

Dr. Dave Turner, John, Session 14, Back in Jerusalem for the Last Time – John 12:1-50 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Turner, John, Session 14, John 12:1-50, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. David Turner's session on John 12 examines Jesus' final return to Jerusalem before his crucifixion. The session highlights the contrasting responses to Jesus' raising of Lazarus: increased faith among some and intensified opposition from religious leaders, who now also sought to eliminate Lazarus. **Turner** explores the triumphal entry, the anointing at Bethany, and the puzzling request of some Greeks to see Jesus, interpreting this as a hint towards the gospel's universal reach. The lecture notes the lack of widespread belief despite Jesus' miracles, attributing this partially to divine providence and fulfilling prophecy, while also acknowledging that some leaders secretly believed. **Turner's analysis** concludes with Jesus' reflection on his approaching hour and a call for believers to prioritize God's glory over personal comfort.

**2. 12 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Turner, John, Session 14 – Double click icon to play in
Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL]
Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament →
Gospels → John).**



**Turner_John_Session
14.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Turner, John, Session 14, John 12:1-50

Briefing Document: Gospel of John, Session 14 (John 12:1-50)

Overview: This briefing document summarizes the key themes and important ideas presented by Dr. David Turner in his teaching on John 12:1-50, which focuses on Jesus' last return to Jerusalem before his crucifixion. The session highlights the increasing conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders, the significance of the triumphal entry and the anointing at Bethany, the puzzling encounter with the Greeks, the somber reflection on unbelief despite Jesus' signs, and the concluding summary of Jesus' public ministry.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. The Climactic Conflict:

- **Escalating Opposition:** Following the raising of Lazarus, the religious leaders' resolve to kill Jesus intensified. This miracle, intended to inspire belief, ironically fueled their determination to eliminate him. As Turner states, "What is amazing and disappointing about the incident is that the resurrection causes the religious leaders to resolve all the more to do away with Jesus."
- **Threat to Lazarus:** Lazarus became a tangible testament to Jesus' power, making him a target as well. Turner draws a stark analogy: "From here on out, Lazarus is going to be closely associated with Jesus, so much so that the Jewish leaders are going to have to resolve not only to kill Jesus but to also kill Lazarus because Lazarus is like exhibit A of Jesus' prowess... almost like in a gangster movie where you have to kill all the witnesses."
- **Jesus' Awareness of His "Hour":** The repeated statement in earlier chapters that "my hour has not yet come" (e.g., John 2) gives way to Jesus declaring, "the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified" (John 12:23). This signifies Jesus' conscious acceptance of his impending death. He uses the analogy of a kernel of wheat to explain the necessity of his death for future fruitfulness.

2. The Triumphal Entry and Anointing:

- **Convergence with Synoptics:** John's account of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem with fanfare aligns with the synoptic gospels. The crowd's acclamation, using palm branches and shouting "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord, blessed is the King of Israel" (John 12:13), fulfills prophecy from Zechariah 9:9.

- **Delayed Understanding:** The disciples' initial lack of comprehension regarding the significance of these events is highlighted. Turner notes, "at first his disciples did not understand all this, only after Jesus was glorified did they realize these things had been written about him, and that these things had been done for him" (John 12:16).
- **Anointing by Mary:** While mentioned briefly in this excerpt, the anointing at Bethany further underscores Jesus' approaching death and burial.

3. The Enigmatic Greeks:

- **Desire to See Jesus:** The arrival of "some folks identified as Greeks" (John 12:20) who wish to see Jesus is a significant but somewhat ambiguous event.
- **Possible Interpretations:** Turner explores various possibilities for their identity:
 - Curiosity seekers or tourists.
 - Hellenized Jews from the Diaspora.
- **God-fearers:** Gentile individuals who believed in the God of Israel but had not fully converted to Judaism (circumcision for men, ritual immersion for all). Turner finds this the most likely explanation, drawing parallels to the "devout converts to Judaism" mentioned in Acts 13:43 (NIV). He questions the accuracy of "converts" here, suggesting they were Gentiles drawn to Judaism but not fully integrated.
- **Anticipation of a Universal Audience:** Turner suggests the inclusion of this incident hints at the future inclusion of Gentiles in God's plan. He connects this to Jesus' statement about "other sheep who are not of this fold" and Caiaphas' prophecy about Jesus dying "not only for that nation, but for the scattered children of God to bring them together and make them one" (John 11:52). This episode might be John's way of symbolically foreshadowing the gospel's spread to all nations.

4. The Tragedy of Unbelief:

- **Muted Response Despite Signs:** Turner identifies John 12:37 as a particularly poignant verse: "even after Jesus had performed so many signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him." This highlights the paradox of Jesus' powerful works failing to generate universal faith.
- **Divine Providence and Fulfillment of Prophecy:** John attributes this unbelief to the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecies (Isaiah 53:1 and Isaiah 6:9-10), suggesting

God was not surprised by this lack of faith. Turner emphasizes, "And God is nevertheless not surprised by this. And so, everything is in God's hands."

