

## **UNDERSTANDING JESUS**

**John 12:44-50**

**By Andy Manning**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. Today we are looking at the last words of Jesus' public ministry. In the next chapter, John 13, Jesus will focus His last days on preparing His inner circle for His departure. In our passage today, this is Jesus' final address to the public. And it serves as a review of the big ideas that we have learned so far about Jesus. It summarizes the main points that John has been making so far. If you understand these four points, you will have a much better understanding of Jesus.

### **II. TEXT: John 12:44-50**

1. *44 Jesus cried out, "The one who believes in me believes not in me, but in him who sent me.*
  - i. In other words, "The one believes in me believes not only in me, or not ultimately in me, but in the Father, because the Father sent me."
  - ii. The Bible commands children to obey their parents. So, this would be like me telling my children, "When you obey me, you don't obey me, but the one who placed me in charge of you."
2. *45 And the one who sees me sees him who sent me.*
  - i. "When you see me, you see the Father."
  - ii. Jesus was not claiming to be the Father, but oneness with the Father; unity with the Father; of the same substance as the Father.
3. *46 I have come as light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me would not remain in darkness.*
  - i. This is Christ's mission statement. He puts it in different ways:
    1. To save His people from their sins. Mt 1:21
    2. Not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. Mk 10:45
    3. To seek and to save the lost. Lk 19:10
    4. To save the world. Jn 3:17
    5. As light, to rescue us from darkness. Jn 12:46
4. *47 If anyone hears my words and doesn't keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. 48 The one who rejects me and doesn't receive my sayings has this as his judge: The word I have spoken will judge him on the last day.*
  - i. In other words, I didn't come to judge the world, but one day everyone will be judged by how they respond to my words.
5. *49 For I have not spoken on my own, but the Father himself who sent me has given me a command to say everything I have said. 50 I know that his command is eternal life. So the things that I speak, I speak just as the Father has told me."*

### III. FOUR BIG IDEAS ABOUT JESUS

#### 1. He was sent by the Father.

- i. This idea bookends this passage.
  1. **John 12:44** Jesus cried out, “The one who believes in me believes not in me, but in him who sent me.
  2. **John 12:49-50** 49 For I have not spoken on my own, but the Father himself who sent me has given me a command to say everything I have said. 50 I know that his command is eternal life. So the things that I speak, I speak just as the Father has told me.”
- ii. Jesus made this claim all throughout the Gospel of John. He was sent by God the Father.
- iii. What did He mean?
- iv. The Jews who rejected Jesus claimed to be worshipers of God the Father. They claimed to believe in God the Father. They said, “We believe in Yahweh, but we don’t believe in You.”
- v. But Jesus said that He was sent by the Father. The Father endorsed Him. He was following the Father’s orders. Therefore, to reject Him was to reject God the Father.
- vi. **John 5:23** “Anyone who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.”
- vii. The point is that you cannot have a relationship with God the Father without believing in Christ.
- viii. **John 14:6** “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”
- ix. There are people all over the world who claim to be religious, who claim to believe in God, but they don’t believe in Jesus. Jesus says that their religion is false. If you want to have a relationship with God, to connect with God, then you must embrace Jesus Christ as God’s one and only divine Son, the Savior of the world who died, rose, ascended, and will one day return. To reject Christ is to reject God.

#### 2. He is God.

- i. Christ identifies Himself with the Father in three ways in this short passage:
  1. To believe in Christ is to believe in the Father. John 12:44
  2. To see Christ is to see the Father. Jn 12:45
  3. To hear Christ is to hear the Father. Jn 12:49-50
- ii. He did not claim to be the Father; but He claimed to be God, making Him equal to the Father.
- iii. We will see this again in John 14. **John 14:8-11**
  - 8 “Lord,” said Philip, “show us the Father, and that’s enough for us.”
  - 9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been among you all this time and you do not know me, Philip? The one who has seen me has seen the Father. How can

you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who lives in me does his works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Otherwise, believe because of the works themselves.

- iv. Then again in **John 14:7** "If you know me, you will also know my Father."
- v. Jesus Christ is not merely a man, although He was fully human. He was not merely a good teacher, or a prophet. He was God. This was His claim, and the claim of the entire NT.
- vi. John stresses the deity of Christ at the very beginning of His gospel. **John 1:1-3** "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 All things were created through him, and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created."
  - 1. Here John stresses the deity of Christ in three ways:
    - a. "The Word was God." This is the most direct way to say that Jesus is God.
    - b. "He was with God in the beginning." Jesus is eternal, a quality that only God has.
    - c. "All things were created through Him." Jesus is the creator, which the OT says is God.
- vii. Jesus is not "a" god. He is not a lesser god. He is not one of many gods. He is not God's firstborn child. He is God. Is Yahweh. He is co-equal, co-eternal with God the Father, and God the Holy Spirit.

