



# Believe

JOHN

MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

## Examining the text & our hearts:

*Bible Reading: John 12:23-43*

23 Jesus replied..., “The hour has come for *the Son of Man to be glorified*.<sup>24</sup> Truly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains by itself. But if it dies, it produces much fruit.” (12:23-24) 27 “Now my soul is troubled. What should I say—Father, save me from this hour? But that is why I came to this hour.<sup>28</sup> Father, *glorify* your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have *glorified* it, and I will *glorify* it again.” The crowd standing there heard it and said it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” Jesus responded, “This voice came, not for me, but for you.<sup>31</sup> Now is the judgment of this world. Now the ruler of this world will be cast out.<sup>32</sup> As for me, *if I am lifted up from the earth I will draw all people to myself*.”<sup>33</sup> He said this to indicate what kind of death he was about to die.<sup>34</sup> Then the crowd replied to him, “We have heard from the Law that the Messiah will remain forever. So *how can you say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’?* Who is this Son of Man?” (12:27-34) 37 Even though he had performed so many signs in their presence, they did not believe in him.<sup>38</sup> This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet...: ‘Lord, who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? ...<sup>41</sup> Isaiah said these things because he saw his *glory* and spoke about him.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, many did believe in him even among the rulers, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, so that they would not be banned from the synagogue.<sup>43</sup> For they loved human praise more than praise from God. (12:37-38, 41-43 CSB)

### SUMMARY:

- In John's Gospel, the crucifixion paradoxically symbolizes Jesus' glorification. The cross is a means of exalting Jesus, despite being an instrument of capital punishment; that claim is akin to someone 'enthroned' on an electric chair. John's distinctive concept of glory provides the key to

unlocking this enigma; glory is not a deity's visible splendor but a profound manifestation of God's character.

- That's why John differs from the Synoptic Gospels, omitting the transfiguration and apocalyptic prophecies. Instead, John emphasizes the cross as the ultimate revelation of God's boundless love for humanity. This revelation glorifies God the Father and exalts Jesus, God's Son.
- Can we become a 'Johannine Church'? Embracing John's view means valuing insights into God's nature over sensational heavenly visions, and abiding in Christ rather than obsessing over global events and end-time prophecies. John encourages us to see beyond the agony and shame of Christ's Passion, grasping its profound unveiling of divine love. Thus, we experience the transformative power of God's love in our daily lives and gain a fresh perspective on Christ's crucifixion.

## 1. The Paradox

- Jesus replied..., "*The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.*"<sup>24</sup> Truly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains by itself. But if it dies, it produces much fruit." (12:23-24)
- "Christ identified his crucifixion as the unique 'hour' when the Father would glorify the Son, &... [vice versa] –that unique hour when God's nature & character would be most brilliantly & definitively put on show. Cornelius Plantinga highlights the paradox: '*The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified,*' says Jesus. How can this be? Being glorified on a cross? Is that like being enthroned on an electric chair? Is it like being honored by a firing squad?' – Cornelius Plantinga. "Looking upon the crucified Christ, the world sees only weakness, shame, & folly, an occasion for death to boast over...God. But... [Christians] confess... the cross was the very hour of his glory." [J. Clark, MP. Johnson, *Incarnation of God*, p]

### a. Paradox – Crucifixion as Glorification

- "John's use of 'glory' & 'glorify'...[is] an *apparent contradiction*. To identify the agony & shame of *crucifixion with glory* ...stretch[es] the word beyond the breaking point." — Kevin Perrotta, Gerald Darring
- The 'Paradox of the Cross' ...is that what...appear[s] to be scandal & degradation *is in fact glorification*" – von Wahlde
- "For John, *the crucifixion is the glorification of Christ* & his glorification is inseparable from the Cross. How can that be? How can death by torture be glory?" — William J. Grimm
- "*Jesus' deepest humiliation is, paradoxically, also his glorification.*" – Richard Bauckham
- "*Jesus' death is the hour of his glorification*, in which his glory & [God's] glory... are revealed...The concepts of *glorification* & *exaltation* are used of Jesus' ignominious death in a manner that's... *paradoxical.*" –D. Moody Smith

### b. Paradox – Crucifixion as Exaltation

- John uses the verb 'to lift up' (Gk. *hypsos*?) in riddling references to Jesus's death, implying that his *physical elevation* above the earth *on the cross is* at the same time *his exaltation to heaven...*—Richard Bauckham
- When "Jesus refers to his death as... 'being 'lifted up' ...he combines a literal... (lifted up on the cross) with a figurative use, referring to his exaltation ...leaving a paradox."—Richard Bauckham

## 2. John's 'Glory'—what is it?

### a. Contemporary concepts of 'glory'

- "Think about the *paradox of Jesus Christ's glory*. How hard it is to see real glory when we think glory is all about making a splash! We miss the real thing because... [we] have *glory mixed up with publicity* – people like pro-athletes & entertainers, or hard-charging winners in business who then... star in their own TV show. In ordinary life, glory is reputation, & it's built on publicity & peer review by people just as fouled up as we are. *John has a different view of glory.*" [Cornelius Plantinga Jr. in C. A. Jarvis (ed.) *Feasting on the Gospels: John*, V. 1, p. 16]

- “The world tends to confuse glory with egoism, self-regard, & self-aggrandizement. Thus, glory tends to be understood in terms of an ascent to greatness, often through competition, often at the expense ...of others. But God manifests his glory by *descent* to greatness... at his own expense.” [John Clark, Marcus P. Johnson, *Incarnation of God,* ]

