

## John 12:20–26 (NKJV)

### The Purpose of the Cross Pt1

<sup>20</sup> Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. <sup>21</sup> Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.”

<sup>22</sup> Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

<sup>23</sup> But Jesus answered them, saying, “The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. <sup>24</sup> Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. <sup>25</sup> He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. <sup>26</sup> If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.

## Introduction

The besetting sin of pragmatic, style-conscious evangelicals has always been that they shamelessly

borrow fads and talking points from the unbelieving world.

Today's evangelicals evidently don't believe the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God (1 Corinthians 3:19).

Virtually any theory, ideology, or amusement that captures the fancy of secular pop culture will be adopted, slightly adapted, perhaps cloaked in spiritual-sounding language, propped up with proof texts, and peddled as an issue that is vital for evangelicals to embrace if we don't want to become totally irrelevant.

That's precisely how evangelicals in the mid-twentieth century became obsessed for several decades with positive thinking, self-esteem, and "Christian psychology."

After that, it was marketing savvy and promotional strategies. By the beginning of the twenty-first century it was postmodernism, repackaged and aggressively promoting itself as the Emerging Church movement.

Today, critical race theory, feminism, intersectional theory, LGBT advocacy, progressive immigration policies, animal rights, and other left-wing political causes are all actively vying for evangelical acceptance under the rubric of "social justice."

There have been many threats to the gospel over the years, but usually you can see the storm clouds brewing before it hits.

But occasionally a new threat to the simplicity or clarity of the gospel seems to erupt with stunning force and suddenness. The current controversy over “social justice” and racism is an example of that.

Four years ago, I would not have thought it possible for Bible-believing evangelicals to be divided over the issue of racism.

As Christians we stand together in our affirmation of the second great commandment (“You shall love your neighbor as yourself” — Leviticus 19:18). We therefore stand together against every hint of racial animus.

Racism is a stain on American history that has left shame, injustice, and horrible violence in its wake. The institution of slavery and a costly civil war left a deep racial divide and bred bitter resentment on every side.

No sensible person would suggest that all the vestiges of those evils were totally erased by the civil rights movement of the mid-twentieth century. Civil rights legislation now guards the legal principle of equal rights for all Americans, but no law can

change the heart of someone who is filled with prejudice or bitterness.

Thankfully, however, much progress has been made. Racial relations in secular America are not what they were even fifty years ago. The American attitude has changed. White supremacy and all other expressions of purposeful, willful, or ideological racism are almost universally condemned.

As Christians we know that the human heart is evil, so undoubtedly there are still people who secretly harbor animosity against ethnicities other than their own.

But any open expression of acrimony, ill will, or deliberate antagonism across ethnic lines will be scorned and emphatically rejected across the whole spectrum of mainstream American life today.

There are people—increasing numbers of them—so obsessed with this issue that they seem able to find proof of racism in practically everything that is said or done by anyone who doesn't share their worldview.

And yet, as the issue of racial division has become more and more a focus in the secular world and in the news media, evangelicals eager to

engage the culture have taken up the issue.

Unfortunately, many who have spoken on this issue have simply echoed the wisdom of this world rather than addressing the issue in a truly gospel-centered way. As a result, rancorous discourse over ethnic differences has eclipsed the gospel and divided the church—even among those evangelicals who might be most likely to self-describe as “gospel-centered Christians.”

It’s quite common these days for Christian leaders addressing this issue to call for people who have never harbored a racist thought to confess the guilt of racism because their ancestors may have been racists.

Expressions of repentance have been demanded of white evangelicals for no actual transgression, but because they are perceived to have benefited from “white privilege.” Supposedly, their skin color automatically makes them culpable for the racism of the past.

One influential evangelical leader, in an article titled “We Await Repentance for Assassinating Dr. King,” suggested that racial reconciliation in the church cannot even *start* until white Christians confess their parents’ and grandparents’ complicity

in “*murdering a man who only preached love and justice*” (meaning Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.).

(The Gospel Coalition

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So by this view of “social justice,” a person’s skin color might automatically require a public expression of repentance—not merely for the evils of his ancestors’ culture, but also for specific crimes he cannot possibly have been guilty of.

If this is accurate, then it could be argued that all of us Americans are guilty through our parents and grandparents of allowing Hitler to take control and kill 6 million Jews. By this view we are complicit in our apathy towards the rise of such evil.

