

# THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

## JOHN 12.37-50



**T. M. Moore**

*A Scriptorium Study*

*And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets,*

*He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Luke 24.27*

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The Gospel of John: John 12.37-50  
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## Introduction to *John 12.37-50*

John chose to skip over events in Jerusalem from Sunday to Thursday. Instead, he offers in this passage both a summation of the state of things in Jerusalem, and of the ministry and message of Jesus to this point. He is closing the curtain on the previous acts of Jesus' life and work, and setting the stage for the final acts to come.

We continue our slow read of John's gospel, because there is much we don't want to miss. John will remind us of the sovereignty of God by citing two passages from Isaiah. He will let Jesus give the key points of His message, and remind His hearers that these are not His words, but those of the Father.

And he'll keep up the growing tension between Jesus and the religious leaders of His day.

All this sets the stage for Jesus to glorify God – an “hour” John has been pointing to from the beginning of his gospel.

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## 1 Blind – Willfully and Willed

Read and meditate on John 12.37-41.

All those signs, and all that profound teaching! And still, the crowds did not believe, even though they celebrated His entrance into Jerusalem and acclaimed Him King. They wanted Jesus to be what *they* wanted, and they would not accept Him otherwise. They were willfully blind to His *true* identity. Just as God willed.

*<sup>37</sup>But although He many signs had done before them, yet they could not find a reason to believe in Him. <sup>38</sup>that so Isaiah's word might be fulfilled, who spoke, "Lord, who believes our word? To whom have You revealed Your arm?" <sup>39</sup>Isaiah said this too, to show that they could not believe: <sup>40</sup>"For He has blinded them, lest anyone should see, and He their hearts has hardened, lest they come to understand, repent, and turning from their sins, be healed." <sup>41</sup>Isaiah prophesied these things when he God's glory saw inside the temple, and there spoke of Him.*

- John 12.37-41

*Reflect*

1. Earlier in this chapter, as Jesus rode into Jerusalem, the people acclaimed Him as the King of Israel, Who had come in the Name of the Lord (v. 13). Now John tells us they did not believe in Him. How shall we reconcile these reports? Complete this prayer: *Lord, I believe in You, and I know You are the King Who comes in the Name of the Lord. I know I believe in You because...*

2. We might be tempted to think that Jesus' mission was a failure. Three years, and still the people did not believe! But Jesus' mission was advancing right on schedule, precisely as God had ordained from long ago. Verse 38 comes from Isaiah 53.1. Read Isaiah 53. What does this describe? Why did John place Isaiah 53.1 just here in his gospel? Is it important that we understand Old Testament types and prophecies concerning Jesus? Explain. *All that was written of You in the Old Testament has come to pass, Lord, and everything that is written concerning what You are yet to do will likewise be fulfilled. Help me to...*

3. The people were blind to Jesus' *true* identity, because they were looking for a different sort of king from God. They wanted Jesus to do *their* will, rather than hear and understand His will and do it. Do you think Christians today sometimes fall into this same snare – looking for political and economic solutions, or the satisfaction of some personal want, rather than the Kingdom not of this world – trying to get Jesus to serve us, rather than us serve Him? Explain. *Your Kingdom is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit, O Lord, and I seek it by...*

4. The second quote from Isaiah (vv. 39, 40) comes from Isaiah 6. Read Isaiah 6.1-10. What do these verses recount? Compare Isaiah's response in Isaiah 6 to the response of the people in John 12. Why was Isaiah able to reply positively to God's call? What do we learn about the sovereignty of God in making known the Good News of His Kingdom? Why did John cite this here? What is his message to us, who read these verses? *Lord, like Isaiah, I hear You calling me each day, and I say...*

5. Notice how John ends this section: “These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.” Is there a connection between *seeing* the glory of God, *bearing* His words, and *proclaiming* the Good News of the Lord? Throughout this chapter, Jesus has been pointing forward to His coming glory, and the glory of the Father. John is telling us as readers, “You are about to witness the glory of God and of the Son.” What does John want us to do, having heard Jesus’ words and seen His glory? What should that look like in your life? Bring together into one the prayers you composed for questions 1-4.

