

# Exposition of the Gospel of John CHAPTER 43 CHRIST SOUGHT BY GENTILES

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## Transcript

Exposition of the Gospel of John

CHAPTER 43

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John 12:20-36

The following is a suggested Analysis of the passage which is to be before us:— 1. The desire of the Greeks to see Jesus, verses 20-23. 2. Christ's response, verses 24-26. 3. Christ's prayer and the Father's answer, verses 27, 28. 4. The people's dullness, verses 29, 30. 5. Christ's prediction, verses 31-33. 6. The people's query, verse 34. 7. Christ's warning, verses 35, 36. The end of our Lord's public ministry had almost been reached. Less than a week remained till He should be crucified. But before He lays down His life His varied glories must be witnessed to. In John 11 we have seen a remarkable proof that He was the Son of God: evidenced by His raising of Lazarus. Next, we beheld a signal acknowledgment of Him as the Son of David: testified to by the jubilant Hosannas of the multitudes as the king of Israel rode into Jerusalem. What is before us now concerns Him more especially as the Son of man. As the Son of David He is related only to Israel, but His Son of man title brings in a wider connection. It is as "the Son of man" He comes to the Ancient of days, and as such there is "given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him" (Dan. 7:14). In perfect keeping with this, our present passage shows us Gentiles seeking Him, saying, "We would see," not "the Christ," but "Jesus." Thus the Father saw to it that His blessed Son should receive this threefold witness ere He suffered the ignominy of the Cross. It is both instructive and blessed to trace the links which unite passage to passage. There is an intimate connection between this third section of John 12 and what has preceded it. Again and again in the course of these expositions we have called attention to the progressive unfolding of truth in this Gospel, and here, too, we would observe, briefly, the striking order followed by Christ in His several references to His own death and resurrection. In John 10 the Lord Jesus is before us as the Shepherd, leading God's elect out of Judaism and bringing them into the place of liberty, and in order to do this He lays down His life that He may possess these sheep (verses 11, 15, 17, 18). In John 11 He is seen as the resurrection and the life, as the Conqueror of death, with power in Himself to raise His own—a decided advance on the subject of the previous chapter. But in John 12 He speaks of Himself as "the corn of wheat" that falls into the ground and dies, that it may bear "much fruit." This speaks both of union and communion, blessedly

illustrated in the first section of the chapter, where we have the happy gathering at Bethany suppling with Him. If the Lord Jesus is to be to others the "resurrection" and the "life", we now learn what this involved for Him. He should be glorified by being the firstborn among many brethren. But how? Through death: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24). Life could not come to us but through His death; resurrection—life out of death accomplished. Except a man be born again he cannot enter the kingdom of God; and except Christ had died none could be born again. The new birth is the impartation of a new life, and that life none other than the life of a resurrected Savior, a life which has passed through death, and, therefore, forever beyond the reach of judgment. "The gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23 Greek). Some have experienced a difficulty here: If the Divine life in the believer is the life of the risen Christ, then what of the Old Testament saints. But the difficulty is more fanciful than real. It is equally true that there could be no salvation for any one, no putting away of sins, until the great Sacrifice had been offered to God. But surely none will infer from this that no one was saved before the Cross. The fact is that both life and salvation flowed backwards as well as forwards from the Cross and the empty sepulcher. It is a significant thing, however, that nowhere in the Old Testament are we expressly told of believers then possessing "eternal life," and no doubt the reason for this is stated in 2 Timothy 1:10, "But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." It is very striking to observe that our Lord did not speak of the union and communion of believers with Himself until the Gentiles here sought Him. It is a higher truth altogether than any which He ever addressed to Israel. His Messiahship resulted from a fleshly relationship, the being "Son of David," and it is on this ground that He was to sit upon the throne of His father David and "reign over the house of Jacob" (Luke 1:32, 33). But this was not the goal before Him when He came to earth the first time: to bring a people to His own place in the glory was the set purpose of His heart (John 14:2, 3). But a heavenly people must be related to Him by something higher than fleshly ties: they must be joined to Him in spirit, and this is possible only on the resurrection side of death. Hence that word; "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more" (2 Cor. 5:16). It is the One who has been "lifted up" (above this earth) that now draws all—elect Gentiles as well as Jews—unto Himself. "And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast:—The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus" (John 12:20, 21). This is very striking. The rejection of Christ by Israel was soon to be publicly evidenced by them delivering Him up to the Romans. As Daniel had announced centuries before, after sixty-nine weeks "shall Messiah be cut off" (John 9:26). Following His rejection by the Jews, God would visit the Gentiles "to take out of them a people for his name" (Acts 15:14). This is what was here foreshadowed by "the Greeks" supplicating Him. The connection is very striking: in verse 19 we find the envious Pharisees saying, "The world is gone after him," here, "And... certain Greeks... saying, We would see Jesus." It was a "first-fruit," as it were, of a coming harvest. It was the pledge of the "gathering together into one the children of God that were scattered abroad" (John 11:52). It was another evidence of the fields being "white already to harvest" (John 4:35). These "Greeks" pointed in the direction of those other "sheep" which the Good Shepherd must also bring. It is also significant to note that just as Gentiles (the wise men from the East) had sought Him soon after His birth, so now these "Greeks" came to Him shortly before His death. Exactly who these "Greeks" were we cannot say for certain. But there are two things which incline us to think that very likely they were Syro-Phoenicians. First, in Mark 7:26, we are told that the woman who came to Christ on behalf of her obsessed daughter, was "a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by nation." Second, the fact that these men sought out Philip, of whom it is expressly said that he "was of Bethsaida of Galilee"—a city on the borders