There’s nothing remotely “just” about that idea, and certainly nothing related to the gospel of Jesus Christ. The answer to every evil in every heart is not repentance for what someone else may have done, but repentance for our own sins, including hatred, anger, bitterness, or any other sinful attitude or behavior.

As Christians committed to the authority of Scripture and the truth of the gospel, we have

better answers than the world could ever give to the problems of racism, injustice, human cruelty, and every other societal evil. We have the cross of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit who grows and leads us in all love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

As Christians we are reconciled with God and united with Christ. To understand that doctrine is to be reconciled with one another. This is a major emphasis in all the Bible's teaching about forgiving one another as God has forgiven us. Christians should not be the ones dividing over race in a racially charged environment. We are the peacemakers and the lovers of all men. We don't seek vengeance. We forgive seventy times seven.

I deplore racism and all the cruelty and strife it breeds. I am convinced the only long-term solution to every brand of ethnic animus is *the gospel of Jesus Christ*. In Christ alone are the barriers and dividing walls between people groups broken down, the enmity abolished, and differing cultures and ethnic groups bound together in one new people (Ephesians 2:14–15)

The evangelicals who are saying the most and talking the loudest these days about what's referred to

as “social justice” seem to have a very different perspective. Their rhetoric certainly points a different direction, demanding repentance and reparations from one ethnic group for the sins of its ancestors against another. It’s the language of law, not gospel—and worse, it mirrors the jargon of worldly politics, not the message of Christ.

*(The above introduction was adapted from a series of blogs by John MacArthur on Social Justice [www.gty.org](http://www.gty.org))*

# Review

## John 12:1–19 (NKJV)

### *Mary Anoints Christ*

Matt. 26:6–12; Mark 14:3–9

**12** Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead.

<sup>2</sup> There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him.

<sup>3</sup> Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His

feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

<sup>4</sup> But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said,

<sup>5</sup> "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" <sup>6</sup> This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.

<sup>7</sup> But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial.

<sup>8</sup> For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."

<sup>9</sup> Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead.

<sup>10</sup> But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also,

<sup>11</sup> because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.

### ***The Triumphal Entry***

Matt. 21:1–9; Mark 11:1–10; Luke 19:29–38

<sup>12</sup> The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,

<sup>13</sup> took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out:

“Hosanna!

‘Blessed is *He who comes in the name of the Lord!*  
The King of Israel!’”

<sup>14</sup> Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written:

<sup>15</sup> “*Fear not, daughter of Zion;*  
Behold, your King is coming,  
Sitting on a donkey’s colt.”

<sup>16</sup> His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and *that* they had done these things to Him.

<sup>17</sup> Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness.

<sup>18</sup> For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign.

<sup>19</sup> The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, “You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!”

# Lesson

## I. The Seeking of the Separated

## II. The Sacrifice of the Savior

## III. The Selflessness of Service

### I. The Seeking of the Separated

**20** Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast.

**21** Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."

**22** Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

**20** Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast.

**20** Now there were certain **Greeks**

**Original Word:** Ἕλληνας, ηνος, ὁ

**Transliteration:** Hellén

**Phonetic Spelling:** (hel'-lane)

**Usage:** a Hellene, the native word for a Greek; it is, however, a term wide enough to include all Greek-speaking (i.e. educated) non-Jews.

1672 Héllēn – an Hellene, i.e. a Greek. 1672/Hellēn ("Greek") originally referred to any native Greek and later became synonymous with any Greek-speaking person, i.e. anyone who followed Greek culture (and especially) spoke Greek.

This is an amazing statement

That Greeks would come to the feast and would pursue Christ.

This is illustration of what the Pharisees said in v.19

**19** The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, “You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!”

They did not mean that every single person in the world had gone after him, but rather that now even the Greeks, Gentiles were going after him.

The word “world” is often used this way in John.

**John 12:47** (NKJV)

47 **And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.**

**John 1:29** (NKJV)

29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

**John 4:42** (NKJV)

42 Then they said to the woman, “Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard *Him* and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.”

**John 18:20** (NKJV)

20 Jesus answered him, “**I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing.**

**Acts 17:6** (NKJV)

6 But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the

rulers of the city, crying out, “These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.

