

## Palm Sunday

OLD TESTAMENT – Zechariah 9:9-12

**Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. 10 I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. 11 As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. 12 Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double.**

**9:9** Quoted in the NT as Messianic and as referring ultimately to the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem (Mt 21:5; Jn 12:15). (CSB)

*rejoice greatly* – Those words remind us of Advent. Here hidden in the words of Zechariah is of Jesus coming into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday as King. It is also a reference for all Christians to the final fulfillment of prophecy when the Lord comes again victoriously with all of His angels. (PBC)

*Daughter of Zion.* A personification of Jerusalem and its inhabitants. (CSB)

God's people are called to welcome their coming King with joyful shouts (cf 2:10). This is a preview to the depiction of the new Jerusalem as the Bride of Christ (Rv 21:2). (TLSB)

Only the “daughter Zion/Jerusalem,” that is, the baptized, the faithful, the elect, understand all this as a cause to “rejoice greatly.” As saints we rejoice, even though as sinners still, we are identified with the original crowd in Jerusalem which, only a few days later, shouted “Crucify him.” (CSB)

*your king.* The Davidic (“your”) Messianic King. (CSB)

This King is unique, one of a kind, the Messiah. John Wycliffe: “Christ mounted these animals to condemn the riding of pope and cardinals, and of the inferior bishops too, who are wont to ride in superfluous pomp on war-horses decked out with gold and silk” (TT, 190). Luther: “Here there is no violence, no armor, no power, no anger, no wrath.... Here there are only kindness, justice, salvation, mercy, and every good thing” (AE 20:94). In His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Jesus gave public proof that He is this promised King (Mt 21:1–11). (TLSB)

It is translated “for you,” dative of advantage: He comes for your good. (Leupold)

*righteous.* Conforming to the divine standard of morality and ethics, particularly as revealed in the Mosaic legislation; a characteristic of the ideal king (see 2Sa 23:3–4; Ps 72:1–3; Isa 9:7; 11:4–5; 53:11; Jer 23:5–6; 33:15–16). (CSB)

*humble.* cf. Isa 53:2–3, 7; Mt 11:29. (CSB)

Jesus will bring the rampant forces of evil to unconditional surrender. It takes faith to accept this King now. It will not take faith to believe in Him as King when He returns in the clouds of heaven to claim undisputed rule. (PBC)

*mounted on a donkey.* A suitable choice, since the donkey was a lowly animal of peace (contrast the war-horse of v. 10) as well as a princely mount (Jdg 10:4; 12:14; 2Sa 16:2) before the horse came into common use. The royal mount used by David and his sons was the mule (2Sa 18:9; 1Ki 1:33). (CSB)

Israelites typically rode donkeys. Horses were reserved for military use. (TLSB)

This was no ordinary king and his kingdom is not of this world. Donkeys were not used in human wars, and gentleness and humility are not the stuff politics are made of. Christ establishes his kingdom first by dying, and later by rising and ascending. He establishes his kingdom in and among us today through the veiled forms of water, bread, and wine and through the foolishness of preaching.

**9:10** *cut off the chariot ... war-horses ... battle bow.* A similar era of disarmament is foreseen in Isa 2:4; 9:5–7; 11:1–10; Mic 5:10–11. (CSB)

War tools have no place in the Messiah's kingdom (cf Ps 46:9). (TLSB)

All apparatus of war will be removed, Messiah's rule not being established by physical force, or maintained by military defenses. (PC)

This state will as we know, be achieved in perfection only when the new heavens and the new earth shall have come into existence. (Leupold)

*Ephraim.* The former the former represents the 10 northern tribes and the latter is the two tribes of the south (Judah). (PC)

*peace to the nations.* In sharp contrast to Alexander's empire, which was founded on bloodshed, the Messianic King will establish a universal kingdom of peace as the ultimate fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant (cf. 14:16; see Ge 12:3; 18:18; 22:18). (CSB)

God's Word is the "weapon" by which He brings peace. (TLSB)

The peace (shalom) here referred to includes more than the cessation of warfare though that is primarily under consideration in a passage such as this. "Peace" is in itself a much broader concept. It includes that wealth of spiritual treasures which He alone is able to bestow, and which is referred to in the statement: "Peace I leave unto you." (Leupold)

*His rule shall be from sea to sea.* It will be universal (see Ps 22:27–28; 72:8–11; Isa 45:22; 52:10; 66:18). (CSB)

*ends of the earth* – He will extend this peace to all the world, teaching the heathen to receive his spiritual rule. (PC)

Christ's rule is universal, not limited to geographical boundaries such as earthly kingdoms. We are to be His witnesses "to the end of the earth" (Ac 1:8). (TLSB)

**9:11** *as for you* – God gets personal. He makes it clear that he is talking to his chosen people. They are his because of the covenant he established and he intends to keep his promises. Throughout Scripture the covenant is often pictured as a marriage – an intensely intimate relationship. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

*blood of my covenant with you.* Probably the Mosaic covenant (Ex 24:3–8). (CSB)

The Lord will set Zion's prisoners free because of His covenant with them, sealed with blood. We have eternal redemption by Christ's blood (Heb 9:12). (TLSB)

*prisoners.* Perhaps those still in Babylonia, the land of exile. (CSB)

*waterless pit.* Cf. Ge 37:24; Jer 38:6. (CSB)

Symbolizes the hopeless condition of one under the curse of the Law. (TLSB)

This is a powerful image for at the time cisterns dug in the ground to hold water were sometimes used as cells for prisoners. The pit could also symbolize the hopeless situation of the exile, even death itself. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

No dungeon is so terrible as that of sin, but Christ has power, through the blood of His covenant, to open its doors, and set free its prisoners. (CB)

**9:12 return** – This is an imperative to go back to their former position, that is, the “fortress,” the place of safety and strength. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

*stronghold.* Either (1) Jerusalem (Zion) and environs or (2) God himself (cf. 2:5). (CSB)

None need despair of relief, however desperate their case, who are willing to come to Christ for help; He is a “strong hold” to all who put their trust in Him, and will reward them with plenteous salvation. (CB)

*hope.* In the future delivering King (vv. 9–10). (CSB)

By grace, the Lord invites sinners to return to their stronghold, the Lord Himself. (TLSB)

Their hope is in abundance of God's grace, since he will restore “twice” what they had previously. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

*double.* Full or complete restoration (cf. Isa 61:7). (CSB)

In place of despair, the Lord promises a double blessing: a secure stronghold and victory over all enemies. (TLSB)

The mind has trouble comprehending the goodness of God. Not only release from prison but the promise to receive twice as much good as we had previously received evil in our languishing. And it come to the people in similar tone to the Prophet Isaiah's words, “Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins” (Isaiah 40:1, 2) (PBC)

## EPISTLE – Philippians 2:5-11

**5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a**

**cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so 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.**

**2:5-11** The Epistle for today is pivotal, providing a bridge from death to life while giving us both promise and reason for following where Christ leads. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

**2:5** *have this mind...in Christ.* In spite of all that is unique and radically different about the person and work of Christ (see vv. 6–11), Christians are to have his attitude of self-sacrificing humility and love for others (see vv. 2–4; Mt 11:29; Jn 13:12–17). (CSB)

The Beck Bible is to preferred: “Think just as Christ Jesus thought.” (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

Paul presents the imperative to think with our minds as Christ thought with His. A soul regenerated in Christ’s image (Titus 3:4-7) has the revelation of Christ through the Word. (TLSB)