of Syro-Phoenicia. The fact that Philip sought the counsel of Andrew, who also came from Bethsaida in Galilee (see John 1:44), and who would therefore be the one most likely to know most about these neighboring people, provides further confirmation. That these "Greeks" were not idolatrous heathen is evidenced by the fact that they "came up to worship at the feast," the verb showing they were in the habit of so doing! These "Greeks" took a lowly place. They "desired" Philip: the Greek word is variously rendered "asked," "besought," "prayed." They supplicated Philip, making known their wish, and asking if it were possible to have it granted; saying, "Sir, we would see Jesus," or more literally, "Jesus, we desire to see." At the very time the leaders of Israel sought to kill Him, the Greeks desired to see Him. This was the first voice from the outside world which gave a hint of the awakening consciousness that Jesus was about to be the Savior of the Gentiles as well as the Jews. Of old it had been said, "And the Desire of all nations shall come" (Hag. 2:7). That it was more than an idle curiosity which prompted these Greeks we cannot doubt, for if it were only a physical sight of Him which they desired, that could have been easily obtained as He passed in and out of the temple or along the street of Jerusalem, without them interviewing Philip. It was a personal and intimate acquaintance with Him that their souls craved. The form in which they stated their request was prophetically significant. It was not "We would hear him," or "We desire to witness one of his mighty works," but "We would see Jesus." It is so to-day. He is no longer here in the flesh: He can no longer be handled or heard. But He can be seen, seen by the eye of faith! "Philip cometh and telleth Andrew" (John 12:22). At first sight this may strike us as strange. Why did not Philip go at once and present this request of the Greeks to the Savior? Is his tardiness to be attributed to a lack of love for souls? We do not think so. The first reference to him in this Gospel pictures a man of true evangelical zeal. No sooner did Philip become a follower of Christ than he "findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth" (John 1:45). How, then, shall we account for his now seeking out Andrew instead of the Lord? Does not Matthew 10:5 help us? When Christ had sent forth the Twelve on their first preaching tour, He expressly commanded them, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not." Furthermore, the disciples had heard Him say to the Canaanitish woman, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 15:24). Most probably it was because these definite statements were in Philip's mind that he now sought out Andrew and asked his advice. "And again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus" (John 12:22). In the light of what has just been before us, how are we to explain this action of the two disciples? Why did they not go to the "Greeks" and politely tell them that it was impossible to grant their request? Why not have said plainly to them, Jesus is the Messiah of Israel, and has no dealings with the Gentiles? We believe that what had happened just before, had made a deep impression upon the apostles. The Savior mounting the ass, the acclamations of the multitudes which He had accepted without a protest, His auspicious entrance into Jerusalem, His cleansing of the temple immediately afterwards (Matthew 21:12, 13), no doubt raised their hopes to the highest point. Was the hour of His ardently desired exaltation really at hand? Would "the world" now go after Him (John 12:19) in very truth? Was this request of the "Greeks" a further indication that He was about to take the kingdom and be "a light to lighten the Gentiles" as well as "the glory of his people Israel?" In all probability these were the very thoughts which filled the minds of Andrew and Philip as they came and told Jesus. "And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified" (John 12:23). Now, for the first time, the Lord declared that His "hour" had come. At Cana He had said to His mother, "Mine hour is not yet come" (John 2:5), and about the midst of His public ministry we read, "No man laid hands on him because his hour was not yet come" (John 7:30). But here He announced that His hour had arrived, the hour when He, as Son of man, would be "glorified." But what is here meant by Him being "glorified?" We believe there is a double reference. In view of the connection here, the occasion when the Lord Jesus uttered these words, their