- **John's Interpretation of Isaiah's Vision:** John states that Isaiah "saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him" (John 12:41), linking Isaiah's vision of the Lord "high and lifted up" (Isaiah 6) to the divine nature of Jesus. Turner notes, "For John to say that they were seeking Jesus and that Isaiah saw the glory of Jesus is part and parcel. It's tantamount. It's really just saying he is the Lord of Hosts lifted up in glory."

5. Ambiguous Faith and the Fear of Excommunication:

- **Belief Among Leaders, Yet Concealed:** Despite the widespread unbelief, John notes that "many even among the leaders did believe in him" (John 12:42), mentioning Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea as potential examples.
- **Fear of the Pharisees:** These believers did not openly confess their faith "for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue. They loved human praise more than praise for God" (John 12:42-43).
- **The Nature of Saving Faith:** Turner reflects on the question of whether this concealed belief constituted true saving faith, acknowledging the complexity and stating, "I don't know how to categorize or predict or exactly know where these people stand before God. I don't think John wants us to know that necessarily." He encourages self-reflection rather than judgment of others' faith, drawing a parallel to the disciples' reaction to the prediction of betrayal in John 13.

6. Jesus' Concluding Public Discourse:

- **Summary of Teachings:** John 12:44-50 is presented as a concise summary of Jesus' public ministry, reiterating key themes such as belief in Jesus being belief in the Father, Jesus as the light of the world, the purpose of his coming to save and not to judge (initially), and the authority of his words as coming directly from the Father. Turner states that this section "almost sounds like a brief summary of everything that Jesus has taught so far...a sort of a nutshell."

7. Jesus' Troubled Soul and Submission to the Father's Will:

- **Echoes of Gethsemane:** John 12:27, "Now is my soul troubled? What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. No, it was for this very reason that I came to this hour. What can I say? Father, glorify your name," foreshadows Jesus' agony in the Garden of Gethsemane (found in the synoptics).

- **Heavenly Confirmation:** The voice from heaven, interpreted differently by the crowd ("thunder" or "an angel speaking"), affirms God's glorification through Jesus.
- **Call to Follow Jesus' Example:** Turner suggests that believers should emulate Jesus' submission to the Father's will, prioritizing God's glory over personal comfort in times of difficulty. "Should we say to God, save us from whatever difficulty we're facing? No, we should say, Father, glorify your name."

Conclusion:

John 12 marks a crucial turning point in the Gospel narrative. Jesus' final return to Jerusalem is met with both enthusiastic welcome and hardened opposition. The chapter explores the complex nature of belief and unbelief, hints at the universal scope of God's plan, and underscores Jesus' unwavering commitment to fulfilling his Father's will, even in the face of imminent death. The encounter with the Greeks and the reflection on the muted response to Jesus' powerful signs serve as poignant reminders of the diverse reactions to his ministry and the ultimate triumph of God's purposes.

4. Study Guide: Turner, John, Session 14, John 12:1-50

Study Guide: John 12:1-50

I. Narrative Flow and Key Events:

- **Return to Bethany (12:1-11):** Jesus returns to Bethany six days before Passover, where he attends a dinner at the home of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. Mary anoints Jesus' feet with expensive perfume, prompting a protest from Judas Iscariot. The raising of Lazarus has intensified both belief in Jesus and the religious leaders' resolve to kill him and Lazarus.
- **Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (12:12-19):** Jesus enters Jerusalem riding on a donkey, fulfilling Old Testament prophecy (Zechariah 9:9). The crowds greet him with palm branches and shouts of "Hosanna," acknowledging him as the one who comes in the name of the Lord and the King of Israel. This event is fueled by the buzz surrounding Lazarus' resurrection.
- **The Request of the Greeks (12:20-26):** Some Greeks who have come to worship at the Passover festival ask to see Jesus. This request is brought to Jesus through Philip and Andrew. Jesus' response focuses on the coming glorification of the Son of Man through death and resurrection, using the analogy of a grain of wheat. He speaks of the necessity of following him in death to find true life and honor from the Father.
- **Jesus' Troubled Soul and the Voice from Heaven (12:27-36):** Jesus expresses his inner turmoil as his hour approaches, echoing the sentiment of Gethsemane in the synoptic Gospels. He prays for the Father to glorify his name, and a voice from heaven confirms that God has glorified it and will do so again. The crowd interprets the voice in different ways. Jesus speaks of the remaining "little while" of light and urges them to believe in the light.
- **The Unbelief of the People (12:37-43):** Despite the many signs Jesus performed, many still did not believe in him. John attributes this unbelief to the fulfillment of prophecies from Isaiah (Isaiah 53:1 and Isaiah 6:9-10), suggesting a divine hardening of hearts. However, John also notes that many, even among the leaders, did believe but did not confess it openly for fear of being ostracized by the Pharisees, valuing human praise over God's.
- **Jesus' Final Public Words (12:44-50):** This section serves as a summary of Jesus' public ministry in John's Gospel. Jesus emphasizes that belief in him is belief in

the Father who sent him, and seeing him is seeing the Father. He has come as light into the world to save it, not to judge it initially. However, those who reject his words will be judged by those very words on the last day, as Jesus speaks not on his own authority but according to the Father's command, which leads to eternal life.