#### b. Biblical ‘Glory’

##### a. In the OT

- The Greek OT ‘Glory’ “*doxa* came to mean honor intended for God, or the majesty & eminence which radiated from God’s own being...God himself could not be seen, but his radiance –as that of fire or light – could be apprehended. [It’s] the visible manifestation of his power.” [GM. Burge, “*Glory,*” in JB. Green (ed.) *Dictionary of Jesus & the Gospels,* p. 269]

##### b. In the Synoptics (Matt., Mark, Luke)

- “As [Jesus] was praying...*his face changed,* & his clothes became *dazzling white.* Suddenly, 2 men were talking with him Moses & Elijah appeared *in glory* ... Peter & [Co.] ... when they became fully awake, they saw *his glory.*” (Luke 9:29-32)
- “The Synoptic Gospels consistently speak of the glory of Christ in future [End-time] language...The glory of Christ will appear only when the Son of Man returns at the end of the age...Luke explains ...’the Christ should suffer these things & *enter into his glory*’ (Lk. 24:26) ...The only exception...is Luke’s Transfiguration account ...[where] Moses & Elijah appeared in glory ... [&] Jesus also is seen in his glory.” [GM. Burge, “*Glory,*” in JB. Green (ed.) *cit.,* p. 269]

##### c. John’s Gospel

- In “a most unexpected development in the 4th Gospel, glory is never associated with any futurist Son of Man... but the earthly ministry of Jesus...In John crucifixion is described as glorification” [G. M. Burge, ‘*Glory,*’*Op. cit.,* pp. 269-70]

##### d. Avoid conflating John with the other Gospels

- There’s an “all-too-pervasive tendency ...to conflate the NT portraits of Jesus into a single mosaic.” – Christopher Skinner

### 3. ‘Glory’ in John’s Gospel

#### a. John has no record of the Transfiguration

- “There’s no room for a transfiguration scene in the 4th Gospel... [John’s] Jesus carries his glory with him.” –John Ashton
- “Unlike the Synoptics, John depicts *no specific transfiguration of Jesus:* theologically, Jesus’ entire ministry was a transfiguration, a revelation of God’s glory.” [Craig Keener, ‘*John,*’ Green (ed.) *Op. cit.,* p. 126]
- John “does not report the transfiguration ...John sees Jesus’ glory – that [in] the Synoptics is manifest by a flash of lightning on the mountain – illuminating all the words & acts of Jesus. ‘The 4th Gospel is an *unceasing theophany in which the...transfiguration that’s described in the Synoptics... [has] no place* since it had no [reason] & is... inferior to the glory that shines in all the discourses &...acts of the Incarnate Word’ (Loisy).” [*Days of the Lord,* V. 1, p. 256 #23]
- “It’s...remarkable that there’s no transfiguration in this Gospel, & no visible revelation of divinity in the resurrection body[of Jesus]; on earth *the sole theophany is the scandal of the cross.*” [Mark Edwards, *John Thro’ the Centuries,* p. 137]
- “The claim [‘we beheld his (Jesus’) glory’ (1:14)] refers *not to a single, visible transfiguration such as appears in the Synoptics,* but overall to Jesus’ ministry & passion. [John] employs the language of theophany, but he applies it to ‘signs’ that differ from...visible theophanies in Israel’s Scriptures.” [Craig Keener, “*We Beheld His Glory,*” in P. N. Anderson (ed.) *John, Jesus, & History,* Vol. 2, p. 17]
- Contrast this with 2 Peter’s transfiguration account: Jesus “received honor & glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased!’” (2 Peter 1:17-18)

#### b. John redefines ‘glory,’ ‘glorification’

- “*Jesus redefines glory, even the glory of God* ...Jesus of the Synoptics overturns conventions... but the revolutionary Jesus of the 4th Gospel goes even further by *redefining ...what’s meant by the glory of God.*” –D. Moody Smith

- "In his death as glorification *Jesus revises the meaning of glory & glorification*, for God's glory is found precisely in Jesus' death." –John Ashton
- "John uses the verb 'glorified' to refer... not just to [Jesus'] post-resurrection exaltation to heaven, but also *his uplifting on the cross*, his resurrection, & his ascension." –James D. G. Dunn

### c. What is 'Glory' in John's Gospel?

- "Glory is the manifestation of God's character" –Richard Bauckham
- "Glory is the visible manifestation of God... In John... it's the visible *revelation of God's character*, what one would see if one could see the very face of God." [Richard Bauckham, *Gospel of Glory*, pp. 72-73]
- "Jesus asks that his 'hour' would *glorify* the Father's name –e., that it would *make the Father's character visibly evident* ... This investment of the horror & shame of the cross with glory makes sense because *glory is the manifestation of God's character. The cross as the supreme enactment of God's love is also the supreme revelation of his glory –of who he is'* (Bauckham)." [K. H. Jobes, *John through OT Eyes*, p. 201]
- "In their basic meaning, the words 'glory' & 'glorify' refer to recognizing with honor & praise. However, ... the biblical phrase 'glory of God' is a technical expression referring to God's eternal mode of existence that becomes visible at strategic moments... Jesus' vocabulary marks *crucifixion as a high point in the revelation of glory*. His death means glorification. *He calls the crucifixion his 'exaltation'.*" [Kevin Quast, *Reading the Gospel of John*, p. 113]
- "In the first half of John's Gospel, 'glory' & 'glorify' are often used in their ordinary NT sense of honor or praise. *The specifically Johannine sense of 'glory,'* however is seen in Jesus' life & ministry especially in ... his death & resurrection... Glory is the hidden but radiant splendor of God's inner nature, & to glorify is to reveal that inner nature in a way that honors God & inspires praise. Jesus' death & resurrection uniquely reveal God's true nature; through them Jesus & God are glo" [Lamar Williamson, *Preaching ... John*, p. 334]

