

The Gospel of John 12:28-50

I Life's Multiplication for the Church (the Glorification of God and Judgment on the World) (12:28-36a)

- A. To glorify the name of the Father is to cause the Father's divine element to be expressed. The Father's divine element, which is the eternal life, was in the incarnated Son. The shell of the Son's incarnation had to be broken through death that the Father's divine element, the eternal life, might be released and expressed in resurrection, just as the life element of a grain of wheat is released by the breaking of its shell and is expressed by its blossom. This is the glorifying of God the Father in the Son
- B. On the cross the Lord as the Son of Man (v.23) was lifted up in the form of the Serpent (3:14), that is, in the likeness of the flesh of sin (Rom. 8:3). Satan as the old serpent (Rev. 12:9; 20:2), the ruler of this world, had injected himself into man's flesh. Through His death on the cross in the likeness of the flesh of sin, the Lord destroyed Satan, who is in man's flesh (Heb. 2:14). By judging Satan (16:11) in this way, the Lord also judged the world, which is hanging on Satan. Hence, the Lord's being lifted up caused the world to be judged and its ruler, Satan, to be cast out.
- C. The Greek, in v.31, for world is "*kosmos*" and means arrangement. The world is an evil system arranged systematically by Satan. All the things on the earth, especially those related to mankind, and all the things in the air have been systematized by Satan into his kingdom of darkness to occupy people and frustrate them from accomplishing the purpose of God, and to distract them from the enjoyment of God. This evil system, the kingdom of darkness, was judged when its ruler, Satan, was cast out by the Lord's being crucified in the flesh.
- D. In one aspect, the Lord's death was His falling into the ground, as revealed in v. 24. In another aspect, it was His being lifted up on the tree (1Peter 1:24). His falling into the ground was to produce the many grains; His being lifted up on the tree was to draw all men to Himself. The many grains produced by His falling into the ground are the "all men" drawn by His being lifted up on the tree.
- E. In this chapter the Lord's death is revealed not as the redeeming death but as the producing, generating death. By this death His incarnation (shell of humanity) was broken that He might accomplish His threefold purpose: 1) the producing of many grains, to draw all men to Himself (vv.24,32); 2) the releasing of the divine element, the eternal life (vv.23,28); and 3) the judging of the world and the casting out of its ruler, Satan (v.31). We must experience the Lord's death that we may participate in the three things that He accomplished.

II Religion's Unbelief and Blindness (12:36b-43)

- A. In v.40, blindness and the hardening of the heart, are related; they are a punishment to the unbelieving ones.
- B. His glory, in v.41, confirms that the Lord Jesus is the very God, Jehovah of hosts, Whose glory Isaiah saw (Isa.6:1,3). This glory, seen and appreciated by Isaiah, was not loved by the Lord's weaker believers (vv.42-43).
 1. Verses 36b through 43 speak of the unbelief of religion and God's judgment upon that unbelief. Regardless of how much the Lord as life worked in wonders, miracles, and signs, the religious people would not go along with Him. No matter how much the Lord did, the religious people would not respond. They simply did not receive Him, but, on the contrary, they rejected Him.
 2. Isaiah had prophesied this already. He said, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the Lord revealed?" (Isa 53:1). The arm of the Lord is the Lord Jesus Himself. The Lord is the arm of God to do things and to deliver, but no one in the religious world could recognize this arm. No one would respond to, receive, or accept this arm. They simply rejected it. Although this arm is salvation, even the Savior and the Deliverer Himself, the religious people rejected Him.
 3. If they (the weaker believers) had appreciated and loved the Lord Jesus as the glory of God, they would not have cared for the glory of man or feared being cast out of the synagogue. In 12:32-50, we have the negative sign of religion's blindness. In verses 35, 36, and 46 we see the rejection of the light, and in verses 37 through 50, the unbelief of the hardened heart. Religion always is a matter of blindness. If you are religious, you are blind. Religion may be the highest product of human culture, but as far as Jesus Christ, the embodiment of the Triune God, is concerned, religion is blind. Religion preoccupies people, veils them, and blinds them.

III Life's Declaration to the Unbelieving Religion (12:44-50)

- A. In verses 44 through 50 we see life's declaration to the unbelieving religion. Here the Lord makes a final declaration to the religious people. After this declaration, for the remainder of the Gospel of John, the Lord has nothing to do with the religious people.
 1. Firstly, He declared that He is the manifestation of the living God (vv.44-45). He is the Son of God, which means that He is the manifestation of God. Whoever sees Him sees God, and whoever receives Him receives God because He is the manifestation of God to man.
 2. Secondly, He declared that he came to this world as the shining light that man might not remain in darkness (vv.46, 36). If people will receive this light, they will have God. He is the manifestation of God as light, and if you received Him as light, you will have God. If a man believes in Him, he will not remain in darkness. However, if you refuse to receive Him as light, you simply reject God and will be overtaken with darkness. He comes as light. If you receive Him you will have God and will become one of the sons of light.
 3. Thirdly, He declared that He came to man with living words and that whoever receives His words will have eternal life now and forever and that whoever rejects His words will be judged by them in the last day (vv.47-50).
- B. What is the meaning of this declaration? It is simply that the Lord told the Jewish people that He is the manifestation of God coming to them as light. If they receive Him, they will have God and become the children of God. But if they reject Him, they will be overtaken by darkness. Moreover, the commandment that God gave to Him to speak is to them eternal life if they receive it. Otherwise, that very word will become a sentence of judgment upon them in the last day. This is the final declaration the Lord made to the religious people. At this juncture, the Lord is finished with the religious people. Beginning with chapter thirteen, the Lord is continually with His disciples, no longer having anything to do with the Jewish people.
- C. There are, therefore, four points to this chapter: the real assembly life, how the Lord produces and increases the assembly, the religious people will not go along with the Lord no matter how much He does for them as life in the signs, and the Lord was forced to make a declaration to the religious crowd.