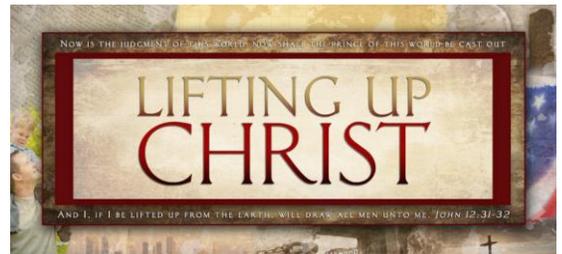


Jeremiah 31:31-34

Psalm 51:1-13

Hebrews 5:1-10

John 12:20-33



NOW IS THE JUDGMENT OF THIS WORLD

John 11:55-57 describes the atmosphere at that time in Jerusalem: Those who came for Passover *were looking for Jesus and saying to one another as they stood in the temple, “What do you think? That he will not come to the feast?”* Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where he was, he should let them know, so that they might arrest him.

Meanwhile, Jesus had been in Bethany with Lazarus and his family. John 12:9-11 reads, “*When the great crowd of the Jews learned that he was there (at Bethany), they came, not only on account of Jesus but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests planned to put Lazarus also to death, because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.*” Things were certainly not improving. The danger for Jesus and his disciples was growing hour by hour.

Verses 1 and 12 in John 12 indicate that Jesus left Bethany and came into Jerusalem five days before Passover, that is, on Palm Sunday. This was the occasion we call the *Triumphal Entry*. A large crowd came out to meet him. John 12:13 says, “*They took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying, ‘Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!’*” When the Jewish authorities heard the *King* word, the fuse was lit.

Still, they hesitated. The Pharisees said to one another, “*You see that you can do nothing; look, the world has gone after him.*” (John 12:19). They would wait until the crowds of worshippers were no longer with him. Then they would make their move. Thus, the stage was set for his arrest at Gethsemane and his crucifixion. Our Lord’s final public appearance before his arrest begins next in John 12:20.

John 12:20-26. *Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. ²¹So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” ²²Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew went with Philip and they told Jesus. ²³And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified. ²⁴Truly, 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. ²⁵He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶If any one serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be also; if any one serves me, the Father will honor him.”¹*

- *Among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks (v.20).* The feast was of course the Passover feast. The Greeks in those days were said to be inveterate travelers, known for their curiosity, always seeking after truth. “*Sir, we wish to see Jesus,*” they said to Philip. They had heard of, or possibly even witnessed, how this extraordinary man had disrupted the sellers and moneychangers in the Temple, and how he was now being worshipped by many as the King of Israel.

- *Philip went and told Andrew (v.22).* Philip and Andrew were from Bethsaida, and knew each other well. Andrew had taken his brother Peter to Jesus (John 1:41-42), and had already decided that the best thing you could do for someone *always* was to take him to Jesus. So they went together to tell Jesus about the Greeks.

- *Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified.”* **The hour** was a term Jesus used often in John’s gospel. It indicated the time of his suffering and crucifixion, as well as other times:

2:4 (at Cana): Jesus to his Mother, “*O woman, what have you to do with me? My **hour** has not yet come.*”
 5:25-29 (on resurrection and judgment): “*Do not marvel at this; for the **hour** is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth ...*”

¹ Bible quotations are from the RSV

7:30 (at the feast in Jerusalem): ... *no one laid hands on him, because his **hour** had not yet come.*

8:20 (at the Temple): ... *no one arrested him, because his **hour** had not yet come.*

13:1 (at the last supper): *Jesus knew that his **hour** had come to depart out of this world to the Father ...*

16:32 (after the last supper): *“The **hour** is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered ...”*

17:1 (final prayer of Jesus): *He lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, “Father, the **hour** has come; glorify thy Son that the Son may glorify thee ...”*

Possibly these Greeks never got to see Jesus (see John 12:36b.) Many others heard of Jesus in those days but never got to see him before he went to the cross. You and I are like all those who never actually saw or heard Jesus. We also must choose whether to believe the rest of the story – how he died to pay for our sins and how he rose from the tomb as our redeeming King. Are you able to believe these things?

- *“Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit”* (v.24). In nature, a plant has to undergo a kind of death in order to survive. A flower sheds its seeds, and they fall to the ground and are dead under the winter snow. Then, in spring, something quite wonderful happens. Up, out of the ground where many seeds had fallen, come new shoots. These become plants like the one they came from. It is the same with Jesus. He died alone on the cross. Now there are millions of beings like him in heaven, and millions more on earth becoming like him.

And even as he surrendered his life and rose again, so you are called today to surrender your life to him, so that you may become like him – sinless and pure and beautiful, as he is. Are you willing to do this?

- *“He who loves his life loses it”* (v.25). Jesus was teaching his disciples here. Suppose there were two flowers in a field. The blue flower said, “Why should I waste energy making seeds, when I can spend the summer making myself more beautiful?” The red flower said, “If I devote my life to sowing seeds, this whole field will be beautiful.” Sure enough, next summer the field was full of red flowers. *“He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life,”* Jesus said (v.25).

John 12:27-33. *“Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, for this purpose I have come to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify thy name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” ²⁹The crowd standing by heard it and said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” ³⁰Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. ³¹Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out; ³²and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.” ³³He said this to show by what death he was to die.*

- *“Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’?”* (v.27). As the hour drew near, Satan’s time for getting Jesus to avoid the cross was running short. Yet for Jesus, the cross was the climax – the whole reason for his coming into the world. His resolve to do the Father’s will never wavered. *“No, for this purpose I have come to this hour,”* he said; *“Father, glorify thy name.”*

- *“I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again”* (v.28). The people said this response of God sounded like thunder. Perhaps it had a note of sadness as well. God had glorified himself again and again in his love for Israel and the entire world. Yet, as the prophet long ago proclaimed, *“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all”* (Isa 53:6).

- *“Now is the judgment of this world”* (v.31). The *judgment of this world* took place at the cross. Sin and death lost the dominion they once had over men. You and I are being judged not according to our sins, but according to our faith in what Jesus has done to pay the cost of our sinful lives on the cross.

- *“And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself”* (v.32). This also is the power of the cross. All men are drawn to it. People come to the cross for salvation and life that could not exist without the cross. And like the flowers in the allegory above, you and I have two choices: You can trust the life you have now, and do all things to better it – and lose it. Or you can trust what the Bible says about Jesus, and lose your life in him – and save it. Our prayer today is that every person who reads these words will therefore choose Christ, today and always!