

“The Hour Has Come”

August 9, 2026

John 12:20-36

I. Introduction

In the beginning of His ministry, when He changed water into wine, Jesus told His mother in [John 2:4](#) that **“My time has not yet come.”** Later in [John 7:30](#), following Jesus’ teaching in the Temple John wrote that **“they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his time had not yet come.”** After the Pharisees tried to trap Jesus using a woman caught in adultery and Jesus had called God His Father, [John 8:20](#) says, **“Yet no one seized him, because his time had not yet come.”** But now, the reason for Jesus’ coming to earth was imminent, so He said in [verse 23](#), **“The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.”**

Following Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, Matthew, Mark, and Luke ([Matthew 21:12-13](#); [Mark 11:15-17](#); [Luke 19:45-46](#)) all report that the next day (i.e., on Monday), Jesus cleansed the Temple. Today’s Scripture comes after that—either Tuesday or Wednesday. As far as John’s record is concerned, this is the end of Jesus’ public ministry. At the end of the conversations with the Greeks and the crowd, **“Jesus left and hid Himself from them.”** But before He went into seclusion, Jesus had 3 different encounters which brought everything to a finale. The first encounter was that of Jesus and the Greeks.

II. Three Encounters

A. Jesus and the Greeks. John doesn’t identify who these Greeks were, where they were from, why they wanted to see Jesus, or why **“they came to Philip.”** Perhaps Jesus was in the part of the temple where they were not permitted to go—Gentiles could go no further than the Court of the Gentiles under penalty of death. In that case, they may have seen Philip passing through the Court of the Gentiles and recognized him as one of Jesus’ disciples. They may have even known him from Bethsaida. Regardless of the reason, these Greeks approached Philip and asked for the privilege of an interview with Jesus. They wanted to be more than part of the crowd; they wanted to meet Jesus personally.

One of the themes in John's Gospel is, as [John 3:16](#) says, that Jesus is the Savior of the world. In [John 10:16](#) Jesus had said, **"I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd."** These Gentiles were part of the **"other sheep."** From the original Greek, it seems that these men were not just curious visitors or one-time investigators; they were accustomed to come and worship at the ordained feasts. Most likely they were *"God-fearers,"* i.e., they were Gentiles who attended the Jewish synagogue and sought the truth, but who had not yet become proselytes—followers of the Jewish religion with all of its does and don'ts. It's interesting that Gentiles came to see Jesus when He was a young child and now Gentiles—Greeks—came to see Him just before His death.

Seeming unsure of how to handle these Gentiles, **"Philip went to tell Andrew"** about their request. Together Philip and Andrew (who was often bringing people to Jesus) brought the request to Jesus. There were probably many people who wanted to see Jesus "up close and personal," but most of them were afraid of the Pharisees. Being from out of the country, these Gentile visitors either did not know about the danger, or they didn't fear the consequences.

There is no record that Jesus did talk with these men, but the message that He gave in response contains truths that apply to everyone. Jesus' reply was directed to all who would choose to follow Him—Jew or Gentile. When He said that **"the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified,"** the majority of the people who were listening must have thought Jesus meant that He was about to overthrow the Romans and set up His earthly kingdom. Obviously, this wasn't what He meant.

We might have expected Jesus to say something like: *"The hour has come that the Son of man should be crucified."* But Jesus looked beyond the cross to the glory that would follow as [Hebrews 12:2](#) says, **"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."** Jesus saw the conclusion or the result of the crucifixion and the glory that it would bring to God. Jesus saw the glory that came after the cross.

Jesus quickly shattered the hopes and dreams of all those expecting conquest when He said that the Son of Man would be glorified by dying. Jesus told them, **“Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.”** His point was that He would be glorified but through death and resurrection. Jesus used the image of a seed to illustrate the great spiritual truth that there can be no glory without suffering, no fruitful life without death, no victory without surrender. Jesus said that by itself, a seed is weak and useless; but when it is planted, **“it dies”** and **“it produces many seeds.”**

Jesus knew that He had come to die. He, also, knew that after the cross, the Gospel would spread to all nations of the world. He told Nicodemus in [John 3:14-15](#), **“Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.”** The Greeks had come to see *Him*, but Jesus pointed them towards His impending death. The only way they could really enjoy **“seeing Him,”** i.e., to have fellowship with Him, was through His atoning sacrifice. Just as **“the kernel falls to the ground and dies,”** Jesus’ death would bear much fruit by providing salvation for the world—for all those who come to see Him.

Jesus then applied this truth to those that would follow Him. The one who loves his life in this world and chooses the interests of the world over the interests of God’s kingdom will, in the long run, lose his life. On the other hand, the one who hates his life in this world and makes Christ, not himself, his first priority will keep it for eternal life. [Turn to Luke 9:23-24.](#) In [Matthew 23:12](#) Jesus said, **“Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”** [1 Peter 5:6](#) says, **“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.”**

B. Jesus and God the Father The thought of bearing the shame of sin, experiencing the wrath of God, and being separated from the Father as well as the pain of the crucifixion itself led to His heart being **“troubled.”** In His humanity, Jesus couldn’t help but react to this ordeal. His soul was troubled—He was upset, even horrified—not because He was questioning the Father’s will, but because He was fully conscious of all that the Cross involved. Jesus didn’t say, *“What shall I do?”* because He knew

what He was ordained to do; what God's will was. He said, **“What shall I say, ‘Father save me from this hour?’”** Jesus immediately answered His rhetorical question with a shout: **“No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify thy name!”**

In reply to Jesus' prayer, **“Father, glorify Thy name!”** we see an encounter between Jesus and God the Father. For the third time in Christ's earthly ministry, God the Father spoke audibly to His Son—the other two times are found in [Matthew 3:17](#) following Jesus' baptism, and in [Matthew 17:5](#) at Jesus' Transfiguration. As the Cross approached, the Father gave Jesus a double assurance: first, the Son's past life and ministry had glorified the Father, and, second, the Son's future suffering and death would also glorify the Father.