There is some disagreement over how to translate the word *phroneō*, “to think.” The series of imperatives in the verses preceding may explain why some manuscripts included “for” at the beginning of this verse, understanding that the mind of Christ in us would explain compliance with the imperatives. For our purposes we might let the tension stand and consider the verb as both indicative and imperative. The presence of God’s inspired Word in our lives, confirmed in our Baptism, means that we do have the mind of Christ. The fact that our regenerate, inspired soul dwells within a contrary human nature means that it is imperative that we continually reorient our thinking to match that of our Savior. The verses that follow are Gospel in nature but also provide an insurmountable logic that is effective in Christian apologetics. No other religious system even begins to suggest a parallel to Christ, true God who became incarnate, provided redemption for the whole world, and rose from the dead. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)The more they are in Christ and Christ is in them, the more Christ-like and unselfish they will be in their attitudes and actions. (PBC)

As if the Apostle would say, “All that I asked of all of you is to be meek and humble so as to be of one mind and one soul, all that you see exemplified in the person and conduct of our Lord. I would like to have you cultivate a mind that is similar to the mind found in Christ. (Stoeckhardt)

**2:6–11** The poetic, even lyric, character of these verses is apparent. Many view them as an early Christian hymn (see note on Col 3:16), taken over and perhaps modified by Paul. If so, they nonetheless express his convictions. The passage treats Christ’s humiliation (vv. 6–8) and exaltation (vv. 9–11).

Note from Colossians 3:16 – *psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.* Some of the most important doctrines were expressed in Christian hymns preserved for us now only in Paul’s letters (1:15–20; Eph 5:14; Php 2:6–11; 1Ti 3:16). “Psalms” refers to the OT psalms (see Lk 20:42; 24:44; Ac 1:20; 13:33), some of which may have been set to music by the church. “Psalm” could also describe a song newly composed for Christian worship (cf. 1Co 14:26, where “hymn” is lit. “psalm” in the Greek text). A “hymn” was a song of praise, especially used in a celebration (see Mk 14:26; Heb 2:12; see also Ac 16:25), much like the OT psalms that praised God for all that he is. A “song” recounted the acts of God and praised him for them (see Rev 5:9; 14:3; 15:3), much like the OT psalms that thanked God for all that he had done. See note on Eph 5:19.

**2:6-8** Paul repeats the Greek term *morphe*, “form,” and also uses *schema*, “manner,” or “shape.” The Son of God took human form, a body like ours except without sin. Note how here and elsewhere Paul’s account of Jesus’ life fits readily with the historical accounts in the Gospels. (TLSB)

**2:6** What follows is truly a remarkable passage. Here Christ is presented as our model, our example in lowliness. But at the same time this passage is very important for the doctrine of the person and two states of Christ. Christ is our example in lowliness. That's ethical. But we cannot imitate His states or saving work. This text reminds us of the necessity of preaching the person and two states of Christ. This also reminds us of the necessity of preaching the person and work of Christ for justification and sanctification. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

*though* – nuparchao – *come into existence* – (*be present* or *at hand*); expletively, to *exist* (as copula or subordinate to an adjective, participle, adverb or preposition, or as auxiliary to principal verb):—after behave, live. – Implies his pre-existent deity, previous to his birth, and his continued deity afterwards.

*form of God.* Affirming that Jesus is fully God. (CSB)

We need to be careful here (as many translations are) not to misunderstand “form” (*hē morphē*) as form only without content. The Son of God does not simply bear the form of God. Rather, “He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power” (Heb 1:3); “In him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell” (Col 1:19). The fact that Jesus is God made it both possible and necessary for him to empty himself on our behalf—possible because no one and nothing could ever really strip him of his divine nature, necessary because the essence of his character is love. We see this clearly in John 13, when Jesus sets aside his garments (as he set aside his divine prerogatives) in order to offer the most humble of services, washing his disciples’ feet. Contrast Jesus with the competitive and self-serving nature of people. Our unwillingness to serve others betrays an absence of certainty about our nature. This has only become worse since Darwin and evolutionary deception has stripped humanity of any kind of inherent dignity as the crown of God’s creative work. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

From all eternity Jesus has been one with the Father, truly God. His eternal existence as God is unshakeable and unchangeable. In Jesus’ incarnation the human nature Jesus assumed shared in all the characteristics of His divine nature. The two natures are now perfectly united. After the incarnation the Bible speaks of one divine-human Christ, the God-man. (PBC)

*form.* Essential form, the sum of those qualities that make God specifically God. (CSB)

As the Son of God, Jesus is God (Col 1:15). Not simply appearance. (TLSB)

*equality with God.* The status and privileges that inevitably follow from being in very nature God. (CSB)

Jesus, as the true Son of God, cannot be less than fully God. He is equal with His Father according to His divine nature. (TLSB)

Jesus is indeed true God, equal with the Father in power, authority and majesty, and He possesses all the characteristics of God. This He clearly demonstrated during His earthly ministry. Here was a man who read the hearts of men, feed multitudes, control the weather, cast out devils, heal the sick and even raise the dead. Those who observed Him at closest range had to declare, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus was and is in very nature God. (PBC)

*a thing to be grasped.* † Something to be forcibly retained—the glory Christ had with the Father before his incarnation. But he did not consider that high position to be something he could not give up. (CSB)

The Greek word means “a thing for self-glorification.” (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

Fully God, He felt no necessity to cling to the honor or privileges that were His as God’s Son (John 13:3-4). God grants us a similar ability ourselves in the service of others, because we are His children too. (TLSB)

*aaragmos plunder* (properly concrete):—robbery. This divine equality was not something Jesus had to steal or even strive for.

In Paul’s day victorious generals and other public figures would frequently honor themselves and their achievements by using their “moment in the sun” to erect monuments to themselves and their achievements. Today, too, the great men of the world frequently use the privileges and trappings of their offices to enhance their reputations, further their careers, perhaps even line their pockets. (PBC)

Jesus, though He was God in very nature, did not appear on earth to glorify Himself. He did not look for His own advantage. Nor did He arbitrarily use the divine privileges and powers He possessed to satisfy passing fancies or to gain earthly fame and power. (PBC)

**2:7 emptied himself.** Lit. “emptied himself.” He did this, not by giving up deity, but by laying aside his glory (see Jn 17:5) and submitting to the humiliation of becoming man (see 2Co 8:9). Jesus is truly God and truly man. Another view is that he emptied himself, not of deity itself, but of its prerogatives—the high position and glory of deity. (CSB)

This verse begins the gradual descent of Jesus in his redemptive service to us—first taking the form of a servant, then humbling himself in death, then even lower by dying on a cross (as one accursed from God). Notice once again, that “form of a servant” means really a servant! The whole life of Christ as recorded in the Gospels is one of constant service to others (so that he had no time even to eat). The Son of God’s adoption of a human nature is beautifully and fully considered in the Book of Hebrews; because he was human he can sympathize and can be a faithful and merciful High Priest for us (e.g., Heb 4:14–16). “Being found in human form” (v 8) reminds us that Isaiah had prophesied that the Messiah would be so fully human as to be unrecognizable: “He had no form or majesty that we should look at him” (Is 53:2). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

“[The Son of Man] was received into God when He was conceived of the Holy Spirit in His mother’s womb, and His human nature was personally united with the Son of the Highest. Christ always had this majesty according to the personal union. Yet He abstained from using it in the state of His humiliation, and because of this He truly increased in all wisdom and favor with God and men. Therefore, He did not always use this majesty, but only when it pleased Him.” (FC Ep. VIII 15-16). (TLSB)

The Beck Bible says, “But He emptied Himself, made Himself a slave, became like other human beings. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

During His earthly ministry Jesus emptied Himself of the full and constant use of all the prerogatives of His divinity. He laid aside the unlimited exercise of His power and did not always use or demand His rights as God. (PBC)

*form of a servant.* Emphasizes the full reality of his servant identity (see Mt 20:28). As a servant, he was always submissive to the will of the Father. (CSB)

Jesus was, in every way, completely a servant to those around Him. (TLSB)

*doulos* a *slave* (literally or figuratively, involuntarily or voluntarily; frequently therefore in a qualified sense of *subjection* or *subserviency*):—bond (-man), servant.