**John 3:16–17** (NKJV)

**16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**

**17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.**

This word “world” is emphasized because of the strong prejudicial separation the Jews had with the Gentiles.

“As the recipients of God’s Old Testament covenant promises, the Jews considered themselves to be superior to the pagan Gentiles because of their God and had no interest in letting Gentiles in.

For example, rather than proclaim God’s message to the Gentile city of Nineveh as he had been called to do, Jonah fled in the opposite direction. He deeply resented the idea that Gentiles could know his God. After he (reluctantly) went and proclaimed God’s impending judgment on the city, the people of Nineveh repented.

Predictably, instead of bringing him joy,

it greatly displeased Jonah and he became  
angry. He prayed to the Lord and said, “Please Lord, was not this what I said while I was still in my own country? Therefore in order to forestall this I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity.” (Jonah 4:1–2)

So deeply ingrained was the Jews’ prejudice against Gentiles that even the Jewish believers in Christ were slow to accept them.

Peter reminded the Gentiles gathered in Cornelius’s house,

### **Acts 10:28**

“You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man who is a Jew to associate with a foreigner or to visit him”

It took a vision from God (10:9–20, 34–35) to convince him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles.

When Cornelius and the other Gentiles heard Peter’s message, believed, and received the Holy Spirit, It says in **Acts 10:45**

“all the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also”.

When Peter returned to Jerusalem, in Acts 11:3

“those [believers] who were circumcised took issue with him, saying, ‘You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them’ ”.

In his defense, Peter related his vision and the salvation of the Gentiles (demonstrated by their receiving the Holy Spirit [vv. 15–17]) at Cornelius’s house (vv. 4–17).

It was only then that his accusers “quieted down and glorified God, saying, ‘Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life’ ” (v. 18).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12–21](#) (pp. 20–21). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

This mentality would have been fed by the Plan of God to reach the Jews first.

It was God’s desire that the gospel be offered first to His chosen people, Israel (Amos 3:2; cf. Deut. 7:6–8; 10:15; 14:2; 1 Kings 3:8; 1 Chron. 16:13; Pss. 105:6; 135:4; Isa. 41:8–9; 44:1–2; Ezek. 20:5).

Jesus told a Samaritan woman that “salvation is from the Jews” (John 4:22); that is, not only did it

originate with them (since Jesus the Messiah was a Jew), but it also was offered to them first.

When He sent the Twelve out on a preaching mission, the Lord charged them, “Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. 10:5–6).

And when a Gentile woman (Mark 7:26) begged Him to heal her demon-possessed daughter, Jesus tested her faith by telling her bluntly, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. 15:24).

It was only after His death and resurrection, after Israel had officially rejected His ministry, that Jesus commanded the disciples that “repentance for forgiveness of sins ... be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47).

### **Acts 13:42–49 (NKJV)**

<sup>42</sup> So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. <sup>43</sup> Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

<sup>44</sup> On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. <sup>45</sup> But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul. <sup>46</sup> Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. <sup>47</sup> For so the Lord has commanded us:

‘I have set you as a light to the Gentiles,  
*That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.*’”

<sup>48</sup> Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

<sup>49</sup> And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region.

The gospel, Paul wrote to the Romans, “is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12-21](#) (p. 20). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

So the blessings of salvation were **never meant to be limited exclusively to Israel.**

On the day the ark of the covenant was brought to Jerusalem, a song of thanksgiving was sung that included a reiteration of Israel's duty to declare the true God to the nations:

(1 Chron. 16:8, 24–30)

Oh give thanks to the Lord, call upon His name; make known His deeds among the peoples.... Tell of His glory among the nations, His wonderful deeds among all the peoples. For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; He also is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the Lord made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are before Him, strength and joy are in His place. Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name; bring an offering, and come before Him; worship the Lord in holy array. Tremble before Him, all the earth; indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved. (1 Chron. 16:8, 24–30)

The Jews' narrow, provincial, prejudicial attitude overlooked the Old Testament promises and their national mandate to proclaim the salvation of God to the Gentiles.

In His covenant with Abraham, God promised him, “In you all the families of the earth will be blessed” (**Gen. 12:3**; cf. 22:18; 26:4; 28:14).

Commenting on that promise, Paul wrote,

**Gal. 3:8**

“The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘All the nations will be blessed in you’ ”.

