

The Hour and the Glory (John 12:19–36)

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Introduction

1. The purpose of Jesus' coming into the world was to manifest the glory of God (John 1:18). The passage before us is the official development of that purpose.

With irony, John reports the frustration of the Pharisees: "*You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him*" (v. 19). In the very next verse, we read of some *Greeks*' seeking Jesus. These were Gentile "God-fearers" representing the building of the universal kingdom. Their coming shows the intention of God to reach the ends of the earth with the gospel (Revelation 7:9, 10).

2. John charts the path of the Savior, the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world. The theme of this passage is twofold: "the hour" and "the glory of God." The latter strikes a note of glamorous exaltation; however, this is not the reality presented here. Even though it was predetermined, the cross proved extremely daunting to Jesus (12:27).

So, how did Jesus face and obey this daunting task (going to the cross) that proved so horrific to His every sense? He did so by demonstrating the mindset of genuine faith that leads to *endurance* (Luke 22:41, 42). As we know, it was not the Father's will to save Him from the hour (Luke 22:43–45; Matthew 26:45, 46).

This leads us to ask, what is the connection that His obedience has with the difficult demands Jesus places on those who would follow Him?

I. The Hour

1. The *hour* is signaled when Gentile worshipers approached, seeking Jesus. His response was that "*the hour*" for the Son of Man to be glorified had come (v. 23). This hour was established in eternity past and anticipated from the foundation of the world.
2. Jesus interpreted this *hour* by stating the principle behind it. To love one's life is a fundamental denial of the sovereignty and authority of God. To love one's life is brazenly to elevate self to the place of determination, a clear form of idolatry. To love one's life is the heart of sin. Thus, Jesus sets forth the principle that He and those who follow Him must observe. A grain of wheat gives up its life so that a harvest may result.

II. The Glory of God

1. Jesus' main purpose was to glorify God, and the way He would glorify God was by His death on the cross. In His prayer (vv. 27, 28), Jesus resolved to do the hard thing. The humanness of Jesus is brought to focus in the dread that gripped His soul as He realized the "hour" had come.
2. John traces the fulfillment of this purpose (John 7:39; 8:54, 55; 1:4; 12:16; 13:31, 32; 15:8; 16:14; 17:1–5).
3. The response of God came as a voice from heaven: "*I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again*" (v. 28). Jesus explained, "*This voice has come for your sake [the crowd], not mine*" (v. 30). The crowd's response to the voice from heaven was twofold: Some viewed it as a natural phenomenon: "*It thundered.*" Others took it as supernatural: "*An angel spoke to Him.*" Jesus explained that the

judgment of the world had come. The sign of this judgment was the cross: “*When I am lifted up from the earth, [I] will draw all [who are my] people to myself*” (v. 32).

III. The Judgment of the World

1. John closes Chapter 12 with a discourse on the theology of unbelief (vv. 34–36). The Jewish leadership had already determined that Jesus must die. Now the crowds, who hoped He was going to establish the kingdom, were disappointed and turning hostile. The impending rejection of Jesus was about to present a problem of monumental proportion.
2. The response of the crowd reveals that the judgment had come. Two things are noted:
 - a. The crowd misunderstood the Scriptures about the Messiah (v. 34). No doubt they were confused by what Daniel had prophesied (Daniel 7:13, 14). There is nothing in this prophecy about the Son of Man’s being lifted up—crucified. The crowd apparently understood that “*lifting up*” meant His dying at the hands of the Jewish leadership.
 - b. Jesus’ response to their questions pointed to the need to “*walk in the light*” (vv. 35, 36). Jesus was with them. They needed to listen to Him and learn from Him. The darkness was soon to overtake them. At this point, Jesus left and hid Himself from them (v. 36), which is the judgment. John developed this statement in last verses of chapter (vv. 36–50), which we will save for the next message.
3. Five issues are revealed in Jesus’ impending passion: (1) Jesus proclaimed, “*Now is the judgment of this world.*” While a future eschatological judgment awaits, the cross is the point of division between light and darkness (good and evil). (2) Jesus proclaimed that “*the ruler of this world [is] cast out.*” This accords with Revelation 12:9). The cross defeated the forces of evil by the defeat of the serpent (Genesis 3:15). (3) The “*lifting up*” of Jesus and His “*drawing all men,*” though it requires the cross, actually points to the resurrection (the Father’s acceptance of His sacrifice) and the exaltation of Christ to the right hand of the Father (Isaiah 52:13; Philippians 2:9; 1 Timothy 3:16). (4) The “*lifting up*” is that which draws the elect to salvation (John 6:44); not to the cross, per se, but to Christ Himself. (5) All this comes in the powerful “*now.*” It is not that there will be nothing left for a future consummation, but all is fixed in this one decisive work of Christ.

Lessons

1. The greatest gift Jesus gave was Himself. He asks us to give ourselves to others in the same way. God is not glorified by the elevation of our own selves but by humble service that He may make fruitful. Are you following Jesus to serve Him or for what you can get from Him?
2. Never blame your unbelief on God’s sovereignty. You are responsible for your own failure to believe. Although some believed, they did not confess their faith because they feared the Jews (vv. 42, 43). Secret faith is insufficient for salvation.
3. The self-revelation of God is called the Word (see 1:1–3). Jesus is the living Word, revealing the Father, and the written Word is the word of Christ, revealing the Son. All judgment is according to the Word.