### d. Jesus' glory expressed in Cana's wedding miracle (Jn. 2:11)

- "Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee. *He revealed his glory*, & his disciples believed in him." (2:11)
- Jesus manifested his glory in... His great act of kindness ... The most divine thing in the world is love. That in God which is greatest is *not power... not the shining splendor of deity...* but love. When the disciples asked [Jesus] to show them the Father, they thought of *some brilliant display*, some revealing of God... [to] startle men. Jesus replied ... 'He who's seen Me has seen the Father' ... The truest revealing of God ... is *not in great theophanies and transfigurations, but in [Jesus'] ministry of gentleness.*" [J. R. Miller, *From the Gospel of John,*]

### e. Glorification – humiliation plus exaltation

- Jesus replied..., 'The hour has come for the *Son of Man to be glorified*.<sup>24</sup> Truly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground & dies, it remains by itself. But if it dies, it produces much fruit." (12:23-24)
- We do not want to minimize the... horrific nature of Jesus' betrayal & crucifixion. Yet... we must also note that the death of our Lord was both the greatest travesty in human history & one of *the greatest moments of glory* ever seen... Jesus said ... 'Now is the Son of Man glorified' (12:31). This is a reference to the atoning death of Christ, which was imminent... When Jesus asks for the Father to glorify Him at the right hour, that right hour is the hour of His death." –Table Talk

#### a. 'Glorification' – Not the 2nd stage of a two-stage process

- "Wasn't it necessary for the Messiah to [1.] suffer these things and [2.] enter into his glory?" (Luke 24:26)
- "Early Christian writers thought of [Jesus'] death & exaltation... as a [2 stage] *sequence: suffering followed by glory*... *John... collapsed this sequence into a single event of Jesus' exaltation* ('lifting up') or *glorification*." –Richard Bauckham

#### b. "John does not treat the crucifixion of Jesus as a humiliation... followed by an exaltation, but [rather, he treats *crucifixion*] as the first step in Jesus' exaltation & glorification. The resurrection is compressed into the crucifixion so that the 2 are stages in *one upward motion*. The death is... an integral part of Jesus' exaltation & glorification –which is... completed in the resurrection... The death of Jesus... is a performative revelation of God's nature." –R. Alan Culpepper "Glorification" includes humiliation, suffering, death, & exaltation

- "The whole [inclusive] sequence of Jesus' humiliation, suffering, death, & exaltation is *his glorification*." –R. Bauckham

## 4. The Son of Man 'Lifted Up' (exalted) (12:31-34; 3:14-16)

- "Now is the judgment of this world. Now the ruler of this world will be cast out. <sup>32</sup> As for me, *if I am lifted up from the earth I will draw all people to myself.*" <sup>33</sup> He said this to indicate what kind of death he was about to die." (12:31-33)
- The crowd asks Jesus: "How can you say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?" (12:34)
- "*Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,* <sup>15</sup> so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. <sup>16</sup> For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one & only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life." (3:14-16)

## a. Jesus' Sayings about 'Glorify' &amp; 'Lifted Up' Make the same Point

- The sayings which refer to Jesus' death as his glorification ...*make...the same point* as those that refer to the lifting up of the Son of Man." –Richard Bauckham
- "For John... Jesus' *glorification is precisely the 'lifting up' of the Son of Man* by means of...the cross...In the cross, Jesus is glorified, salvation is wrought, God's love for the world is revealed." [David L. Bartlett, *Feasting on the Word*, V. 6, p. 228]
  - "The hour has come for the Son of Man *to be glorified.*' (12:23b)
  - "The Son of Man *must be lifted up.*" (12: 34b)
  - "The second saying [12:34] is represented as the crowd's response to the first [12:23] ...'to be lifted up' is being paired with 'to be glorified.'" [C. Southgate, *Theology in a Suffering World*, p. 82]
- "'Lifting up' & 'glorification' are alternative & complementary ways of speaking of the same [cross] event ...all the emphasis is upon exaltation & glorification, with not a whisper of humiliation." –John Ashton
- "The sayings which refer to Jesus' death as his glorification...*make...the same point* as those that refer to the lifting up of the Son of Man (e.g., 12:23; 13:31-32). The verb ([Gk.] *doxazo*) can mean to honor [or 'glorify'] &...*points to the same Johannine paradox of the cross. Just as Jesus' humiliation is at the same time, his exaltation*, so his rejection, *his shaming & disgrace* in...his death *is paradoxically his honoring* by God in which he honors God & God is...honored by him. But, John's use of the verb means more than 'honor': it relates to ...glory." [R. Bauckham, *Jesus & the God of Israel*, pp. 48-9]
- "In both sets of sayings –those which refer to the cross as Jesus' *lifting up* & those which refer to [it] as his *glorification* – the divine identity [who God is] is revealed in *the paradox of Jesus' death*: his humiliation ...is in divine reality his exaltation, his shame...is ...his honor [glorification]." [Richard Bauckham, *Op. cit.*, 49]

b. Synoptics: Son of Man 'must suffer'; John: 'must be lifted up'

- Synoptics: Jesus: "The *Son of Man must suffer* many things & be treated with contempt" (Mk. 9:12)
- Jesus to Emmaus disciples: "Wasn't it necessary for the Messiah to *suffer these things & enter into his glory?*" (Lk. 24:26)
- John: Jesus: "The *Son of Man must be lifted up*" (Jn. 3:14; 12:34)
- "While the Son of Man in the Synoptic Gospels *must (dei) suffer*, in John's Gospel the *Son of Man must (dei) be lifted up* (3:14; 12:32, 34)." [Karl O. Sandnes, *Early Christian Discourses*, p. 174]
- "In place of the... predictions of the Synoptic Gospels... that the *Son of Man must suffer*, with ...details of rejection & death... John has predictions...that the *Son of Man must be lifted up (hypsoo)*." [Richard Bauckham, *Op. cit.*, p. 47]
- "Whereas the Synoptic Gospels present Jesus' death as a moment of humiliation and apparent defeat, in [John's] passion narrative *Jesus' death is his glorification*... There's no agony in the garden or cry of abandonment from the cross... [John's] passion narrative proclaims Jesus' victory & glorification." [Frank J. Matera, *NT Christology*, pp. 228-9]

