



JOHN 12:20-36 | JESUS TELLS OF HIS DEATH

- Verse 20 –
 - These **certain Greeks** are likely Greeks who have converted to Judaism. The Passover was not a feast to which Gentiles were invited, and certainly not **to worship**.
 - Bullinger says that these are “Gentiles, not Greek-speaking Jews,” but gives no explanation.
 - Exodus 12:48 requires circumcision for those who eat the Passover meal.
- Verses 21-22 –
 - The phrase, **Sir, we would see Jesus** became a popular phrase to have engraved in pulpits, reminding Pastors to preach Jesus. The encouragement may be in order but has the pitfall of removing the words from their context.
- Verse 23 –
 - It would be hard to take the glorification of the **Son of man** to be anything other than the establishment of the kingdom of God, for in this is His full glory. However, note that the verb is in the *subjunctive*, a tense of *possibility*: **should be glorified**. Both the NASB and the ESV fail to properly translate the subjunctive tense.
- Verse 24 –
 - Lest they think that the glorification was *next on the agenda*, the Lord gives one of 25 **verily, verily** statements in this Gospel. The statement clearly speaks of *death* before *glorification*.
 - Jesus uses the illustration of **a corn of wheat**.
 - The phrase is literally a “seed of grain.”
 - In older English, **corn** was a broadly used word for any seed kernel, such as *barley corn* and *pepper corn*.
 - The *maize* that modern English calls *corn* was not introduced to England until after the arrival of the pilgrims (1620, while the KJV was translated in 1611).
 - Jesus speaks figuratively of the “death” of the kernel, which, in turn, **bringeth forth much fruit**.
- Verse 25 –
 - For those who are not “right dividers” (dividing the message of the Kingdom from that of the Gospel of grace), this verse is hugely problematic. Either Jesus is *wrong*, or Jesus is preaching a self-based salvation.
 - Jesus clearly talks about **life eternal**, and what can that be if not *living forever*?
 - Jesus also clearly gives instruction on achieving that eternal life: *hate your life* rather than *love your life*. This is, no doubt, a word about self-sacrifice. It also says that *self-sacrifice* leads to **life eternal**.
 - Would there be another *plain sense* of these words? They are not problematic to the one who *rightly divides* because they would then only be applied to the Gospel of the Kingdom, which did indeed involve self-sacrifice.

- Verse 26 –
 - Jesus’ word to those who **would see Jesus** (v. 21) is **serve me** and **follow me**. Furthermore, the service to Jesus will be honored by the Father.
- Verses 27-28 –
 - The versification is odd in these verses. The change should be after the red-letters, with verse 27 going through **glorify thy name**.
 - The Lord is “thinking out-loud” in a sense, saying-
 - *What shall I say in response to the fact that my soul is troubled?*
 - *Shall I say, “Father, save me?”*
 - *No! This is the very reason I came!*
 - *I say: Father, glorify thy name.*
 - Verse 28 contains the second time that God spoke from heaven. This time God testifies that He *has* and *will* glorify His name.
- Verses 29-30 –
 - It is difficult to know what exactly the people heard.
 - Some **said that it thundered** but others said **an angel spake**.
 - It was clearly audible, and Jesus clearly referred to it as a **voice**, with seemingly no objection.
 - For some to attribute what they heard to an angel indicates that the audible noise was *voice-like*, and that perhaps some who were not paying attention to the situation attributed it to thunder, or perhaps they simply used thunder to avoid addressing the truth.
- Verse 31 –
 - In every prophetic passage of Hebrew Scriptures, the course of events included the **judgment of this world** prior to the establishment of the Kingdom.
 - Jesus announces not only this **judgment** but also that **the prince of this world** (Satan) will **be cast out**.
 - Clearly the Jewish people would have understood the Lord’s reference to **the prince of this world**, whether their understanding was fully informed or not.
 - Rabbinical teaching was of the *Sar ha-olam (prince of the age)*, who was believed to be the angel of death from the Passover (see note in *The Companion Bible* for more information).
- Verse 32-33 –
 - In contrast to Satan being **cast out**, the Lord will be **lifted up**, a reference that is most often taken as to the cross (as required by verse 33) but could also be inclusive of the ascension.
 - Perhaps it is best understood in light of [Matthew 24:27](#), where the Son of man “draws” as lightening, or [Matthew 24:30](#), where the Son of man appears and **all the tribes of the earth...shall see** Him.
- Verse 34 -
 - This shows that the people clearly knew that Jesus was talking about His death.
 - It also tells us that the Jewish people expected, from the pages of **the law**, that **Christ abideth for ever**.
 - For references, see [Psalm 89:4](#), [29](#), [36](#), [37](#). & [110:4](#). [Isaiah 9:7](#). [Ezekiel 37:25](#).
 - Note that **the law** is often used more broadly than the five books of Torah alone.