

# John 12: Surrendered or Self-Serving

## *The Necessity of Surrender*

---

John 12.20-26



## A Defining Moment

*Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. “Sir,” they said, “we would like to see Jesus.”*

---

*So the Pharisees said to one another, “Look how the whole world has gone after him!”*

- ❖ Philip was a resident of Bethsaida; this area of Galilee, home as well to Andrew, had a large (Gentile) Greek population. It was here that Jesus began his ministry in fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy—

*Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali—to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah:*

*“Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali,  
the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan,  
Galilee of the Gentiles—*

*the people living in darkness have seen a great light;  
on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.”*

MATTHEW 4.13-16



- ❖ Among those gathered for the Passover were “God-fearing” Greeks, such as those Paul encountered in the synagogues on his missions outreaches (cf. Acts 17.4). As such, they had access at the Temple in Jerusalem, but only to the (outer) Court of the Gentiles; they were prohibited from going any further.
- ❖ When Jesus entered Jerusalem, he cleared (as he had at the beginning of his ministry) the money exchangers and animal sellers whose operations were set up in the Court of the Gentiles where these Greeks would have gathered to worship, declaring—

*“Is it not written:*

*‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations’?” (Mark 11.17)*

These words are from Isaiah 56, where, in their context, God declares—

*“Let no foreigner who is bound to the LORD say,*

*“The LORD will surely exclude me from His people. . . .*

*“[For] foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD to minister to Him,*

*to love the name of the LORD, and to be His servants,*

*all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to My covenant—*

*these I will bring to My holy mountain and give them joy in My House of Prayer.*

*Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on My altar;*

*for My house will be called a House-of-Prayer-for All-Nations.” (verses 3, 6-7)*



## A Dramatic Declaration

*Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus. Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. . . . it was for this very reason I came to this hour.”*

---

- ❖ Why did they approach Philip? Was it because he had a Greek name (as did Andrew—the only two disciples with Greek names)? Had some of them perhaps known Philip back home in Bethsaida? Undoubtedly, they had been spectators to the dramatic (and violent) clearing of the Temple, following the heralded (and equally dramatic) entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem; undoubtedly they had also heard his declaration and knew its reference.
- ❖ “*Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father*” (14.9). Could it be that these outsiders, these “second class” worshippers who have been drawn to *God-One-and-Only* but have been prohibited from really “drawing near,” are now finding that desire drawing them to the *Son-One-and-Only* who has come to make the Father known (P<sup>18</sup>)—something that even Philip has yet to understand? Could it be that Greeks and this moment are a fulfillment of the words Jesus had spoken to another prohibited seeker: “*Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks*” (4.23)?



- ❖ In response to the request of the Greeks, Jesus declared—

*“The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. . . . it was for this very reason I came to this hour.”*

In the original Greek, Jesus makes this declaration in the grammatically perfect tense, signifying consummation. The final declaration of Jesus on the cross, “It is finished,” will also be spoken in this tense. Thus, Jesus frames the beginning and end of this final and ultimate week of his substitutionary life with two “consummation announcements”.

- ❖ The words of the Pharisees, *“Look how the whole world has gone after him!”* and the words of Jesus, *“I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.”* are converging at this moment in fulfillment of the prearranged purpose for which the Father, in love for the world, sent His Son.
- ❖ In turning over the tables of the marketeers, Jesus was declaring that he had come to “turn over” the Old Order— *“For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ”* (P<sup>17</sup>). In declaring that his “house” (a reference to himself, not the building; see John 2.21-22) would be a *House-of-Prayer-for-All-Nations*, Jesus was serving notice that a New Order was being established—one that would be “in him” and “through him” and would fling wide open the way of grace to “whosoever.” The Apostle Paul captured the profound implications of this moment when he wrote—



*Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)— remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.*

EPHESIANS 2.11-22