

The Word Saves

John 12:44-50

SS Lesson for 07/17/2022

Devotional Scripture: 1 Tim 1:15-16

OUTLINE

LESSON BACKGROUND AND KEY VERSE

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Key Verse: John 12:46

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

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Belief in Jesus' resurrection (John 11:25-26)

Belief that Jesus provides our righteousness (Rom 3:22)

Belief that Jesus will do what He has promised (Rom 4:18-22)

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Belief that Jesus and God are One (John 10:30)

Belief that Jesus is God in all His fullness (Col 1:19)

Belief in the light of Jesus (46)

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Jesus is the light that came to make God known (John 1:18)

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Lesson Background and Key Verse

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

After a notable introduction (John 1:1–50), John’s Gospel focuses on the bulk of Jesus’ public ministry: his miraculous works and teaching (2:1–11:57). In this section of the Gospel, John recorded seven accounts of Jesus’ miraculous acts and seven accounts of Jesus’ teachings. Together they highlight the way Jesus showed his mission to the world, a mission given by his heavenly Father. But throughout this section of the Gospel, Jesus’ audiences were unable and unwilling to accept his teachings. They saw his miracles and enthusiastically received him. However, far too often they failed to rightly understand his teaching (see John 6:14–15, 42, 52). Jesus did not fulfill the hopes and wishes they desired from a savior or messiah. As a result, many stopped following Jesus (6:60–66). Despite seeing and hearing Jesus, belief was not always present. Today’s Scripture text marks a transition to a third section of the Gospel. This section tells of the events surrounding Jesus’ death and resurrection (John 12:1–20:31). Given that half of John’s Gospel is dedicated to the events of Jesus’ final week, there can be no doubt of John’s focus. A Savior who does miraculous acts and provides eternal teaching is nothing without the events of the Passion Week. This lesson’s Scripture text serves as Jesus’ final public discourse to his generally unbelieving audience. Immediately prior to this text, John provides some editorial context surrounding the teaching. John cites the words of the ancient prophet Isaiah in order to frame the situation Jesus faced (John 12:37–38; see Isaiah 53:1). Even as Jesus performed many miraculous acts, there were people who failed to believe and follow him. This reality was highlighted in the nature of Jesus’ coming into Jerusalem. Many people celebrated his entry (John 12:12–19), but there would be other people who would call for his crucifixion several days later (19:1–6). As a result of their unbelief, many people would experience certain consequences and judgment (12:40; see Isaiah 6:10).

Key Verse: John 12:46

I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

12:20. The mention of **Greeks** is significant. They were the wanderers of the ancient world and the seekers of truth. These Greeks were probably God-fearers who attended Jewish synagogues and feasts. Their coming was symbolic of the coming of Gentiles **to worship** God through Christ (cf. 10:16).

12:21-22. Why did the Greeks approach **Philip** about seeing **Jesus**? Perhaps because Philip had a Greek name. Or he may have had some contact with Greeks from the Decapolis area. **Philip went to... Andrew, and Andrew and Philip... told Jesus.** Since crowds of people probably wanted to speak with Jesus, the disciples may have tried to do some screening (cf. Luke 18:15-16).

12:23-24. **Jesus** had been moving toward His decisive hour (cf. 2:4; 4:21, 23; 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20). The coming of the Greeks confirmed that **the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified** (cf. 12:23; 13:1; 17:1). For most people death is their humiliation. But for Jesus death was His means of entry into glory. His willingness to die for others’ sins in obedience to the Father (Isa. 53:10, 12) brought Him renown (glory; cf. John 12:16; 17:1, 5). **I tell you the truth** introduces a solemn affirmation. The analogy of **a kernel of wheat “dying” in the ground** and producing **many seeds** teaches that death is necessary for a harvest.

12:25-26. The wheat analogy (v. 24) illustrates a general paradoxical principle: death is the way to life. In Jesus’ case, His death led to glory and life not only for Himself but also for others. In the case of a disciple of Jesus, the principle is similar. A disciple must hate **his life in this world**. To “hate his life” means to be so committed to Christ that he has no self-centeredness, no concern for himself. On the other hand **the man who loves his life will lose it**. Anything in life can become an idol including goals, interests, and loves (cf. Luke 12:16-21; 18:18-30). A believer should undergo a spiritual death to self (Rom. 6:1-14; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Gal. 6:14). Being a servant of Jesus requires following Him. Many of Jesus’ original servants *did* follow Him—in death. According to tradition, the early disciples died as martyrs. Jesus’ word was thus a prophecy and also a promise. His true disciples (those who serve Him) **follow** Him in humiliation and later in **honor** or glory (Rom. 8:17, 36-39; 2 Tim. 2:11-13).

