



THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

LESSON 12

John Chapter 12



Brief Recap

John opened his Gospel not at Bethlehem, but **before creation**: Jesus Christ is the eternal Logos, the Creator who became flesh and dwelt among us. From there, John steadily builds his case through carefully selected signs and “I AM” declarations, showing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing in Him brings eternal life. John’s seven-sign structure has now reached its dramatic climax: in Chapter 11, Jesus stood before the tomb of Lazarus and declared, **“I am the resurrection, and the life,”** then proved it by calling a man four days dead back to life (John 1:1–3, 14; 2:11; 6:35; 8:12; 10:9, 11; 11:25–26, 43–44; 20:30–31).



But notice the extraordinary irony: **the greatest public sign produces the final determination to kill Him.** After Lazarus is raised, the Sanhedrin concludes that Jesus must die; Caiaphas unknowingly prophesies the substitutionary significance of His death, and Jesus withdraws until the appointed hour. The evidence has reached its peak—and so has the unbelief.

John Chapter 12

The first eleven chapters have largely presented Christ to the nation through His words and signs; beginning here, in chapter 12, the narrative rapidly narrows toward **Jerusalem, Passover, the Cross, and the “hour” for which He came.** We see three great movements: **Jesus anointed at Bethany, the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, and the Son of Man who “must be lifted up.”**

 **John 12:1]** *“Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.”*

John gives us an unusually precise chronological marker: **“six days before the passover.”** Passover fell on the **14th of Nisan**, placing Jesus’ arrival at Bethany on the **8th of Nisan**. If you want to fully grasp Scripture, you could study the basics of the Jewish calendar, as God has embedded remarkable prophetic appointments within it. John has moved us into the **final week** of Jesus’ earthly ministry:

- ✓ **8th of Nisan:** Jesus arrives at Bethany.
- ✓ **10th of Nisan:** The Triumphal Entry.
- ✓ **14th of Nisan:** Passover.



That makes the **10th of Nisan** especially significant. Exodus instructed Israel to select the Passover lamb on the tenth day and keep it until the fourteenth; during that interval, the lamb destined for sacrifice was identified and examined (Ex. 12:3–6).



Remez — The Lamb Approaches Jerusalem: Here is a remarkable prophetic picture that we should see. **While Passover lambs are being presented for inspection, God's Passover Lamb is about to present Himself publicly to Israel.** The timing is not incidental—it is part of the architecture of the event (Ex. 12:3–6; John 1:29, 36; 1 Cor. 5:7). John the Baptist had already identified Jesus twice: ***“Behold the Lamb of God.”*** Now, as Passover approaches, the Lamb Himself approaches Jerusalem (John 1:29, 36).



John 12:2] *“There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.”*

John gives us a wonderfully ordinary scene following an utterly extraordinary miracle. Jesus shares a meal with intimate friends in Bethany. The gathering with the supper took place at **Simon the leper's house**, recorded by Matthew and Mark (Matt. 26:6; Mark 14:3).



John 12:3] *“Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.”*

Mary now does something extravagant, deeply personal, and culturally startling. While others are eating and serving, **Mary is again found at the feet of Jesus**, pouring out something of enormous value upon Him.

The Greek tells us that this was about twelve ounces of an intensely fragrant substance associated particularly with India and also Syria, and it was very expensive for the time, worth roughly a year's wages for an ordinary laborer. There is a beautiful picture in this household:



- **Martha serves** — representing the believer's work for Christ.
- **Mary worships** — representing the believer's devotion to Christ.
- **Lazarus fellowships** — representing the believer's life with Christ.

This is where the scene becomes culturally startling. A Jewish woman appearing publicly **with her hair unbound was considered disgraceful**. Yet Mary deliberately disregards the social convention because her attention is completely fixed upon Christ.



John 12:4-6] *“Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.”*

Notice something subtle here—John expects his readers already to know the Gospel story by identifying Judas this way. He writes retrospectively and openly identifies the betrayer before the betrayal occurs in his narrative. Mary's extravagant worship immediately exposes the heart of Judas. **She sees something worth giving; Judas sees something worth selling.**

Judas' objection initially sounds reasonable—even compassionate. Mary has just poured an enormous amount of wealth upon Jesus. Matthew and Mark show that Judas' criticism influenced others at the supper (Matt. 26:8–9; Mark 14:4–5).

However, John does not leave Judas' motivation open to interpretation: “...**not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief...**” John's candor makes it plain that Judas was stealing.

