

A. John 12:20-26 – Some Greeks wanted to personally meet Jesus

1. John 12:20 – *Now there were some Greeks among those who were going up to worship at the feast ...* Some Greek-speaking Gentile converts had made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem to celebrate the Jewish Passover festival. Interestingly, in the previous verse the Pharisees feared that the whole **world** was going after Jesus.
2. John 12:21 – *... these then came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and began to ask him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."* Unlike Israel, these Gentile worshippers did not ask for a sign; they wanted to **see** Jesus. The wicked and [spiritually] adulterous majority in Israel only wanted signs (Matt. 12:39, 16:4). 1 Corinthians 1:22
3. John 12:22 – *Philip came and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip came and told Jesus.* We do not know why these Greeks approached Philip, other than that Philip had a Greek **name** and was from Bethsaida, a community which boasted many non-Jewish residents. Interestingly, Andrew was the only other disciple with a Greek name.
4. John 12:23 – *And Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified."* Philip and Andrew might have found Jesus' response perplexing and irrelevant, but Jesus never got side-tracked with **superficial** matters.
 - a. Just like these Greeks, Nicodemus came to see Jesus because of the great things he had seen and heard. But Jesus was much more than a great person. He was God, the Messiah. Jesus immediately pointed both Nicodemus and the Greeks to the **gospel** message (John 12:24).
 - b. The greatest need of all mankind, Greeks and Jews, is to be saved from sin and death and to be made right with God. Jesus **purpose** in coming to earth was to make this possible by dying on the cross in our place and rising again. John 12:27, Romans 1:16-17
 - c. Throughout the book of John, the event of Jesus' crucifixion is referred to as an *hour* yet to come. This **hour** was the very purpose for which Jesus came to earth. Jesus' hour was going to happen at the precise time determined by God from all eternity. John 2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 16:32; 17:1; 1 Peter 1:20
 - d. Sometimes we are **perplexed** by God's answers to our prayers. However, God knows our true need and He is more interested in an eternal solution than in a quick temporal fix. Christ came not to save us from physical pain, but to save us from sin and death through justification, as well as sanctification. Romans 8:28-29, 2 Corinthians 4:18
5. John 12:24 – *"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."* Jesus continued His response with the words, *"Truly, truly."* By means of a **metaphor**, Jesus was about to share with them a super important truth on which they could rely.
 - a. Like a kernel of wheat, Jesus would die, and like a seed planted in the soil He would come forth and go on to provide true bread for this world. In His case, if He failed to die, He would remain alone and not provide salvation. But if He died, He would come forth and offer true **food** for the spiritually starving masses. 1 Corinthians 15:20, 23, 36
 - b. Without the death of a seed, growth and harvest are impossible. In the same way, without the death of Messiah, a great spiritual harvest would never occur. The Greeks, who esteemed knowledge, should have rejoiced with such amazing **wisdom**. Romans 14:9
6. John 12:25a – *"He who loves his life loses it..."* Still responding to the Greeks, Jesus continued His deep sayings. He said that if you guard your life, you'll lose it. An unbeliever who lives for the pleasures of this life, will **miss** the chance to find Christ and eternal life.
7. John 12:25b – *"...and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life **eternal**..."* The person who values eternal life more than the natural life of this world will listen to the gospel and be saved. The person who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, does not hold this life as important. In losing their life, they actually keep it. They gain eternal life.
8. John 12:26a – *"If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me..."* Building on His previous statement regarding salvation (justification), Jesus added an additional challenge of **discipleship** (sanctification).
 - a. The goal in Jesus' metaphor was not simply for the seed to **sprout**, but also for there to be a harvest.
 - b. The sprouting of the seed would be compared to being born again with new life while the goal of being born again would ultimately be to bear **fruit** that remains.
9. John 12:26b – *"...and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him."* As believers we are slaves of the one to whom we present ourselves. Presenting our members to Christ as **slaves** of righteousness results in sanctification and true life. Romans 6:16, 22

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- a. A servant stays **near** his or her master, not running ahead or trailing behind. Servants keep their eyes on their master just like Jesus kept His eyes on the Father and always did His Father's will. Jesus came to earth to serve and to give His life as a ransom for sinners. He accomplished His goal. Psalm 32:9, 123:2; Matthew 20:28; John 8:9; Ephesians 5:1
- b. A servant needs to be filled with God's word and led by the Holy Spirit in order to know what God's **will** is, both globally and personally. God's will is always good and perfect in every respect. Romans 12:1-2, Philipians 1:9-11, Colossians 1:9-11
- c. Upon glorification, a believer will be **rewarded** for works done according to God's will and by His power. 1 Corinthians 3:10-15, 15:57-58