12:27-28a. Jesus instructed His disciples on the cost of commitment to the Father’s will by disclosing His emotions. He was in turmoil (*tetaraktai*, “stirred, agitated”; cf. 11:33; 14:1) because of the prospect of being made sin (2 Cor. 5:21) in His death. In view of His turmoil, should He shrink back and ask for deliverance **from this hour**? Certainly not, for His Incarnation **was for** the **very** purpose of bringing Him

to this hour (cf. John 12:23; 13:1; 17:1). Jesus willingly expressed His submission to the will of the Father in the words, **Father, glorify Your name!** So also believers in difficulty should stand and embrace His will—desiring that His name be glorified—in spite of conflicting emotions.

12:28b-29. The Father then spoke **from heaven** in a thunderous **voice**, confirming His working in Jesus both in the past and in the future. The voice was audible but not all understood it (cf. v 30; Acts 9:7; 22:9).

12:30-31. The **voice** from heaven confirmed faith in the spiritually perceptive but to the unspiritual it was only a noise (1 Cor. 2:14). Jesus' death on the cross was a **judgment on the world**. Evil was atoned for. The world's goals, standards, and religions were shown to be folly. The Cross was also the means of Satan's defeat (Rev. 12:10). **The prince of this world** (i.e., Satan; cf. John 14:30; 16:11), **Jesus** said, **will be driven out**. His power over people by sin and death was defeated and they can now be delivered out of his domain of spiritual darkness and slavery to sin (Col. 1:13-14; Heb. 2:14-15).

12:32-33. Jesus' words, **When I am lifted up from the earth**, refer not to His Ascension but to His crucifixion (cf. 3:14; 8:28). He knew how He would die—by being “lifted up” on a cross. Jews, however, normally stoned those they considered worthy of death (cf. Stephen's death, Acts 7:58-60). Jesus said that at the cross He would **draw all men to Himself**. He did not mean everybody will be saved for He made it clear that some will be lost (John 5:28-29). If the drawing by the Son is the same as that of the Father (6:44), it means He will draw indiscriminately. Those saved will include not only Jews, but also those from every tribe, language, people, and nation (Rev. 5:9; cf. John 10:16; 11:52).

12:34. **The crowd** was puzzled. If the Messiah is **the Son of Man**, then He should be here **forever**, they reasoned. Daniel 7:13-14 spoke of the Son of Man's everlasting dominion. Perhaps the people wondered if He was making a distinction between the Messiah (**Christ**) and **the Son of Man**. Did He use the term “Son of Man” differently than its sense in Daniel 7:13? They seemed to understand that Jesus was predicting His death, but they could not see how that was possible, if He was the Messiah.

12:35-36. The crowd thought on intellectual difficulties, but **Jesus** confronted them with the fact that the issue was moral. Their time of opportunity was limited. He is **the Light** for the world (1:4, 9; 8:12; 12:46), but the day of His public ministry was almost over (v. 23). The **darkness** of night was coming in which evil powers would hold sway over people. **The man who walks in the dark** means an unbeliever who stumbles through life without knowing what life is all about and **where** it is headed (cf. 3:19; 8:12; 1 John 1:6). Their privilege was to **trust in the Light** (i.e., in Jesus) and **become sons of Light** (i.e., His disciples; cf. Rom. 13:12; Eph. 5:8, 14; Col. 1:13-14; 1 Thes. 5:5; 1 John 1:7; 2:10). Once again **Jesus** supernaturally vanished **from them** (cf. John 5:13; 8:59; 10:39).

12:37. John from the beginning of his Gospel (1:11) had sounded the theme of national unbelief. John now explained that in spite of **all Jesus' miraculous signs (sēmeia)**, **they still would not believe in Him**. Their unbelief was irrational, as sin always is.

