

The Hour Has Come

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- [0 : 0 0] John 12 verse 20. Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So these came to Philip who was from Bethsaida in Galilee and asked him, Sir, we wish to meet with Jesus.
- Philip went and told Andrew. Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. And Jesus answered them, The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.
- And truly, truly, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone. But if it does, it bears fruit.
- Whoever lives his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant also be.
- If anyone serves me, the Father will honour him. Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour?
- [1 : 0 7] But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name. Then a voice came from heaven. I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.
- The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, An angel has spoken to him. Jesus answered, This voice has come for your sake, not mine.
- Now is the judgment of the world. Now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.
- He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. So the crowd answered him, We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever.
- How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is the Son of Man? So Jesus said to them, The light is among you for the little while longer.
- [2 : 1 2] Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.
- This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. We'll keep your Bibles open. If we haven't met, my name's Roy, one of the pastors here. And we're going to be working our way, and continue working our way through John's Gospel.
- So keep it in front of you there. Let's pray. As we come to God's word, let's pray. Our Father in heaven, thank you that we can gather here this morning. And as we sit under your word, we get to know you, and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Please work in us by your spirit, we pray, to help us to live lives which please you, and honour the Lord Jesus. We ask it in his name. Amen. Well, timing is everything.
- It's timing and humour. If you don't have the punchline at the right time, it's not funny. It's having the difficult conversation. You've got to pick the right time to have it. In the race, when to make you move.

[3 : 21] In the music, making sure everyone plays at the right time. In declaring your love for someone, you've got to make sure that it comes back, doesn't it? The I love you comes back, just so you know. If you're playing tennis, in hitting the ball, or playing the cricket, timing is everything.

Maybe calling election, timing is important as well. Apparently, we are living in a very perilous time in world history. The doomsday clock has been moved forward to 90 seconds before midnight, just so you know.

The doomsday clock is the thing that gives us a real feel by the scientists and those who know about the danger we are in of a nuclear holocaust occurring.

It's never been closer to midnight than it is now. Now, you might think, well, some might think, that a nuclear holocaust is the worst thing that could ever happen in the world.

Doom. But you'd be wrong. The biggest event and the greatest event in world history is yet to come, but at one level has already come 2,000 years ago.

[4 : 43] not doom, but glory. So here in John 12, it's Passover time. And that is the reason for this feast that's happening in Jerusalem.

Passover time is one of three feasts where every able-bodied man was supposed to go up to Jerusalem to worship at the temple. And there'd be up to three million people turn up into Jerusalem. It's a time when they remembered their great salvation, their great exodus out of Egypt about 1,400 years earlier.

When God saved them, God punished those who did not put the blood of a lamb over the doorpost and he passed over those who did and rescued his people and brought them out of Egypt and took them to the promised land.

God saved his people. It was a time of deliverance for those who trusted in God's word. It was a time of great salvation. It was the event in Israel's history. Passover time.

Expectations are high. There was a longing for a king, a Christ, who now rescued them from the Romans. That's the time that we're in, in John chapter 12.

[5 : 52] Now when John Baptist came on the scene, people thought that he might be the Christ. Remember back in John chapter 1 verse 19. This is the testimony of John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, who are you?

And John confessed and did not deny it but confessed, I am not the Christ. Then after feeding 5,000 people in the wilderness, we're reading John chapter 6, the people saw the sign that he'd done and they said, this indeed is the prophet who has come into the world.

Perceiving that they were about to come and take him by force and make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself. And now here in John 12, just after having raised Lazarus from the dead, we hear the reaction of the crowd of people who see Jesus coming to Jerusalem.

We saw it last week in John chapter 12 verse 13. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him crying out, Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel.

Waving palms was well associated with the nationalistic hope of a Messiah coming to deliver his people. Hosanna, give salvation now. Hebrew expression for save.