first meaning evidently was: the time has arrived when the Son of man should be glorified by receiving the worshipful homage of the Gentiles. He intimated that the hour was ripe for the blessing of all the families of the earth through Abraham's seed. But, linking this verse with the one that immediately follows, it is equally clear that He referred to His approaching death. To His followers, the Cross must appear as the lowest depths of humiliation, but the Savior regarded it (also) as His glorification. John 13:30, 31 fully bears this out: "He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night. Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him." The two things are intimately related: salvation could not come to the Gentiles except through His death. "And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified" (John 12:23). It is by no means easy to determine to whom Christ uttered these words. We strongly incline to the view that they were said to the disciples. The record is silent as to whether or not the Lord here granted these "Greeks" an interview; that is, whether He left the temple-enclosure where He then was, and went into the outer court, beyond which Gentiles were not permitted to pass. Personally, we think, everything considered, it is most unlikely that He suffered them to enter His presence. If the wish of these "Greeks" was not granted, it would teach them that salvation was not through His perfect life or His wondrous works, but by faith in Him as the crucified One. They must be taught to look upon Him not as the Messiah of Israel, but as "the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24). Very different were the thoughts of Christ from those which, most probably, filled the minds of His disciples on this occasion. He looked, no doubt, to the distant future, but He also contemplated the near future. Death lay in His path, and this engaged His attention at the very time when His disciples were most jubilant and hopeful. There must be the suffering before the glory: the Cross before the Crown. Outwardly all was ready for His earthly glory. The multitudes had proclaimed Him king; the Romans were silent, offering no opposition (a thing most remarkable); the Greeks sought Him. But the Savior knew that before He could set up His royal kingdom He must first accomplish the work of God. None could be with Him in glory except He died. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.!" "Nature is summoned here to show the law of increase which is stamped upon her; and that creative law is made an argument for the necessity of the death that is before Him. What an exaltation of the analogies in Nature to exhibit and use them in such a way as this! And what a means of interpreting Nature itself is here given us! How it shows that Christ, ignored by the so-called 'natural' theology, is the true key to the interpretation of Nature, and that the Cross is stamped ineffacably upon it! Nature is thus invested with the robe of a primeval prophet, and that the Word, who is God, the Creator of all things, becomes not merely the announcement of Scripture, but a plainly demonstrated fact before our eyes today. "The grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies: it has life in it, and carries it with it through death itself. The death which it undergoes is in the interest even of the life, which it sets free from its encasement—from the limitations which hedge it in—to lay hold of and assimilate the surrounding material, by which it expands into the plant which is its resurrection, and thus at last into the many grains which are its resurrection-fruit. How plain it is that this is no accidental likeness which the Lord here seizes for illustration of His point. It is as real a prediction as ever came from the lips of an Old Testament prophet: every seed sown in the ground to produce a harvest is a positive prediction that the Giver of life must die. The union of Christ with men is not in incarnation, though that, of course, was a necessary step towards it. But the blessed man, so come into the world, was a new, a Second Man, who could not unite with the old race, and the life was the light of men; but if that were all, the history would be summed up in the words that follow: 'And the light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not. He was in the world... and the world knew him not.' To the dead, life must be communicated that there may be eyes