12:38. The Jews' national, irrational unbelief had been predicted by **Isaiah the prophet**. The clearest Old Testament passage concerning the suffering Servant (Isa. 53:1-12) began by stating that Israel would not perceive God's revelation in and through the Servant. **Who has believed our message and seen His arm... revealed?** implies that only a few have believed (quoting Isa. 53:1).

12:39-40. Then John again quoted from **Isaiah** (6:10) to explain that the nation as a whole was *unable* to believe. Because they constantly rejected God's revelation, He had punished them with judicial blindness **and deadened... hearts**. People in Jesus' day, like those in Isaiah's day, refused to believe. They “would not believe” (John 12:37); therefore **they could not believe** (v. 39). Similar illustrations of God's punishing of persistent sin by hardening are common (Ex. 9:12; Rom. 1:24, 26, 28; 2 Thes. 2:8-12).

12:41. In a vision **Isaiah... saw** “the Lord Almighty” (lit., “Yahweh of hosts,” or “Yahweh of armies”; Isa. 6:3). John wrote that this glory Isaiah saw was **Jesus' glory**. The implication is startling: Jesus is Yahweh! (Cf. John 1:18; 10:30; 20:28; Col. 2:9.) Jesus in His nature is God (but God the Son is distinct in person from God the Father and God the Spirit). Isaiah **spoke about Him**, for many of Isaiah's prophecies predicted the coming Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth (e.g., Isa. 4:2; 7:14; 9:6-7; 11:1-5, 10; 32:1; 42:1-4; 49:1-7; 52:13-53:12; 61:1-3). Earlier Jesus had said that Moses wrote about Him (John 5:46).

12:42-43. In spite of massive national unbelief, the situation was not hopeless. God always has a remnant. **Many** individuals in high places did believe **in Jesus**, but **for fear** of being **put out of the synagogue** they did **not** openly **confess** Him. They feared men's opinions and **loved** men's **praise... more than** God's

praise. When and where Jesus spoke these words is not indicated. This seems to be a general summary of Jesus' manifestation of Himself to the nation.

12:44-46. Cried out (*ekraxen*, "called out," *not* wept; cf. 1:15; 7:28, 37) indicates the importance of the issues before the nation. **Jesus** is the perfect manifestation of God, **the One who sent Him** (1:18; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3), so that to **believe in Jesus** is to believe in God. People do not have two objects of faith: God and/or Jesus. When one sees Jesus, he **sees the Father who sent Him** (cf. John 12:41; 14:9). Jesus came to lead people out of Satan's kingdom of **darkness** into God's kingdom of love and **light** (cf. 1:4, 9; 8:12; 12:35; Col. 1:13-14).

12:47-50. Since Jesus is God's Word (*Logos*) to people, God **spoke** decisively and finally in Him (Heb. 1:1-3). The issue is the command of **the Father**. To obey **the Father** is to come **to eternal life** (John 12:50). To reject the Father's word—which is Jesus' **very word** (v. 48; cf. v. 50b; 7:16; 14:10, 24)—is to abide in death. Moses predicted the coming of the great Prophet (One who would speak for God). Moses said, "You must listen to Him" (Deut. 18:15). Condemnation **at the last day** is the penalty for rejecting the One whom the Father sent (Deut. 18:18-19; John 3:18, 36; 5:24). The purpose of God's revelation in Jesus is positive: He came **to save**, not **to judge** (12:47; cf. 3:17 and 9:39). But rejection of God's Revelation inevitably brings a hardening in sin and ultimately God's judgment. In speaking of Jewish national unbelief John balanced his theological explanation with Jesus' serious exhortation to the nation to repent. In the words of Moses, these "are not just idle words for you—they are your life" (Deut. 32:47).

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

The Word Saves Through Belief (John 12:44-46)

44 Then Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me.

45 And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me.

46 I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.

Belief in Jesus (44)

Belief that Jesus is the Christ, Son of the living God (Matt 16:15-16)

15 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Belief in Jesus' resurrection (John 11:25-26)

25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; 26 and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

Belief that Jesus provides our righteousness (Rom 3:22)

22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference,

Belief that Jesus will do what He has promised (Rom 4:18-22)

18 Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." 19 Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead — since he was about a hundred years old — and that Sarah's womb was also dead. 20 Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, 21 being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. 22 This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness."

Belief that Jesus provides eternal life (John 3:15)

15 that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.