Also, as the group's treasurer, Judas saw that Mary's gift of three hundred denarii was money that, from his perspective, could have entered the common treasury he controlled. His objection stemmed from covetousness disguised as moral concern.

 **John 12:7-8]** *“Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.”*

Jesus immediately comes to Mary's defense. What Judas condemns as waste, Jesus identifies as preparation for **His burial**. **Mary appears to understand that Jesus is approaching His death when the disciples still do not.**

Jesus had repeatedly told His disciples that He would be killed and rise again, yet they didn't grasp it until after the Resurrection, when they began to put together what He had previously told them (Matt. 16:21; 17:22–23; 20:17–19; Luke 18:31–34).

Jesus is not dismissing care for the poor. Deuteronomy relates: “**For the poor shall never cease out of the land...**” (Deut. 15:11). Jesus distinguishes between an **ongoing responsibility** and an **unrepeatable moment**.

 **John 12:9]** *“Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.”*

News that Jesus is back in Bethany spreads quickly, and the crowds come for **two reasons**: to see Jesus and to see Lazarus. John deliberately keeps Lazarus before us because the man who walked out of the tomb has become **living, public evidence** of Jesus' authority over death. That creates an enormous problem for the religious establishment.

Insight — Lazarus: A Problem for the Sadducees

The religious elites in Israel at this time were the Pharisees (conservatives) and the Sadducees (liberals). By this stage, the Sanhedrin (chief priests) were substantially associated with the **Sadducean establishment**. The Sadducees denied the resurrection and other supernatural doctrines (Acts 4:1–2; 5:17; 23:8). Although the Pharisees hated Jesus equally, the fact that Lazarus is walking around the outskirts of Jerusalem is an embarrassing contradiction of the Sadducean theological system. Their doctrine says the dead do not rise.

 **John 12:10-12]** *“But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus. On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,”*

Notice what the chief priests **do not** do. They do not attempt to prove that Lazarus was never dead, nor do they deny that Jesus raised him. Their solution is simply: **Kill Lazarus**.

You see, **Lazarus Had Become Dangerous** and John gives the reason: “**Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus**. Lazarus has become walking evidence and “**punctures their whole system.**”





Insight — The Extraordinary Power of Rationalization

Looking at this from a distance, we naturally think, *Surely the raising of Lazarus should have convinced them!* Instead, confronted with a resurrected man, they decide the appropriate response is to **kill him again**. A **rule of thumb: never underestimate the human ability to rationalize**.



People often believe what they have already decided they must believe, and inconvenient evidence can provoke hostility rather than repentance (John 5:39–40; 11:47–53; 12:10–11).

The Sanhedrin's plan is almost darkly absurd. Jesus has just demonstrated that He can **raise Lazarus from the dead**, and their solution is to kill Lazarus. Even if they succeed, what exactly have they proven? John's irony is devastating: **they try to defeat the power of resurrection through death**.

In verse 12, John changes scenes: **“On the next day...”** This is an important chronological marker. John moves us forward toward the event Christians call the **Triumphal Entry**. And **“...much people that were come to the feast...”** Ancient census documents record **256,500 Passover lambs, using the Torah pattern of roughly 10 people per lamb, which would estimate a potential crowd of nearly 2.6 million people**. The point: **Jerusalem is packed**, Passover expectations are high, and word is spreading that the One who raised Lazarus is coming.

~ The Triumphal Entry ~



John 12:13-15] *“Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.”*

Jesus now does something He had consistently refused to permit earlier: **He deliberately presents Himself publicly as Israel's King**. This fulfills **Zechariah 9:9**, turning the Triumphal Entry into an unmistakable prophetic declaration.



Zechariah 9:9] *“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.”*

The word **King** is crucial to understanding what is happening. Jesus is not merely entering Jerusalem as a popular rabbi; He is deliberately presenting Himself in the precise manner Scripture had prescribed for Israel's Messiah-King.

Remember, earlier in John's Gospel, after feeding the five thousand, the crowd intended to **“take him by force, to make him a king.”** Jesus withdrew from them as His appointed hour had not yet arrived. But now everything changes. Jesus deliberately obtains the donkey, mounts it, and rides into Jerusalem while the multitude publicly identifies Him as **“the King of Israel.”** This time He does not withdraw or silence the declaration. **The hour has arrived.**

Why a Donkey? To modern eyes, a donkey can appear almost comically humble for a royal procession. But that is precisely the prophetic picture and describes the setting.



