

John Ch 12:31-50

“The Last Call”

We’ve pointed out before how at this point in John’s gospel, the public ministry of the Lord for all intents and purposes, has basically drawn to a close. In that He’s not really ministering on the scale of mass quantities and multitudes of people anymore. Now He obviously hasn’t shunned every form of public appearance and/or the teaching of the people with whom He comes into contact, (even at this point in ch 12 He’s teaching there in or near the temple as the nation prepares for Passover). But on the scale of the feeding of the 5,000 and again the feeding of the 4,000 and those discourses that followed those events, or settings like the sermon on the Mt., that facet of His ministry has ended.

He’s ceased appealing to the nation on that level having accepted His rejection, He came to His own and His own did not receive Him. However as we draw ch 12 to a close, even the appeal to the crowds on smaller scales will end, His public appeal in *any* form closes with ch 12, this is officially His last call. What can I say, there comes a point when Jesus will officially cease appealing to you if you continue to reject Him, and refuse to receive Him, and deny Him access into your life. Ironside put it like this, “If men refuse the testimony of the first twelve Chapters of John’s Gospel, God has nothing more to say to them. He has given His full revelation.” H.A. Ironside and From the end of ch 12 (that few day period just before the cross) thru ch 16 He’ll begin to focus His attention specifically on His disciples and preparing them for His departure. But He says here in vs 31

Vs 31-32

We left off last time considering the proper perspective for the troubled soul as Jesus is considering the cross that lies just ahead of Him. and The reality of what that entails, bearing the burden of the sin of the world upon Himself, being (in fact) *made* sin for us (the bible says) that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Cor 5:21) and So as He’s there contemplating what’s to come upon Him, the sin of the *world* (not even knowing so much as what the weight of a *single* sin feels like). and Of course that sin would separate Him from the Father, having never spent so much as a single second in separation from the Father from before the world was created, not to mention all of the physical ramifications that the cross would entail. and So as He’s considering these things He said, “My soul is troubled, and what shall I say?” and In that small section there from vs 27-30 we’re able to glean that the objective of our lives regardless of the trial or the tribulation of the moment is to glorify the Father, even as Jesus gave us example in the resolve of His own life. He realized that the Father was in control of the details of His life, and if the Father had determined that a certain scenario was to be played out in His life, then, “Father strengthen me in it and be glorified through it.” “Father glorify Your Name.”

This is the flow that we're falling into as we come to vs 31. The topic at hand is the cross. and So as Jesus draws our focal point to the place of the cross He says, "Now is the judgment of this world." The sin of the world, the system of the world, was placed as it were on trial before the Father and found guilty, and Jesus says, "Now, the judgment is coming down." But the good news is that Jesus bore the sentence on our behalf, that's what the cross was all about, Jesus, dying the death that we deserve, absorbing the judgment, and the penalty that should've been placed upon us. There at the cross Jesus stepped into our rightful position and absorbed in Himself the wrath of God that was to be poured out upon each and everyone of us, the wages of sin the bible says is death, and Jesus took our place, died a substitutionary death, so that we can be as it were "pardoned" in Him.

You see the world has been judged, the Divine gavel has fallen, and the verdict is guilty as charged, "...*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*" Rom 3:23 and we're all as it were on death row just awaiting our sentence of eternal death and separation from God to be carried out. But here's the deal, "...*we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.*" 1 John 2:1-2 You see, Jesus came to this earth, died the death that we deserve, the just dying for the unjust, and there's a Divine pardon from eternal death row just waiting for anyone who will call upon Him. The judgment of the world is a done deal, the trial is over, and the verdict is guilty, but Jesus is our pardon, our release from the death sentence. Jesus said, "*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.*" John 11:25-26 Will never have to suffer eternal death and separation from the Father, so we have a choice, take the death penalty, or receive pardon in Jesus Christ Jesus said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*" John 14:6 If you want to be pardoned of your sin, it's only in Christ that that's going to happen, other than that, it's certain judgment, the world has been judged. It's like there's a door before mankind, to open the door is *Liberation*, to close it is *Condemnation*, and it hinges on the cross, the choice is yours.

