

The Gentiles Seeking Jesus and the Jews Rejecting Jesus John 12:20-50

by R.A. Torrey

Jesus teaches that the Gentiles seek Him, while the Jews reject Him, and that serving Christ requires following Him and hating one's life.

Scripture: John 12:20

Topics: "The Consequences of Unbelief", "Seeking Jesus"

Description

R.A. Torrey explores the contrasting responses of the Gentiles and Jews to Jesus in John 12:20-50, emphasizing the Greeks' desire to see Jesus and the Jews' rejection of Him despite witnessing His miracles. He highlights the necessity of sacrifice for true discipleship and the consequences of unbelief, illustrating how the Jews' refusal to accept Jesus fulfilled prophetic warnings. Torrey underscores that while the Gentiles sought the light of Christ, the Jews remained blinded by their own choices, ultimately leading to their spiritual downfall. The sermon calls for a genuine pursuit of Jesus and warns against the dangers of valuing human approval over divine truth.

Transcript

DISCOVERY OF THE FACTS

1. The Gentiles Seeking Jesus, vv. 20-36 With what request did certain Greeks come to Philip? Was that a laudable desire? How much depends on truly seeing Him? (John 6:40; 3:14, 15; 20:20; 2 Cor. 3:18.) How can we see the Lord? (John 5:39; 16:14; 1 Cor. 11:26.) Do all men wish to see Jesus? Why not? (John 3:19.) Why did the Greeks come to Philip? What did this request suggest to Jesus? How was the Son of man to be glorified? (v. 24; John 17:10; 13:31-32; 17:5.) Was there any manifestation of Christ's glory in the cross itself? (1 John 4:7; 4:9; 3:16; John 1:14.)

What did Jesus see to be the only road to glory? Was that true of Him only, or for us also? If we wish to bear fruit what must we do? If we die what will be the result? Suppose one is not willing to die that he may bear fruit? In what sense will he lose it? What if one sacrifices his life for Christ? (John 12:25.) What does "hate" here mean? (Gen. 29:30, 31.) Who did Jesus say must tread the path of sacrifice and death besides Himself? If we would serve Christ, then where must we be ready to go? (Matt. 16:24.)

Where did He go? (Luke 22:39-44; 23:33.) Does it pay, then, to serve Christ? If we follow Him to Gethsemane and Calvary now, where shall we follow Him hereafter? (John 17:24; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 3:21.) Is it worth living for and dying for, to be with Him? (2 Cor 5:8; Phil. 1:23.) Will any one who serves and follows Jesus have any other reward than being with Jesus? How will the Father honor him? (John 14:21-23; 17:22, 23.) Up to this point what view of His death was it that had occupied the mind of Jesus?

What view of it for a moment now took possession of His mind? What was the effect of that view? Did Jesus recoil from the cross? How much did Jesus' soul dread the cross and all that went with it? (Matt. 27:38; Luke 22:44.) Did the recoil of Jesus' soul from the horror of the cross cause Him to waver for one moment from His purpose to endure the cross? When, out of the horror, came the suggestion to ask the Father to spare Him that hour, what was the sturdy response of Jesus' spirit?

What was Jesus' prayer? What did the Father's glorifying His name involve for Jesus? Was that prayer heard? On each of the three recorded occasions on which God spoke audibly, in connection with what feature of Christ's ministry was it? (Humiliation, Matt. 3:13-17; decease, Luke 9:31; death, John 12:27, 28.) What did God say on this occasion? How had He already glorified it? (John 11:4-40; 1:14.) How was He yet to glorify it? (13:37.) For whose sake was this voice? Why was it not for Jesus Himself?

Did the people all understand the voice? Was the trouble with the voice? Does every man hear the voice of God in the utterances in the Bible? Who does? (John 8:47.) When God speaks what does it test? Is it God's voice or our ears that are on trial? How could a voice be sent for the benefit of those who do not understand it (v. 31)? What does Jesus see as the result of His death? Why does He say "now"? How was His death the judgment of the world and casting out of its Prince? (1 John 3:8; Heb. 2:14; Col. 2:15.)