## c. John's Paradox of Jesus' 'lifting Up' (exaltation)

- There's a "*paradox* in the 4th Gospel's use of *hypsoo* [Gk. 'lifting up']: faith sees *the cross, the pathway of suffering, as the pathway to glory.*"—William Loader

- “On the cross, Jesus is ...lifted up in the place of shame... But at another level this ‘lifting up’ refers to ...to glory; it carries the meaning of ‘exaltation’ & ‘glory.’”— T. Wright

d. Double Meaning of ‘Lifted Up’

- “Three times in the...Gospel...Jesus predicts that the Son of Man will be ‘lifted up’ (*hypsoo*; 3:14; 8:28; 12:32, 34) ... The narrator comments ‘He said this to show by what death he was to die’ (12:33), John has in mind the *literal hoisting [up] of Jesus on the cross*. But the word *hypsoo* is a curious choice. *Usually it means ‘make high, exalt,’* and we should probably recognize John’s... *double entendre* [double meaning] pointing to the crucifixion as the apex of divine love to the eye of ” [Paul A. Rainbow, *Johannine Theology*, pp. 202-3]
- “What does it mean that the Son of Man must be ‘lifted up’? ...It clearly refers to the cross. *On the cross, Jesus is lifted up above the earth, lifted up in the place of shame*, of hard & bitter agony, the place... which symbolize[s] a world gone But at *another level this ‘lifting up’ refers to ...to glory*; it carries the meaning of ‘exaltation’ & ‘glory’. On the cross, Jesus is lifted up as the true revelation of God, lifted up in the supreme work of love, of ...compassion, the place ...which symbolize[s] the yearning love of the Creator for his lost & self-destructive world.” [N. T. Wright, *Following Jesus*, p. 37]
- John “repeatedly mentions that the Son of Man has...[to] be ‘lifted up’. This *could* be interpreted as promotion, ascendancy, exaltation... supreme recognition, a great man put on display ...But the cruel reality is that Jesus’ ‘lifting up’ would be on a cross... physically affixed to a wooden cross & raised up as a symbol of being rejected ... But *if one reads John’s story correctly ...this crucifixion is in fact his exaltation & coronation*. The Roman [soldiers] would raise him up, but many will be drawn to... [him] in fascination, admiration, awe, & worship. His crucifixion is not a mark of his shame, but a demonstration of his divine love.” [Nijay K. Gupta, *Reading Philippians*, p. ]
- “The key is the *double meaning of the word* [‘lifted up’]. It refers both *literally* to the crucifixion as a lifting up of Jesus above the earth...& *figuratively* to the same event as Jesus’ elevation to the status of divine sovereignty over the cosmos. *The cross is ...his exaltation*. Its *physical character, as literal elevation from the earth*, symbolizes its *theological character* as the decisive *movement upwards to heaven* as the place of divine sovereignty [God’s throne]. The *literal elevation*, which Jesus’ executioners intended as humiliation ...a *disgrace for all to see*, John’s readers see, through [the eyes of faith], as an event in which *Jesus’ divine identity is manifested for all to see*, thereby drawing all people to himself(12:32).” [Richard Bauckham, *Op. cit.*, p. 48] “Multiple meanings ...play a role... with ‘being lifted up.’ On one hand to be lifted up is to be honored or glorified, exalted & set above —as done to a king [e.g., Jesus’ Jerusalem entry]). On the other hand, ...it refers to the cruel means [crucifixion] by which Jesus will die, a stark ...contrast with the first meaning of glorification. In both cases, Jesus’ death is in view.” [Bruce R. Reichenbach, “*Soteriology in ...John*,” *Themelios*, V. 46.3 (2021) p. 579]
- Concerning “John’s use of *hypsoo*, ‘to lift up,’ or ‘exalt’ in 3:14; 8:28; 12:32. In all these passages the *verb is used in a double sense*. It means both ‘to be exalted’ & ‘to be raised from the ground on the cross.’ It’s...John’s irony that what means one thing to outsiders means something else also to believers. ...According to John, *Jesus is most highly exalted when he is apparently most deeply degraded*; & *God’s glory*, for those who have eyes of faith *shines most clearly... when Jesus dies on the cross in weakness & in totally human humiliation... The glory does not first become manifest at the resurrection: it is seen on the cross & supremely there...* God’s nature is supremely revealed in the completely human death of Christ. The divinity becomes clearest at the very point where Jesus would seem to be the most disastrously ” [Anthony T. Hanson, *Grace & Truth*, p. 28]
- “Jesus is exalted & glorified *in the cross event*, so that Jesus’ exaltation/glorification & death appear to be indivisible in John. The cross... reveals Jesus’ true divine identity.” [J. A. Dennis, “*Death of Jesus*,” Green (ed.) *Op. cit.* p. 293]

e. As Moses lifted up the Snake, Jesus must be lifted up (3:14)

- “*Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,* <sup>15</sup> so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. <sup>16</sup> For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one & only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.” (3:14-16)

a. ‘Lifted up’ (exalted) from the earth to the cross (3:14)