The judgment of this world was sealed at the cross, and Jesus says, "Now the *ruler* of this world will be cast out." Who's the ruler of this world? Satan, remember when he was tempting Jesus there in the wilderness, and we read where having taken Jesus up on a high mountain, he showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. "*And the devil said to Him, 'All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours.'*" Luke 4:6-7 Jesus didn't say, "What are you talking about you liar, they're not yours, therefore you won't give them to Me." He just rebuked him and said, "*Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'*" Luke 4:8 and So in not correcting him when he said that all the kingdoms of the world had been delivered to him, Jesus was acknowledge the validity of the statement, Satan *is* the ruler of this world.

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul calls him, "...*the prince of the power of the air*," Eph 2:2 and Jesus says, "Now" (that is by means of the cross) the ruler of this world will be cast out. Which is to say a couple of things, #1 it speaks of rendering the power of Satan over someone's life null and void as by the blood of Jesus Christ Before you gave your heart to Jesus Christ Satan had dominion over your life, but by the blood of Jesus Christ being applied to your life, he's cast out of that position and rendered powerless over you. The bible says that Jesus took the hand writing of requirements that was against us out of the way, nailing them to the cross, "*Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.*" Col 2:15 John tells us in his 1st epistle, "*For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.*" 1 John 3:8 and So the ruler of this world is cast out of your life through the work of the cross and the shed blood of Jesus Christ . Now that doesn't mean that he doesn't still seek to harass and harangue you on a consistent basis, but he has no more dominion over you.

But it also speaks of a literal casting out, before the cross Satan had a vice grip on this world, but Jesus bought back (as it were) the title deed to the earth by the purchase price of His blood. and Now Satan *will be* cast out, we want to notice the future tense of this statement. Jesus didn't say that the moment His atoning death and subsequent resurrection took place, there would be peace and harmony in the world because the wicked one will have been destroyed. He said, "*He will be cast out,*" the victory of the cross ensures the day when the ruler of this world will be utterly cast out.

When will that happen? Well, Rev Ch 20 speaks of a thousand year period of time during which Jesus will be ruling and reigning upon the earth (we call it the millennial reign of Christ). and During that time the bible says that Satan will be bound and cast into a bottomless pit. Now after that thousand years he'll be released, and those who've never known anything but a life under the rule of Jesus Christ will have the opportunity to make the freewill choice to serve Jesus, or follow after Satan, and the bible says that Satan will deceive multitudes during that time, and they'll all encircle the New Jerusalem to wage war against the saints and the beloved city. and We read, "*And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*" Rev 20:9-10 and Jesus looking forward even to that point from right here, prophecies the reality that by His blood, and His work there on the cross, the ruler of this world will be cast out.

Vs32

Now there are those who have sought to apply this vs to Jesus' exaltation. That if we would just exalt Jesus before the world, that if He would be raised in praise then people would be drawn to Him. and We know that in various passages of scripture the phrase "lifted up" carries with it the connotation of exaltation, but not here. Here Jesus is very specific that He's not in regards to any form of exaltation, He's speaking here of His humiliation, His mutilation, by the cross, it's not praising the Lord that draws people to the Lord.

Don't get me wrong, it's good to exalt the name of Jesus, we're to do that, but you can exalt Him all day long and never see one person come to know Him through that. Jesus is saying here that the compelling force which will draw people to Himself is His sacrificial death upon the cross, the bible says it like this, "...*the goodness of God leads you to repentance.*" Rom 2:4 and Again, "*God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*" Rom 5:8