Zechariah describes Israel's King as ***“just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass.”*** Jesus comes the first time not as a conquering warrior but as the humble King bringing salvation. The donkey therefore identifies both **His kingship and the character of His first coming.**

At His first coming, Christ enters Jerusalem **lowly**, riding the animal specified by Zechariah. At His Second Coming, John sees heaven opened and Christ returning as the conquering King upon a **white horse**, followed by the armies of heaven. The contrast is dramatic:

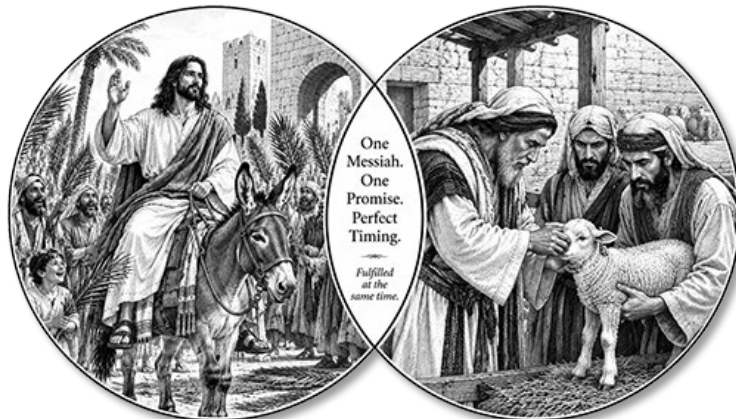
- **First Coming:** humble King bringing salvation (Zech. 9).
- **Second Coming:** conquering King executing judgment (Rev. 19:11–16).

The One riding the donkey and the One riding the white horse are **the same King**. What changes is the mission.

This also connects directly with the Passover chronology we have been tracking. On this day, the **10th of Nisan**, Israel, according to rules set in Exodus, selects its Passover lamb to sacrifice on the 14th of Nisan. At the same time, **Jesus presented Himself for inspection on the 10th of Nisan.** These two prophetic pictures converge in one event:

Zechariah: *Behold thy King.*

Exodus: *Behold the Lamb.*



The Triumphal Entry

Zechariah 9:9
John 12:12-15

The Passover Lamb

Exodus 12:3-6
1 Corinthians 5:7

This is not simply *a* day of prophetic fulfillment—it is **the appointed day**. The Triumphal Entry is directly connected to Gabriel's prophecy to Daniel about the sixty-nine weeks, identifying the very day Jesus would publicly appear as Messiah the Prince (we will touch on it very briefly).

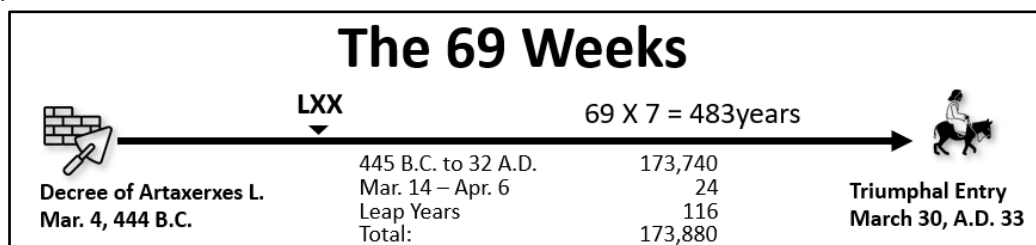


Daniel 9:25] *“Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.”*

Notice what Gabriel says. He does **not** say that the countdown ends with the

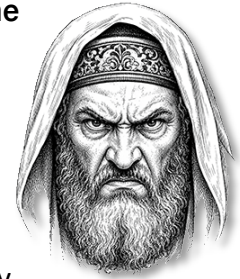
Messiah's birth, baptism, first miracle, or crucifixion. It terminates: ***“...unto the Messiah the Prince...”*** And that explains why John 12 matters so much. On this day Jesus deliberately permits the multitude to proclaim Him **King**.

The crowds sing a Psalm of praise (Psalm 118:24-26) and effectively proclaim: **This is the day. Save now! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!** And Jesus is riding directly into that joyous proclamation.