- “It is God’s salvific plan that he would lift up the Son of Man so that the one who believes might have eternal life. Thus the [‘lifted up’] in 3:14 ...*can only mean the placement of the Son of Man on the cross*, rather than his ascension to the Father ...For John, *the divine glory is revealed* not on the heavenly throne with the angelic entourage, but *on the earthly throne, the cross, surrounded by hostile forces.*” [Jey Kanagaraj, *Mysticism in... John*, pp. 204-5]

- "The ascent ['lifting up'] onto the cross is the beginning of the ascent ['lifting up/exaltation] ultimately to heaven itself. *When the world lifts Jesus to the cross & to death, it unwittingly sets in motion an event of greater significance.* For through death he returns *exalted & glorified to the Father.*" [William Loader, *Jesus in John's Gospel*, pp. 246-7]
- b. 'Lifted Up' not only to the cross, but also to the throne (3:14; 12:32)
- Jesus: "*if I am lifted up from the earth I will draw all people to myself.*" (12:32)
  - "God's intention is to save the world by lifting up his only Son. This '*lifting up*' relates not only to the crucifixion of Jesus but also to his enthronement in heaven. Even more, this exaltation also involves the judgment of the world (3:18-19). In Jn. 12:31-32, this aspect of 'lifting up' (i.e., crucifixion) is set forth in terms of the judgment of the prince [ruler] of the world. [Hence,] the analogy of Jesus' crucifixion to Moses' lifting up of a bronze serpent in 3:14." [Sanghee M. Ahn, *Christological Witness Function of the OT Characters*, pp. 246-7]
  - "Clearly the lifting up of the Son of Man is not simply 6 feet [2 m.] above earth, but to a position from which he can draw all to himself – to his throne in heaven. The thought is *not* that the Son of Man will *draw all to his cross*, but that he will *draw all to himself as the crucified-exalted Redeemer.*" [G. Beasley-Murray, "12:31-32," W. Schrage, *Op. cit.* pp. 75-6]
  - 12:31-32 "show that the ['lifting up'] denotes *more than a simple return via death to the heavenly home* of the Son of Man in this event the judgment of this world takes place, the prince ['ruler'] of this world is dethroned, & the Son of Man assumes the...lordship ...under which all humanity may now come. The... significance of the 'lifting up' of the Son of Man is set forth in... 3 statements." [George Beasley-Murray, *cit.*, p. 73]
- f. Jesus' Cross – the Greatest Revelation of who God is (Love)
- "God is love (1 Jn. 4:16). Since love was the motivating force behind the gift of the Son, it would follow that Jesus the Son is the preeminent revelation & most eloquent expression of God's love." [Patricia D. Sanchez, *Word We Celebrate*, p. 112]
- a. Jesus' cross reveals the Face of God
- Jesus' "death is not...a sad accident cutting short a promising career, but *the climax & purpose of his whole work.* In this act God will glorify his name. And, in being thus 'lifted up' –glorified, crucified –Jesus will draw all people to himself. ... [because] *his cross is the true revelation of the true God, & what we see in that revelation is the face of love* [i.e., *the face of God*] ...The 'lifting up' of Jesus insists that the cross itself is a moment of glory... when sovereign love meets a world in agony & grasps that agony to itself." [N. T. Wright, *Following Jesus*, p. 39]
  - John uses 'glory' "to highlight 'the extraordinary nature of the love of God for the world in going to the lengths of Jesus' abject dying in the pain & shame of crucifixion." [Richard Bauckham, *Gospel of Glory*, p. 43]
  - "It is *through Jesus' death that God is most fully known, that God's glory is supremely revealed*, that the truth is most clearly testified to, & that life is abundantly given." [A. Lincoln, in R. Longenecker (ed) *Life in the Face of Death*, p. 123]
- b. What is the glory of the cross?
- "God & Jesus are *glorified* at the cross because *Jesus' death was God's supreme revelation of himself.* At the cross God reveals himself as a loving Father who gives... his own Son –to the world. He also reveals himself as a loving Son who, through suffering, gives his whole life back to the Father for the world. *God is glorified at the cross because he shows forth...his love...*To the ordinary eye, Jesus hanging on the cross appears... [as] shame & defeat. John uses the language of glory to open our eyes ...to see what most...at the crucifixion could not see: the love of the Father & Son for one another & for the human race." [Kevin Perrotta, Gerald Darring, *My Peace I Give You*, pp. 9-10]
- g. Jesus' Execution is his Exaltation
- "John's Gospel explains the exaltation & glorification of Christ in a different way [from other Gospels] ... The death of Jesus is spoken as...the 'lifting up' of the Son of Man. The Son of Man is lifted up at *his execution*, but this lifting up is also seen as *an exaltation.*" [Biju Chacko, *Intercultural Christology in John*, 89]
  - "The 4th Gospel uniquely presents *Jesus' death* as an event that *reveals both Jesus' glory & the Father's glory*, so that in Jesus' death the Father's glorification of the Son & [vice versa] are inextricably connected... John 12 ...combines imagery from 'glorified' (*doxazo*) & 'lifted up' (*hypsoo*) in the event of the cross recalling ...Isaiah's Servant, who likewise is 'lifted up' & 'glorified' (LXX 52:13). *Jesus' glorification on the cross is the moment, the 'now' of eschatological judgment for the world & its ruler.* Unlike the Synoptics, in John's Gospel the Son of Man fulfills his judgment role *in the present of the event of the cross.*" [JA. Dennis, "Glory," in J. B. Green (ed.) *Op. cit.*, p. 422]
- h. Exalted/Lifted up (Gk. *hypsoo*) – John vs. Paul (Phil. 2:9)