It was as if He covered the glory of His divine majesty with the tattered rags of a beggar. He became altogether lowly. He became like every other human being – lowlier, in fact, than most – in His earthly manner of living. Though He Himself was sinless, He assumed human nature in the weakened condition in which we have it, burdened with the consequences of sin. Although He is the Lord of the universe, He was born in a stable. He never possessed earthly property or wealth. He was despised by many of His contemporaries. He placed Himself under the demands of God’s law. (PBC)

*born in the likeness of men* – Not mere resemblance. He was conceived as a man like any other man, except without sin. (TLSB)

**2:8** *found in human form.* Not only was Jesus “like” a human being (v. 7), but he also took on the actual outward characteristics of a man (see Jn 1:14; Ro 8:3; Heb 2:17). (CSB)

Jesus shared all the characteristics of a human being. (TLSB)

*humbled himself.* See v. 7; 2Co 8:9. (CSB)

The Son of God humbled himself; true love is given freely and at one’s own expense. Even as the Son of God did not think equality with God something to cling to selfishly, so also he did not think that he was above enduring death for the sake of his beloved ones. Now we see that this process of humbling himself to effect our redemption knew no limits, so that he humbled himself even to die the most accursed of all deaths. Mention of the cross here brings up all the significant imagery of the devil, who once overcame by a tree, now being overcome by a tree; the First Adam failing before a tree, the Second Adam winning absolute victory on a tree (Rom 5:12–21); he became accursed so that we might be blessed (Gal 3:13–14). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

*obedient.* How Jesus humbled himself (cf. Heb 5:7–8). A “servant” (v. 7) obeys. (CSB)

Jesus put all His thoughts, words, and actions under the direction of His Father’s will. (TLSB)

*to the point of death.* Stresses both the totality and the climax of Jesus’ obedience. (CSB)

In a person of Christ, God truly died. (Exegetical Notes – Bult)

*on a cross.* Heightens Jesus’ humiliation; he died as someone cursed (see Gal 3:13; Heb 12). Crucifixion was the most degrading kind of execution that could be inflicted on a person. (CSB)

stauros – a *stake* or *post* (as *set upright*), that is, (specifically) a *pole* or *cross* (as an instrument of capital punishment); figuratively *exposure to death*, that is, *self denial*; by implication the *atonement* of Christ:—cross. – The kind of death he submitted himself to amazes believers, confounds unbelievers: this was the style of execution reserved by the Romans for slaves, foreigners, and barbarians – never Roman citizens.

The most despised and cursed death. According to OT Law, being hung on a tree meant you were cut off from God. You were left there all day as an example to others (cf. Dt. 21:22-23). The Romans crucified criminals by the main entry roads into a city in order to humiliate them and to warn those who entered not to make the same mistake. (TLSB)

In OT Israel, after a wrongdoer had been put to death, the civil laws prescribed that his dead body be nailed to a post or a tree. This was to impress on the people that that individual, by his transgression, had suffer the ultimate curse of being cut off from God and His believing people. If in the sight of God, than hanging of a dead body signified His curse, how much more would the hanging of a living person be considered a curse, especially when that person was experiencing anguish beyond description. How deliberately and heavily the words fall as the apostle describes the ultimate humiliation of the God-man: EVEN DEATH ON A CROSS. (PBC)

**2:9** *therefore - dio*, “therefore; that is why.” The first word of this verse is the pivot and shows the proper relationship between man (in this case the Son of Man) and God: man humbles himself in submission to God and love of neighbor, and God exalts man as is right. What we give away for the benefit of others God restores again, but if we would keep what God has given, how can God give any more to us? Remember that “name” (*to onoma*) is not just an empty title, but includes all the power and prerogatives of a being. Jesus is not only Creator but also now Redeemer. This truth is the basis and justification of v 10. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

*highly exalted*. See Mt 28:18; Ac 2:33; cf. Isa 52:13. (CSB)

auperupsoo to *elevate above* others, that is, *raise to the highest position*:—highly exalt. (qv)

The Apostle’s Creed lists the various events of Jesus’ exaltation: “He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.” What a glorious victory these words describe. Jesus, our Savior, having successfully completed His redemptive work for us, openly triumphed over the forces of hell. Death had to relinquish its hold on Him. Earth could no longer contain Him. Heaven opened its doors to receive Him. Jesus, our victorious Savior, now holds in His hands the reins of the universe. He rules all things in heaven and on earth in the interest of His believers, and He will come again to end this age, judge the world, and take His believers to be with Him and to share His glory in eternal life. (PBC)

*the name ... above every name*. Reference doubtless is to the office or rank conferred on Jesus—his glorious position, not his proper name (cf. Eph 1:21; Heb 1:4–5). (CSB)

In ancient times, people were given names to describe them. The name of Jesus describes the essence of who He is: “salvation is of the Lord.” There is no other savior or means of salvation. “After His resurrection, He entirely laid aside the form of a servant, but not human nature, and was established in the



full use, manifestation, and declaration of the divine majesty. In this way He entered His glory” (FC Ep VIII 16). (TLSB)

His name, spoken with contempt by His enemies, especially by those who condemned Him to death as a blasphemer, is the only “name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” Only through Jesus’ name, and through faith in His name and the gospel revelation which stands behind it, can sinners be saved. (PBC)

**2:10–11** *bow ... confess.* Cf. Isa 45:23. God’s design is that all people everywhere should worship and serve Jesus as Lord. Ultimately all will acknowledge him as Lord (see Ro 14:9), whether willingly or not. (CSB)

All created beings must and will confess Jesus as Lord: The saints and angels in heaven, all human beings on earth, even the demons and the damned in hell. (PBC)

God the Father exalts the Son to the place that is rightly his (see last week’s Gospel) so that creation relates rightly to him. When every knee bows in submission and every tongue confesses the truth of Christ, then creation will experience paradise. Life is found in God’s design. Life is conveyed in the Word of the Lord. When all is right in God’s creation for all eternity, then God will be glorified as is proper to him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

Bow is synonymous with worship toward God (Ex. 4:31; 34:8; Ps. 95:6; 1 Sam 1:28; see note Ex 33:10) or respect and service for a human being (Gn. 33:3; 43:26-28; 1 Sam 20:41; 28:14; Est 3:2). God expressly forbade bowing to false gods (Ex 20:4-5). People also bowed to (1) greet someone (Gen 18:2; 19:1), (2) signal humility and repentance (Ezr 9:5; 10:1, and (3) express thanks (Gen 24:52). Bows were done in a variety of ways (1 Ch 29:20; 1 Kg 18:42; Ne 8:6) and likely included tilting the head, tilting the upper body, kneeling with one’s face to the ground, or lying prostrate. The more elaborate the bow, the greater the expression of devotion or emotion (Gn. 33:3). (TLSB p. 1276)