However, the Pharisees understood the implication as well, and **when the Pharisees get upset, always pay attention**. Luke records the interchange:

 **Luke 19:39-40]** *"And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."*



The Pharisees understand what the crowd is declaring. Psalm 118, the donkey, Zechariah 9:9, and the proclamation of the King combine into an unmistakable **Messianic declaration**. And Jesus refuses to stop it. Even more astonishingly: **If the people become silent, creation itself will provide the testimony**. This day **must** be proclaimed.

For a moment, everything is wonderful. The crowds cheer Jesus, palm branches wave, and Israel's King approaches the city. Then the mood changes dramatically as Jesus crests the Mount of Olives and Jerusalem, filled with millions of people, spreads out before Him. Luke tells us:

 **Luke 19:41-42]** *"And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in **this thy day**, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."*

 **Luke 19:43-44]** *"For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; **because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.**"*

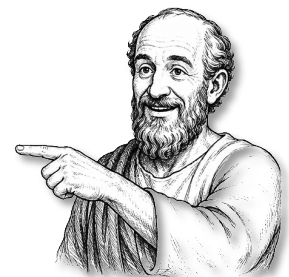
Jesus **held Israel accountable for NOT recognizing the prophetic timetable**. Gabriel had provided the countdown; Zechariah had provided the transportation; Psalm 118 had provided the proclamation—and Messiah was standing before them, yet the country and its leadership **collectively** did not recognize Him (Dan. 9:25; Zech. 9:9; Ps. 118:24-26; Luke 19:41-44).

This helps explain why Jesus weeps while the people around him celebrate. **They see a parade. Jesus, in the big picture, sees the coming judgment**. The judgment comes in two forms, as Jesus elaborated on above:

1. Israel falls into blindness and can no longer recognize their Messiah (Luke 19:42).
2. 38 years after Jesus spoke these words (the exact time Israel wandered in the wilderness), in 70 A.D., Titus Vespasian, commanding the 5th, 10th, 12th, and 15th Roman legions, laid siege to Jerusalem for nine months and slaughtered a million inhabitants, with another 500,000 from famine and sickness that followed (Luke 19:43-44).

Is Israel's blindness permanent? **No**. But for how long? Until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in (the completion of the church age), as told to us by the Apostle Paul:

 **Rom. 11:25]** *For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.*



Remez — Three Prophetic Streams Converge: Notice how beautifully the Integrated Message comes together on one day:



PATTERN

- **Exodus 12:** The Passover Lamb is presented.
- **Zechariah 9:** Israel's King arrives riding a donkey.
- **Daniel 9:** Messiah the Prince arrives at the appointed time.

And Psalm 118 supplies the soundtrack: **"This is the day..."**

Different writers, different centuries, different prophetic perspectives—**one appointed event**. Ex. 12:3–6; Ps. 118:24–26; Dan. 9:25; Zech. 9:9; John 12:12–15.



John 12:16] *"These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him."*

John now offers an important eyewitness account: the disciples participated in the Triumphal Entry without fully understanding its **prophetic significance**. Only after Jesus was glorified did the pieces come together—Zechariah's prophecy, the donkey, the public presentation of the King, and their own participation in the event. John is showing us how the Resurrection and glorification of Christ illuminated Scriptures they had previously witnessed being fulfilled before their eyes.



John 12:17-19] *"The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record. For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him."*

John now explains that the Triumphal Entry garnered attention because **the raising of Lazarus is still reverberating through Jerusalem**. Eyewitnesses are openly testifying, others have come because they heard their testimony, and the Pharisees watch their attempts to contain Jesus collapse. Lazarus was an event they simply **could not deny**.

Because of this their frustration is almost palpable. Arrest attempts have failed, arguments have failed, intimidation has failed, and the plot to suppress the Lazarus evidence has not stopped the crowds. Then comes their exasperated conclusion: **"...behold, the world is gone after him."** This is a wonderful irony as we shall see in the next verses.