### 3. He came to rescue us from darkness.

- i. **John 12:46** "I have come as light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me would not remain in darkness."
- ii. Christ is often referred to as the light in the Gospel of John. It is one of the seven "I am" statements of Jesus; His famous self-descriptions.
  - 1. **John 8:12** Jesus spoke to them again: "I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life."
- iii. This is a claim to deity, and to messiahship.
  - 1. In the OT, God is called the light.
    - a. **Psalms 27:1** "The Lord is my light and my salvation."
  - 2. In the OT, the Messiah was called the light.
    - a. **Isaiah 49:6** "I will also make you a light for the nations, to be my salvation to the ends of the earth."
- iv. Why did Jesus use the light metaphor to refer to Himself and His mission?
- v. Darkness in the Bible refers to sin, Satan, death, sorrow, hell, ignorance. Christ came to rescue us from these things.

1. He rescues us from the darkness of sin and empowers us to live in righteousness and love.
  2. He rescues us from the darkness of Satan and enables us to overcome His attacks.
  3. He rescues us from the darkness of sorrow and fills our hearts with joy and peace.
  4. He rescues us from the darkness of hell and grants us the gift of eternal life.
  5. He rescues us from the darkness of ignorance and gives us the knowledge of God.
- vi. But notice that there is a condition in this verse.
1. **John 12:46** "I have come as light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me would not remain in darkness."
  2. Jesus came as light into the world, to save "everyone" from the darkness. But only those who believe in Him will be saved.
  3. Make no mistake. The Bible does not teach that everyone goes to heaven. It does not teach that there is no hell. It does not teach that it doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are a good person. The Bible is very clear that there is salvation in no other name but Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12). If you want to be saved from the darkness, then you must believe in Jesus Christ.
  4. It reminds me of the story of Noah's ark. In the book of Genesis, the first book of the Bible, after God created people and they were multiplying across the earth, mankind became increasingly sinful; so sinful that God decided to destroy every person and creature and start over with one man and his family – Noah. Noah was a righteous man who found favor with God. So God told Noah, "I'm going to send a flood to destroy every living person and animal on the earth, but I am going to save you and your family. Build an ark – a giant boat – and when it starts raining, get in the ark." So God provided a way of salvation for Noah and his family, but there was a condition. Noah had to get in the ark.
    - a. It is the same with us. We have sinned, and the punishment for sin is eternal separation from God in hell. But God loves us still and provided a way of salvation for us. He sent Jesus Christ to be punished for our sins so that we could be forgiven and reconciled to God. But if we want to be saved, we must get in the ark of Christ. We must put our faith in Jesus Christ.
    - b. It is not enough to look at the ark; to admire the ark; to touch the ark; to believe in the ark. You must board the ark.

- c. To believe in Christ is not to look at Christ, or to admire Christ, or to even believe in His existence. Even the devil believe that Christ exists.
- d. To believe is to turn from your sins and rely completely upon Jesus Christ for salvation – not your good works – only Christ. It is to believe that the only thing that you contribute to your salvation is the sin that put Christ on the cross.

**4. He did not come to judge.**

- i. **John 12:47** “If anyone hears my words and doesn’t keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.”
- ii. Christ’s purpose for coming to earth was not to punish people; it was not to destroy His enemies; it was not to condemn sinners. He came to save. We saw this expressed earlier in John’s gospel.
- iii. **John 3:17** “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”
- iv. **Barclay** “It was not the wrath of God which sent Jesus to us; it was his love.”
- v. God does not want anyone to go to hell. He wants everyone to be saved and to go to heaven.
  - 1. **2 Peter 3:9** “The Lord does not delay his promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance.”
  - 2. **1 Timothy 2:3-4** “3 This is good, and it pleases God our Savior, 4 who wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”
- vi. Christ did not come to judge, but He will judge on the last day.
  - 1. **John 12:48** “The one who rejects me and doesn’t receive my sayings has this as his judge: The word I have spoken will judge him on the last day.”
  - 2. **NIV Study Bible** “It is not the purpose of the sun’s shining to cast shadows, but when the sun shines, shadows are inevitable.”
  - 3. There will be a judgment at the last day – the day when Christ comes back – and Christ will be the judge.
  - 4. **Acts 17:31** “because he has set a day when he is going to judge the world in righteousness by the man he has appointed.”
  - 5. Everyone will be judged by one standard: What did you do with Jesus Christ? Did you accept Him or reject Him? Did you confess Him or deny Him? Did you listen to Him or ignore Him? Did you run to Him or run from Him? Did you love Him or hate Him?
  - 6. **1 John 5:11-12** “11 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 The one who has the Son has life. The one who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”

- a. Notice again: Not everyone has life. Only those who have the Son have life. Those who do not have the Son will be sent to hell to suffer for all eternity.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

1. There are a few parts of the Bible that are difficult to understand. But for the most part, the Bible is simple enough for a kid to understand. It all focuses on the person and work of Jesus Christ.
  - i. He was sent from the Father.
  - ii. He is God.
  - iii. He came to save us from darkness, but we must believe in Him.
  - iv. He did not come to judge, but those who reject Him will be judged.
2. Now you have no excuse. You have heard about Jesus. You understand Jesus. What will you do with Jesus?