*under the earth* – This is a figure of speech that refers to the souls of those who have gone not to heaven, but to damnation in the “lower regions” (1 Peter 3:18-20). (TLSB)

**2:11** *Jesus Christ is Lord* – An early creed. See p. 1975. Jesus (Greek) or Joshua (Hebrew) is the name given to the Son conceived by the Holy Spirit (Mt. 1:21) in the Virgin Mary. Christ (Greek) or Messiah (Hebrew) is the title of the One whom God promised to send to save His people. This Jesus, who is the Christ, demonstrated Himself to be Lord over all His nature, life, death, and resurrection. No one is Lord over Him, but He is Lord over all. (TLSB)

This verse emphasizes what was said in verse 10. It is a comfort for us to know that every rational creature, be that in heaven, on earth or of the underworld, cannot but make this confession. That says two things to us: (1) God is glorified by the person and work of our Lord Jesus. Therefore Jesus ought have our utmost confidence. (2) With Jesus as our example we ought humble ourselves as Paul here tells us to do. And if we so do, although what we do is so foolish in the eyes of the world, the Lord will not forget us. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

2:1–11 Paul couples the imperatives of a Christian life with a description of Christ, who makes that life possible. We are certainly not lords, nor have we any excuse for refusing to honor Jesus Christ as Lord. Yet the fulfillment of the imperative to live like Christ is supported by all that Christ gives freely: the encouragement, comfort, love, and mind of Christ, along with the participation of the Spirit. • Dear Lord Jesus, place firmly in our minds and hearts both who You are and what You are so that we may proclaim Your grace and image to others. Amen. (TLSB)

GOSPEL – JOHN 12:20-43

**20 Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. 21 So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” 22 Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. 23 And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. 25 Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26 If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.**

**12:20-33** The mood of the text is one of somber anticipation. Chronologically, the text occurs between the triumphant entry into Jerusalem and Jesus’ washing of the disciples’ feet. The narrative is rapidly moving to the events of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, so there is an ominous expectancy in this passage. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

The intent of the text is to have the readers seek and serve (v 26) Jesus only as they are drawn to his hour of death, his glorification of being lifted up on a cross. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

**12:20-23** It is the coming of the Greeks that is important, not only their conversation with Jesus. The Greeks were probably “God-fearers”—Gentiles attracted to Judaism but not ready to convert and accept the requirements of the Law such as Sabbath observance and circumcision. Some think they could have been actual converts or proselytes. Regardless, they came to worship in Jerusalem during the Passover celebration. On the Jewish Pentecost or Feast of Weeks, there were people in Jerusalem from “every nation under heaven” (Acts 2:5) “both Jews and converts to Judaism” (Acts 2:11). The arrival of Gentiles seeking him prompts Jesus to declare that his hour has now come. It is time for him to be glorified in death and resurrection for the whole world. There is no turning back. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

Some commentators are of the opinion that this episode happened in the afternoon of Palm Sunday. It is found only in John and is found right after Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Others feel that it occurred on Tuesday morning, two days later. In any event, all agree that Jesus was in the Temple. (Buls)

**12:20** *Greeks*. Probably “God-fearers,” people attracted to Judaism by its monotheism and morality, but repelled by its nationalism and requirements such as circumcision. They worshiped in the synagogues but did not become proselytes. (CSB)

Probably Greek-speaking Gentiles from a place like the Decapolis. (TLSB)

Greeks" meaning Gentiles. "Who were among those who customarily went up." They were among the God-fearing Gentiles who worshipped in Jerusalem at the time of the Passover. Compare Acts 10:1.22.35; 13:16.26.43.50; 16:14; 17:4.17; 18:7. They came to worship. (Buls)

**12:21** *Philip*. A Greek name, which may be why they came to this disciple (though he was not the only one of the Twelve to have a Greek name). (CSB)

Perhaps because Philip had a Gk name and came from an area near the Decapolis. (TLSB)

This is narrative. They must have been acquainted with Philip. Bengel suggests that perhaps they always lodged with Philip in Bethsaida on their journey to Jerusalem. They simply request to meet Jesus to become acquainted with Him. This request must have proceeded from faith, for they surely knew that the Jewish authorities hated Jesus. It has been suggested that perhaps these Greeks were in the crowd which went out to meet Jesus, John 12:13, but we don't know. (Buls)

They were acquainted with Philip, since his home was in Bethsaida, and they may have met him often in the North. (Kretzmann)

He was from out of town (Bethsaida, in northern Galilee), so they may have felt more comfortable approaching him. (PBC)

*to see.* Means "to have an interview with." After v. 22 John records no more about these Greeks. He regarded their coming as important but not their conversation with Jesus. Jesus came to die for the world, and the coming of these Gentiles indicates the scope of the effectiveness of his approaching crucifixion. (CSB)

For that moment, the request was symbolic. They represented the Gentile nations and the fulfillment of the messianic promise of a light for the nations (Isaiah 60:3). It reveals the desires of people impressed by God's law and made aware of God's Messiah. It is the spirit of Christians to this day who never stop searching the Scriptures to learn of Him. (PBC)

**12:22** For some reason, Philip hesitated to speak immediately with Jesus. Here Andrew showed the same missionary zeal he had shown earlier (1:41). (TLSB)

Many commentators quote Bengel who says at this point:

A prelude is here given of the kingdom of God which is about to pass from the Jews (exclusively) to the Gentiles. (Buls)

Farrar: When Jesus was born, Chaldeans from the East had sought His cradle, and now Greeks and sons of the West came to His cross. (Buls)

Fahling: In this request Jesus saw an indication of His glorification, which consisted in His being acknowledged by men of all nations, as had been prophesied. (Buls)

Hendriksen: Andrew and Philip, hesitating to *offend* the Greeks, also hesitating to *encourage* them, place the request of the Greeks before Jesus. (Buls)

Jesus had told His disciples not to go to the Gentiles, Matthew 10:5, and that He was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, Matthew 15:24. But Jesus Himself had foretold the bringing in of the Gentiles at John 10:16. John 12:20-22 reveals the Greeks, Philip, Andrew and Jesus as very tactful, but forthright nonetheless. A great truth is being introduced. Whether these Greeks actually met Jesus is not stated. (Buls)

Lenski: We hear nothing further about the Greeks. . . John is not telling the story of these Greeks but of Jesus.