Belief that Jesus is God (45)

Belief that Jesus is God in the flesh (Col 2:9)

9 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,

Belief that Jesus is God who appeared in a human body (1 Tim 3:16)

16 Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.

Belief that Jesus and God are One (John 10:30)

30 I and the Father are one."

Belief that Jesus is God in all His fullness (Col 1:19)

19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him,

Belief in the light of Jesus (46)

Jesus has the light dwelling in Him (Dan 2:22)

22 He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him.

Jesus will eternally be the light of the new Heaven and Earth (Rev 21:23)

23 The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.

Jesus is the light that came to make God known (John 1:18)

18 No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

Jesus is the light that reveals God to those He chooses (Luke 10:22)

22 "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

Jesus is the light that came to make known eternal life (John 17:3)

3 Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

The Word Saves Through Judgment (John 12:47-50)

47 And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.

48 He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him, the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.

49 For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak.

50 And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak."

Judgment of Jesus' Word (47-48)

A judgment that will bring everything to light (1 Cor 4:5)

5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

A judgment that judges men's secrets (Rom 2:16)

16 This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.

A judgment of the nations (Matt 25:31-33)

31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

A judgment entrusted to Jesus by God (John 5:21-22)

21 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. 22 Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son,

A judgment that all will stand before (Rom 14:10)

10 You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat.

A judgment that judges what was done in the body (2 Cor 5:10)

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

Judgment through Jesus' authority (49)

Authority because God put all things under Jesus' power (John 13:3)

3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God;

Authority because Jesus has all authority (Matt 28:18)

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Authority because God exalted Jesus above all powers (Eph 1:20-21)

20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

Authority because Jesus is Lord of all (Phil 2:9-11)

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Authority because Jesus created all things (Col 1:16-17)

16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Judgment of eternal life (50)

Eternal life because no one comes to the Father except through Jesus (John 14:6)

6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Eternal life because Jesus is the bread of life (John 6:33)

33 For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

Eternal life because Jesus has the words of eternal life (John 6:67-68)

67 "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. 68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

Eternal life because He is the resurrection (John 11:25)

25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies;

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh

Camouflaged Christians (12:42-43)

42 Nevertheless, even among the rulers many believed in him, but because of the Pharisees they would not confess Jesus to be the Christ, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue. 43 For they loved praise from men more than praise from God.

Israel's unbelief was not complete. Besides the disciples and intimate friends of our Lord, there were a number who believed in Him as the Messiah. John notes this fact in verses 42 and 43. But John also makes a point of calling our attention to the "**rulers**" who believed in Jesus. Why would John take special note of these folks? I believe I understand what John is trying to tell us here: it was these "**rulers**" who could have put a stop to the arrest, trial, and crucifixion of our Lord ... and didn't. If you look back over the earlier chapters of John's Gospel, you will see that there was a very strong feeling against Jesus on the part of some of the rulers of the Jews. The problem was that the Jewish rulers—the members of the Sanhedrin—were not unanimous in their commitment to kill Jesus, regardless of the law. Thus, in John chapter 7, the Sanhedrin orders the arrest of Jesus, but the temple police come back empty-handed. Most of the Sanhedrin are intent on killing Jesus, but Nicodemus raises some legitimate legal and procedural objections. Now, after the raising of Lazarus, the triumphal entry of our Lord into Jerusalem, and our Lord's "attack" on the Pharisees (see Matthew 23), there is a very strong opposition to Jesus on the part of the rulers of the Jews.

In spite of the unbelief of Israel's rulers, and in spite of the Sanhedrin's commitment to arrest and to kill Jesus, there were some rulers who had come to believe in Jesus as Israel's Messiah. It is my opinion that apart from the silence of these believing rulers, the arrest and crucifixion of our Lord would not have been possible. This silence, while cowardly and sinful, was also a part of the divine plan. It was this silence which paved the way for those opposed to Jesus to achieve His arrest, trial, and execution. While those who kept silent sinned, God used their sin to achieve His purposes. God is not limited to our times of faith and our acts of obedience to achieve His will; He is more than able to use our sin and rebellion to bring about His purposes as well. And that is what John is telling us here. It was due to the religious leaders' animosity, the crowd's rejection of Jesus, and the complacency of the rulers who believed in Jesus that the cross of our Lord was achieved, in fulfillment of our Lord's purpose and plan, and of Old Testament prophecies.