to see. Men can only be born again into the family of God, of which the Son of God as Man is the beginning. "Yet the life cannot simply communicate the life. Around Him are the bands of eternal righteousness, which has pronounced condemnation upon the guilty, and only by the satisfaction of righteousness in the penalty incurred can these bands be removed. Death—death as He endured it—alone can set Him free from these limitations: He is 'straitened till it be accomplished.' In resurrection He is enlarged and becomes the Head of a new creation; and 'if any man be in Christ, it is new creation' (2 Cor. 5:17). In those redeemed by His blood the tree of life has come to its precious fruitage" (Numerical Bible). "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal" (John 12:25). First of all, this was a word of warning for the beloved disciples. They had just witnessed the palms of victory waving in His path: soon they should see Him numbered with the transgressors. The echoes of the people's "Hosannas" were still sounding in their ears: in four days' time they should hear them cry, "Crucify him." Then they would enter into the fellowship of His sufferings. But these things must not move them. They must not, any more than He, count their life dear unto them. He warns them against selfishness, against cowardice, against shrinking from a martyr's cross. But the principle here is of wider application. There is no link of connection between the natural man and God. In the man Christ Jesus there was a life in perfect harmony with God, but because of the condition of those He came to save He must lay it down. And He has left us an example that we should follow His steps. If we would save our natural life, we must lay it down: the one who loves his life in this world must necessarily lose it, for it is "alienated" from God; but if by the grace of God a man separates himself in heart from that which is at enmity with God (James 4:4), and devotes all his energies to God, then shall he have it again in the eternal state. "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor" (John 12:26). If the previous verse was a warning to the disciples, this was spoken for their encouragement. "Each grain of wheat that is found on the parent stem follows of necessity by the law of its own nature the pattern of the grain from which it came. His people, too, must be prepared to follow Him upon the road on which He was going. Here is the rule, here is the reward of service: to be with Christ where He is, is such reward as love itself would seek, crowned with the honor which the Father puts upon such loving service. The way of attainment is by the path which He had trodden, and what that was, in its general character at least, is unmistakably plain" (Mr. F. W. Grant). "Now is my soul troubled: and what shall I say?" (John 12:27). That was the beginning of the Savior's travail ere the new creation could be born. He was seized by an affrighting apprehension of that dying of which He had just spoken. His holy soul was moved to its very depths by the horror of that coming "hour." It was the prelude to Gethsemane. It reveals to us something of His inward sufferings. His anguish was extreme; His heart was suffering torture—horror, grief, dejection, are all included in the word "troubled." And what occasioned this? The insults and sufferings which He was to receive at the hands of men? The wounding of His heel by the Serpent.> No, indeed. It was the prospect of being "made a curse for us," of suffering the righteous wrath of a sin-hating God. "What shall I say?" He asks, not "What shall I choose?" There was no wavering in purpose, no indecision of will. Though His holy nature shrank from being "made sin," it only marked His perfections to ask that such a cup might pass from Him. Nevertheless, He bowed, unhesitatingly, to the Father's will, saying, "But for this cause came I unto this hour." The bitter cup was accepted. "Father, glorify thy name" (John 12:28). Christ had just looked death, in all its awfulness as the wages of sin, fully in the face, and He had bowed to it, and that, that the Father might be glorified. This it was which was ever before Him. Prompt was the Father's response. "Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified, and will glorify again" (John 12:28). The Son of God had been glorified at the grave of Lazarus as Quickener of the dead, and now He is glorified as Son of man by this voice from heaven. But there is more than this here: the Father uses the future tense—"I