In **Deuteronomy 32:21** God said of Israel, “They have made Me jealous with what is not God; they have provoked Me to anger with their idols. So I will make them jealous with those who are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation”;

in Romans 10:19 the apostle Paul appealed to this passage as proof that the gospel would be extended to the Gentiles.

In **Psalms 22:27** David wrote, “All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will worship before You,”

**Psalms 102:15** the psalmist added, “So the nations will fear the name of the Lord and all the kings of the earth Your glory.”

**Isaiah 49:6**

Isaiah predicted that God would “make [Messiah] a light of the nations so that [His] salvation may reach to the end of the earth”.

**In Isaiah 45:22** God graciously calls to sinners, “Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other.”

In **Romans 15:8–12**, Paul emphasized that it has always been God’s plan to bring Gentiles into His kingdom:

For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers, and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, “Therefore I will give praise to You among the Gentiles, and I will sing to Your name.” Again he says, “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people.” And again, “Praise the Lord all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise Him.” Again Isaiah says, “There shall come the root of Jesse, and He who arises to rule over the Gentiles, in Him shall the Gentiles hope.”

In that brief passage,

Paul quoted from all **three divisions** of the Old Testament (cf. Luke 24:44), the Law (Deut. 32:43), the Prophets (Isa. 11:10), and the Psalms (18:49; 117:1),

demonstrating to the Jews from their own Scriptures the truth of God's plan for Gentile salvation.

Clearly, God commanded that the gospel be preached to all people, of every nation and ethnic background (Matt. 24:14; Mark 13:10; cf. Matt. 26:13; 28:19–20; Col. 1:23; Rev. 14:6).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). *John 12–21* (p. 20). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

It is in this context that we have the verse that is so often misunderstood.

**John 12:32 (NKJV)**

***32 And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself."***

In this verse the “drawing” is a salvific drawing. It is the same word and same idea as in John 6:44

**John 6:44 (NKJV)**

***44 No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.***

This is not a prevenient grace drawing, as some teach this verse means.

The “all” in the verse refers to the Jews and Greeks...in context. He will save of all peoples.

**Ephesians 2:11–18 (NKJV)**

***11*** Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called

the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—<sup>12</sup> that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

<sup>14</sup> For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, <sup>15</sup> having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, <sup>16</sup> and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. <sup>17</sup> And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. <sup>18</sup> For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

John 10:16 (NKJV)

<sup>16</sup> **And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock *and* one shepherd.**

John 11:51–52 (NKJV)

<sup>51</sup> Now this he did not say on his own *authority*; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus

would die for the nation, <sup>52</sup> and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.

### **Galatians 3:27–28 (NKJV)**

<sup>27</sup> For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. <sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

### **Colossians 3:9–11 (NKJV)**

<sup>9</sup> ....., since you have put off the old man with his deeds, <sup>10</sup> and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, <sup>11</sup> where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave *nor* free, but Christ *is* all and in all.

**20** Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast.

They were most likely Gentile proselytes to Judaism (or at least God-fearers [Acts 10:22; 17:4, 17; cf. 8:27]; Gentiles who had abandoned their pagan

religion and turned to worship the true God), who had come to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). *John 12-21* (pp. 24-25). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

**21** Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and **asked him, saying**, “Sir, **we wish** to see Jesus.”

**asked him** Imperfect Act Ind  
**erótaó: to ask, question**

**Original Word:** ἐρωτάω

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** erótaó

**Phonetic Spelling:** (er-o-tah'-o)

**Definition:** to ask, question

2065 erōtáō (from eromai, "ask") – make an earnest request, especially by someone on "special footing," i.e. in "preferred position."

2065 /erōtáō ("to ask on special footing, intimacy") requests from a "preferred position" (E. Abbot, Johannine Grammar, 467,8). Such requesting receives special consideration because of the special relationship involved.

**saying** Pres Act Participle

**we wish** Pres Act Indicative

**theló: to will, wish**

**Original Word:** θέλω

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** theló

**Phonetic Spelling:** ( eth-el'-o,)

**Definition:** to will, wish

**Usage:** I will, wish, desire, am willing, intend, design.

Cognate: 2309 thélō (a primitive verb, NAS dictionary) – to desire (wish, will), wanting what is best (optimal) because someone is ready and willing to act.

