

The Heights Baptist Church

GLORIFIED THROUGH SUFFERING • JOHN 12:12-50 • 3/28/2021

MAIN POINT

Jesus came not as a political victor but as one glorified through suffering. Those who place their faith in Him as He truly is, and not only as they desire Him to be, will not be put to shame but receive the gift of eternal life.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

When was a time you had high expectations for an event that turned out to be different than you expected?

What are some expectations you or others might have about Jesus? How do you respond when you realize that Jesus is not always as you expect Him to be?

As Jesus entered Jerusalem, He received a great reception, but the people misunderstood the purpose of His coming. In a few short days, many of those who cheered Him into the city would also jeer Him out toward the cross. It is important that we accept Jesus as He truly is and not only as we wish Him to be. The truth about Jesus is that He is glorified through what He suffered.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ JOHN 12:12-16.

What did the people testify about Jesus in their praises?

What do you think the crowds were expecting when they welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem with such fanfare? How did they misunderstand what God had planned for Jesus?

Considering the fact the crowds and disciples didn't understand what Jesus was planning to do, how He would save them, and that Jesus knew they were all about to

turn on Him, why do you think He allowed the celebration to continue as He entered Jerusalem?

Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey was the deliberate display of Israel's king coming with God's offer of peace. He was the Son of David, chosen to sit on David's throne. He was the One of whom the prophet Zechariah had spoken (Zech. 9:9). Yet it was no small irony that the people, by using palm branches in their celebration, were heralding Jesus as a political king, not the humble Shepherd-King He was portraying Himself as. The palm branch was a significant symbol of military victory for the Jews, which means the people displayed them expecting Jesus to be their political or militaristic king. In chanting, "Hosanna" ("Save now"), along with other phrases from Psalm 118, the Jews were using a common patriotic or nationalistic cheer—another affirmation that the Jews looked to Jesus as their political savior.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 12:27-36.

Do you find it odd that Jesus, of all people, was troubled? Why should one who could heal the sick or raise the dead in any way be troubled?

Jesus, alluding to His impending death on the cross, expressed the horror that was gripping His soul. Jesus underwent a crisis moment, but He quickly reminded Himself that it was for this very purpose He came. He knew it was His destiny. As horrible as the reality was in that moment, and as much as He longed to not endure it, He knew it was God's will for Him and He persevered in obedience.

In what sense was Jesus's death on the cross an act of judgment of the world (v. 31a)?

According to Jesus, what impact would His death on the cross have on Satan (v. 31b)? Read Revelation 12:11 for further insight.

At the end of v. 32, Jesus gave a third impact of his death. What was that? What does it mean? What are its implications for you and I?

Jesus stated that through His death on the cross, not only would the world be judged and Satan defeated, but people would be drawn to Him. That is, they would be saved. "All people" cannot mean "every person," since the judgment of others also takes place in the cross. Rather, as the surrounding context and the overall theological emphasis of the Gospel of John demonstrates, "all people" is a reference to all people groups.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 12:37-50.

Based on this description, what do you think it would have been like to be in the crowd that heard this teaching from Jesus in Jerusalem?

Why is it surprising that more people did not believe in Jesus? What did say was the reason for the people's disbelief?

Why do you think John chose to include the passages from the Book of Isaiah in his description of the people listening to Jesus?

Isaiah knew what it was like to preach to an audience with hard hearts. Similar to the Israelites in the Old Testament, these people had rejected God's message and messenger. They had heard the voice of God, but did not respond. Therefore, God had hardened their hearts and no longer called out to them.

How would you summarize Jesus' point in verses 44-50? How is this connected to recognizing that Jesus is glorified through what He suffered?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How have you been challenged by today's study regarding what it means to truly follow Jesus? What needs to change in your life?

Who in your life might need to hear the warning of Jesus this week? What are some ways you might humbly but truthfully extend that warning?

How can the authority of Jesus as seen in John 12 encourage you to boldly share the gospel and the warnings that come along with it?

PRAYER

Lead your group in prayer thanking Jesus for His willingness to tell you the truth. Ask for the strength and courage to daily respond to His voice, even when that response requires you to be uncomfortably honest and forthright with those around you.

COMMENTARY

| JOHN 12:12-50

12:12-19 Jesus's triumphal entry, with people waving palm branches to greet him, is celebrated in Christian tradition as Palm Sunday. Jesus's riding into Jerusalem on a donkey fulfilled OT Scripture (Zch 9:9; see Ps 118:25-26). The waving of palm branches, a symbolic act celebrating victory over one's enemy and/or reception of a king, may indicate that the people thought Jesus would take Israel's vacant throne and deliver the nation from Roman occupation and suppression. Yet Jesus's popular acclaim would not last; some people who now hailed him as victor called for his crucifixion only a few days later.

12:12 The next day probably refers to Sunday of Passion Week, now known as Palm Sunday. The festival was the Passover celebration.

12:13 Palm branches were a Jewish national symbol. The people hailed Jesus as the Davidic king of Ps 118:26 (cp. Mt 21:4-9). Psalm 118 was part of the Hallel (Pss 113-118), sung by the temple choir at major Jewish festivals.