will glorify again." This He would do in bringing again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep: "raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father" (Rom. 6:4). "The people therefore, that stood by, and heard, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him" (John 12:29). What a proof was this that the natural man is incapable of entering into Divine things. A similar instance is furnished in the Lord speaking from heaven to Saul of Tarsus at the time of his conversion. In Acts 9:4 we read that a voice spoke unto him, saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" In Acts 22:9 we are told by Paul, "They that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me." They perceived not what He said. As the Savior had declared on a former occasion, "Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word" (John 8:43). How the failure of these Jews to recognize the Father's voice emphasized the absolute necessity of the Cross! "Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes" (John 12:30). Three times the Father spoke audibly unto the Son: at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of His Messianic career, and in each case it was in view of His death. At the Jordan Christ went down, symbolically, into the place of death; on the Holy Mount Moses and Elijah had talked with Him "of his decease" (Luke 9:31); and here, Christ had just announced that His "hour" was at hand. It is also to be observed that the first time the Father's voice was heard was at Christ's consecration to His prophetic office; the second time it was in connection with His forthcoming decease, His priestly work, the offering Himself as a Sacrifice for sin; here, it followed right on His being hailed as king, and who was about to be invested (though in mockery) with all the insignia of royalty, and wear His title, "The king of the Jews," even upon the Cross itself. Mark also the increasing publicity of these three audible speakings of the Father. The first was heard, we believe, only by John the Baptist; the second by three of His disciples; but the third by those who thronged the temple. "For your sakes": to strengthen the faith to the disciples; to remove all excuse from unbelievers. "Now is the judgment of this world" (John 12:31). How this brings out the importance and the value of the great work which He was about to do! In this and the following verse, three consequences of His death are stated. First, the world was "judged": its crisis had come: its probation was over: its doom was sealed by the casting forth of the Son of God. Henceforth, God would save His people from the world. Second, the world's Prince here received his sentence, though its complete execution is yet future. Third. God's elect would be drawn by irresistible power to the One whom the world rejected. "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John 12:31). The tense of the verb here denotes that the "casting out" of Satan would be as gradual as the "drawing" in the next verse (Alford). The Lord here anticipates His victory, and points out the way in which it should be accomplished: a way that would have never entered into the heart of men to conceive, for it should be by shame and pain and death; a way that seemed an actual triumph for the enemy. Not only was life to come out of death, but victory out of apparent defeat. The Savior crucified is, in fact, the Savior glorified! "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out." As pointed out above, the casting out of Satan was to be a gradual process. In the light of this verse, and other passages (e.g., Hebrews 2:14, 15), we believe that Satan's hold over this world was broken at the Cross. The apostle tells us that Christ "spoiled principalities and powers, having made a show of them openly; triumphing over them" (Col. 2:15), and this statement, be it noted, is linked with His Cross! We believe, then, the first stage in the "casting out" of Satan occurred at the Cross, the next will be when he is "cast out" of heaven into the earth (Rev. 12:10); the next, when he is "cast into the bottomless pit" (Rev. 20:3); the final when he is "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone" (Rev. 20:10). "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die" (John 12:32, 33). A truly wonderful and precious word is this. It is Christ's own declaration concerning His death and resurrection. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth" referred to His crucifixion; but "will draw all unto me" looked to the resurrection-side of the Cross, for a dead Savior could "draw" nobody. Yet the two