*Summary*

“But the prophet, you say, assigns another cause than that of their will. What cause does the prophet assign? That ‘God has given them the spirit of remorse, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear. And has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart.’ This also, I reply, their will deserved. For God thus blinds and hardens, simply by letting alone and withdrawing his aid. And God can do this by a judgment that is hidden, although not by one that is unrighteous. This is a doctrine that the piety of the God-fearing ought to preserve unshaken and inviolable in all its integrity: even as the apostle, when treating of the same intricate question, says, ‘What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.’ If, then, we must be far from thinking that there is unrighteousness with God, this only can it be, that, when he gives his aid, he acts mercifully. And when he withholds it, he acts righteously. For in all he does, he does not act rashly but in accordance with judgment.” *Augustine (354-430 AD)*

It’s easy for us to condemn the fickle and faithless crowd that welcomed Jesus so raucously, then betrayed and killed him so viciously. They kept trying to believe that Jesus was the conquering Davidic king they’d been hoping for; but when it became clear He was not going to liberate them from the Romans, and not going to bring in abundant material blessing, then, rather than praise Him, they despised Him, and turned on Him like a pack of dogs. How can we tell when we’re seeking to do God’s will, or seeking to get God to do ours?

*Closing Prayer*

I waited patiently for the LORD;  
And He inclined to me,  
And heard my cry.  
He also brought me up out of a horrible pit,  
Out of the miry clay,  
And set my feet upon a rock,  
And established my steps.  
He has put a new song in my mouth—  
Praise to our God;  
Many will see it and fear,  
And will trust in the Lord.  
Blessed *is* that man who makes the LORD his trust,  
And does not respect the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.  
Many, O LORD my God, *are* Your wonderful works  
*Which* You have done;  
And Your thoughts toward us  
Cannot be recounted to You in order;  
*If* I would declare and speak *of them*,  
They are more than can be numbered.  
Sacrifice and offering You did not desire;  
My ears You have opened.  
Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require.  
Then I said, “Behold, I come;  
In the scroll of the book *it is* written of me.

I delight to do Your will, O my God,  
And Your law is within my heart.”

Psalm 40.1-8

**Psalm 40.1-8** (*Dix: For the Beauty of the Earth*)

I waited patiently for God; He inclined and heard my cry,  
Lifted me up above the sod, set me on a Rock on high!  
New songs in my mouth He gave; may He through me many save.

Blessed are all who trust in You, turning both from lies and pride.  
Countless wonders, Lord, You do, and Your thoughts with us abide.  
Lord, Your worth who can declare? None with You can e'er compare.

Off'rings You do not require – open now my ears, O Lord –  
What from me do You desire? Firm delight to do Your Word.  
Take my life in ev'ry part; write Your Law upon my heart.

## 2 Loving the Wrong Praise

Read and meditate on John 12.42, 43.

Some of the rulers believed in Jesus, but that faith, though real, was small.

<sup>42</sup>And yet,  
among the Jewish rulers, many set  
their hearts to trust in Him, but they would not  
confess Him, fearing they would be put out  
of fellowship, <sup>43</sup>because they loved men's praise  
more than the praise of God.

- John 12.42, 43

*Reflect*

1. John says these men from among the rulers of Israel *believed* in Jesus. Would you describe theirs as a mature faith? What kind of faith was it? What might be some other indicators of this kind of faith? Complete this prayer: *I know it is important to keep growing in my faith, Lord. Otherwise...*
2. These men who sat with the rulers and listened as they plotted against Jesus, *believed* in Him. But they would not speak up for Him. Nicodemus had tried once, only to be denounced and silenced (cf. Jn. 7.50-52). What did these men fear? (v. 42; cf. Jn. 8.20-22) What would have been the consequences of that action? Do Christians sometimes fear being ostracized by their unbelieving neighbors, friends, or co-workers? Why? *What about me, Lord? Do I fear what others might think or do, so that...?*
3. John explains the reticence of these believers by saying “they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.” In this instance, what would “the praise of men” have been? Do you ever find yourself catering to “the praise of men”? Explain. *Lord, why should I want men to praise me? What is there in me that...*
4. What does John mean in this case by “the praise of God”? What opportunity did these men have for praising God? What opportunities do you have each day for praising God? *Help me, Lord, to be alert to every opportunity to praise You, and lead me to...*
5. What should a believer do if he recognizes that his faith is so small, that he loves the praise of men more than the praise of God, or that he fears men and what they might do more than he fears disobeying the Lord? How can believers help one another avoid this snare? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote from questions 1-4.