**21** Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, “Sir, we wish **to see** Jesus.”

**see**

**horaó: to see, perceive, attend to**

**Original Word:** ὁράω

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** horaó

**Phonetic Spelling:** (hor-ah'-o)

**Definition:** to see, perceive, attend to

**Usage:** I see, look upon, experience, perceive, discern, beware.

3708 horaō – properly, see, often with metaphorical meaning: "to see with the mind" (i.e. spiritually see), i.e. perceive (with inward spiritual perception).

**21** Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.

The text does not state who these Greeks were, where they were from, why they wanted to see Jesus, or why they **came to Philip**. Perhaps Jesus was then in the part of the temple to which they were not permitted to go (Gentiles could go no farther than the Court of the Gentiles).

In that case, they may have seen Philip passing through the Court of the Gentiles, recognized him as one of Jesus’ disciples, and approached him. That Philip and Andrew are Greek names is not significant, since many Jews also had Greek names. But John’s note that Philip **was from Bethsaida of Galilee** may suggest that the Greeks singled him out for that reason. **Bethsaida** was near the Gentile region known as the Decapolis (Matt. 4:25; Mark 5:20; 7:31), and they may have been from that region. Further, as a native of Galilee, Philip likely spoke Greek.

**22** Philip came and told Andrew, and  
in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

Unsure of how to handle these Gentiles, **Philip came and told Andrew** about their request. Perhaps Philip hesitated to take them directly to Jesus because he remembered the Lord's admonition to the Twelve:

“Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans” (Matt. 10:5),

and His declaration that He

“was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. 15:24).

The Lord was also undoubtedly hard to reach in the crowds, and Philip may have wondered if it was possible or appropriate to interrupt Him. Furthermore, with Jesus' enemies watching His every move, Philip may have surmised that it was dangerous for the Jews to see Him talking with Gentiles.

It was natural for him to approach Andrew, since they were both from Bethsaida (John 1:44), and Andrew was more of an insider among the Twelve (along with Peter, James, and John). Together, **Andrew**

**and Philip came and told Jesus** about the Greeks' request for an interview.

The question arises as to why such an open-ended incident is included. Since there is no record that Jesus ever spoke to them, the best that can be said is that they represent Gentile interest—the wave of the near future as the Lord called the church, a new people made of Jews and Gentiles, to be His witness in the world.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [\*John 12–21\*](#) (pp. 25–26). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

## **II. The Sacrifice of the Savior**

**23** But Jesus answered them, saying, **“The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.**

**24** **Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.**

**23** But Jesus answered them, saying, “**The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.**”

“The hour **has come**  
erchomai, Perf Act Ind.

The Lord’s response is directed neither to Jews or Gentiles, but to all who choose to follow Him. Yet the coming of these Gentiles triggered the Lord’s declaration, “**The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified**” (cf. 13:31–32; 17:1, 5; Isa. 52:13). Significantly, this is the first time that Jesus spoke of His **hour** as being present;

in all previous references in John’s gospel, it had not yet arrived (2:4; 7:30; 8:20; cf. 7:6, 8). From this point on the Lord referred to it as imminent (v. 27; 13:1; 16:32; 17:1).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). *John 12–21* (pp. 26–27). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

**John 12:27 (NKJV)**

<sup>27</sup> “**Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour.**”

**John 13:1 (NKJV)**

**13** Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

**John 16:32** (NKJV)

<sup>32</sup> Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.

**John 17:1** (NKJV)

**17** Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,

**23** But Jesus answered them,

saying, “The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.”

In the context of the triumphal entry, the crowds no doubt interpreted Jesus’ words to mean that He was about to overthrow the Romans and set up His earthly kingdom. They would have remembered the prophecy of Daniel 7:13–14 concerning the **Son of Man** (unmistakably a title signifying messiahship to

those who knew the prophecy) and the establishing of His kingdom:

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). *John 12-21* (p. 27). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

## **Daniel 7:12–14** (NKJV)

<sup>12</sup> As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

<sup>13</sup> “I was watching in the night visions,  
And behold, *One* like the Son of Man,  
Coming with the clouds of heaven!  
He came to the Ancient of Days,  
And they brought Him near before Him.

<sup>14</sup> Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,  
That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.

His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion,  
Which shall not pass away,  
And His kingdom *the one*  
Which shall not be destroyed.