John tells us why the believing rulers of Israel remained silent: they feared what the Pharisees could do to them. They were afraid of being cast out of the synagogue. While they were willing to identify with Jesus to some extent, these rulers of Israel were not willing to break with their colleagues. John explains that they "**loved praise** (literally *glory*) **from men more than praise** (literally *glory*) **from God.**" The "glory" which comes from men is the kind of "glory" we see at our Lord's "triumphal entry." It is praise that is rooted in popularity and success, and in living up to man's expectations and goals. The "**glory**" which comes from God is that which is often His reward for suffering, for "taking up our cross." Those rulers of Israel who believed in Jesus were not yet ready to suffer with Jesus, the Messiah.

These two verses (42 and 43) have much to say to us. I attended an HCJB banquet this past week and heard an exciting report of how God is using this great radio station, high up in the mountains of Quito, Ecuador, to proclaim the gospel. In a little quiz that was passed out at this banquet, this question was asked: "How many people would each Christian have to witness to in order for the Great Commission to be fulfilled?" The answer, my friend, was nine. If every Christian shared his or her faith with nine unbelievers, the Great Commission could be fulfilled in our generation.

This raises another question. “Why haven’t we fulfilled the Great Commission?” The reason is simple. Only one out of 20 professing Christians shares his faith. We are not so different from the “**rulers**” John speaks of, are we? We believe in Jesus as our Savior, and as the Savior of the world, and yet we keep it a secret. We don’t share our faith with the lost. And we don’t do so because we are more concerned with winning “glory” from men (by our success and popularity) than we are with seeking the glory that comes from Him—a glory that comes through suffering, from taking up our cross.

By way of application, I want to say two more things. *First, the unbelieving world cares little about what we believe, so long as we keep quiet about it.* I have heard the talk about being a “silent Christian,” and while there are times when we need to keep our mouths shut, most of our silence about Christ falls far short of being truly Christian. Let us beware of keeping silent when it is time to speak out regarding our Savior.

Second, the silence and the sins of those who profess to know Christ will not prevent God’s purposes from being achieved on this earth. Throughout history, God has been bringing about His purposes both “in spite of” and “by means of” man’s failures.

John continually stresses a very important biblical truth—the *sovereignty of God*. God is in complete control of everything. Even the actions of Judas are under our Lord’s control. Judas is responsible, but ultimately our Lord is in control. In the sovereign plan and purpose of God, Judas will betray Jesus, Peter will deny Him, and those rulers who have believed in Jesus will keep silent. God uses man’s opposition, rebellion, and even his sins to bring about His purposes, yet without justifying the sin.

Jesus’ Final Words (12:44-50)

44 But Jesus shouted out, “The one who believes in me does not believe in me, but in the one who sent me, 45 and the one who sees me sees the one who sent me. 46 I have come as a light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me should not remain in darkness. 47 If anyone hears my words and does not obey them, I do not judge him. For I have not come to judge the world, but to save the world. 48 The one who rejects me and does not accept my words has a judge; the word I have spoken will judge him at the last day. 49 For I have not spoken from my own authority, but the Father himself who sent me has commanded me what I should say and what I should speak. 50 And I know that his commandment is eternal life. Thus the things I say, I say just as the Father has told me.”

We cannot tell for certain when and where these final words of our Lord were spoken. In verse 36, John tells us that Jesus “**went away and hid himself from them.**” Verses 37-43 are John’s words, explaining Israel’s unbelief. Verses 44-50 are our Lord’s final words, which seem to be placed here out of chronological sequence. John is not so concerned about the timing of these words as their impact. In many ways, verses 44-50 sum up the message of the Gospel of John, and of our Lord. We find nothing new here, but a repetition of what has been said many times before. Since these are our Lord’s final words, spoken publicly to the Jews in Jerusalem, this makes good sense.

I would point out that our Lord’s words here are not only applicable to the Jews, who are already rejecting Him as their Messiah, but to the Greeks, who are seeking Him as their Messiah. Jesus intends for these words to be heard because He shouts them out (verse 44). I believe the backdrop for these final words of our Lord is found in John chapter 10, where our Lord says,

37 “If I do not perform the deeds of my Father, do not believe me. 38 But if I do them, even if you do not believe me, believe the deeds, so that you may come to know and understand that I am in the Father and the Father is in me.”