*Summary*

“Then the Evangelist said that many among the authorities who believed in him hid their opinion about him because of the Pharisees, because they feared they might lose their privileges and because they valued the glory of people more than the glory of God. What did our Lord say? While some believed, others did not even accept the accomplished miracles, others only came to know the truth through the miracles but hid their opinion because of their fear of the Pharisees as they pursued human glory.” *Theodore of Mopsuestia (350-428 AD)*

The fear of men is a snare. We will make no progress in our walk with and work for the Lord if we allow ourselves to be deterred in our witness by what others think. How can you prepare each day to resist this temptation and press on in obedience to the Lord?

*Closing Prayer*

You who fear the LORD, praise Him!  
All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him,  
And fear Him, all you offspring of Israel!  
For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted;  
Nor has He hidden His face from Him;  
But when He cried to Him, He heard.  
My praise *shall be* of You in the great assembly;  
I will pay My vows before those who fear Him.  
The poor shall eat and be satisfied;  
Those who seek Him will praise the LORD.  
Let your heart live forever!  
All the ends of the world  
Shall remember and turn to the LORD,  
And all the families of the nations  
Shall worship before You.  
For the kingdom *is* the LORD's,  
And He rules over the nations.

Psalm 22.23-28

**Psalm 22.23-28** (*Darwall: Rejoice, the Lord is King*)

All you who fear the Lord, now praise His holy Name!  
You children of His glorious Word, declare His fame!  
We stand in awe of our eternal God, and on His mercy call.

For He has not despised the anguish of our King,  
Nor from Him hid His eyes, Who knew such suffering.  
Let praise arise from all who love and serve the Ruler of the skies!

The suffering King shall eat and praise with us the Lord.  
Forever we His praise repeat and trust His Word.  
Praise God above, all you who keep His vows and who His mercies love!

All nations shall repent and hasten to the Lord;  
All those to whom His truth is sent shall praise His Word.  
The Lord is King! His sovereign rule on high now we His people sing!

### 3 Believing is Seeing

Read and meditate on John 12.44, 45.

Jesus came to bear witness to the Father, Who sent Him for this purpose. Here again, He makes the kind of claim that will provoke the religious leaders of Israel to seek His death.

<sup>44</sup>And in those days  
the Lord cried out and said, "He who believes  
in Me, believes not in Me, but believes  
in Him Who sent Me. <sup>45</sup>He who sees Me, sees  
Him Who has sent me.

- John 12.44, 45

Reflect

1. Where Jesus is concerned, seeing is not necessarily believing. But believing results in seeing. Explain. Complete this prayer: *Lord, help me always to believe Your Word, and show me...*

2. Jesus has now returned to Jerusalem from His retreat in Bethany, and it was as if He wanted to make sure there was no mistake about Who He is or why He had come. We note that Jesus "cried out," not unlike the voice of Wisdom in Proverbs 8. Read through Proverbs 8 (don't let the feminine pronouns throw you; all abstract nouns in Hebrew are in that form, but it has nothing to do with the sex of the speaker). Do you think it's possible John's use of the verb *cried out* was meant to cue up Proverbs 8 for us as readers? Explain. *I know, Lord, that Your Spirit teaches us by comparing one Scripture with another. Teach me to hear You crying out so that...*

3. In verse 44, Jesus equated believing in Him with believing in the One Who sent Him. Any true prophet of Israel might have been able to make a similar claim, and many people looked on Jesus as a prophet. This claim might have been controversial, but not particularly inflammatory. Why not? Why did Jesus preface His claim in verse 45 with this claim? What does this claim suggest about what *we* believe when we believe in Jesus? *I believe in You, Lord, and in the Father Who sent You. Show me each day, more and more...*

4. Jesus' claim in verse 45 was of an entirely different nature. Those who might have agreed with Him at verse 44 would now be more careful about agreeing with this claim. Why? What was Jesus saying (cf. Jn. 14.9)? In what sense does someone *see* the Father when they *see* Jesus (cf. Heb. 1.3)? What does it mean to *see* Jesus? *Lord Jesus, to know You truly is to know the Father, and to know the Father...*

5. Jesus wanted to make sure that the religious leaders would not be mistaken about what He claimed about Himself. He did not want to be branded as merely a rabble rouser or a political zealot. When they put Him on that cross, He wanted them and all the people to make sure they were killing Him for the right reason. The same is true for us. When people today reject Jesus and the Gospel, we need to make sure they're doing so for the right reason, because they deny or refuse to submit to Him as God. It's important that all who reject Jesus know clearly Whom they are rejecting. Why? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote for questions 1-4.