Just as when you learned of God's love for you, and came to realize the death that Jesus died for you, and that He came to save you and not condemn you, and was overwhelmed by His goodness towards you as demonstrated in the cross, you gave your heart to Him, that's the same thing that's going to draw others as well. How do we reach young people? The message of the cross, how do you appeal to the older generation? The message of the cross, how do you reach the people of Nigeria, or Russia, or Joplin MO, the message of the cross, it's cross generational, it's cross cultural, it's the cross, and it's by the cross that we have access to everlasting life, it's the message that the world needs. That's why Paul the apostle said, "*For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.*" 1 Cor 2:2 For all intents and purposes this guy had a masters degree in theology, could've shared all kinds of things with all kinds of people, but he purposed one message in his heart, Jesus Christ and Him crucified, he understood this statement of Jesus right here, it's the message of the cross that's going to convert the human heart. A little bit later he said, "*Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified,*" 1 Cor 1:22-23 A lot of people are entertained by a lot of different things, Paul says, "We didn't cater to any of that stuff, we kept the message focused on the essential need of humanity, Christ crucified." Jesus says, this is what's going to draw all men, that is, men from every tribe and tongue and nation, Jew and Gentile, to Me. He's not saying all men in the regard of everyone will be saved, remember the context, the Greeks seeking to see Him, He's saying the cross will be the component through which all men, that is, men of Jewish or Gentile descent, will be drawn to Him.

Now, real quick here, this word "Draw" also carries with it the idea of, "To drag." It's the same word that's translated in John Ch 21 as "dragged" when Peter went and dragged the net of 153 fish upon the shore. and So a very real aspect of what Jesus is saying here also applies to the day when He *will* draw, or "drag" all peoples to Himself on what we call judgment day. Whether you want to be "drawn" to Jesus or not, one day we'll all stand before His throne. We'll all be drawn to Him in that regard, how much better to be drawn to Him by His love in the day of grace, than to wait to be drawn to Him in judgment when it'll be too late.

Vs34

They didn't get what He was saying, we just saw this triumphal entry and all, what are You talking about, "Being lifted up" and all? The scriptures say the Christ remains forever, so if that's You, what are you talking about, "Being lifted up?" and They were right, all over the OT the scripture speaks of the eternal reign of the Christ, that He would be a priesthood forever in the order of Melchizedek, that His name would endure forever, that of the increase of His government there would be no end, and on and on we could go.

But they didn't see the balance of the scripture that spoke of His rejection, how He would be cut off, how He would be bruised for our iniquities, and wounded for our transgressions and as a sheep before it's shearers is silent so He'd open not His mouth. Now there were those who being unable to reconcile those various passages thought perhaps there were 2 Messiahs, one that would suffer, and one that would reign, and they were trying to get on track, but they missed it. There was only 1 Messiah, but there would be 2 comings, the 1st time to suffer, the 2nd time to reign, the 1st time as the Lamb of God, the 2nd time as the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

Vs35-36

So Jesus responds to them, but not with respect to their question, they're wanting to talk theology, He's saying, "Look, just get to know Me personally. I'm only going to be available to you in this fashion for a little while longer." In essence Jesus is telling them, "You're in the dark about these things, but the lights come on in Me." The lights come on in Jesus Christ and He's saying to us, walk in the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light, who is the light of the world? He is, Jesus is, and as we walk in Him, and believe in Him, we'll become like Him, have you ever noticed how you begin to take on the gestures and inflections of the people you love and spend a lot of time with? The same thing happens with Jesus, the more time you spend *with* Him, the more you'll become *like* Him.

Vs37-38

Perhaps you've heard the phrase, "The same sun that softens the wax hardens the clay." and That's the way the human heart responds to the Word and the witness of God, it'll either soften you unto repentance, or it'll harden you unto resistance. What makes the difference? The attitude in the heart of the individual confronted by the message, God doesn't block anyone from believing, that choice is up to you, but the more you *resist* the message the harder you become *to* the message. But God didn't stop these people from believing so that His Word could be fulfilled, if you're not careful you'll see it that way. This word "that" in vs 38 could also be understood, "The result being", or "Consequently," Jesus did all these miracles before them, but even still they didn't believe *in* Him, "consequently" the word of Isaiah the prophet was fulfilled. But we need to understand that God hasn't ordained some to be believers, others to be non-believers, some to receive and others to refuse, nor does the result stem from the presentation of the message, it's a simple question of the individuals own attitude of the heart towards the truth of the gospel message. and It's possible to *resist* to the point of impossible *reception*, notice.