[7 : 09] Passover is the time to remember God's great saving work in the past for the Jew. Could it be that Jesus is the King who's come to save us from the Romans?

And then in a passage here now, verse 20, is the great turning point in John's Gospel. Now, the hour has come.

At one level, it's the turning point of world history. The hour came and it's all because the Greeks have come to see Jesus. Be careful of Greeks bearing presents, we're told, but these are Greeks, Suvalaki, loving oil, olive oil, pastor loving Greeks.

They've come to the Passover feast as well. Not because they're Jews, but because they admired some of the things they saw in Judaism. Now, what is the significance of the Greeks turning up now?

Why is this the moment that Jesus chooses to say the hour has come? Why?

[8 : 29] I think there's two reasons. One is because of Isaiah chapter 49 verse 6. It's too small a thing that my anointed one, my servant, would save just the Jews, but he's going to save the nations.

So, Isaiah chapter 49 verse 6. Jesus came to save the world, not just the Jews. And by the Greeks coming to Jesus, we see that Jesus is the King, is the Lord, is the Saviour of both Jew and Greek.

Now, the Bible often speaks about the Gospel being for both the Jew and the Greek. Right? In Acts, in Romans, in 1 Corinthians, in Acts chapter 14 verse 1. Now at Iconium they entered together to the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed.

Romans chapter 3 verse 9. What then? Are the Jews any better off? Not at all, for we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin. Mention of the Greeks means that now, truly, the whole world is coming to Jesus, which is just what the Pharisees and Sadducees have been saying had happened, the sentences through before.

Jesus has come to save both the Gentiles, the nations, as well as the Jews. And when you mention Jews and Greeks, that is the whole world. But I think a second reason is because of 1 Corinthians chapter 1 verse 18.

[9 : 59] Jews demand signs, Greeks look for wisdom. 1 Corinthians chapter 1 verse 22.

The Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to the Gentiles. But those were called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God.

For the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men. Now, so far in John's gospel, that's exactly what we've been seeing.

Jews demanding signs. then we'll believe. Not recognising the significance of the signs that have been done amongst them. And now the Greeks are turning up, looking for Jesus, the wise one, where wisdom is to be found, but they'll be confounded by him as well.

And verse 23, John chapter 12 verse 23, we'll pick it up at verse 21. So they came to Philip who was from Bethsaida in Galilee and asked him, Sir, we wish to see Jesus.

[11 : 11] Philip went and told Andrew and Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus and Jesus answered them, The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

The clock has been ticking in John's gospel now from the very start. There's been an expectation of a time, a time, an hour that must come when something earth-shattering will take place.

But when is the question? And it's been not yet, not yet, not yet, all the way so far. John chapter 2 verse 4 in Canaan when he goes and does his first sign turning water into wine, he tells his mother his hour is not yet.

And then in John chapter 4 when he addresses the woman at the well and tells her that there's an hour coming when worship will be transformed, not on this mountain nor another mountain, but spirit and truth you'll worship him.

John chapter 7 verse 6 on an earlier occasion going up to the feast of tabernacles in Jerusalem he says not yet. And in John chapter 8 verse 20 teaching at the temple when he's the Christ they wanted to seize him but they couldn't because his hour was not yet to be seized.

- [12 : 22] But now as the whole world goes after him, goes over to him, the hour has come, the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified, not by though a victorious uprising, he just walked in riding on a donkey, the cult, the foal of a donkey, not by a military coup, not by a political overturning of things, toppling of powers and governments, but by something completely incomprehensible to those around about them.

The hour has come for the greatest moment in human history so far, the turning of time from BC to AD. And we see it's going to be glory verse 24.

Truly, truly I say to you unless a grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies it remains alone but if it dies it bears much fruit.

Now is the time for the Son of Man to be glorified. Glory is one of the key themes that come in John's Gospel. Now we see how it comes, not by triumph over the oppressor but by the death of the Son of God.