B. John 12:27-36b – If I be lifted up

1. John 12:27 – “*Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose, I came to this hour.*” Jesus’ **hour** referred to His death for our sins and resurrection. This was the hour prophesied in the Old Testament and the reason for which He came to earth.
 - a. Jesus knew why He came into the world. He knew a terrible hour of **agony** was coming. But He did not live His days dreading that hour. He knew everything would happen at the exact time set by the Father, no sooner, no later. In the meantime, He had work to do. Every day, every moment, He did what God the Father showed Him to do.
 - b. But now the hour was upon Him, and Jesus’ soul was greatly **disturbed**. He knew He was about to bear the sins of the world in His body on the cruel cross. He was going to be judged and separated from God the Father in our place, as a substitute for all mankind. Matthew 26:38-45, 2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 Peter 2:24
 - c. As a human, Jesus wanted to be saved from the **anguish** and torture He was about to face. But He had come to earth as the promised deliverer to save mankind from sin and death, and He was determined to complete His mission. No matter what, God always does what He says He will do. Acts 2:23, Galatians 4:4, Hebrews 12:2, 1 Peter 1:20
2. John 12:28 – “*Father, glorify Your name.*” Then a voice came out of heaven: “*I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.*” God the Father answered Jesus’ prayer. His immediate thunderous reply was, once again, undeniable **proof** that God the Father approved of Jesus. Jesus’ death would bring great praise and honor to God.
3. John 12:29 – *So the crowd of people who stood by and heard it were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, “An angel has spoken to Him.”* As we might predict, the people nearby misunderstood the Father’s remarkable response. Their **inability** to grasp God’s words paralleled national Israel’s hardheartedness towards the voice of God.
4. John 12:30 – *Jesus answered and said, “This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sakes.”* Jesus did not need an audible voice to know His Father was listening. God the Father’s loud answer was for the sake of those listening. God did everything He possibly could to get people to **believe** in Jesus and be saved.
5. John 12:31 – “*Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.*” Christ’s main purpose in coming to earth was to be judged for the sin of mankind. The judgement Christ bore on the cross assured Satan’s demise. On the cross, Jesus judicially **defeated** the devil. You can rest assured; Satan will be cast out.
6. John 12:32 – “*And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.*” Being *lifted up* was Jesus’ way of predicting and explaining His death on the cross. That was a death He willingly suffered on **behalf** of the entire world. John 3:14
 - a. The word *draw* HELKUO means to move by pulling, to **attract**, to drag or to haul. This word is used four other times in John’s Gospel. Twice it describes pulling a loaded fish net up out of the water and another time it describes drawing a sword out of its sheath. John 6:44, 18:10, 21:6, 21:11
 - b. This clearly shows that God uses the preaching of Christ crucified to powerfully draw and **attract** people to Himself. The lifting up of Christ on the cross, as well as the lifting up of Christ in our preaching, becomes a powerful attraction to the truth. We can see why Paul preached Christ crucified. 1 Corinthians 1:17-18, 23-24; 2:1-2; Galatians 3:1
7. John 12:33 – *But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die.* Being lifted up literally referred to Jesus’ body being raised up on the **cross**. The cross ironically led to Jesus’ ultimate exaltation. Isaiah 52:13, Philipians 2:9, Hebrews 12:2
8. John 12:34 – *The crowd then answered Him, “We have heard out of the Law that the Christ is to remain forever; and how can You say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this Son of Man?”* The crowd did

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not understand the significance of the suffering Messiah foretold in Isaiah 53. They could not make sense of His predictions concerning His **death**.

9. John 12:35 – *So Jesus said to them, “For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes.* Jesus issued another **urgent** invitation for the crowd to believe in Him. As the light of the world, He was right there with them at that moment.
 - a. The light of the world was with them. By simply believing in Him they could have their spiritual eyes opened and **avoid** the ever-present snares of deception.
 - b. However, if they continued to walk in the darkness, they were in **danger** of permanently remaining in a spiritually blind condition.
10. John 12:36a – *“While you have the Light, believe in the Light...”* Jesus encouraged His hearers to believe in Him while He was physically **present** with them. It is easier to believe in something you can see. They would find it harder to believe once He was gone. John 20:25-29
11. John 12:36b – *“...believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light.”* Jesus assured them that if they would believe in Him, they would become children of God (*sons of Light*). To become a **child** of God depended on them believing in the light of the world. This is still true today. Have you become a child of God by faith in Jesus Christ? John 1:12