**Jesus’ next statement**, however, shattered any illusions the crowd had, turning their dreams of conquest into a vision of death. The Lord introduced it with the solemn phrase

**24** Most assuredly, I say to you,  
 unless a grain of wheat falls into the  
 ground and dies, it remains alone; but  
 if it dies, it produces much grain.

**truly, truly, I say to you** (cf. 1:51; 3:3, 5, 11; 5:19, 24, 25; 6:26, 32, 47, 53; 8:51, 58; 10:1, 7; 13:16, 20, 21, 38; 14:12; 16:20, 23; 21:18), underscoring its significance. The Son of Man would be glorified, not by conquering the Romans and immediately establishing His kingdom as they so eagerly anticipated but by dying. Using an agricultural illustration that would have been familiar to His audience

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). *John 12-21* (p. 27). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

unless a grain of wheat falls into the  
 ground and dies, it remains alone; but  
 if it dies, it produces much grain.

The Lord's point was that He would be glorified, but through death and resurrection. There could never be the establishing of His glorious kingdom with all its features promised in the Scriptures without the cross. Anyone who thinks that Jesus came to offer the kingdom to Israel without the cross, and thinks the cross was only a reaction because of Israel's unbelief, is a fool.

That is the very word Jesus used to describe that assumption. He said to the disciples on the road to Emmaus,

“O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?” Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. (Luke 24:25–27)

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12–21](#) (pp. 27–28). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

Jesus was not born to live a moral example,  
or to teach us principles of prosperity  
or to make your life better here.

He did not die to make you a better you.

He died to reconcile you to God.

To satisfy the wrath of God so that he could justly  
bring you into right relationship with Himself

### **Romans 3:24–26 (NKJV)**

<sup>24</sup> being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup> whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His

forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, <sup>26</sup> to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

### **2 Corinthians 5:19–6:1 (NKJV)**

<sup>19</sup> that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

<sup>20</sup> Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

**24....unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.**

Just as a **grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies** to produce a rich harvest, so also Christ's death would bear **much fruit** by providing salvation for many, of every tribe and language. That fruit would include countless Gentiles like these Greeks who desired to meet with Him.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). *John 12-21* (p. 28). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

### **Matthew 20:28 (NKJV)**

<sup>28</sup> just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

**Matthew 26:28** (NKJV)

<sup>28</sup> For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

**Hebrews 9:28** (NKJV)

<sup>28</sup> so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

**Revelation 5:9** (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup> And they sang a new song, saying:

“You are worthy to take the scroll,  
And to open its seals;  
For You were slain,  
And have redeemed us to God by Your blood  
Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,

**Revelation 7:9–12** (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup> After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, <sup>10</sup> and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation *belongs* to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” <sup>11</sup> All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the

four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, <sup>12</sup> saying:

“Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom,  
Thanksgiving and honor and power and might,  
*Be to our God forever and ever.*  
Amen.”

Regardless of race, every person who through faith in Christ receives eternal life is part of the spiritual harvest that resulted from His death

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12-21](#) (p. 28). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

### **III. The Selflessness of Service**

**25** He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

**26** If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.

Jesus then applied that truth with a general invitation illustrating the heart attitude required of one who receives His gift of salvation

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). *John 12-21* (p. 28). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

**25** He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

ὁ φιλῶν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἀπολλύει αὐτήν, καὶ ὁ μισῶν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τούτῳ εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον φυλάξει αὐτήν.

He who loves

ὁ φιλῶν Pres Act Parti “The one continually loving”

**25** He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

will lose it, Some manuscripts are future tense  
Some are Present tense.

**apollumi: to destroy, destroy utterly**

**Original Word:** ἀπόλλυμι

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** apollumi

**Phonetic Spelling:** (ap-ol'-loo-mee)

**Definition:** to destroy, destroy utterly

**Usage:** (a) I kill, destroy, (b) I lose, mid: I am perishing (the resultant death being viewed as certain).

622 apóllymi (from 575 /apó, "away from," which intensifies ollymi, "to destroy") – properly, fully destroy, cutting off entirely (note the force of the prefix, 575 / apó).

622 /apóllymi ("violently/completely perish") implies permanent (absolute) destruction, i.e. to cancel out (remove); "to die, with the implication of ruin and destruction" (L & N, 1, 23.106); cause to be lost (utterly perish) by experiencing a miserable end.