Now is the time for Jesus to be glorified but it won't become him being installed as king in Jerusalem on a throne in any earthly sense. But what does it say verse 24?

- [13 : 51] If the grain stays on the bush it just remains a single grain but if it falls and dies it can bear much fruit. As the seed goes to the ground germinates, sprouts, grows, it becomes a plant that blossoms and grows more fruit.

One wheat seed lots of wheat sheaves a wheat bush with lots of more wheat on it. Jesus speaking clearly of his death and resurrection his ascension his glorification through which the crop will grow a great harvest will come.

But you see there's a clear choice in verse 25. Jesus tells the disciples that the kind of followers he's after are devoted ones. Verse 25 and verse 26 show us clearly whoever loves his life loses it.

Whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me he must follow me and where I am there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me the Father will honour him.

Those who serve Jesus must follow him his way not their own way. Those who serve Jesus will have eternal life.

- [15 : 09] His way is of self-sacrifice. Our way is to be of self-sacrifice as well. Those who do not serve Jesus will not have eternal life.

You cannot have it any clearer than that. It's a clear choice. Love, hate. Clear choice.

It's a clear and fundamental preference is what's going on here with the idea of love and hate. To prefer our own ways and deny God's rule over our life is to focus on self and my glory.

Now there are some things that we will find hard to believe. Some things hard to obey in scriptures. Things that seem nonsense, counterintuitive even, to the society that we live in or people around it will consider it incomprehensible that we might live this way.

But if we're going to prefer the way of the Lord Jesus and hate the way of the world, well then we're going to be swimming against the tide.

- [16 : 22] We won't swim with the tide of this world. It'll be difficult. I was speaking to someone a while ago and they were saying they're going to go into a triathlon.

and I just smiled at myself because the triathlon involves a swim with the current of the river. Only 700 metres, that'd be nice, wouldn't it?

But if you want to swim in Jesus' triathlon, you're going to be swimming against the tide. It'll be difficult. But it will be better now and better in the future.

If we hate our earthly desires and preferences which come naturally in this world, well then we will keep Jesus' promises or better still guard our life to eternal life.

We'll protect it from loss. We'll ward off the things that will want to take us astray. We'll be diligent to stick close to Jesus when things would want to take us away from him.

[17 : 25] We'll guard it, guard the good deposit that's been entrusted to us. That's what we'll do. We'll protect it from loss. Now again, love hates talking about a fundamental preference.

Not to hate on an absolute scale but a preference. Have a preference for the things of God and his ways, his priorities, his son's glory, not mine, not my reputation but the son's reputation, not my glory.

Then we will have eternal life. And note this verse 26, it's pretty impressive isn't it? The Father will honour you. How good will that be?

The creator of the universe will honour you for honouring him. Now that's something to look forward to. Far better than the praise of men.

That's the praise, the glory to look forward to. Imagine that, being put on stage and the creator of the universe saying, well done and honouring you.

[18 : 36] That is the thing that will come in our faithful following the Lord Jesus Christ. That is something that transcends anything this world can give, any prize this world can give, any glory this world could give.

The Father saying, well done, good and faithful servant. Now, some here are following Jesus, you know this is true. We all need God's help to stop doing things our way, to do things God's way, to hate our natural way of life and to have life.

Keep pressing on. Let me encourage you to do that. And some here, we're glad you're here, are not yet followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And you're all thinking, the rest of you are crazy and Jesus is nuts. Are you really saying that God's ways are better than my natural desires, my sinful desires and I'm saying yes?

Jesus saying yes. Why don't you give it a try and see? It isn't so much our expectations of Jesus that are in question, not us thinking about Jesus.

[19 : 49] Let's turn it upside down and get it right. It's Jesus' expectation of us that matters. Following Jesus means following him in a life of self-denial, even possibly to the point of death.

It means letting go of the world to gain something far, far better. It's through death that glory comes. It's through sacrificial death that eternal life comes.

brothers and sisters, if you're finding it difficult for the Lord Jesus Christ right now, that's normal Christianity.