John 12:20-21] *"And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus."*



John 12:22-23] *"Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified."*

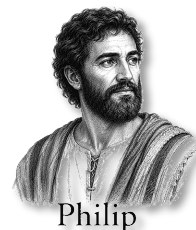
So, the Pharisees have just complained, **"the world is gone after him,"** and John immediately introduces Gentiles seeking Jesus. These Gentiles came to Jerusalem **"to worship at the feast."** They were evidently God-fearing Gentiles attracted to Israel's God and worship, though John does not identify them as Jewish proselytes. End result: **The Gentiles are now seeking Israel's Messiah.**





This should remind every person preaching or teaching: **people have not come to see you—they have come to see Jesus.** We too often in our culture see people become fascinated with personalities, cleverness, controversy, or novelty and still miss its central purpose. **If people leave impressed with the teacher but having seen little of Christ, something has gone wrong.**

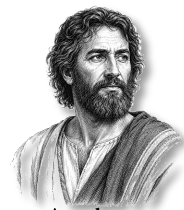
Phillip and Andrew: John specifically reminds us that Philip was “*of Bethsaida of Galilee.*” Interestingly, *Philip* is a Greek name, which may explain why these Greek visitors felt comfortable approaching him. Philip then goes to Andrew—another disciple bearing a Greek name. Perhaps Philip is uncertain how to handle the request. Jesus' earthly ministry has been directed particularly toward Israel, and these are Gentiles (Matt. 10:5–6; 15:24).



Philip

Andrew, on the other hand, is often seen bringing someone to Jesus.

- Andrew brings **Peter** to Jesus. John 1:40–42.
- Andrew brings the **boy with the loaves and fishes** forward. John 6:8–9.
- Andrew now helps bring **the Greeks** to Jesus. John 12:20–22.



Andrew

Andrew never becomes the dominant apostolic personality that Peter becomes. Yet Andrew repeatedly does something enormously important: **He brings people to Christ.** He is a genuine soul-winner.

Notice that John never actually tells us whether Jesus met privately with these Greeks. Instead, their arrival becomes the occasion for Jesus to announce something much larger. **The hour has arrived.**

Jesus announced several times throughout John that His hour was “*not yet come*” (John 2:4; 7:30; 8:20). The hour is the approaching complex of events surrounding **His death, Resurrection, and glorification.** And this explains why the arrival of the Greeks is so significant. **The Cross Comes Before the Gentile Harvest.**



John 12:24-25] *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.”*



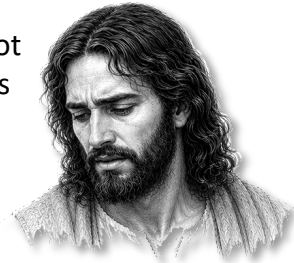
John 12:26-28] *“If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour. Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.”*

Jesus now explains how the Gentiles standing nearby—and ultimately multitudes from every nation—will gain access to Him. **The Cross must precede the harvest.** The agricultural picture is simple. A grain kept safely in someone's hand remains one grain; planted in the earth, it disappears beneath the soil and produces an abundance of new life. Jesus now takes the principle governing His own mission and applies it to discipleship.



“He that loveth his life shall lose it...” is not a statement on the hatred of physical existence. He is contrasting a life **clutched for oneself** with a life surrendered to Him. The believer who makes preserving his present worldly life the supreme objective ultimately loses what he is trying to preserve. But the person willing to relinquish everything for Christ discovers **life eternal** (Matt. 10:39; 16:24–25; Mark 8:34–35; Luke 9:23–24; 17:33).

Jesus’ tone suddenly changes: **“Now is my soul troubled...”** Jesus does not approach Calvary emotionally detached. He knows exactly what awaits Him—the physical suffering, the rejection, and above all the bearing of sin as the substitutionary sacrifice (Isa. 53:4–6, 10–12; Matt. 26:36–39; 2 Cor. 5:21). Jesus then frames the question: **“...and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour...”** Then immediately answers it: **“...but for this cause came I unto this hour.”**



The purpose of Christ’s Incarnation is concentrated into one sentence. **He came for this hour.**

Jesus’ answer to His troubled soul is **“Father, glorify thy name.”** The Son willingly proceeds toward the Cross so that the Father’s character—His holiness, righteousness, justice, mercy, and love—will be displayed.

Then something extraordinary happens: Jesus speaks to the Father, and an audible voice answers from Heaven, **“I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.”** That does not happen often. In Scripture, at each major transition, we see **the Father audibly authenticate the Son.**



John 12:29-30] *“The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.”*



John 12:31-33] *“Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die.”*

The crowd unquestionably experiences something supernatural yet interprets it differently. Some hear only **thunder**; others recognize a voice and conclude, **“An angel spake to him.”** That distinction fits a recurring biblical pattern: people can encounter the same divine activity yet possess radically different levels of spiritual perception. Interestingly, in the Old Testament God’s voice is repeatedly associated with thunder (Ex. 19:16–19; 1 Sam. 7:10; 12:17–18; Ps. 29:3–9).