12:15 Jesus is depicted as the humble Shepherd-King of Zch 9:9 who came to the Holy City to take his rightful place. An early messianic prophecy spoke of a ruler from Judah who would command the obedience of nations and would ride on a donkey (Gn 49:10-11). Do not be afraid may be taken from Is 40:9, which refers to one who brings good tidings to Zion (Is 44:2).

12:19 The world was an obvious exaggeration, highlighting the Pharisees' frustration (Ac 17:6).

12:20-50 This section concludes the first major unit of John's Gospel, which narrates Jesus's mission to the Jews. The approach of some Greeks signaled that Jesus's mission was approaching the climax in which he would die and thus reach all nations. His "hour" was now at hand (vv. 23-26); the Son of Man would shortly be "lifted up" (crucified) by men and highly exalted by God the Father (12:32). After these things Jesus would be able to draw people (Jews and non-Jews) to himself (12:32). Further, the Jewish nation would suffer judgment for rejecting Messiah, who had performed so many signs among them (vv. 37-40).

12:20 Greeks likely refers to Gentiles, not necessarily Grecians. They were "God-fearers" who came to Jerusalem to worship at the Passover festival.

12:21-22 The Greeks may have singled out Philip (who in turn went to get Andrew) because he and Andrew were the only two members of the Twelve with Greek names.

12:24 The principle of life through death is illustrated by an agricultural example.

12:25 Following Christ involves self-sacrifice, shown supremely at the cross.

12:26 This truth extends beyond a disciple's earthly life to his eternal destiny (7:34,36; 14:3; 17:24).

12:27 Jesus's expression of anguish may invoke Davidic psalms such as Ps 6:3 or 42:5,11.

12:28 This is one of only three times during Jesus's earthly ministry when a heavenly voice attested to his identity (cp. his baptism and his transfiguration, Mt 3:13-17; 17:1-13 and parallels).

12:29 God's revelation through thunder and angels is well documented in the OT. Thunder was part of God's appearance at Mount Sinai (Ex 19:16,19). Angels (or the angel of God) spoke to Hagar (Gn 21:17), Abraham (Gn 22:11), Moses (Ac 7:38), Elijah (2Kg 1:15), and Daniel (see Dn 10:4-11).

12:30-31 The ruler of this world in its fallen, sinful state is Satan (14:30; 16:11; 1Jn 5:19). Now, at the cross, the devil would be cast out, or decisively defeated (Lk 10:18; Col 2:14-15).

12:32 This most explicit lifted up saying completes the earlier references in 3:14-15 and 8:28. Very likely, the terminology echoes Is 52:13. All people, in the present context, means "all kinds of people"—both Jews and Gentiles (10:16; 11:52; cp. 12:20-21).

12:34 This is the final of several messianic misunderstandings featured in John's Gospel (cp. 7:27,31,41-42). This reference may find its basis in passages such as Ps 89:4,36-37 (which in turn is grounded in 2Sm 7:12-16); Ps 110:1; Is 9:7; and Dn 7:14.

12:35-36 Jesus's answer was indirect (see v. 46). In light of the fact that the light would be with people only a little longer, his crucifixion was near (7:33; 16:16-19). He urged that they believe in the light (9:4; 11:10; see note at 8:12) while there was still time.

12:36 When Jesus hid from them, he illustrated God's imminent judgment and completed his revelatory work to the people of Israel (1:18).

12:37-50 This indictment identified Israel's wilderness generation with the unbelieving Jews in Jesus's day. Just as the ancient Jews saw God's power (performed through Moses) at the exodus (Dt 29:2-4) and turned away, so the Jews in Jesus's day watched miraculous signs (performed by Jesus) and responded with grumbling (Jn 6:41,61; cp. Ex 17:3; Nm 11:1) and unbelief (Jn 12:39).

12:38-40 John cited Is 53:1 and 6:10 to indicate that the Jewish rejection of Jesus was predicted by Scripture and thus served to confirm rather than thwart God's plan. Is 53:1 referred to the Servant of the Lord who was rejected by the people but exalted by God. Is 6:10 attributed

people's hardening ultimately to God himself (similar to Pharaoh's). These verses are the first in a series of fulfillment quotations in the second half of John's Gospel.

12:41 The reference to Isaiah seeing his (Jesus's) glory may indicate that Isaiah foresaw that God would be pleased with a Suffering Servant who would be "raised and lifted up and greatly exalted" (Is 52:13). Like Abraham, Isaiah saw "Jesus's day" (cp. Jn 8:58).

12:42-43 Among the rulers who believed in Jesus were Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus (see 7:50-57; 19:38-42).

12:44-50 This section summarizes Jesus's message and conveys his final appeal, bringing closure to the first major section of John's Gospel. Sent me presupposes the Jewish idea of representation, according to which a messenger's identity is inseparable from that of the one who sent him. Verses 48-50 echo Deuteronomy (Dt 18:19; 31:19,26).