The world hates you, that's normal. Keep pressing on. Keep pressing on for the Father's well done.

all the disciples died for their Lord Jesus. John the Baptist lost his head for speaking the truth. We read of James' death under Herod by the sword in Acts chapter 12.

[21 : 02] Paul suffered incredibly for the sake of the Lord and Saviour Jesus. In fact, God promises that all who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

2 Timothy chapter 3 verse 12. Brothers and sisters, what will you choose? We press on.

Jesus is now troubled. It's a troubling hour. Verse 27 to 29. The hour is rightly troubling for him. Jesus knows his glorification comes through sacrificial death on a cross.

and all that entails. The expectation of this hour is glorification through humiliating death. Should he avoid it?

There's the real question, right? Now is my soul troubled and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this purpose I've come to this hour.

[22 : 08] Father, glorify your name. Then a voice came from heaven. I've glorified it and I'll glorify it again. This hour is a turning point of human history that's coming, that's now upon us.

Jesus is truly human, right? He's not some super human hero through whom death is but a flesh wound. He knows what it's like and what's in store for him.

He will feel every cruel blow of the whip that's to come. He knows he is in for what he's going to get and will feel every beating he receives and every nail that's hammered through his limbs.

Yet he will go through it with the plan that they have, God, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit have planned from together since the beginning of creation before the beginning of time.

This is the hour, the pivotal hour in cosmic history that's coming and Jesus wants to bring glory and praise and honour to the Father, to the Father's name and so the Father speaks.

[23 : 29] Notice God has glorified his name already in all that Jesus has been doing and saying and it's through the death of the Son that he'll glorify his name. again. And so we see the outcome in verses 30 to 33.

Four things will be the outcome now that the hour of Jesus' glorification has come. Firstly, judgment on the world. Secondly, Satan driven out, the rule of the world, John chapter 8, driven out.

Thirdly, Jesus lifted up and fourthly, gathering all men being drawn to Jesus. So first, judgment on the world. There's a division, a division between light and darkness. A division between good and evil.

They'll be brilliantly exposed. You see there in verse 31, now is the judgment of this world. It's going to be clear as crystal. The world refers to the people who live in the world, both Jews and Greeks, a way of speaking of all mankind, mind, by passing judgment on Jesus, people are actually going to be passing judgment on themselves.

As people reject Jesus, they'll be rejected by God. Those who accept the Son, believe in the Son, will be honoured by the Father.

[24 : 41] Those who reject the Son, condemned by God. Secondly, Satan's defeat. Now we see Satan thrown down. Now the rule of the world is cast out.

The cross will mark the defeat of Satan, the ruler of this world. Though the cross looks like Satan defeating God, it's actually the end of Satan's reign.

It's his demise. We learnt in Revelation last year that Satan is cast down, defeated by the blood of the Lamb. Revelation chapter 12, verse 6 and 7 to 11. Jesus is enthroned in heaven by the obedience to the death on the cross, expelled Satan from any pretense of power.

The only power he has lies in the first place. And third, lifting up. Jesus will be lifted up at this hour, he'll be lifted up on the cross. It's clearly in view now, the very next thing that's going to happen, but not only being lifted up on the cross, verse 33, but be lifted up to glory as well.

Isaiah 52, verse 13, the lifting up of the Lord is through his sufferings. You can't separate the death on the cross from the subsequent exaltation to glory.

[25 : 59] It's Philippians 2 territory, Hebrews 1 tells us. And finally, gathering. As a result, the glorification to the death on the cross, he will draw men or people or nations to himself.

not every person individually, right? Not every individual person, but all classes, all nations of mankind will be drawn to Jesus.

There will be neither Jew nor Greek, but one in Christ Jesus. It reminds us of the trigger of the Greeks coming to Jesus, who are the first of the nations to come to Jesus at the Passover festival.