- Jesus was “obedient to the point of death—even to death on a cross. Therefore, *God highly exalted* [Gk. *hyper-hypsoo*] *him* & gave him the name that is above every name...” (Phil. 2:8-9)
- “For... John ...the hour of death is the hour of glorification. [But,] *for Paul...* the manner of Christ's death is the ultimate offense & folly... *Only in resurrection ...*does Christ's death on the cross become ...the power of God.” –Colin Brown
- Regarding “John's use of the verb, *hypsoo*. In Phil. 2:9 Paul uses it (with the prefix *hyper*) to express the hyper-exaltation of Jesus, but John uses it of his crucifixion. This is...clear in Jn. 12:32 ‘I, *when I'm lifted up from the earth*, will draw all people to myself.’ [12:33] makes plain how the crowd understood the words ...They clearly... [thought] they meant, ‘the Son of Man must be hanged.’ *Jesus is not only ‘lifted up’ on the cross, he's also ‘lifted up’ (exalted) to glory...* The cross involves *physical elevation* & for that reason becomes a symbol of the personal *spiritual elevation* of the Messi But it's not mere symbolism. Through the cross Jesus will return (bringing human nature with him) to the glory he had with the Father before the world was (17:5).” [Donald Macleod, *Christ Crucified*, pp. 20-21]
- “For John the cross is not merely a necessary prerequisite ...to glory & exaltation; *it [the cross] is the beginning stage of exaltation*, a ‘lifting up,’ & a revelation of glory...[that] necessarily *includes the rejection of Jesus* by ‘the Jews’... John's theology of glory ...emphasizes... that the *rejection and crucifixion of Christ are the climactic revelation of his glory,*” [Daniel J. Brendsel, *Isaiah Saw His Glory*, pp. 129]
- In “John's remarkable & distinctive way of speaking of the exaltation (‘lifting up’) & glorification of Jesus as taking place *through his humiliating death* as well as his subsequent resurrection. The point of *Jesus' deepest humiliation is, paradoxically, also his glorification*. Whereas the more common Christian thinking envisioned humiliation followed by exaltation, suffering followed by glory [i.e., sequentially], John sees *exaltation & glory in the humiliation & death* [i.e., simultaneously].” [Richard Bauckham, *Gospel of Glory*, p. 54]

## 5. No place for Theophanies or Apocalyptic End-time Prophecies in John's Gospel

### a. No theophanies — heavenly visions of God;

- “*Heavenly visions of God are not what is on offer in the 4th Gospel...*” — Christopher Rowland
- “We find *no theophanies in John's Gospel...* the Father makes no appearance as [God the] Father” — Mark Stibbe
- “Throughout the Bible, there are divine manifestations ...or theophanies ...But *none of these is found in the 4th Gospel*. In fact, the [4th] Gospel contains explicit denials that anyone has seen God.” —Marianne M. Thompson

### b. Apocalyptic expressions absent

- “*John's Gospel contains little that's apocalyptic*, while the Synoptics present Jesus in an apocalyptic light.” —Fred. Murphy • “*The 4th Gospel ...* though it has a few passages with futuristic orientation, *lays primary emphasis on realized eschatology [in the present] ...Apocalyptic expressions* (‘final hour,’ ‘Antichrist’)) [are] *absent from the 4th Gospel.*” —D. A. Carson

### c. John omits the Synoptics' end-of-the-world prophecies Vs. Frenzy of End-Time Prophetic speculation

#### a. John omits Apocalyptic End-time prophecies

- Mark's “‘Predictions of *the signs of the end*’ is *missing* [from John]. It lies *outside the Evangelist's interests.*” — C. H. Dodd
- Futurist passages “such as 5:28, 6:66 ...in the 4th Gospel ...*are shorn of the martial [warlike] drama, cataclysm, & millennial zeal that one finds in... [the] Synoptics...*” —Paul Cefalu Scholars note “*John's lack of end-of-the-world eschatology ... [including End-time] judgment &/or destruction...of the natural elements... The 4th Gospel lacks these elements.*” —Benjamin Reynolds

#### b. Vs. current frenzy of End-Time Prophetic speculation — “Israel, Hamas, WW3 & the End-Times,” “Israel, Russia, End-Times”

- “Gog of Magog” is not Russia: “The facts are that, in Ezekiel 38:2, ‘Ro'sh’ is not a reference to ‘Russia.’” — Earl W. Morey
- Even if one...transliterate[s]...ro'sh as a proper name...it can have *nothing to do with modern ‘Russia.’* — Edwin M. Yamauchi
- “Contemporary enthusiastic eschatological commentary & speculation [in the US] has become increasingly *intertwined with conservative politics and with Christian nationalism.*” —Martyn Whittock



d. Jesus' greatest prophecy regarding the future – "*I will come again*" (14:3)

- Jesus: "If I go away & prepare a place for you, *I will come again* & take you to myself, so...where I am you may be also." (14:3)
- This "is the key passage that speaks of the future of believers... [It] refers ...to the *final eschatological return of Jesus* for his The apocalyptic return of Jesus is referred to in [John's writing] only here 21:22; 1 Jn. 2:28, 3:2." –RA. Culpepper

## e. Jesus' 'Farewell Discourses' (Jn. 13-16) displace the Synoptics' Apocalyptic (Mk. 13)

- John's "Farewell Discourse...has only a minimum of apocalyptic imagery & expectation." – Eugene Boring
- "*Jesus' farewell discourses* [Jn. 13-17] ... are very important for understanding the 4th Gospel. In a sense, they *displace the apocalyptic discourse* of the Synoptic Gospels & offer a rather different outlook on the future... Jesus' followers [are] to *look not towards God's immanent intervention in history*, apocalyptically conceived; rather [they are] to *look immediately inward, to the present manifestation of the Father & the Son* in the church [community] *through the Spirit* (14:22-23) ..." [C. Clifton Black, D. Moody Smith, *Anatomy of the NT*, p. 147]