Jesus explains that the heavenly testimony was given for **their benefit**, then immediately announces the Cross’s cosmic significance: judgment has arrived, **“the prince of this world”** will be cast out, and the crucified Christ will draw men to Himself. The Cross is simultaneously sacrifice, judgment, victory, and the means by which salvation reaches outward to the world.

The **“prince of this world”** is **Satan**. Jesus uses this title again in the Upper Room, and Paul similarly describes Satan as **“the god of this world”** and **“the prince of the power of the air”** (John 14:30; 16:11; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2).

Remembering Satan’s temptation of Christ, Satan showed Jesus the kingdoms of the world and offered them to Him in exchange for worship. Luke 4:5–8. **Jesus never disputes Satan’s present authority over those kingdoms.**



Adam's fall brought humanity and the created order under Satan's dominion; Scripture therefore describes Satan as exercising genuine, though strictly bounded, authority within the present world system (Gen. 3:1–19; Luke 4:5–8; John 12:31; 14:30; 2 Cor. 4:4). **But the Cross marks the decisive judgment of that ruler.**

The final execution of Satan's sentence still lies ahead: he will be expelled from the heavenly realm, confined during the Millennium, and ultimately cast into the lake of fire. Rev. 12:7–12; 20:1–3, 10. **Calvary wins the victory; Revelation completes the sentence.**

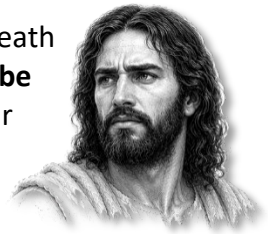
Jesus now explains how this victory will occur: ***“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”*** John has already prepared us for this expression in Chapter 3. Jesus told Nicodemus: ***“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up”*** (John 3:14). Again, this reference reaches back to Numbers 21 and the Brazen Serpent, while pointing forward to Christ being lifted up in crucifixion.

 **John 12:34]** *“The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?”*

 **John 12:35]** *“Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.”*

 **John 12:36]** *“While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.”*

The crowd immediately sees a problem between Jesus' prediction of His death and their expectation of an everlasting Messiah: **How can the Messiah be “lifted up” if He abides forever?** Their Scriptures were correct; their understanding was incomplete because they had not reconciled the suffering Messiah with the reigning Messiah. Jesus does not satisfy their curiosity with a theological debate—He gives them an urgent warning: **the Light is still among them, but not for much longer. Rejected Light Produces Darkness.**



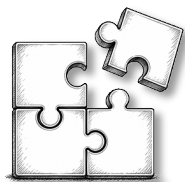
The progression is frightening:

- They would not believe.
- They could not believe.
- They should not believe.



At first, unbelief is an act of the will. But persistent rejection of revealed truth hardens the heart until the person becomes increasingly incapable of responding to the very truth previously rejected (Matt. 13:14–15; John 12:37–40; Acts 28:25–27; 2 Thess. 2:10–12).

That is why Jesus says: ***“While ye have light, believe in the light.”*** There is urgency in those words. ***“That Ye May Be the Children of Light.”***



The Puzzle of the Two Messiahs: Rabbinic (Jewish) thought wrestled with an Old Testament puzzle. Some passages portray a **suffering Messiah** (Servant), while others portray a **victorious, reigning Messiah** (Conqueror). They resolved the confusion through concepts such as the appearance of two Messiahs: **Messiah ben Joseph** and **Messiah ben David**.

However, the New Testament gives the solution to their puzzle: **Not two Messiahs—two missions of the same Messiah.** At His First Coming, He comes as the suffering Servant and Lamb of God. At His Second Coming, He appears openly as the conquering King (Isa. 53:3–12; Zech. 9:9; 12:10; John 1:29; Rev. 5:5–6; 19:11–16).

 **John 12:37-38]** *“But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?”*

John now pauses the narrative to explain one of the great tragedies of Christ's public ministry: **Israel had been given overwhelming evidence, yet the nation still rejected its Messiah.** The problem was not a shortage of signs; they had witnessed them repeatedly, culminating in Lazarus walking out of his tomb. John then reaches back seven centuries to Isaiah 53 and shows that even this rejection had been prophetically anticipated.

 **John 12:39-41]** *“Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.”*

John now takes us one step deeper into Israel's rejection of Messiah. Verse 37 said that despite overwhelming evidence, **“they believed not”**; now John says, **“they could not believe,”** showing the terrifying progression from willful unbelief into judicial blindness.