Summary

"Notice in the passage before us that there are two aspects about the Savior: first, believing in him, and second, what is above believing, that is, to behold (contemplate) the Word and in beholding the Word to behold the Father. Believing occurs even among the multitude of those who come to religion. But to behold the Word, and in him to regard the Father, does not pertain to all who believe but only to the pure in heart. This is how I understand 'He who has seen me has seen the Father.' For it is not the one who applies the

power of vision lying in the eyes of the body to Jesus and his body who has seen his Father and God. And I think that time and training were needed in order to see Jesus, and seeing the Son to behold also the Father.”  
*Origen (185-254 AD)*

The glorification of Christ – the *hour* for which He came – was accelerated at Calvary, illuminated by His resurrection, enhanced by His exaltation and enthronement, is expressed by His rule in and through the lives of His people, and will culminate in His return. Christ will not share His glory with another, so Satan was made to relinquish any access to God he enjoyed in heaven, and was cast out to stalk and prowl about on earth. How do we keep the banished ruler from governing our lives, so that we can live under the exalted Ruler’s grace and truth and glory?

*Closing Prayer*

Teach me Your way, O LORD;  
I will walk in Your truth;  
Unite my heart to fear Your name.  
I will praise You, O Lord my God, with all my heart,  
And I will glorify Your name forevermore.  
For great *is* Your mercy toward me,  
And You have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.  
O God, the proud have risen against me,  
And a mob of violent *men* have sought my life,  
And have not set You before them.  
But You, O Lord, *are* a God full of compassion, and gracious,  
Longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth.  
Oh, turn to me, and have mercy on me!  
Give Your strength to Your servant,  
And save the son of Your maidservant.  
Show me a sign for good,  
That those who hate me may see *it* and be ashamed,  
Because You, LORD, have helped me and comforted me.

Psalm 86.11-17

**Psalm 86.10-17** (*Andrews: Praise My Soul, the King of Heaven*)

For You are great, You wondrous deeds do;  
You are the only and sovereign Lord.  
Teach me Your way, let me give heed to,  
With all my heart, Savior, all Your Word!  
Lord, be gracious to me, Lord, be gracious to me,  
Praise Your Name forever, Lord!

Great is Your mercy, Lord, toward me;  
You have delivered my soul from hell.  
Though dreadful foes and threats arrayed be,  
You will Your grace and Your mercy tell!  
Lord, be gracious to me, Lord, be gracious to me,  
Slow to anger, loving well!

Turn to me, Lord; be gracious to me;  
Grant me Your strength; save Your servant, Lord!  
Let me a sign of something good see;  
Shame all who hate me beneath Your Word.

*The Gospel of John: John 12.37-50*

Lord, be gracious to me, Lord, be gracious to me,  
For You help me, sovereign Lord!

## 4 Light in the World

*Read and meditate on John 12.46.*

Jesus returns to the theme of light and darkness as a primary trope for thinking about His mission. We need to think more carefully about this image.

*<sup>46</sup>“I have come to be  
a light unto the world, that all who trust  
in Me shall not abide in darkness.”*

- John 12.46

*Reflect*

1. Light, we know, overcomes darkness. What is light, and how does it do that? Why does this make light a particularly good way of thinking about the mission of Christ? Complete the following prayer: *Lord Jesus, You are the Light of my world, showing me...*
2. “Darkness” is frequently used in Scripture to represent the world apart from God. Why is this such a powerful image? What is suggested about *darkness* that makes it not the way things are supposed to be? *I know many people who live in darkness, Lord, and I pray for them, that...*
3. Recall your life when you were abiding in *darkness*. What was that like? Was it pleasant? Was your life then to be preferred to your life now, in the light of Jesus? What difference has the light of Jesus made in your life? *Lord Jesus, thank You for delivering me from darkness, for...*
4. When light comes into a dark room, the photons of light fill every corner to varying degrees, depending on distance from the light and strength of the light source. Darkness cannot stand against light, and this is a theme John has been applying to Jesus since John 1.1-5. Mediate on Ephesians 1.22, 23 and 4.8-10. How does thinking about Jesus as light help us understand what Paul teaches here? What are the implications of this for your soul, and for your [Personal Mission Field](#)? *Lord Jesus, fill all my soul with Your light! Radiate Your light from me so powerfully and consistently that...*
5. What did Jesus say was the criterion for no longer abiding in darkness? How, using your own experience, would you explain what this means to a friend or co-worker who *is* in the darkness? How do you hope to increase the light of Jesus in you, so that it shines into the darkness of the world more powerfully and more consistently? Bring together your prayers from questions 1-4 into one prayer.