**12:23** *Jesus answered them* – This is apparently to Philip and Andrew rather than the Greeks. We are never told whether these Greeks met with Jesus, who is now fully focused on His challenges in Jerusalem. (TLSB)

*The hour has come.* The hour to which everything else led. (CSB)

The antecedent of is the two disciples. "The hour has come" in the sense of the occasion of Jesus' suffering and death was found at John 7:30; 8:20. At this point it occurs in John with greater frequency. Compare 12:27; 13:1; 16:32; 17:1. The word "glorified" covers the suffering, death, resurrection and final ascension of the Son of man. The Son of man clothed God in splendor by His atoning work which brings the Gentiles into the Church. (Buls)

Until now, we have become accustomed to hearing that Jesus' hour had not yet come (7:30; 8:20). But now it had. He, the essence of humanity, had come to Jerusalem to die for the lost humanity and rise again in glory. Jesus came to sacrifice Himself for the salvation of the Greek as well as the Jews. (PBC)

*glorified.* Jesus was speaking about his death on the cross and his subsequent resurrection and exaltation (see notes on v. 41; 11:4; 13:31). (CSB)

**12:24-26** The principle of the kernel of wheat is that it must die to produce fruit. Just so, Jesus must die. The fruit is those who look to Christ and eternal life. They refuse to satisfy their desires and needs apart from God's will and follow Jesus in humble service. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

**12:24** *truly, truly I say to you* – Here is another "I tell you the truth," so frequent in John, (twenty-four times) introducing a very important statement. (Buls)

*if it dies, it produces.* The principle of life through death is seen in the plant world. The kernel must perish as a kernel if there is to be a plant. (CSB)

Now follow two present general statements which are axiomatic and paradoxical. To bring out the axiom add "ever" to each protasis and "always" to each apodosis. It is a principle of nature that if a seed does not die, there will be no fruit but that if it dies there will be much fruit. The point of comparison is clear, but applies to Jesus only. No other human being ever produced much fruit by dying, none other than Jesus Christ. His death brought much fruit, especially among the Gentiles. (Buls)

Here begins Jesus' answer to the request of the Greeks. He did not spend His time exchanging amenities with these visitors. He spoke truths for all generations of men. (Buls)

This emphasizes the necessity of Jesus' death as the way to glorification and the blessing of many disciples. According to the time reckoning in John, Jesus rose from the dead on the 16<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, the day barley firstfruits were offered at the temple. (TLSB)

Similarly, Jesus would not bear the fruit of His mission from God unless, He first died. All His miraculous signs had no eternal benefit without the miracle of the cross and the empty tomb. The Son of Man had to die for a spiritual harvest to come, the harvest of souls for eternity. (PBC)

Jesus' dying would have its effect on all who follow Him. We too in a sense must die. We don't die as a substitute for others as Jesus did. But in believing in Him as our Substitute, we die with Him. (PBC)

**12:25** *the man who hates his life ... will keep it.* To love one's life here and now—to concentrate on one's own success—is to lose what matters (cf. Mt 16:24–25; Mk 8:34–35; Lk 9:23–24). Supremely, of course, the principle is seen in the cross of Jesus. (CSB)

Jesus applied the image in v 24 to the life of His followers (cf Mk 8:34). Idolatrous love of self brings a person under God's judgment. (TLSB)

Verse 24 applies to Jesus only. Verses 25-26 apply to all people, Jews and Gentiles. Note that both verses contain two statements each. The universal atonement underlies these two verses. Both verses contain warning and promise. (Buls)

In verse 25 Jesus is comparing two types of people, which include all human beings. On this verse cf. Luke 14:26-27. He is speaking of a selfish, temporal love. To love one's soul means to live for self-gratification and avoidance of suffering. "Hate" does not denote the hatred of the flesh but the hatred of the new man. This involves one immediately in repentance, faith, the new life, also suffering. Compare Matthew 16:25. (Buls)

Nothing frightens the Christian so much as the thought of losing his own soul. Nothing comforts the Christian quite so much as the preservation of his soul for everlasting life. (Buls)

Ylvisaker: To love is here the equivalent of holding on, clinging to, being unwilling to part with. To hate is to give up cheerfully, turn away, or separate from. (Buls)

Kretzmann: It is one of the demands of Christian discipleship that all followers of Christ die unto this present life, with all it has to offer, daily. Compare Matthew 10:39; 16:25; Mark 8:35; Luke 9:24; 17:33. (Buls)

Hendriksen: The solemn truth stated in verse 24 applies to Christ, to him alone. Nevertheless, there is an analogous principle which operates in the sphere of men. It is the one stated in verses 25 and 26. (Buls)

Lenski: The Christian is ready, contrary to his natural inclinations and desires in his life here on earth, to wound, grieve, deny, crucify, mortify self in repentance and sanctification. . . He shall thus get out of his natural life what God intends him to get and at the same time attain the life eternal. (Buls)

This is well said, because Jesus is not teaching asceticism. (Buls)

But herein is an admonition also for the disciples, who are pledged to follow their

When Jesus warns against loving our lives, He means putting this earthly life first. It's a warning against self-centeredness. Those who put all their affection on this life and what they can get out of it will one day die and lose it all. (PBC)

*hates.* Love for God must be such that all other loves are, by comparison, hatred. (CSB)

Semitic idiom indicating preference; the opposite of sinful self-adulation. (TLSB)

Note from TLSB Romans 9:13: *Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.* Refers to the nations of Israel and Edom. The "love/hate" language emphasizes preference of one over another, not literal hatred (compare Gn 29:30 to 29:31).

Jesus means putting Him and the life He gives first. When we believe in Jesus and have eternal life in Him, worldly living loses its attraction. Everything worldly carries sin's taint and becomes hateful. (PBC)

**12:26** Just as Christ was ready to face death, so must His disciples be, no matter who they are or where they come from. (TLSB)

Note that both of these conditional sentences are general, covering all instances, an open invitation to both Jews and Gentiles. He died for all. "Serves" here is wider in meaning than mere religious service. "Serve" is a twenty-four hour a day matter, which involves a person in constant use of Law and Gospel. "Must follow," though an imperative, is an invitation, an invitation to trust, serve, suffer. And then follows a wonderful promise. "Where -- there" are correlative adverbs of place. Read John 7:34 and 8:21 where Jesus warned His enemies that they would *not be able* to come. But here at John 12:26; 14:3; 17:24 He does not say "you will be able" because it is purely a gift of Jesus. (Buls)

In what sense will The Father honor the "service" of Jesus? Bengel suggests that this corresponds to verse 23, the glorification of the Son of man. Just as the Son of man was glorified through suffering, death and resurrection, so the server will be honored with final glorification. (Buls)

"My servant" is a fellow-heir with Christ, Romans 8:17. In verse 26 Jesus is not merely prophesying, but stating the certainty of everlasting life for the servant. (Buls)

Before we leave this section we refer to Solomon's prayer for the Gentiles at 1 Kings 8:41-43. In its highest sense, the prayer of Solomon was answered here in John 12:20-33 when these Greeks, as representatives of all Gentiles, were knocking at the door of the Kingdom, to use an expression from Stoeckhardt, who says: "The hour that Christ should enter into glory through His death was at hand, because the Gentiles were knocking at the door and desiring a portion of Christ's kingdom." (Buls)

**12:20–26** When some Greeks want to see Jesus, He uses the occasion to proclaim His death and the fruit it will bear. Too often we are tempted to think that we are really "living" when we are indulging in life's sinful pleasures. Christ promises everlasting life to all who deny themselves and trust in Him. He shows us the meaning of abundant life. • O God, as Your baptized child, let me consider myself "dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Rm 6:11). Amen. (TLSB)

*The Son of Man Must Be Lifted Up*

**27 "Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. 28 Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." 29 The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." 30 Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not mine. 31 Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. 32 And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." 33 He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. 34 So the crowd answered him, "We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?" 35 So Jesus said to them, "The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. 36 While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light."**

**12:27** *troubled.* John's equivalent to the agony in Gethsemane described in the other Gospels. (CSB)

Christ knew that the moment of His death was at hand. (TLSB)

Note that four of these words are quoted from the LXX, Psalm 6:4 (3), a penitential Psalm. Psalm 6 is spoken by the penitent sinner because of his own sins. Here Jesus uses it because of what He is about to suffer because of all men's sins. "Is troubled" is perfect tense because Jesus' soul has been disturbed for some time but the intensity is growing as He approaches His death. Jesus announced His impending death at least three times (cf. Matthew 16:21; Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22 for the first announcement). The first announcement occurred at least nine months before this time. (Buls)