What does the "lifting up" mean? (Compare John 3:14.) Why is the crucifixion called a lifting up? What did Jesus say would be the result? What is the mightiest magnet in the world? Are all men drawn? Do all men come? What difficulty did Jesus' words about lifting up suggest to the minds of His hearers? Were they not right in their interpretation of the Old Testament? (2 Sam. 7:13; Ps. 110:4; Is. 9:7; Dan. 7:14, 27.) What alone could explain this seemingly inexplicable contradiction?

What will explain all the seemingly inexplicable contradictions of prophecy? What was the real difficulty they had in the matter? (1 Cor. 1:23.) Did Jesus unravel their difficulty for them? What did He tell them to do? Which is better, bothering our heads with critical problems we cannot solve and trying thus to display our critical acumen or to let the light shine into us and allow time and events to solve the riddles? How long did Jesus tell them they were to have the light?

How long did they have it (v. 36)? How long will we have it? What did Jesus say would be the result if they did not improve the light while they had it? (See R. V.) Did the darkness overtake this people? What would be the result of believing in the light? When must they believe? Having uttered these words, what did Jesus do? Why? Did He ever come back to them? If we will not heed His warnings and promises, what will He do? 2. The Jews Rejecting Jesus, vv. 37-50 What reason had these people for believing? (37; compare 14:7.)

Why did they believe? (John 5:44; 3:18-20; 7:17.) Are we to understand from vv. 38 to 40 that the prophecies of Isaiah made it impossible to believe even though they wished to, or that God foresaw and foretold in these prophecies the willful blinding of their minds, and so it could not be that they would believe because God who never makes mistakes had foretold that they would not? Had they any excuse for their blindness and unbelief? (John 15:22, 24.) Did Jesus wish them to believe? (Matt. 23:37.)

Whose fault then was their unbelief and consequent ruin? (John 5:40.) How long before had this blindness and hardening of their hearts been predicted? In what way did their very unbelief glorify God? (Compare 13:27-29.) Is the world in general much more ready to believe God's word than these Jews were? By what name is Christ designated in v. 38? What is the meaning of that name? (1 Cor. 1:24.) Is He universally recognized as the power of God? By whom is He so recognized? (1 Cor. 1:24, 18.)

How is He revealed to those who recognize Him as the power of God? (Matt. 16:17; 2 Cor. 4:6; Eph. 1:17-19.) By whom is He not recognized? (2 Cor. 4:3.) Why is He not recognized? (2 Cor. 4:4.) Are those whom "the God of this world" blinds at all responsible themselves? (John 3:19; 2 Thess. 2:10, 11.) Are we to understand from v. 40 that God blinds the eyes of those who would see and hardens the hearts of those who would believe and obey? (2 Peter 3:9; 1 Tim. 2:3, 4.) Whom is it then that God blinds and hardens? (2 Thess. 2:10, 11.)

If men wish truth what does God give them? (John 7:17.) If men wish falsehood what does God let them have to the full? What will be the final consequence of the choice of error? (2 Thess. 2:12.) Are there any today who wish to believe error? What is the result of seeing the truth with the eyes and perceiving it with the heart (v. 40)? Which is better, then, to try to see the truth or to try not to see it? What is all the Lord asks as a condition of healing us? (Hos. 14:1, 2, 4; Jer. 3:12, 13, 22.)

Whose glory are we told in the prophecy of Isaiah the prophet had just seen when he uttered these words? (Is. 6:1-5, 9, 10.) Whose glory are we told by John that he had seen when he uttered these words (v. 41)? What is the necessary inference? Were there none of the rulers who believed on Jesus? Why did they not come out openly then and confess Him? Are there any like them today? Were they saved? (Matt. 10:30, 33; Ro. 10:10; Mark 8:38.) Was it a wise choice they made in concealing their faith in order to retain the praise of men? (Mark 8:36.)

What did they fear would be the result of an open confession of Christ? Had they any ground for that fear? (c. 9:22, 34.) Would it be any real loss to be persecuted for Christ's sake? (Luke 6:22; 1 Peter 4:12-16; Acts 5:41.) What lay at the bottom of their refusal to confess Christ lest they be cast out of the synagogue? Are there any today who love the praise of men more than the praise of God? Are they wise? If one believes on Jesus on whom does he really believe? Who sent Jesus?