*Summary*

“All saints are lights, but they are illuminated by Christ through faith, and everyone that becomes separated from him will be enveloped in darkness. But that light that enlightens them cannot become separated from itself. For it is altogether beyond the reach of change. We believe, then, the light that has thus been lit is the prophet or apostle. But we believe him for this end, that we may not believe on that which is itself enlightened, but, with him, on that light that has given him light. Then we too may be enlightened, not by him, but along with him by the same light as he. And when he says, ‘That whoever believes on me may not abide in darkness,’ he makes it sufficiently clear that all have been found by him in a state of darkness. But so that they do not remain in the darkness in which they have been found, they ought to believe on that light that has come into the world, for that is how the world was created.” *Augustine (354-430 AD)*

The image of Jesus as light, and us as illuminated by Him, has implications for every aspect of our lives, everywhere the darkness lingers, and the light of life has yet to shine brilliantly forth. Explain.

*Closing Prayer*

The LORD *is* my light and my salvation;  
Whom shall I fear?  
The LORD *is* the strength of my life;  
Of whom shall I be afraid?  
When the wicked came against me  
To eat up my flesh,  
My enemies and foes,  
They stumbled and fell.  
Though an army may encamp against me,  
My heart shall not fear;  
Though war may rise against me,  
In this I *will be* confident.  
One *thing* I have desired of the LORD,  
That will I seek:  
That I may dwell in the house of the LORD  
All the days of my life,  
To behold the beauty of the LORD,  
And to inquire in His temple.

Psalm 27.1-4

**Psalm 27.1-6** (*Joanna: Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise*)

Lord, You are our Light and our Savior most dear!  
You guard us with might; therefore, whom shall we fear?  
Though evil surround us, our enemies fall;  
No harm shall confound us when on You we call.

One thing we request, but to dwell with You, Lord.  
Your beauty to test and to think on Your Word.  
In trouble You hide us secure in Your grace;  
No foe may o'erride us: We sing of Your praise!

## 5 The Word that Judges

Read and meditate on John 12.47, 48.

As Jesus had previously said, He had not come to judge the world, but to save it (v. 47; cf. Jn. 3.17). But salvation would not be salvation, were there not something from which we must be saved!

<sup>47</sup>“Just  
so, anyone bears My words, but does  
not trust in Me, I do not judge, because  
I did not come to judge the world, but to  
deliver it.<sup>48</sup>He who rejects Me, who  
does not receive My words, yet has this as  
his judge – the words I speak will on the last  
day judge him.”

- John 12.47, 48

Reflect

1. We need to analyze these two verses carefully, so that we don't come away thinking Jesus is speaking out of both sides of His mouth. First, Jesus holds out the possibility that some people who hear His words will not believe. Why not? Why would anyone, hearing these glorious promises, from such a glorious Savior, *not* believe in Him? Complete this prayer: *Salvation is a gift, Lord, but not everyone is interested. Nevertheless, I must...*

2. Jesus' mission to earth was not to condemn, but to redeem. He came to save *the world*, sent by the Father Who loves *the world* which He created (Jn. 3.16). By finishing His work and glorifying the Father, Jesus is now reconciling *the world* to God (2 Cor. 5.17-20), and while this includes the world of people, it implies more than this. What is suggested here about the “great salvation” (Heb. 2.3) Jesus brought to the world, as far as its scope, reach, and power? How should we think about what it means to be “saved”? *Thank You, Lord, for saving me. Give me grace each day to know more of Your great salvation, and to...*

3. Jesus said He did not judge those who heard His words but did not believe. That would have been outside the scope of His mission. But this does not mean that such people are not judged. Explain. *Lord, many people I know are living under judgment, and don't realize it. Thank You for delivering me from judgment; use me...*

4. Jesus judged no one, but only gave people the opportunity of receiving salvation by believing in Him. Jesus equated not receiving His words with rejecting Him (v. 48). Those who will not receive the offer of salvation, which Jesus speaks to them, thus reject Him, and leave themselves *outside* the reach of His salvation. Is it possible that Christians do this, too? That we who profess to believe in Jesus nonetheless reject His words for one reason or another? Where does this leave us when this happens? *Lord, I don't always find your Word agreeable or convenient, and I sometimes make excuses for not obeying You. But Your Word is always true, and I need to remember that...*

5. A day of judgment is coming – “the last day.” That day is not yet. There is a sense in which people who reject Jesus' words are already living under judgment (Rom. 1.18-32), but this is not the *final* judgment, after which the opportunity for salvation is permanently lost. Judgment goes on now, but only on “the last day” will that judgment be final. Should we include this word of judgment in our presentation of the Gospel? How would you do that? Bring together into one your prayers from questions 1-4.