### **Matthew 10:28 (NKJV)**

<sup>28</sup> **And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.**

The one who **loves his life** in this world by preferring it over the interests of God's kingdom, ultimately **loses it**. On the other hand, the one **who hates his life in this world** by making Christ, not self, his first priority **will keep it**

**to life eternal.** Hating one's life is a Semitic expression that has the connotation of giving preference to one thing over another (cf. Gen. 29:31; Deut. 21:15 [the word translated “unloved” by the nasb in those verses literally means, “hated”]; Luke 16:13; Rom. 9:13). In this context it refers to preferring Christ over one's family, possessions, goals, plans, desires—even one's own life

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [\*John 12–21\*](#) (p. 28). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

### 1 John 2:15–17 (NKJV)

<sup>15</sup> Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. <sup>16</sup> For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. <sup>17</sup> And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

### Matthew 10:37–39 (NKJV)

<sup>37</sup> He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. <sup>38</sup> And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

39 He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

**Luke 14:26–27 (NKJV)**

26 “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.

27 And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

**Luke 14:33 (NKJV)**

33 So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.

Though it may not be required, being willing to give up everything to follow Christ is what separates true disciples from false professors. Jesus does not identify true saving faith by its perfection but by its affection. Those who truly come to Christ love Him above all else—all sin, all self-righteousness, all relationships, and all self-will.

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25 He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

**will keep****phulassó:** to guard, watch**Original Word:** φυλάσσω**Part of Speech:** Verb**Transliteration:** phulassó**Phonetic Spelling:** (foo-las'-so)**Definition:** to guard, watch**Usage:** (a) I guard, **protect**; mid: I am on my guard, (b) act. and mid. of customs and regulations: I keep, observe.

5442 phylássō (akin to 5441 /phýlaks, "a military guard") – properly, preserve by "having an eye on" (J. Thayer), referring to the uninterrupted vigilance shepherds show in keeping their flocks (see Lk 2:8, used with 5438 /phylaké, "a military guard," i.e. exercising unbroken vigilance as a military guard).

5442 /phylássō ("**keep watch over, keep secure**")

emphasizes the needed vigilance to keep what is entrusted.

Thus 5442 (phylássō) is often used in the NT in the Greek middle voice meaning, "Personally be on guard against," stressing the constant, personal interest involved with the guarding.

**26 If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.**

**Let him follow me** (ἐμοὶ ἀκολουθεῖτω [*emoi akoloutheitō*]). "Me (associative instrumental case) **let him**

**keep on following” (present active imperative of ἀκολουθεω [akoloutheō])**

Robertson, A. T. (1933). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Jn 12:26). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

The one who **serves** Jesus **must follow** Him;

**1 John 2:6 (NKJV)**

<sup>6</sup> He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

**1 John 1:7 (NKJV)**

<sup>7</sup> But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

**1 John 3:24 (NKJV)**

<sup>24</sup> Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

**1 John 4:15–16 (NKJV)**

<sup>15</sup> Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. <sup>16</sup> And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

## **Ephesians 5:1–2 (NKJV)**

**5** Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. <sup>2</sup> And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

## **1 Thessalonians 1:6 (NKJV)**

<sup>6</sup> And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit,

So true salvation is not only affection but also direction.

To those who follow, Jesus made two ultimate and glorious promises. First, **where** He is, **there** His **servants will be also**. That is nothing less than a promise of eternal heaven.

In John 14:3 Jesus told His disciples, “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also” (cf. 17:24). In contrast, His enemies did not know where He was going (John 8:14; 9:29) and could not go there (John 7:34; 8:21).

The second blessed promise to the one who **serves** Jesus is that **the Father will honor him**. All human

honors pale into insignificance compared to the eternal honor God will bestow on those who love and serve His Son. Those who “obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus [gain] with it eternal glory” (2 Tim. 2:10).

Through the death of Jesus Christ, God was “bringing many sons to glory” (Heb. 2:10). Though the world may hate those who serve the Lord Jesus Christ (John 15:18–19; 16:2; 17:14; 1 John 3:13; cf. Matt. 10:22; 24:9; Luke 6:22; 21:17),

God’s promise still holds true: “Those who honor Me I will honor” (1 Sam. 2:30). That promise, originally given to the Jews of the Old Testament, now extends through the cross to all people who truly believe.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12–21](#) (pp. 29–30). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.