By the way, the word "hour" including this instance, occurs seventeen times in John from this point on. In the majority of cases it has to do with His suffering and death. (It occurs here again twice in verse 31) (Buls)

"What shall I say" is deliberative subjunctive. It denotes deep emotion, not a mere request for information. KJV and NEB make the sentence a statement. The others make it a question, as does Nestle/Aland. It is surely a question: "Shall I say: 'Father, save me from this hour'?" AAT gives the sense: "Father, save Me from what is going to happen? No! I came to suffer this now." "No" is clearly "No!" The situation is much like in the Garden of Gethsemane, Matthew 26:38ff. (Buls)

"This reason" though it has no expressed antecedent, means "For this very reason, namely, to die for the world." He says "No!" to "save me," just mentioned, and "Yes!" to His purpose. "I've come" denotes Jesus' willing obedience. (Buls)

Kretzmann: Every Christian may say a similar prayer when the hour of tribulation comes upon him; only he must never set his own will above the will of his heavenly Father. . . Jesus corrects His prayer by asking that the work for which He came into the world continue. (Buls)

Verse 27 reveals two things: Jesus' intense agony and His willing obedience, no matter what the cost. (Buls)

Jesus' condition (the verb is perfect tense) is one of turmoil. Interpretation of the question in that verse is controverted. It could be a hypothetical/rhetorical question, or it could be an actual prayer Jesus immediately repudiates. Either way, his emphatic declaration is that he do the Father's will. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

Jesus had to come to Jerusalem to die. As true man, He was troubled by what He faced. The triumphant procession did not change the reality He knew was coming. He already felt the burden we associate with Gethsemane. He opened His soul for us to look in. Jesus was not a robot, heading for the scrap heap without feeling. As true God, He did not simply switch off all sorrow and suffering. His sufferings would be intense beyond measure because of our sin. (PBC)

*this hour.* Jesus faced the prospect of becoming sin (or a sin offering) for sinful people (2Co 5:21). He considered praying for God to save him from this death, but refused to pray it, because the very reason he had come was to die. (CSB)

Still the God-man never wavered from His assigned path. He did not cry out in human frailty for the Father to save Him from His ordeal. He had come from heaven for this very purpose, prepared for this time. He was there to bring glory to God. (PBC)

The thought of the coming ordeal, in a way, filled the soul of Christ with dread, He was deeply moved and agitated at the prospect. He felt something of the dread and fear of death. For Jesus was true man, whose flesh and blood shrank from the idea of death. Death is a judgment of God upon sins and sinners.

To die in the stead of all men, as their substitute, and thus as the greatest sinner of all times, was a thought which filled the soul of Jesus with dread. He hardly knows what to say in this emergency. As though seeking counsel from His disciples, He asks: Shall I say, Father, deliver Me out of this hour? Should He plead to be saved the ordeal which His human nature dreaded? Every Christian may say a similar prayer when the hour of tribulation comes upon him; only he must never set his own will above the will of his heavenly Father. But even the thought of becoming unfaithful to His Father's trust Jesus repudiates, since it is for this reason that He came into this hour. It is the goal and culmination of His life's work. He cannot disappoint His Father at this time. Without His death His life would be fruitless. (Kretzmann)

**12:28-33** The glory spoken of by Jesus and the Father is the cross, not outward splendor in the political, social realm. In being lifted up in death, God is present and seen. What appears as Satan's victory is actually his downfall. Certainly, Jesus is glorified in his resurrection and ascension as essential events in the work of salvation. But here the cross is the particular place where God is revealed for us, where God draws us to himself. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

**12:28** *Father, glorify your name!* His prayer was not for deliverance but for the Father to be glorified. The voice from heaven gave the answer. (CSB)

The Father had already glorified Christ through His incarnation and earthly ministry (esp miracles and signs); now He was about to glorify Him again through His death and resurrection. (TLSB)

Note the word "glorify" for the second time. First, verse 27, in agony. Here in determination. The name of God is His revelation of Himself through Jesus. Jesus asks that revelation to be clothed in splendor by His suffering and dying. The Father had glorified His name, His revelation, by Jesus' incarnation, His life, miracles, baptism, preaching and transfiguration. (Buls)

The first "I have glorified" denotes approval, and second "will glorify" offers comfort and promise to Jesus. Commentators point out that this is the third word of the Father publicly about Jesus. The first was at His baptism, the second at His transfiguration. On this read John 17:4.5. Jesus is very God of very God, incarnate. The Father addresses Jesus as both human and divine. (Buls)

*a voice came from heaven* – The Father answered Jesus' prayer aloud from heaven. His name had been and would be glorified. By sending His Son in the flesh and through His Son's miraculous signs, the Father received glory (1:14). In the events to come, Christ's work of salvation – His death, resurrection and ascension – would most assuredly glorify God's name further. (PBC)

**12:29** *thundered* – God's voice was audible to all, but not everyone identified it or understood it (cf. Ex 19:16,19). (TLSB)

It is clear that the crowd standing there heard something but did not understand. There were two opinions indicating that they discussed it. (Buls)

The ignorant Jews had heard the sound, but had not understood the words. And so they expressed their opinion, some thinking that there had been a clap of .thunder, others, that an angel had spoken with Jesus. (Kretzmann)

**12:30** *voicc came for your sake* – The crowd needed to hear the voice as a sign that a truly cosmic even was being set in motion, the confrontation God had predicted in Eden (Genesis 3:15). (PBC)



Hendriksen thinks this means "Not exclusively for my sake has this voice occurred, but also for your sake." That may be, for the Father's voice surely strengthened Jesus. In any case it shows Jesus' great love for His disciples. Jesus assures them that the Father has answered His prayer (cf. 11 :42) and that He (Jesus) is about to do His great vicarious work. Jesus' entire thinking and doing is devoted to saving mankind. (Buls)

He is saying this was said so that they might have this additional evidence and He is the Son of God. (CB)

**12:31** *of this world.* The cross was God's judgment on the world. (CSB)

The judgment of this world would be based on the outcome. This judgment is an ongoing process, as people either in faith accept or in unbelief reject Jesus as their Savior. (PBC)

Jesus Himself will be judged a criminal shortly, but here He speaks of the condemnation of Satan and the work of the Holy Spirit (cf 16:8-10). (TLSB)

*the ruler of this world.* Satan (cf. 16:11). The cross would seem to be his triumph; in fact, it was his defeat. Out of it would flow the greatest good ever to come to the world. (CSB)

A compound sentence. Each member introduced by "now," denoting what will happen presently. Only in this Gospel is Satan called "the ruler of this world." Compare 14:30 and 16:11. In all three cases, Satan is doomed. By causing man to fall into sin, Satan usurped authority over man. But Satan, who rules this world of men, is about to be thrown out. That is the judgment, the moment of crisis, of and for this world. Satan is conquered. Compare Luke 10:18 and Hebrews 2:14. (Buls)

Death is Satan's most fearsome weapon. By dying, Jesus conquered Satan and death. Jesus is speaking about His own death. Read Ephesians 2:1-10. Satan is still hard at work. The Gospel is our only hope. (Buls)

Christ's death on the cross may have appeared to be Satan's triumph, but in fact it spelled his overthrow. (TLSB)

Satan would be driven out as the Seed of the woman emerged as the risen victor. Jesus would break the devil's power over us. (PBC)