And now things are imminent, verse 34 following. Now things that Jesus teaches about himself baffles his hearers. Look what's going on here, that baffles them.

So the crowd answered him, they clearly know that Jesus is talking about someone dying, right? So the crowd answered him, we've heard from the law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say the Son of Man must have lifted up?

[27 : 03] Who is this Son of Man? If Jesus is the Christ, they understand from the law that the Christ, or the Son of Man, must live forever.

I mean, they don't understand that Jesus is saying that the Son of Man must be lifted up, that he's dying on the Roman cross. They don't get that. How can that possibly be the case? And it's Daniel chapter 7 territory where it's linked to the anointed king who reigns in the cosmos.

How can it be that it's just mind-boggling, you just can't get it. It's a mystery. So Jesus reiterates that he'll only be with them for a little time longer, and living in rejection of him and living in darkness, you can't see where you're going, you'll be stumbling around.

The danger is in the darkness that takes you and overcomes you and destroys you. darkness is talking about the way of the world, living in rejection of Jesus. So Jesus says, now is the time to believe in him, now is the time, and so become sons of light, they become like him.

That is, leave the kingdom of darkness and come into the kingdom of the sun, the kingdom of light and life and immortality. Come now, he's saying. Don't dilly-dally, now is the time.

[28 : 33] Well, brothers and sisters, this present hour, the hour that we're living in currently, now is the judgment, now is the Satan cast down, now Jesus is glorified and now all people have been drawn to him.

The cross was the time, the hour, the moment that Jesus was heading for. And we now live in the era that ticks on in the hour after Jesus has died and risen again.

Jesus has been glorified, he has been exalted, he has been lifted up to reign as king forever. That's why we call it the year of the Lord. And our domini, year of the Lord.

Jesus reigns now. It's not the common era. The clock is still ticking, and we don't know how many more ticks it will tick for before the Lord Jesus returns in all his glory.

And the hour has come for everyone to recognise that Jesus is the Christ, the King, the Saviour, the Ruler, the Lord of all. Now is the time. It doesn't come about by a vote.

[29 : 55] It came about by a decisive victory at the cross. It isn't for us to doubt or debate whether Jesus did or didn't, or to posit alternative leaders.

He is the Christ who graciously rules now and will graciously rule, powerfully rule, forever. Our only response is to recognise him as king or to live in opposition to that rule.

They're the only two responses we can make. The one who becomes king through death and subsequent resurrection and exaltation of glory bears much fruit.

Having been drawn to Jesus, those of us who have, what does our following him look like? Do our lives demonstrate, recognise, acknowledge that Jesus is our king, our Lord, the one that we follow through thick and thin?

The one who we listen to and obey from his word? The one whose ways we prefer over our own goals? And the good news is that salvation is still open to all, to all who recognise Jesus as the king of the universe.

[31 : 28] The leaders of the Jewish nation were desperately opposed to Jesus. They would not come to him, even with the evidence of Lazarus raised before them.

Now, Jesus will do one more sign. He himself will rise from the dead and so call all people to himself.

Some obey the call, others reject the call. People have been divided over Jesus throughout history, preferring he would go away and leave them in their preferences.

But the light is still shining. Ultimate darkness is yet to come. It's still time to believe in Jesus and follow him before the hour, the time for coming to believe is over forever.

Let's pray. Our Father in heaven, we thank you that you have glorified your son, the Lord Jesus Christ. we pray that our following of him might be worthy of him and that you might welcome us and give us the honour of following the Lord Jesus on that last day.

[32 : 52] And we pray for those who are doubting and struggling and finding it difficult to do so. Please help us to keep walking with Jesus as our loving Lord and Saviour.

And Father we pray for those who still to confess that Jesus is Lord. Father we pray that you might bring a change of heart, a willingness to love him and to deny self.

For we pray it in Jesus name. Amen.