Summary

“Those who refuse to hear Jesus and accept saving faith will condemn themselves, for he who came to illumine came not to judge but to save. Therefore, he who disobeys and subjects himself to the greatest

miseries can only blame himself as justly punished.” *Cyril of Alexandria (375-444 AD)*

Like Jesus, we are not called to *pronounce* judgment, but to *announce* it. What’s the difference?

*Closing Prayer*

Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised  
In the city of our God,  
*In* His holy mountain.  
Beautiful in elevation,  
The joy of the whole earth,  
Is Mount Zion *on* the sides of the north,  
The city of the great King.  
God is in her palaces;  
He is known as her refuge.  
For behold, the kings assembled,  
They passed by together.  
They saw it, *and* so they marveled;  
They were troubled, they hastened away.  
Fear took hold of them there,  
*And* pain, as of a woman in birth pangs,  
*As when* You break the ships of Tarshish  
With an east wind.  
As we have heard,  
So we have seen  
In the city of the LORD of hosts,  
In the city of our God:  
God will establish it forever.  
Selah  
We have thought, O God, on Your lovingkindness,  
In the midst of Your temple.  
According to Your name, O God,  
So *is* Your praise to the ends of the earth;  
Your right hand is full of righteousness.

Psalm 48.1-10

**Psalm 48.1-11** (*Cwm Rhondda: Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah*)

Great is God, now greatly praise Him in the city of the Lord.  
Holy she, His lovely mountain, great and glorious by His Word!  
God her King is great within her, He, her Stronghold ever sure!  
He, her Stronghold ever sure!

Earthly kings, amazed and wond’ring, look upon the Church with fear.  
See them flee in dread and anguish, knowing that the Lord is near.  
For the city of the Savior God will keep forevermore!  
God will keep forevermore!

For Your grace and lovingkindness we proclaim Your matchless worth!  
As Your Name is, great and boundless, let Your praise fill all the earth.  
Let Your people sing rejoicing for the judgment of Your truth;  
For the judgment of Your truth.

## 6 The Gospel Command

Read and meditate on John 12.49, 50.

Jesus punctuates His claims by insisting He is not speaking on His own authority. He wasn't making this up. God had sent Him to the world, and Jesus spoke as the Father directed Him, so that eternal life could come to the world.

*<sup>49</sup>“On My own authority I have not spoken; but the Father, He Who sent Me, gave me a command, what I should speak. <sup>50</sup>And I know this command is life eternal. Therefore, everything I speak is only what the Father says to speak.”*

- John 12.49, 50

Reflect

1. John has used verses 44-50 to sum-up nearly a week's worth of teaching. How would you summarize in one sentence what Jesus claimed here? Why is it important that we do this? How might you use this one sentence this week? Complete this prayer: *Lord, You are the God of light and life, and you call us to receive Your words, trust in You, and...*
2. Jesus understood the growing resentment and hostility of the religious leaders. He represented a direct challenge to their authority, and they did not intend to allow Him to continue. Do you think Jesus' disclaimer in verse 49 would have mollified or further irritated His enemies? Why? *Sometimes, Lord, we just can't placate people where You're concerned. Nevertheless...*
3. Jesus indicated that the Good News He proclaimed is a *command*. Paul said the same thing in Acts 17.30, 31. Does it make a difference in how we present it, whether the Gospel is an *offer* or a *command*? Do commands have consequences? Explain. *Thank You, Lord, that You enabled me to obey the command of the Gospel. Help me today to obey...*
4. Jesus said that the command God had given Him was “everlasting life.” How would you explain that concept to an unbelieving friend? Should Christians, who already *have* everlasting life, seek to *increase* in everlasting life? Are we *commanded* to do so (cf. Phil. 2.12; 2 Pet. 3.18)? Explain. *Lord, I know there is more of eternal life for me to realize each day, so...*
5. From time to time you may hear someone wondering aloud about “God's will for my life.” According to Jesus, what is God's will for humankind? For you? How much of your life does this entail? Bring together into one your prayers from questions 1-4.