The efforts of Satan and wicked men to procure the death of Christ were overruled for the promotion of His glory, the salvation of His people, and the ruin of all who continued to oppose Him. (CB)

**12:32** *And I.* Jesus emphasizes what He will experience and do. (TLSB)

*lifted up.* The cross was the supreme exaltation of Jesus (see notes on v. 41; 13:31). (CSB)

Only in John's Gospel (3:14; 8:28; 12:32,34) is "lifted up" used of Jesus' crucifixion. "Draw" is used of dragging dead weight, e.g. beaching ships or dragging a net of fish to the shore. Jesus used it again and again in John 6 of the Father "dragging" (drawing) people to Jesus. They cannot do it by their own powers. (Compare John 6:44). There the word was used of conversion but here Jesus is using "dragging" of redemption. We think that Lenski errs here when he says: (Buls)

This is the drawing exerted by grace through the means of grace (Word and Sacrament), alike in effectiveness and seriousness for all men, not in any way limited on God's part. . . Jesus is speaking of this universal and unlimited grace only in so far as it succeeds in actually drawing men from the world to himself. (Buls)

*all people.* Christ will draw people to himself without regard for nationality, ethnic affiliation or status. It is significant that Greek Gentiles were present on this occasion (v. 20). (CSB)

Not that everyone in the world would enter heaven, but Christ would make atonement for everyone's sins and draw people out of every nation to form His Church. (TLSB)

No! Jesus is not speaking of a potentiality, but an actuality. Jesus says: "I will draw all men to myself." This is the universal atonement, not the possibility of conversion. Lenski has real problems not only here but also with John 1:9; 2 Corinthians 5:19; Romans 5:12-21 and other passages. Look at John 12:33. Was the death of Christ for all men a mere potentiality or an actuality? It would be dangerous to say that Christ died for all only potentially. No. He died for all actually. Why then are not all saved? Because many reject what Christ and His cross did for all. Verse 32 must be taken literally without any kind of exegetical adornment. (Buls)

Bengel: 'Draw all men,' even the Gentiles. Satan shall not be able to retain them. He shall give way. Here the answer is given to the request made at verse 21. I WILL DRAW from earth, upwards. By this word a power is indicated in opposition to the prince of the world, who shall no longer detain his captives. (Buls)

Bengel rightly understood verse 32 as universal. Satan was not conquered potentially, but actually. Christ did not die for some men potentially, but for all actually. As Bengel says, here was Jesus' answer to the request of the Greeks. If the Greeks did not hear what Jesus said, Philip and Andrew likely told them what He said. (Buls)

All people have to enter judgment through Jesus. They cannot avoid the significance of the cross. (PBC)

**12:33** This is plainly a comment by the Evangelist John. In indirect language, spoken for the benefit of the Greeks, Jesus is speaking of His crucifixion. When Jesus first announced His coming death to the disciples, they were shocked. Jesus likely uses "the kind of" here to soften the idea so they could get used to it. But He spoke in unmistakable terms. (Buls)

**12:34** *the Law.* Here seems to mean OT Scripture in general (see note on 10:34), the reference being to passages such as Ps 89:36; 110:4; Isa 9:7; Da 7:14. (CSB)

Scriptural texts prophesying the Messiah's eternal kingdom (e.g., 2Sm 7:13; Ps 89:35-37; Dn 7:13-14). (TLSB)

*how can you say* – They searched for understanding. They believed from Scripture that the Christ would be eternal (Psalm 110:4; Isaiah 9:6, 7; Ezekiel 37:25; Daniel 7:13, 14). Sadly, for many that meant the Christ would set up an eternal kingdom on earth. It definitely did not make sense to them that the Christ would die. (PBC)

*Son of Man.* The only place in the Gospels where anyone other than Jesus used the expression, and even here Jesus is being quoted. (CSB)

*be lifted up* – Crowd evidently understood this as reference to Jesus' execution. (TLSB)

*who is this Son of Man* – People seem confused about the title’s meaning, despite Jesus’ emphasis on Himself in v. 32. The question implied, however, that at least some considered it a reference to the Messiah. (TLSB)

**12:35–36** *the light*. Light is closely identified with Jesus, as seen from the call to believe in the light. (CSB)

Jesus did not try to explain away their doubts; He just told them to stay with Him while they still could. He called for them to trust in Him. Those people didn’t need all their questions answered just then. They needed only to listen and believe. By walking in the light of Jesus, they would be enlightened. They would become light bearers too, shining Christ’s light in their lives. (PBC)

While men have opportunities to obtain spiritual knowledge they should diligently improve them, lest their opportunities cease, and they be left to ignorance, darkness, and woe. (CB)

*lest darkness overtake you* – Believing in Jesus is a matter of utmost urgency. (TLSB)

**12:27–36a** Christ faces the moment of His glory, confirmed by His Father’s voice from heaven: the hour when He would be lifted up on the cross so that He could draw all people to Himself. Now is the day of salvation (2Co 6:2); people ignore it at their great peril. Thanks be to God, Christ remains committed to His mission to save the world in spite of its unbelief. • Father, glorify Your Son and draw us to Him today. Amen. (TLSB)

*The Unbelief of the People*

**When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them. 37 Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him, 38 so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: “Lord, who has believed what he heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” 39 Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said, 40 “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them.” 41 Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him. 42 Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; 43 for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.**

**12:36b** *he departed* – From Jerusalem or perhaps from the crowd. (TLSB)

**12:37** *they still would not believe*. God’s ancient people should have responded when God sent his Messiah. They should have seen the significance of the signs he did. (CSB)

The faith of many on Palm Sunday was fickle. Although Jesus had done His miraculous signs in their presence, including the raising of Lazarus, they continued not to believe in Jesus. (PBC)

**12:38** *Isaiah might be fulfilled* – Anticipating these days, the prophet Isaiah had asked, “Who has believed our message?” (53:1). Even though the Pharisees feared Jesus’ popularity, in reality the people were rejecting Jesus’ teaching. (PBC)

As Isaiah foretold, the people believed neither the message nor Jesus’ signs (cf. 14:10-11). (TLSB)

**12:39-40** As in the days of Isaiah, God’s judgment locked people in their unbelief. They would not believe, so they are condemned to become those who could not believe. (TLSB)

**12:39** *could not believe.*† They purposely rejected God and chose evil, and v. 40 explains that God in turn brought on them a judicial blinding of eyes and hardening of hearts. Yet many Jewish leaders did believe in Jesus as the Messiah (v. 42). (CSB)

Many of these people, especially the Jewish leaders, had become hardened in their hearts against Jesus. They didn’t acknowledge the arm of God at work in His miracles. Finally, as He once did with Pharaoh at the time of Israel’s exodus from Egypt, God blinded the eyes of those who refused to see and closed the hearts of those who had locked Jesus out. (PBC)

It is said of Joseph’s brothers that they could not speak peaceably to him (Genesis 37:4); and Christ said to the Jews, “How can you believe, who receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that comes from God only?” (John 5:44) The two things were incompatible. They must cease from the one in order to do the other. So here; as they continue to love and cherish their sins, they could not, continuing this course, embrace the Messiah. The two things could not coexist. This was the reason why they should have renounced the one, and performed the other. But they would not do it. (CB)

**12:40** These words from Isa 6:10 are quoted by Jesus (Mt 13:14–15; Mk 4:12; Lk 8:10) and by Paul (Ac 28:26–27). (CSB)

Referring to what was heard. (TLSB)