The people standing there heard some kind of sound but didn't understand what was said. Jesus said, **“This voice was for your benefit, not mine.”** The voice didn't come for Jesus' sake; He didn't need to hear the Father's audible voice to know that His prayer was answered. The bystanders had heard Jesus pray and then they had heard a sound from heaven in response to that prayer. That should have convinced the undecided that Jesus was in touch with the Father; that Jesus was the Son of God. At the same time, the Father's response, also, reassured the disciples or followers that Jesus' impending death in no way signified God's disapproval.

Jesus then went on to speak openly about the Cross. **“Now is the time for judgment of the world.”** It was the time of judgment for the world of sin and for Satan, the prince of the world. At first, the death of Jesus Christ would seem like a victory for the wicked world, but it would really be a judgment of the world. On the cross, Jesus would defeat Satan and his world system—[turn the](#) [Hebrews 2:14-15](#). Even though he is permitted to go to and fro on the earth, Satan is a defeated enemy. He is in his death throes even as we speak.

When Jesus spoke about being **“lifted up,”** He was talking about His crucifixion, but He was also talking about being glorified later on as He is lifted up to His rightful place in heaven. Isaiah wrote in

Isaiah 52:13, **“My servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.”** The Son of Man was glorified by being crucified and by being exalted in heaven.

When Jesus said, **“I will draw all men to myself,”** He didn’t mean universal salvation. He was referring to those who believe in His life, death, and resurrection—Jew or Gentile—as Romans 10:12 says, **“For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile-- the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him.”** The phrase **“all men”** also emphasizes that only through Christ’s death is sin satisfactorily atoned for—turn to 1 Peter 1:18-21. Salvation is only through Jesus.

C. Jesus and the Crowd Finally, there was the encounter of Jesus and the crowd. The people did not understand what Jesus was talking about. They knew that **“Son of Man”** was a title for the Messiah, but they could not understand why the Messiah would be crucified. Based on passages like Isaiah 9:7 (which we read during Advent) which says, **“Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end,”** the people assumed that the Messiah would come to defeat all God’s enemies and establish an everlasting kingdom of peace and righteousness. They were looking for a conqueror. This *is* what the Lord Jesus Christ will do BUT at His second coming. The crowd overlooked the clear teachings from Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, and others that at His first Advent the Messiah would come to die as a sacrifice for sins. So, they mocked Jesus and asked, *“What kind of Son of Man are you talking about?”*

But this wasn’t the time to discuss the fine points of theology—as verse 31 says, this was an hour of judgment and opportunity. So, Jesus extended to them one final invitation to make Him their Lord and Savior, **“You are going to have the light just a little while longer.”** Jesus is the Light of the World and He knew that only a short time remained for people to hear and respond to Him—2 Corinthians 6:2 says, **“Now was the day of salvation.”**

Despite all the indisputable evidence they had seen in the last 3 years, the Jewish people as a whole had concluded that Jesus was not the Messiah. Soon they would reach the conclusion that He should be executed as an impostor. The tragic end of Jesus’ public ministry to Israel is seen in verse 36: **“When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them.”** The Light went away;

God's patience had come to an end. Jesus' warning from [John 8:21](#), **"I am going away, and you will look for me, and you will die in your sin. Where I go, you cannot come"** was about to come true.

III. Conclusion

We are bombarded daily with ads for health insurance, life insurance, exercise equipment, weight loss programs and a plethora of medicines—all ways to plan for the future—both short-term and long-term. But Jesus says that there is only one way to plan; only one way to have a fruitful life and a guarantee of eternal life—follow Him in death, burial, and resurrection. In [John 10:10](#) He said, **"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full."** Life can never be fulfilled unless we yield ourselves to God and permit Him to *"plant us."* We must choose to die to self so that we may live unto God. [Turn to Romans 6:8-14.](#)

Jesus' challenge today is the same as it was in John 12: we must surrender our lives to Him. Note the contrasts: loneliness (a single seed) or fruitfulness (many seeds); losing your life or keeping your life; serving self or serving Christ; pleasing self or receiving God's honor. [Psalm 1:3](#) says, **"He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season, and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers."** Choose to allow Him to plant you so that you can be all you can be—whatever you do prospers.

[Romans 10:9](#) says that Jesus must be your Savior and your Lord, but it is up to you. Choose carefully—there is a limit to God's patience—at the end, **"When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them."** [Hebrews 9:27](#) says, **"It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,"** There's only going to be one question: "What did you do with Jesus?" Those who reject Jesus Christ by never going to Him in saving faith, will without a doubt face God's vengeance, wrath, and judgment in eternal punishment. [John 3:36](#), **"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."** Choose carefully—choose wisely—**"The hour has come."**