things are most intimately connected. It is not simply that Christ is the magnet; it is the crucified Christ. "It is crucifixion which has imparted to Him His attractive power; just as it is death which has given Him His life-giving power. It is not Christ without the Cross; nor is it the Cross without Christ; it is both of them together" (H. Bonar). And wherein lies the attraction? "Because of the love which it embodies. Herein is love—the love that passeth knowledge! What so magnetic as love? Because of the righteousness which it exhibits. It is the Cross of righteousness. It is righteousness combining with love taking the sinner's side against law and judgment. How attractive is righteousness like this! Because of the truth which it proclaims. All God's truth is connected with the Cross. Divine wisdom is concentrated there. How can it but be magnetic? Because of the reconciliation which it publishes. It proclaims peace to the sinner, for it has made peace. Here is the meeting-place between men and God" (Ibid). But what is meant by "I will draw"? Ah, notice the sentence does not end there! "I will draw all unto me." The word "men" is not in the original. The "all" plainly refers to all of God's elect. The scope of the word "all" here is precisely the same as in John 6:45—"And they shall be all taught of God." It is the same "all" as that which the Father has given to Christ (John 6:37). "The promise, 'I will draw all unto me must, I think, mean that our Lord after His crucifixion would draw men of all nations and kindreds and tongues to Himself, to believe in Him and be His disciples. Once crucified, He would become a great center of attraction, and draw to Himself; releasing from the Devil's usurped power, vast multitudes of all peoples and countries, to be His servants and followers. Up to this time all the world had blindly hastened after Satan and followed him. After Christ's crucifixion great numbers would turn away from the power of Satan and become Christians" (Bishop Ryle). Christ's design was to show that His grace would not be confined to Israel. The Greek word here used for "draw" is a very striking one. Its first occurrence is in John 6:44, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." Here it is the power of God overcoming the enmity of the carnal mind. It occurs again in John 18:10, "Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant." Here the term signifies that Peter laid firm hold of his sword and pulled it out of its sheath. It is found again in John 21:6, 11, "Simon Peter went up and drew the net to land full of great fishes." Here it signifies the putting forth of strength so as to drag an inanimate and heavy object. It is used (in a slightly different form) in James 2:6, "Do not rich men oppress you and draw you before the judgment seats?" Here it has reference to the impelling of unwilling subjects. From its usage in the New Testament we are therefore obliged to understand Christ here intimated that, following His crucifixion, He would put forth an invincible power so as to effectually draw unto Himself all of God's elect, which His omniscient foresight then saw scattered among the Gentiles. A very striking example of the Divine drawing-power is found in Judges 4:7, "And I will draw unto thee to the river Kishon, Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hands." In like manner Christ draws us unto Himself. "Thus it is His heart relieves itself. The glory of God, the overthrow of evil, the redemption and reconciliation of men is to be accomplished by that, the cost of which is to be for Him so much. He weighs the gain against the purchase-price for him, and is content" (Mr. Grant). "The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?" (John 12:34). It seems exceedingly strange that men acquainted with the Old Testament should have been stumbled when their Messiah announced that He must die. Isaiah 53, Daniel's prophecy that He should be "cut off" (Dan. 9:26), and that solemn word through Zechariah, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd" (Zech. 13:7), should have shown them that His exaltation could be only after His sufferings. "Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth" (John 12:35). His questioners, most probably, in their malignant self-conceit, flattered themselves that they had

completely puzzled Him. But He next spoke as though He had not heard their cavil. They were not seeking the truth, and He knew it. Instead of answering directly, He therefore gave them a solemn warning, reminding them that only for a short space longer would they enjoy the great privilege then theirs, and stating what would be the inevitable consequence if they continued to despise it. "While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them" (John 12:36). "Christ had spoken. Introduced at the commencement of the Gospel as the Light of men (John 1:4), He had proclaimed Himself to be the Light of the world, that whosoever should follow Him should not walk in darkness, but have the light of life (John 8:12). He had also said that, as long as He was in the world, He was the light of it (John 9:5). Soon would the Light be withdrawn, His death being near at hand. Is there not, then, something awfully solemn in these few words of our chapter (John 12:35, 36)? He had preached among them. He had wrought miracles among them. He had kept, too, in His ministry to the land which God had promised to Abraham. He had never ministered outside of it. The people in it had enjoyed opportunities granted to none others. What, now, was the result, as His public ministry was thus terminating? 'He departed, and did hide himself from them.' Who of them all mourned over His departure? or sought where to find Him?" (Mr. C. E. Stuart) Study the following questions on our next lesson:— 1. What is the central design of this passage, John 12:37-50? 2. Why is Isaiah 53 quoted here, verse 38? 3. Why was it "they could not believe" verse 39? 4. Whose "glory" is referred to in verse 41? 5. Had those mentioned in verse 42 saving faith? 6. When and where did Jesus say what is found in verses 44-50? 7. What is the "commandment" of verses 49, 50?

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