Why is believing on Jesus a proof of really believing on Him whom He hath sent? (John 14:9.) If we really gaze at Jesus whom do we see? (v. 45; compare John 14:9.) As what had Jesus come into the world? (v. 46; compare c. 8:12.) How can any one come out of darkness into light (46)? If we reject the word of Jesus, what will that word do? When will the rejected word of Jesus judge us? Where did Jesus get His teaching? Whose words are the words of Jesus? (v. 49; compare c. 14:10, 24.) What is God's commandment (v. 50)? What is meant by saying that His commandment is eternal life? CLASSIFICATION OF TEACHINGS

1. God, the Father His dwelling place, heaven, 28; answered prayer, 28; spoke from heaven, 28; spoke for the benefit of man, 30; blinded the eyes and hardened the hearts of those men who would not see nor believe so that they could not see nor believe, nor turn nor be healed, 40, compare 2 Thess. 2:10-12; heals those who hear and turn, 40; honors those who serve Jesus Christ, 26; sent Jesus Christ, 44, 49; spoke through Jesus Christ, 49, 50; His commandment, life eternal, 50. 2.

Jesus Christ (1). Nature: Divine: He that hath seen Him hath seen the Father, 45. Divine words spoken of Jehovah in the Old Testament are applied to Jesus in the New Testament, i. e., Jesus Christ occupies the

same place in New Testament thought as Jehovah in Old Testament thought, 40, 41; compare Is. 6:1-3, 9, 10. Human--Son of Man, 23, 34. (2). What He is: "The Desire of all nations," 21; "The light of the world," 35, 46; those who refuse to walk in that light will be overtaken by darkness, 35 R.

V.; through belief in Him the Light, we become sons of light, 35; the Arm of the Lord, 38, compare 1 Cor. 1:24; subordinate to the Father, 44, 49, 50; sent by the Father, 44, 49, 50; those who rejected Him will be judged by His word in the last day, 47, 48. (3). His word: The very word of God, 49, 50. (4). How He was received by men: He did many signs before men, yet they believed not on Him, 37; they rejected God's testimony concerning Him, 38; they failed to recognize Him as "the Arm of the Lord," 38. (5).

His death: The necessity of it--"The Son of man must be lifted up," 34; the manner of it--crucifixion, 32, 33; the glory of it, 23, 24; the agony and horror of it, 27. The results were much fruit, 24; the world judged, 31; the prince of this world cast out, 31; all men drawn to Him, 32, 33; His own attitude toward it: Shrank from it in heart-breaking horror, 27; compare Matt. 26:58; Luke 22:44; marched unflinchingly toward it, 27, 28. (6). His love to the Father: Desired His glory alone though that involved the shame and agony of the cross for Himself, 38. (7).

His prayer: Not "Father, save me from this hour," 27; but "Father, glorify Thy name," 28; heard and answered, 28. (8). His eternity: Abideth forever, 34.. (9). His treatment of those who rejected Him: "Departed, and hid Himself from them," 36. The Greeks said, "We would see Jesus"; would you see Him?, 21. 3. Serving Christ The condition: "Follow Me," 26; hate your life, 25. The reward: Become sons of light, 36; life eternal, 25; be where Christ is, 26; honor from the Father, 26. 4.

The Jewish Multitude (1). Their privileges: A voice from heaven spoke in their ears for their sakes, 28, 30; saw the signs which Christ wrought, 37; heard the words of Christ, 35, 36. (2). Their folly: Closed their eyes to the revelation of God's power in Christ, 38; believed not, 37; stumbled at the cross, 34; puzzled at the Scripture they could not understand instead of believing the word they could, 34. (3). Their punishment: Jesus departed and hid Himself from them, 36; darkness overtook them, 35 R. V.; their eyes blinded, 40; their hearts hardened, 40; they fulfilled the prophecies of God in rejecting His Son, 38-40.

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