God has blinded their eyes by presenting to them truths which they would reject, their rejection bringing them into greater darkness. In a similar sense it is said, that Jesus Christ came into the world to set members of families at variance, by leading some to trust in Him, while others on this account opposed them and sought their death. (Matthew 10:21, 35, 36) (CB)

**12:41** *saw his glory.* Isaiah spoke primarily of the glory of God (Isa 6:3). John spoke of the glory of Jesus and made no basic distinction between the two, attesting Jesus’ oneness with God. The thought of glory here is complex. There is the idea of majesty, and there is also the idea (which meant so much to John) that Jesus’ death on the cross and his subsequent resurrection and exaltation show his real glory. Isaiah foresaw the rejection of Christ, as the passages quoted (Isa 53:1; 6:10) show. He spoke of the Messiah both in the words about blind eyes and hard hearts, on the one hand, and about healing, on the other. This is the cross and this is glory, for the cross and resurrection and exaltation portray both suffering and healing, rejection and triumph, humiliation and glory. (CSB)

Either directly in a vision or through the prophetic words God gave him. *His glory.* Isaiah either saw the preincarnate Christ or discerned what the Christ would do as the Suffering Servant. (TLSB)

You have heard the familiar verses. Perhaps you have learned them by heart: “He was wounded for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His stripes we are healed” (Is 53:5). “A bruised reed He will not break” (42:3). He “was numbered with the transgressors; yet He bore the sin of many” (53:12). You have sung the familiar hymns: “O Sacred Head, Now Wounded” (*LSB* 449), “Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted” (*LSB* 451), and “A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth” (*LSB* 438). Some of the more familiar Scripture passages are part of the songs of the Suffering Servant. For centuries, hymn writers have mined the rich imagery of the Servant Songs to create hymns of lasting comfort. (TLSB p. 1178)

The Holy Spirit inspired Isaiah to record four separate songs of the Suffering Servant (42:1–9; 49:1–13; 50:4–11; 52:13–53:12). With remarkable clarity, 700 years before the Servant was born, Isaiah vividly portrayed His life from manger to grave to resurrection. He wrote how the Servant, born of a virgin, would atone for the sins of the world with His own suffering and death. No other human could fulfill the mission of the Servant. (TLSB p. 1178)

### **The Servant Is a Humble King**

In the Old Testament, the king of Israel, the temple, and the land bear rich theological imagery. We hear of God accomplishing the salvation of His people through His king, dwelling with His people in His temple, and restoring His people to the land promised long ago. Isaiah further defined God’s kingly role as that of a Servant. The Messiah, a royal descendant of King David, would be a King radically different from all previous kings. True, this King would bring forth justice to the Gentiles, even to all the earth (42:1, 4), but He would come quietly and humbly (53:2). This King would come not to be served by His subjects, but to serve them. He would offer His life for all people. (TLSB p. 1178)

In the Servant Songs, God provided His prophet Isaiah a glimpse of the future, far beyond the impending judgment of Jerusalem and exile in Babylon. Isaiah wrote about the day when God Himself would dwell in human flesh with His people to serve them and all nations. For example, in ch 49, the Servant Himself speaks of His commission to bring salvation to Israel and to be a light to the Gentiles. He would take the sins of the world—past, present, and future—upon Himself and offer Himself as the perfect sacrifice to make satisfaction for that sin. (TLSB p. 1178)

### **A King like No Other**

This King would not draw attention to Himself (42:2). Subjected to great humiliation (52:14), His appearance would startle and amaze other kings (52:15). Despised and rejected by people, He would be a man of sorrows, a man not highly esteemed (53:3). When accused, this innocent King would not defend Himself but would stand silent (53:7). The King would “bring forth justice to the nations” (42:1) in what would appear to be a gross miscarriage of justice, since the guilty would be released and the innocent condemned to die (53:8). (TLSB p. 1178)

Scorned by His own people, the Suffering Servant would be worshiped by princes. Despised by the common man, kings would arise to see Him (49:7). This King would be smitten, stricken, and spat upon (53:4). He would be bruised, berated, and beaten (53:5). He would turn His cheek to allow His beard to be pulled and plucked (50:6). Although innocent of violence and deceit, He would be killed with criminals and buried with the wicked and the rich (53:9). Who is like this Servant King? (TLSB p. 1178)

### **Set Apart by the Father**

Is 42:1 records the Father’s introduction of this Suffering Servant and His work: “Behold My servant, whom I uphold, My chosen, in whom My soul delights; I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations.” This Servant is the Father’s singular chosen Servant. The Father unhesitatingly acknowledges Him. He is the One elected by the Father for this unique position of honor. He is the One in whom the Father greatly delights. Knowing the difficulty of the mission He has assigned to this Servant King, the Father confers His Spirit on Him to equip Him for His peculiar work. (TLSB p. 1178)

Centuries after Isaiah completed his prophetic work, when John baptized Jesus in the Jordan River, the Father’s voice boomed from heaven with reference to the Servant Song, “This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” (Mt 3:17; cf Is 42:1). The Spirit descended from the heavens in the form of a dove and came to rest upon the Son (cf Is 42:1). Later (Lk 4:18), the Suffering Servant began His public ministry by reading the words of Is 61:1, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me.” Then He proclaimed, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (Lk 4:21). Later, when the Servant turned to

Jerusalem and His bloody mission on the cross, the Father again affirmed His pleasure with His Son and His work by saying, “This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” (Mt 17:5). (TLSB p. 1178)

### **The Servant Suffers for You**

“But He was wounded for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His stripes we are healed” (Is 53:5). With these poetic words, Isaiah drives the prophecy home. He explains why it was necessary for the Servant King to suffer. The almighty God took on human flesh in order that He might be humiliated, tortured, and killed to take away your sins! He was wounded—for you. He was crucified to bring about peace with God—for you. Through His work as the Suffering Servant, He brings healing—for you. Who is like this Servant King? Who is like this God? (TLSB p. 1178)

Tell me, ye who hear Him groaning,  
Was there ever grief like His?  
Friends through fear His cause disowning,  
Foes insulting His distress;  
Many hands were raised to wound Him,  
None would intervene to save;  
But the deepest stroke that pierced Him  
Was the stroke that justice gave. (LSB 451:2)

There is no other God who loves and forgives like your God (Mi 7:18). He is the Suffering Servant King who died for you, that you might live eternally like a king with Him. (TLSB p. 1178)

**12:42** *many even of the authorities believed on him* – Though they remained secret believers for fear of excommunication (see note on 9:22). (CSB)

E.g., Nicodemus (3:1-21) and Joseph of Arimathea (19:38). (TLSB)

*fear of the Pharisees* – Pharisees controlled Jewish synagogues. Few dared to oppose them, for fear of being ostracized. (TLSB)

They hid their real views for fear of being put out of the synagogue. They could not face the humiliation of that, valuing their reputation among the people more than their need to give glory to God. They still loved glory that comes from men more than the glory that comes from God in Christ. We should not be surprised at this cowardice in faith. Our own lives display it today. How often do we Christians fail to confess our faith because we fear the reaction of those around us? (PBC)

**12:36b–43** Some Jews reject Jesus and, under God’s judgment, are hardened in unbelief; others believe in Him but refuse to confess Him openly for fear of being removed from the synagogue community. The desire to be accepted by others can stand in the way of a Christian’s bold confession of Christ today. Yet, take heart. God has revealed His saving presence (His glory) in the person of His Son, that we may glorify Him before all people. • Lord, may I “tell of [Your] salvation from day to day” (Ps 96:2). Amen. (TLSB)