Summary

“What he intends then by the words is this: It is not possible that he [the Father] should speak one set of words and I should utter another. ‘And I know that his commandment is life everlasting.’ He said this to those who called him a deceiver and who asserted that he had come to do harm. However, when he says ‘I judge not,’ he shows that he is not the cause of their destruction. By this he all but plainly testifies (when he is about to remove himself from them and leave) that ‘I converse with you, speaking nothing on my own but everything as from the Father.’” *John Chrysostom (344-407 AD)*

The Gospel is powerful to save or to condemn, because it comes via our Lord Jesus Christ, with the authority of God the Father. The Gospel is a command, which to obey is life, and to reject is to condemn oneself to

eternal darkness. How can you declare this Gospel, and yet make sure you are doing so in love (Eph. 4.15)?

*Closing Prayer*

O God, do not be far from me;  
O my God, make haste to help me!  
Let them be confounded *and* consumed  
Who are adversaries of my life;  
Let them be covered *with* reproach and dishonor  
Who seek my hurt.  
But I will hope continually,  
And will praise You yet more and more.  
My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness  
*And* Your salvation all the day,  
For I do not know *their* limits.  
I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD;  
I will make mention of Your righteousness, of Yours only.  
O God, You have taught me from my youth;  
And to this *day* I declare Your wondrous works.

Psalm 71.12-17

**Psalm 71.12-18, 3** (*Solid Rock: My Hope is Built on Nothing Less*)

O God be not too far from me; me ever-present Helper be!  
Consume and shame my enemies; let them reproached and humbled be.  
A Rock of habitation be; command Your Word to rescue me;  
My Rock and Fortress ever be!

But as for me my voice I raise to sing in hope and constant praise!  
With saving grace my voice will swell Your never-ending grace to tell.  
A Rock of habitation be; command Your Word to rescue me;  
My Rock and Fortress ever be!

O Lord, I praise Your righteousness, Who me from youth have taught and blessed.  
Forsake me not when I am old, 'til I Your mercies all have told!  
A Rock of habitation be; command Your Word to rescue me;  
My Rock and Fortress ever be!

## 7 Summation

*Read and meditate on John 12.37-50.*

In this final passage of Jesus' public ministry, John provides a kind of summation of where things stand. Jesus has been clear and consistent in His teaching, and abundant in His signs. Yet most people still do not believe. And among those who do, only the disciples seem willing to be publicly identified as followers of the Lord. His enemies are plotting, and the masses of people fear them. Yet in the midst of this, Jesus does not tone down His message. Quite the opposite, in fact.

*<sup>37</sup>But although He many signs had done before them, yet they could not find a reason to believe in Him, <sup>38</sup>that so Isaiah's word might be fulfilled, who spoke, "Lord, who believes our word? To whom have You revealed Your arm?" <sup>39</sup>Isaiah said this too, to show that they could not believe: <sup>40</sup>"For He has blinded them, lest anyone should see, and He their hearts has hardened, lest they come to understand, repent, and turning from their sins, be healed." <sup>41</sup>Isaiah prophesied these things when he God's glory saw inside the temple, and there spoke of Him.*

*<sup>42</sup>And yet, among the Jewish rulers, many set their hearts to trust in Him, but they would not confess Him, fearing they would be put out of fellowship, <sup>43</sup>because they loved men's praise more than the praise of God.*

*<sup>44</sup>And in those days the Lord cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, believes not in Me, but believes in Him Who sent Me. <sup>45</sup>He who sees Me, sees Him Who has sent me. <sup>46</sup>I have come to be a light unto the world, that all who trust in Me shall not abide in darkness. <sup>47</sup>Just so, anyone hears My words, but does not trust in Me, I do not judge, because I did not come to judge the world, but to deliver it. <sup>48</sup>He who rejects Me, who does not receive My words, yet has this as his judge – the words I speak will on the last day judge him. <sup>49</sup>On My own authority I have not spoken; but the Father, He Who sent Me, gave me a command, what I should speak. <sup>50</sup>And I know this command is life eternal. Therefore, everything I speak is only what the Father says to speak."*

- John 12.37-50

*Reflect*

1. How would you “sum-up” the situation in your [Personal Mission Field](#), with respect to where people stand with Jesus? Do you see the same kind of people in your Personal Mission Field that Jesus saw in His? Explain. Complete this prayer: *Lord, You have commanded us to lift up our eyes and see the harvest. As I look around my Personal Mission Field...*