Vs39-40

Because they would not believe after so much indisputable evidence, they came to the point where they actually could not believe. If you choose to close your eyes, God will confirm that in blindness, if you choose to resist in your heart, God will confirm you in that position. This is serious stuff, that's why it's so critical to respond to the gospel when it's presented to you, because the more you hear it, and resist it, the firmer and firmer you'll grow in that position until eventually, if you don't respond, you'll be given over to that position in totality.

That's what happened here, they resisted the compelling power and conviction of the Holy Spirit so long that eventually God just gave them over to what they wanted, blindness, hardness of heart, and an inability to comprehend the truth. The Pulpit Commentary says this, "Thus even now disinclination to God and to righteousness leads to moral incapacity. Sin is punished by its natural consequences: unbelief is punished by unsusceptibility to clearest evidence; prejudice by blindness; rejection of Divine love by inability to see it at its best." Look at Romans Ch 1 (Vs18-28)

So be careful the position that you take before God, because there just may come a time when you get what you're asking for, if you don't want to walk in the light, God will cast you into outer darkness. If you don't want to be in His presence, you'll be separated from Him for all eternity, if you don't want to be open to His voice, then you may have your ears closed to Him altogether. Because God will honor the position you take before Him, even as He did with the Pharaoh who resisted Him, and God strengthened Him in that. Now I'm not trying to scare anyone and saying if you've ever said "No" to God that your fate is forever sealed, if you're with in the sound of my voice you have opportunity to repent, but I can't guarantee how long the forbearance of God will last in any given situation, that's the Lord's sovereign call, it's my duty to implore you to repent while you have the chance. So if the Lord is dealing you in an area, or perhaps you don't know Him and you've resisted His calling out to you up to this point, make today the day that you respond to Him, rather than continuing to resist Him.

Vs 41

This is a great vs regarding the deity of Jesus Christ, because Isaiah said this back in Ch 6 when he saw God high and lifted up, and the seraphim flying around the throne crying, Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory! and Here John says that it was Jesus' glory that he saw that day, and it was Jesus he spoke of. Let your J.W. friends in on that.

Vs42-43

So it wasn't a blanket rejection of every individual in the nation, people were coming to Christ, but overall as a nation, they had rejected Him and turned a blind eye to Him. Now the question comes up, is it possible to be a closet Christian? Can you believe and never confess, and the answer ultimately is no. Either the secrecy will sort of cancel out the belief as you allow compromise to cloak your beliefs, or your belief will cancel out the secrecy as you make your stand for righteousness in the face of compromise. But for these guys it was the fear of man bringing the snare into their lives, they loved the honor and praise of man over the honor and praise of God, how sad is that? Someone once said, "Men may laugh you into hell, but they can never laugh you out!" Well said, be careful placing too much regard on what man may think of you, better to fear God and go to Heaven, than to fear man and go to hell.

Vs44-50

So this is it, the last call that Jesus ever makes publicly regarding John's record. and The reason I'm not expounding on it much is because it's a basic reiteration of that which He's been seeking to convey all along. He stresses one final time that He and the Father are one, vs 46 that He's the light of the world, in vs 47 Jesus stresses that He didn't come to condemn the world, but that world through Him might be saved. But in vs 48 we need to understand that there are inescapable consequences for rejecting Jesus Christ and The Word of God which is rejected will be the final judge one day, heaven and earth will pass away but the Word of God will by no means pass away, liberation or condemnation, it all hinges on the door of the cross. Vs 49-50 Jesus always does that which pleases the Father, and here's the fact, God's not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. His command is everlasting life to all who will obey through the person of His Son Jesus Christ and Jesus goes on record here in His final public word in saying that everything that He's said, has come straight from the Father's heart. and So that's it, now what do you do? Accept it, or reject it?

So if you're here and God is dealing with regarding His desire for you to accept His Son, perhaps this is the 1st time you've really heard the gospel with clarity, or perhaps you've resisted for some time. God is calling out to you today to come to Him through the person of His Son, this is His command, everlasting life, will you obey the call of the Father to you today? Jesus bore the Judgment so that you might receive the pardon, but it's only by the cross, it's only through the shedding of His blood, why resist the heart of God, receive Jesus Christ today. and As far as the east is from the west, He'll remove your sins from you, and you can leave this place forgiven, a new creation in Christ.