First they would not believe. → Then they could not believe.

In verse 40, John now quotes Isaiah: **“He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.”**

The source is Isaiah's extraordinary throne-room encounter in Isaiah 6 (Isa. 6:1–10). Isaiah has just volunteered: **“Here am I; send me”** (Isa. 6:8).

Then God gives him the sobering commission that his prophetic ministry will encounter a people who hear but do not understand and see but do not perceive (Isa. 6:9–10). John now says that pattern reaches its climactic expression in Israel's rejection of Jesus.



The Pharaoh Pattern: There is a powerful biblical precedent in Pharaoh. During the Exodus confrontation, Pharaoh repeatedly hardens his own heart before Scripture emphasizes that **God hardened Pharaoh's heart** (Ex. 7:13–14, 22; 8:15, 19, 32; 9:7, 12; 10:1, 20, 27). The pattern is the same:

Truth presented → truth rejected → heart hardened → judgment confirmed.

God's judicial hardening does not transform innocent belief into unbelief. **It confirms persistent rebellion in the direction already chosen** (Rom. 1:18–28; 2 Thess. 2:10–12).

Isaiah 6:9–10 becomes one of the most frequently invoked explanations for persistent unbelief. Jesus, John, and Paul use it (Matt. 13:13–15; Acts 28:23–28).





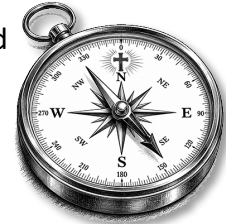
Something To Watch: John 12 describes a frightening spiritual trajectory that is especially visible today: **truth rejected repeatedly can eventually become truth a culture is no longer capable of recognizing.** Scripture anticipates an end-time environment in which people reject the love of the truth and consequently become vulnerable to powerful deception; technological sophistication does not protect a civilization from spiritual blindness. The answer is therefore not merely access to more information—it is receiving and obeying the Light God has already given (John 12:35–40; Rom. 1:21–28; 2 Thess. 2:9–12).



John 12:42-43] *“Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”*

After describing the nation's judicial blindness, John makes an important distinction: not everyone among the rulers rejected Christ internally. Many actually believed on Him, but fear of the Pharisees kept them from openly confessing Him because exclusion from the synagogue carried enormous social and religious consequences. John then exposes the heart of their compromise: they valued men's approval more than God's.

Majority Opinion Is a Dangerous Compass: These rulers occupied one of the most educated religious environments in Israel. They possessed Scripture, institutional authority, social prestige, and theological credentials—and yet those very structures created pressure against publicly acknowledging the truth standing before them. That is worth remembering.



Institutional consensus and biblical truth are not synonymous.



John 12:44-47] *“Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.”*



John 12:48-50] *“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.”*

John closes Jesus' public ministry with a powerful summary of everything Christ has been declaring throughout the Gospel.

We see that **“Jesus cried and said...”** This is not casual conversation. The Greek verb conveys a public, emphatic proclamation. He is not separating Himself from the Father. He is saying precisely the opposite: **faith in the Son reaches directly to the Father who sent Him.**

No biblical route to the Father bypasses the Son. Jesus takes the claim even further: **“And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me.”**



The invisible God is made known through the Son, who uniquely reveals Him. Paul later describes Christ as: ***"...the image of the invisible God..."*** (Col. 1:15).

Jesus returns to one of John's great themes: ***"I am come a light into the world..."*** and His mission is ***"...that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness."***

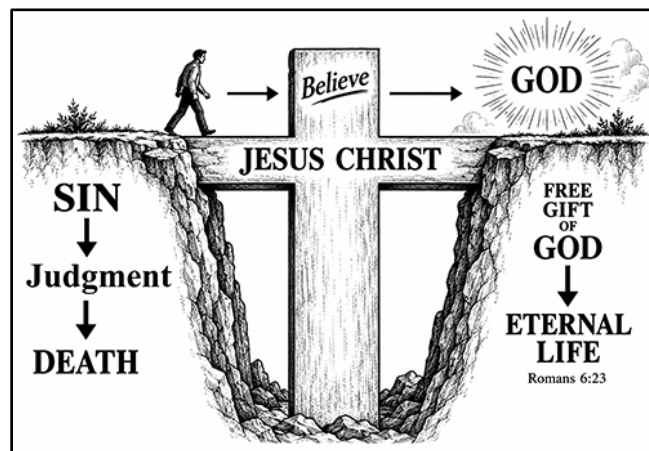
Everything between those statements—the signs, discourses, confrontations, and testimonies—has demonstrated **who the Light is**. John tells us to **believe in the Light so that you do not remain in darkness**. All those who do not believe stumble around in the darkness, at best.