## f. Can we be a "Johannine Church"?

## 6. John's 'Gethsemane' (12:27-30)

- "Now my soul is in turmoil, & what should I say—'Father, save me from this hour'? No! It's for this very reason that I came to this hour.<sup>28</sup> Father, *glorify your name*." Then a voice came from heaven, '*I have glorified it, & I will glorify it again!*'<sup>29</sup> The crowd... said that it was thunder. Others were saying, 'An angel has spoken to him.'<sup>30</sup> Jesus replied, 'This voice is for your benefit, not for mine.'" (12:27-30 ISV)

## a. No Gethsemane Scene on John's Gospel

- In John's Gospel, the Son "exists in communion with God [the Father ... This] communion is apparent in the *absence of a Gethsemane scene in this Gospel*. There's a kind of [Gethsemane] scene earlier in John, but it takes place in the public sphere following the arrival of the Greeks ... (12:27-33). Here [John's] *Jesus does not struggle with the will of God* as does the Synoptic Jesus (Mk 14:32–42). When he experiences distress & agitation, recognizing the signs of the Passion drawing near, *Jesus is not tempted*, as in the Synoptic account, *to ask for the hour to pass him by or to have the cup removed* (Mk 14:35–36). He *raises the possibility but almost at once rejects it* (Jn 12:27b) &, later at the arrest, *confirms his readiness to drink the cup* (18:11). His response to the coming of the hour (12:23) expresses the *oneness of heart which renders such a request* [to remove the cup] *unnecessary*, a oneness that allows no breach in the affiliation of Son & Father. Instead, the prayer moves in a uniquely Johannine direction that expresses immediate acquiescence, born of unwavering love & trust, a prayer that is immediately answered: 'Father, glorify your name!' (12:28–29)." [Dorothy A. Lee, "*Jesus' Spirituality of [A]ffiliation in the 4th Gospel*," *Religions*, Vol. 13, #647 (2022) pp. 2-3]

## b. Different Occasion, but 'Gethsemane' elements

- The "passage reflects elements of Jesus' Gethsemane experience, recorded... by the Synoptics, it is sometimes referred to as the '*Johannine Gethsemane*' (Jn. 12:27-36). ...*The occasion is different* –the arrest comes later in...Jn. 18 –the story has 'a Gethsemane quality'." [Laszlo Gallusz, *7 Prayers of Jesus*, p. ]
- "The Synoptic Gethsemane accounts... are probably best understood as *closely akin to, but nevertheless distinct from, the present instance* [12:27-33]." [Stephen Voorwinde, *Jesus' Emotions in the 4th Gospel*, p. 191]
- "I hold this to be the *Johannine version of the agony in Gethsemane*. The connecting links are manifold [many]...[But,] Jesus refuses any prayer aimed at his rescue. John thus brings the prayer of Jesus into fundamental consistency with...his ministry [defined by] 'the hour'." –Karl O. Sandnes, *Early Christian Discourses on...Gethsemane*, p. 178]

## c. A Prayer Not Prayed

- There's a "hypothetical prayer & an actual prayer... First, [Jesus] considers praying, 'Father, save me from this hour.' However, he rejects this option & utters a short but determined response... 'Father, glorify your name'" [Gallusz, *Op. cit.*, p]

- “This...petition’s hypothetical preface (‘What should I say, ‘Father, save me from this hour?’”), when dismissed, as it is here in [Jn.’s] Gospel, *could sound like a... correction... of the Synoptic Gethsemane prayer.*” [Frederick Bruner, *John*, p. 976]
- “What shall I say?” John “explicitly *rejects a portrayal of Jesus who trembles at death & asks to be delivered from it* (Gethsemane of Mk. 14; Mt. 26; Lk. 22). *John ponders this scene from the other Gospels ...rejects it in advance*, makes the...prayer of Jn. 17 into his substitute for the Gethsemane prayer.” [ME. Boring, FB. Craddock, *People’s NT*, 329]

#### d. Jesus’ ‘Gethsemane Prayers’ – John vs. the Synoptics

- “In John’s Gospel the prayer [‘My Father, if...possible, let this cup pass from me...’ (Mt. 26:39)] is turned into a question [What should I say—Father, save me from this hour? (Jn. 12:27)] that is answered in the negative [–‘no’]: such a prayer is simply out of the question... By leaving out the prayer, in fact denying it... John has Jesus speak differently...In the 4th Gospel ...commitment...marks Jesus’ obedience & piety, not...dread & fear... The *agony is ...present...but it does not lead to a prayer for being relieved*; on the contrary, he prays for ‘glorification’...*Jesus’ response to this consideration is...* [Gk.] *alla*, which *here simply means ‘no’*. Jesus contemplates praying [that prayer], but ends up precluding it as an option... In *John’s Gospel*, *‘there’s no room for a Gethsemane scene where Jesus asks the Father to take away the bitter cup of painful death’* (Kasper B. Larsen).” [Karl O. Sandnes, *cit.*, pp. 183-4]
- *John’s “Jesus (unlike Mark’s Jesus) chooses not to pray for the removal of the cup, despite the distress of his soul, but asks instead that the Father’s name be glorified (12: 28a). This is the only place in the 4th Gospel where the Father speaks directly: ‘I have both glorified it & I will glorify it again’ (12:28b). These words confirm Jesus’ prayer & disclose the unity of heart & will between Father & Son that undergirds the Passion.*” [Dorothy A. Lee, *Creation, Matter...*, p. ]
- “In the Synoptic[s] ...Jesus struggles with the human preference to have the cup pass from him, while in John he struggles with the temptation to cry out ...to his Father to be saved from the hour. In both scenes he triumphs ...[But,] the triumph [in] *John 12* is precisely that *Jesus avoids what he does in the Synoptic Gospels* ... The hour-theology of John...renders impossible any prayer aiming to save Jesus from this very hour.” [Karl O. Sandnes, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 186-7]