Jesus’ words here are spoken to the Jews in Jerusalem during the feast of the Dedication. Jesus has been teaching about Himself as the Good Shepherd, and He has clearly claimed to be one with the Father. As a result, the Jewish religious authorities sought to stone Him (10:31). Jesus tells them how they can put His words to the test. They know that He has claimed to be God, so let them test this claim by His works. Do His works confirm His words? This is a very sensitive point because our Lord frequently employs the word “**hypocrite**” in reference to the Pharisees. Their works did not measure up to their words (see Matthew 23:1-3). Jesus is more than willing to have His words tested by His works. If they will not believe His words for their sake alone, then let them believe His words on account of His works. Let them conclude with Nicodemus, “**Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs that you do unless God is with him**” (John 3:2).

When we go back to John 12:34, the Jewish people had to choose between the teaching of Jesus and the teaching of the Pharisees. There (12:35-36), Jesus urged them to “**walk in the light,**” to believe and behave in

the light of what He taught. Once again, in Jesus' final exhortation to the Jews, He urges those who hear Him to walk in the light. His message is clear and concise. *He has come from God, and He speaks for God (verses 49-50). His words are God's commandment, and this commandment is the means to eternal life (verses 49-50). To believe in the word of Jesus is to believe in the Father; to see Jesus is to see the Father (verses 44-45). If one believes in Jesus, he obeys His words. If one does not believe in the words of Jesus, he disobeys the commandment of God and fails to enter into eternal life. Instead, the words of Jesus become the basis of the unbeliever's eternal judgment*

(Adapted from URL:<https://bible.org/seriespage/greeks-seek-jesus-john-1220-50>)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

After this teaching, Jesus' public interactions would be greatly limited. He would celebrate Passover with his disciples (John 13:1–30) and give them his final teaching (13:31–16:33) before his trial and crucifixion. Therefore, we can look at Jesus' teaching as his final public teaching (and warning) on the saving nature of his Word. True belief requires confession that Jesus is Lord and a life change resulting from that confession. Disciples of Jesus prioritize obedience as his light directs their actions. In Jesus' time, many people saw God's miraculous power at work in him. But when time came to listen and obey his words, many people stopped following him. For this reason, Jesus taught of the necessity of belief and of judgment. Later in John's Gospel Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commands" (John 14:15). Love is demonstrated by right belief and hearing and obeying Jesus' words. All believers must faithfully abide in Jesus' words. In the future, his words will judge all humanity. Disciples love and follow him. Jesus' words will transform us and lead us into a life that bears the fruit of obedience (see James 2:14). Jesus has brought spiritual light into the world.

Concluding Thoughts from the Echoes Commentary

Eternal Life - This is one of the last messages Jesus gave to the people in His public ministry. These words were solemn and significant for Jesus' hearers. Those who respond to Jesus are responding to God. To believe in Jesus is to believe in God and inherit eternal life. Jesus strongly encouraged the multitude to see Him as Savior. He earnestly prayed and pleaded for hard hearts to soften when they heard His word. When believers commit to becoming Christ-followers, they will spend eternity in heaven. John described the tone of Jesus' message that day as one who shouted with persistence. Usually Christ spoke gently but He felt the desperation of the late hour. He once again emphasized His oneness with the Father. He is who He says He is, God in the flesh, the Messiah.

Light - Thoughts of light and darkness are a reoccurring theme in John's Gospel, and Jesus speaks of Himself as "light." Jesus reminds His hearers that there is a continuing conflict between darkness and light, and He is offering them a way out of the darkness. To shut one's eyes to the light (in Jesus) is a sure and certain way to remain in the darkness.

Judgment - Jesus makes it clear that He did not come to judge people. However, people may bring judgment on themselves in refusing to believe Jesus' words. His word will be the judge on the last great day. Those who despise Him will have no excuse. Jesus' teaching was not purely of human origin. His teaching originated with God the Father.

Come Home - Since the beginning of time, individuals have been curious about God. Where is He? How can I get to know Him, know what He is like? What's He thinking, saying? Are there expectations God has of humanity? Jesus came to answer those questions to allow each individual to know the Father. God loves humanity and He desires all to know Him, His love. Encourage those in your class whom you are not certain of their salvation to consider Christ. By doing so, you might lead people to the Father and His everlasting home.