Father. The same idea applies to 12:31-32, except that the more specific term “be lifted up” is used instead of “be glorified; here the death-resurrection-exaltation of Jesus is concentrated into a single term, indicating the unity of the redemptive action of God in Christ as the means whereby the saving sovereignty of God comes for the world.” [George Beasley-Murray, *John*, p. 211]
- B Glorification through:
 - 1 Becoming a grain of wheat and dying – 12:24

- 2 His soul being troubled – 12:27 (one verse describing scene in the garden of Gethsemane)
Note: Jesus, in turmoil of spirit, shrinks from the fearful experience before him, and in his address to God seeks avoidance of it; yet he acknowledges that to endure it is the reason for his mission from God; in an act therefore of total obedience to the Father's will his spirit rises in unreserved affirmation, "Father, glorify your name." [G. Beasley-Murray, *John*, p. 212]
- 3 Having glorified the Father's name and glorifying it again – 12:28 **Note:** The father's name has been glorified in the revelation that has taken place through the ministry of Jesus ("I have glorified it"), and that now the revelation is about to be climaxed in the obedience of the Son on the cross and in his exaltation by the Father. [George Beasley-Murray, *John*, p. 212]
- 4 Being lifted up from the earth – 12:32:
 - a through the cross
 - b through resurrection
 - c and through ascension and being enthroned
- C Apparently Jesus rejection, resulting in Him being put to death on a cross, looked like a failure.
- D Actually, His going to the cross allowed Him:
 - 1 To be the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world
 - 2 To be the grain of wheat to die and bear fruit, produce life
 - 3 To be glorified by being lifted up
 - 4 To judge the world and to cast out the ruler of this world (Col. 2:14-15; Heb. 2:14-15)
 - 5 To draw all men to Himself

III The result of Jesus' glorification

- 1 As the Lamb of God He died to take away the sin of the world – 1:29
- 2 As a grain of wheat He died to produce and bring forth life – 12:24 **Note:** This is the principle of "the kingdom of God: life is given through death...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." [George Beasley-Murray, *John*, p. 211]
- 3 He judged the world – 12:31 **Note:** "The sentence of judgment passed on this world is endured by the One whom the world murders" [i.e., Jesus] [Beasley-Murray, *John*, p. 213]
- 4 He was given authority to cast out Satan, this world's ruler (12:31; Col. 2:14-15; Heb. 2:14-15)
- 5 He draws all men to Himself – 12:32 **Note:** "Jesus was 'lifted up' to heaven via the cross: Satan was *dethroned* & the Son of Man *enthroned* over the world for which He died...The lifting up is not simply on the cross, but via the cross to the throne of heaven. The thought is not that Jesus will draw all [people] *to His cross*, but that He will draw all [people] *to Himself* as the crucified & exalted Redeemer. In virtue of His dying & rising the Son of Man brings the saving sovereignty to the world, and He exercises that sovereignty by drawing all [people] to Himself in the kingdom." [Beasley-Murray, *John*, p. 214]

IV As the grain of wheat He did not love His life – 12:24-26

- 1 Dying on the cross the real "hating his life"
- 2 Applies to Jesus and to us - a transition verse
- 3 For us not loving our life is serving the Lord and following the Lord
- 4 Serving and following the Lord results in "where I am, there will my servant be also." **Note:** Christ draws men to fellowship with himself, alike in suffering and in the presence of God. [George Beasley-Murray, *John*, p. 212]