C. John 12:36c-43 – Some believed but others did not

1. John 12:36c – *These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them* . Jesus knew that the religious leaders of the Jews would seize Him if they could, but He controlled His own destiny. It is very amazing that He could effortlessly **conceal** Himself from their view when and wherever He wanted.
2. John 12:37 – *But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him* . Despite the countless miracles Jesus did during the days of His earthly ministry, many in Israel still refused to believe in Him. This is a very **sad** statement. This shows how hardened many in Israel had become. John 20:30-31, 21:25
3. John 12:38 – *This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet which he spoke: “Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”* Spiritual deliverance came to Israel, but they rejected it. The Lord’s power was unmistakable. They heard Jesus’ words and saw His miracles, yet, as He predicted, they persisted in **unbelief**.
4. John 12:39-40 – *For this reason they could not believe, for Isaiah said again “He has blinded their eyes and He hardened their heart, so that they would not see with their eyes and perceive with their heart and be converted and I heal them.”* Because of Israel’s continued stubborn **rejection** of the Savior, God finally hardened their hearts. Luke 13:34, 19:41-42
 - a. After ongoing rejection of the truth, God may give a person over to his or her own decision and personal hardness. We see this happen in the story of Pharaoh. God hardened Pharaoh’s heart after he had **repeatedly** hardened his own heart.
 - b. The subject of eternal salvation is not a **trivial** issue: it is a serious matter of life and death. In 2 Corinthians 6:2b Paul said, *“Behold, now is the acceptable time, behold, now is the day of salvation .”* God is patient not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9b).
5. John 12:41 – *These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him* . Isaiah was not like Israel. When Isaiah saw God’s glory, he believed. His belief in the Lord caused him to speak about Him. Israel, however, saw God’s **glory** and even heard His voice but did not believe. 2 Peter 3:15a
6. John 12:42-43 – *Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue, for they loved the approval of men rather than the **approval** of God* . This is a remarkable passage.
 - a. Many men of **power** and influence, like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, believed in Jesus, but they were not yet public with their faith.
 - b. Before we criticize these believers, let’s remember that the Holy Spirit had not yet been given. Today we have the Holy Spirit and yet we all struggle with being **strong** in our testimony or witness. When our faith is tested, we sometimes fail.
 - c. However, as they grew in their faith, many of these believers would gain courage. At this point, they were still infants in their faith. They should have **spoken** up for Jesus, but they were afraid to lose worldly things like prestige and prominence. John 19:38-39

D. John 12:44-50 – Jesus’ last public sermon

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1. John 12:44 – *And Jesus cried out and said, “He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me . Jesus said that to believe in Him was to believe in God the Father. These **true** statements of equality with God always brought controversy. But Jesus knew exactly what He was saying. John 5:22-24*
2. John 12:45 – *“He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me.”* Jesus stated that whoever looks at Him in faith is looking at God the Father who sent Him. In other words, to believe in Jesus is to believe in the Father. No one can behold the one and not behold the other. Jesus’ every word and action **revealed** and explained the Father. John 1:18, 8:19
3. John 12:46 – *“ I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness .”* Because of sin, this world is a **dark** place. That’s why Jesus came. He came to be true light, to shine and give hope. No one who puts their faith in Him will be in darkness ever again because they will have the true light of life. John 1:4,9,14
4. John 12:47 – *“ If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world.”* Jesus emphasized the gracious purpose of His coming. He came to be the **Lamb** of God, to take away the sin of the world. The world was already condemned at the fall. Jesus came to save it from judgment.
5. John 12:48 – *“ He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.”* Jesus, who is the Word of God, will have the last word on judgment day. Those who reject Jesus Christ and His teaching will not escape judgement. Like it or not, on judgement day, Christ’s word will be the **judge**.
6. John 12:49 – *“ For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak.”* Jesus did not speak on His own; the Father commissioned Him. The Father gave Him **authority** to challenge the system. Jesus spoke for the Father. His words should have been heeded. Matthew 28:18
7. John 12:50a – *“I know that His commandment is eternal life...”* In 1 John 3:23a we read, *“ This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ ...”* Jesus knew that Gods’ command to believe in the Son would bring eternal **life** to all who obey that command. John 6:29
8. John 12:50b – *“ ...therefore, the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me .”* Since the message God commands us to preach is the **only** message that brings eternal life, Jesus made sure that He only preached that message, nothing more, nothing less.
 - a. Jesus never changed God’s message, nor did He deviate from it. He gave it just as the Father gave it. We would do well to take note of this principle. How could we even entertain the thought that it is our prerogative to **change** His message?
 - b. A correct understanding of the gospel is a matter of life and **death**. We should be extremely faithful to the message, presenting it just as the Father gave it in the Word. God’s message does not need enhancements or changes. 2 Corinthians 2:15-16, Galatians 1:6-10
 - c. The gospel is the **simple**, objective and life-changing good news that on a day in history Christ died for your sins and rose again. Everyone who believes in Him, has eternal life. John 3:16, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4