For those who believe, Jesus says, ***"I judge him not..."*** because the Father ***"hath committed all judgment unto the Son."*** The reason for His **First Coming**: ***"...for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world."*** The First Coming centers upon redemption. **The Second Coming brings judgment and establishes His Kingdom** (Matt. 25:31–46; Acts 17:31; Rev. 19:11–16).

That distinction is fundamental.

The King has every right to judge the world that rejected Him, yet His First Coming is an **extraordinary demonstration of grace**. He comes first offering salvation, even though humanity's rejection of Him is already exposing the grounds of its judgment.

The Cross therefore stands between the sinner and the judgment he deserves. Christ came first as Savior. He will return as Judge and King.



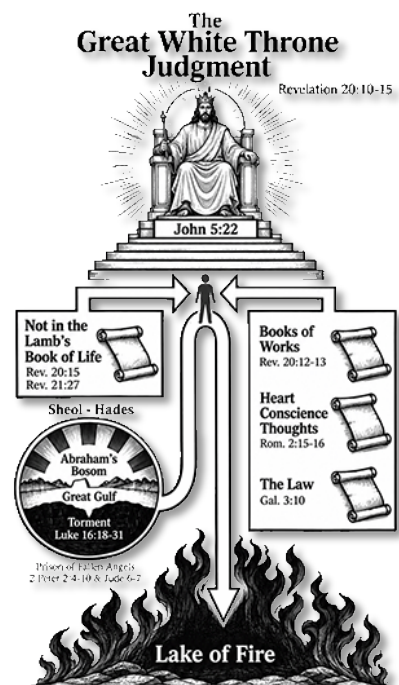
Jesus promised concerning believers: ***"...I will raise him up at the last day"*** (John 6:40). But here in v. 48, the same phrase appears in connection with judgment: ***"...the same shall judge him in the last day"*** (John 12:48).

John's Gospel therefore presents resurrection as certain for both believer and unbeliever, though their destinies differ entirely:

- ✓ For the believer, Christ promises resurrection **unto life**.
- ✓ For the unbeliever, there remains resurrection **unto damnation**.

Finally, Jesus explains why His words carry such authority: the perfect unity between His words and the Father's will. Therefore, rejecting Christ's words means rejecting **the Father's testimony**. After all the signs, confrontations, prophetic fulfillments, debates, rejection, and warnings of judgment, the Father's purpose remains: **Life everlasting through the Son**.

Next Lesson: Read John Chapter 13. We will start the "Upper Room Discourse" (chapters 13 through 17).



Gospel of John Section 2

John 12	Supper at Bethany
John 13	Washing and Betrayal
John 14	New Promise: The Rapture
John 15-16	En route to Gethsemane
John 17	Prayer of Intercession
John 18	Gethsemane: Arrest and Trials
John 19	Crucifixion
John 20	Resurrection
John 21	Epilogue in Galilee

JOHN CHAPTER TWELVE

M A R N N E V I G D A L M M L A	ALWAYS	MARTHA
E N V A R W O B E S E L A A N M	BEFORE	MARY
L A I O I N A P S I U R W O R F	BETHANY	ODOUR
D E F E R S I L O L T S E A I Y	BETRAY	PENCE
R E A H R W E T K H P R E L Y O	BURYING	POUND
B U E R M E A D A R E O L J J S	CHIEF	PRIESTS
S H O T S E H B D H E E U U S E	COLT	RAISED
S U E D L I S T T S D A D N C E	COSTLY	REASON
M A P N O U E B B H T A S N D E	FILLED	SIMON
B D E P R S U A D E S S E O E L	GIVEN	SUPPER
B B N A E R T E N E T P E M N Y	HOSANNA	TABLE
A E Z O Y R R A F N N H E I L H	HUNDRED	THEREIN
T A T I M D E E B B A D A T R T	ISRAEL	THEREON
L E N R N I I S S L E S S N L P	JESUS	THIEF
L G B U A H S D R O E O O O Y L	JUDAS	WALK
E H H T T Y F E I H C F C H O E	LAZARUS	WIPED