2. John did not want us to be alarmed about the paucity of public support for Jesus. He tied the situation in Jerusalem to two passages in Isaiah (53.1; 6.10), and used those to frame the events in Jerusalem in the larger context of Scripture. How should we as followers of Christ today take comfort and encouragement from these texts? *Thank You, Lord, for Your Word, which is ever-present, ever-true, ever...*

3. Verse 41 puts the situation and the citations from Isaiah in the larger context of that toward which John’s gospel has been moving since John 1.14. Isaiah saw God’s glory. John saw God’s glory. And we’re about to see God’s glory in the chapters that follow. How should this orientation toward the glory of God encourage and sustain us in our witness for the Lord? *Show me Your glory, Lord, and keep me focused on it, since...*

4. Light, darkness; believe, reject; see Jesus, see the Father; saved, judged: Verses 44-48 offer a concise summary and synopsis of the message and ministry of Jesus. Explain. How might you use these ideas as the content of a Gospel presentation? *You have called me to be Your witness, Lord, and given me Your Spirit for this work. Help me each day as I...*

5. Ultimately, Jesus is all about the Father (vv. 49, 50). The Father sent Him. The Father commanded Him. The Father told Him what to speak. He reveals the Father to all who see Him. He comes in the authority of the Father. He is the Father’s Son. All who believe in Him become children of the Father (Jn. 1.12). Jesus does not save us so that we will love and follow Him *merely*. He leads us to the Father (Heb. 1.3), intercedes for us with the Father (Heb. 9.25), and glorifies the Father in all He does. Would you say that your relationship with Jesus is giving you a better understanding of and love for the Father? Explain. Bring together into one prayer the prayers you composed for questions 1-4.

*Summary*

“If life everlasting is the Son himself and the commandment is life everlasting, what is this but saying, ‘I am the commandment of the Father?’ And in the same way in the following, ‘Whatever I speak therefore, even as the Father said to me, so I speak,’ we must not understand ‘said to me’ as if words were spoken to the only Word or that the Word of God needed words from God. The Father spoke to the Son in the same way as he gave life to the Son. It was not that the Son was ignorant or did not [already] have life. Rather, it was simply because the Son was what he was. What, then, is meant by ‘as he said to me, so I speak’ but that I am the Word who speaks. The Father is true, the Son is truth: the True beget the Truth. What then could he say to the Truth if the Truth was perfect from the beginning and no new truth could be added to him? That he spoke to the Truth then means that he beget the Truth.” *Augustine (354-430 AD)*

This passage functions in two ways. It closes the door on Jesus’ public ministry, setting the stage for the events to follow; and it opens the door to the glory of Jesus and the Father. In chapters 13-17, Jesus will show and tell that glory, carefully preparing His disciples for what is to come; then He will fulfill the glory of the Father in chapters 18-21. Jesus is the key to the glory of God. See Him, and you see God’s glory. What does it mean for you to *see* Jesus?

*Closing Prayer*

I have set the LORD always before me;  
Because *He is* at my right hand I shall not be moved.  
Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices;  
My flesh also will rest in hope.

For You will not leave my soul in Sheol,  
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.  
You will show me the path of life;  
In Your presence *is* fullness of joy;  
At Your right hand *are* pleasures forevermore.

Psalm 16.8-11

**Psalm 16.8-11** (*All to Christ: Jesus Paid It All*)

You are ever with me, Lord; in You I shall not fall.  
But rejoicing in Your Word, I abide within Your call.  
    Make me know life's way! Pleasures fill Your hand;  
    Fill my life with joy each day! Before Your face I stand.

Soon Your glory I shall see, for as Jesus rose again,  
You will come to gather me to my home with You in heav'n.  
    Make me know life's way! Pleasures fill Your hand;  
    Fill my life with joy each day! Before Your face I stand.

*The Gospel of John: John 12.37-50*

*Questions for reflection or discussion*

1. Meditate on Acts 17.32-34. Paul mentions three responses to the Gospel. Had Jesus experienced these three? Should we expect to as well? Explain.
2. How has John 12.27-50 helped to equip and encourage you in your witness for Christ?
3. What is the Gospel, as Jesus outlines it in these verses?
4. What is the glory of God? How did Jesus glorify the Father? How do we?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from John 12.37-50? How are you putting that lesson to work in your walk with and work for the Lord?

*Items for prayer:*

## The Fellowship of Ailbe

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