#### e. The Father’s Response (12:28)

- “Now my soul is troubled. What should I say—Father, save me from this hour? But that is why I came to this hour. <sup>28</sup> Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “*I have glorified it, & I will glorify it again.*” (12:27-28)

##### a. The only time God the Father speaks directly in John

- “This [is] the *only instance of the Father’s voice* sounding in John’s Gospel.” [David F. Ford, *John*, 244]
- “God never appears in the 4th Gospel, & the only words he speaks are ‘I have glorified it, & I will glorify it again’ (12:28).” [A. Kostenberger, S. Swain, *Father, Son, & Spirit*, p. 47]
- “In *the only instance in John where God is portrayed as speaking directly*, the crowds who hear God’s voice think that they have heard thunderings of an angel (12:28-30).” [Marianne M. Thompson, *God of the Gospel of John*, 104]

##### b. The Father’s Response — “*I have glorified it, & I will glorify it again.*”

- “What’s truly exceptional in 12:27-33...as a Gethsemane scene, is the fact that Jesus’ prayer actually receives a heavenly response... Jesus’ prayer for glorification is emphatically affirmed: ‘Father, glorify your name.’” – Karl O. Sandnes

##### c. The Crowd’s Misunderstanding (12:29)

- “The crowd standing there heard it & said it was thunder. Others said, ‘An angel has spoken to him.’” (12:29)
- The Father responds to Jesus’ prayer: “The problem, here as elsewhere, is that few have ears to hear. The people think the voice is thunder, or maybe an angel. They do not recognize that it is the unmediated voice of God & they do not know that it is for their benefit. The Father is bearing witness to the Son (usually...it’s the other way around), & that witness is mostly missed.” [Mary H. Shore, “*Commentary on Jn. 12:20-33*,” *Working Preacher* (March 18, 2018) p. ] “**Isaiah... saw his glory & spoke about him.**” (12:41) **Who is ‘his, him’? What’s ‘his glory’?**
- “Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory & spoke about him.” (12:41 CSB) **Who is ‘his, him’?**
- “John... claims that *‘Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus’ glory & spoke about him’* (12:41).” – K. Beale, B. L. Gladd
- ““These things’...in Jn. 12:41a refers to both Isaiah quotations in 12:38-40 [i.e., Is. 53:1 & 6:10] ...Both the quotation[s] of Isaiah are read by John as *Isaiah’s direct testimony to the future earthly ministry of Jesus...*

John believes the *glory seen by Isaiah (Jn. 12:41b)* is *especially the glory of the rejected & crucified Servant who is 'high & lifted up' (Is. 52:13)*....*This peculiar glory, a glory involving rejection & suffering, seems to be John's... special emphasis...* For John, Isaiah 'saw' one possessing true 'glory'. Isaiah saw a Servant whose *humiliation is his glory.*" –Daniel Brendsel

- "In the context of Isaiah 6, the 'glory' that Isaiah witnessed was the glory of YHWH (Is. 6:1, 3), *but here 'his glory' is almost certainly a reference to Christ*, even though he has not been mentioned by name since 12:36." –Edward Klink **What is 'his glory' that Isaiah saw?**
- "It's...overwhelmingly likely...*John is hinting...the 'glory' Isaiah saw was a vision of the crucified Jesus.*" – Richard Hays
- "At the close of the Book of Signs, John appeals to Isaiah's prophetic vision of Christ's glory as [the Jewish] people fail to recognize his divine glory & reject him (12:37-41). Yet for those with eyes to see, *Christ's rejection & suspension on the cross actually constitute his messianic glory*; his shameful death is the 'hour' of his glory, when he finishes his mission & draws all people to himself. Thus, John's argument in 12:41, the... context, & his distinctive use of... 'glory' & 'lifted up' suggest that *'his glory' includes the Son's incarnate glory as the suffering & exalted servant* [of Isaiah]." –Brian J. Tabb

## QUESTIONS:

1. A few days before his crucifixion, Jesus declared "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified" (12:23) Why is this statement a 'paradox' – an apparent contradiction? Discuss.
2. 2 Peter's transfiguration account says: Jesus "received honor & *glory* from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I'm well-pleased!'" (2 Pet. 1:17-18). Is the concept of 'glory' here the same as that of John? What (if any) are the differences? Discuss.
3. Consider this saying: "*Through Jesus' death on the cross, God's glory is supremely revealed.*" Do you agree/disagree?
4. In several places Jesus talks about the "Son of Man" being "lifted up" (3:14; 8:28; 12:32) Does Jesus mean:
  - a. Lifted up on (onto) the cross?
  - b. Lifted up (exalted) to the heavens?
  - c. both a. & b.? Discuss.
  - d. Is the phrase "lifted up" (as used by John) a paradox (puzzle)? In what sense? Discuss.
5. Apostle Paul uses the (Greek) verb '*exalt (lift up)*' to describe Jesus' exaltation (resurrection, ascension) following his death (Phil. 2:9 'highly *exalted*'). How does John's use of this term 'exalt/lifted up' differ from Paul's use?
6. John's Gospel differs from the other 3 Gospels in that it omits Jesus' transfiguration & lacks the Synoptics' end-time signs/prophecies (e.g., Mk. 13). What factors might explain John's omissions? What implications might we draw?
7. The question was posed: "Can we be a 'Johannine Church'?"
  - a. What would a "Johannine Church" look like?
  - b. What would be *emphasized* by a "Johannine Church"?
  - c. What would be *de-emphasized*?