II. Quiz:

1. What was the immediate consequence of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead, according to John 11, and how did Jesus respond to this?
2. Describe the scene of the triumphal entry in John 12. What Old Testament prophecy is mentioned in connection with this event, and what did the disciples understand later about its significance?
3. Who were the "Greeks" who wanted to see Jesus in John 12, and what is the scholarly opinion about their background and motivation?
4. What analogy does Jesus use in John 12:24 to explain the necessity of his death, and what does this analogy signify?
5. When Jesus expresses his troubled soul in John 12:27, what does he ultimately pray for, and what is the response from heaven?
6. According to John 12:37-40, why did many people not believe in Jesus despite his miraculous signs? Which Old Testament prophet and passages are cited to explain this?
7. What does John reveal in 12:42 about the beliefs of some of the Jewish leaders, and why did they not openly confess their faith?
8. According to the passage, what was one of the main reasons the religious leaders wanted to kill Jesus, and why did they also want to kill Lazarus?
9. In his final public words (John 12:44-50), what does Jesus say about the relationship between belief in him and belief in the Father?
10. What does Jesus state was the purpose of his first coming into the world, and what will be the basis of judgment for those who reject his words?

III. Quiz Answer Key:

1. The raising of Lazarus led many bystanders to believe in Jesus, but it also caused the religious leaders to resolve even more strongly to have Jesus killed. In

response, Jesus withdrew to the obscure location of Ephraim to ensure his personal safety for a time.

2. Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey, and the crowd greeted him with palm branches, shouting "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel!" The Old Testament prophecy mentioned is from Zechariah 9:9. The disciples initially did not understand the significance of these events and the related scriptures (Psalm 118 and Zechariah 9:9) until after Jesus was glorified.
3. The "Greeks" were likely Gentile God-fearers who had come to Jerusalem to worship the God of Israel during the Passover festival. While some speculate they could have been Hellenized Jews from the Diaspora, the text suggests they were Gentiles interested in Judaism but not full converts.
4. Jesus uses the analogy of a kernel of wheat falling to the ground and dying to explain that unless he dies, he will remain alone, but if he dies, he will produce many seeds. This signifies that his death is necessary for his glorification and for bringing forth many believers.
5. Jesus expresses his deep distress and asks, "Father, save me from this hour?" but immediately rejects this, stating that he came for this very hour. He then prays, "Father, glorify your name." A voice from heaven responds, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again."
6. John attributes the lack of belief in many to the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecies, specifically Isaiah 53:1 (who has believed our message?) and Isaiah 6:9-10 (God blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts). This suggests a divine element in their inability to believe.
7. John reveals that many, even among the leaders, did believe in Jesus, but they did not openly acknowledge their faith because they feared being put out of the synagogue by the Pharisees. They loved human praise more than praise from God.
8. The religious leaders wanted to kill Jesus because of the increasing number of people believing in him, especially after the raising of Lazarus, which they saw as a threat to their authority. They also planned to kill Lazarus because he served as powerful evidence of Jesus' miraculous power and message.

9. Jesus states that whoever believes in him does not believe in him only, but in the one who sent him, and whoever looks at him is seeing the one who sent him. This emphasizes the close relationship and unity between Jesus and the Father.
10. Jesus states that he came into the world as light so that everyone who believes in him should not remain in darkness. He initially did not come to judge the world but to save it. However, those who reject his words will be judged by those very words on the last day, as they originate from the Father's command.

IV. Essay Format Questions:

1. Analyze the contrasting reactions to Jesus' ministry and miracles presented in John 12:1-50. What factors contributed to belief and unbelief, and what does this reveal about the nature of faith and resistance?
2. Discuss the significance of the arrival of the Greeks in John 12:20-26 within the broader context of John's Gospel. How might this episode foreshadow the universal reach of Jesus' message?
3. Explore the theological implications of John's use of Old Testament prophecies in chapter 12, particularly in relation to the triumphal entry and the unbelief of the people. What does this suggest about God's plan and Jesus' identity?
4. Examine the tension between belief and confession in John 12:42-43. What does this passage suggest about the social pressures and personal cost of following Jesus in the first century, and are there parallels in contemporary contexts?
5. Analyze the structure and content of Jesus' final public discourse in John 12:44-50. How does this summary encapsulate the key themes and claims of his ministry as presented in the Gospel of John up to this point?

V. Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Bethany:** A village located about two miles east of Jerusalem, on the Mount of Olives. It was the home of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha, and a place where Jesus often stayed.
- **Passover:** A major Jewish festival commemorating the liberation of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. It was a time when many Jews from across the region and diaspora would travel to Jerusalem.
- **Triumphal Entry:** Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on a donkey, where he was greeted by crowds hailing him as the Messiah. This event is recorded in all four Gospels and is seen as a symbolic claim to kingship.
- **Hosanna:** A Hebrew expression meaning "save us!" or "save now!" It was used as a shout of praise and acclamation, particularly in a religious context.
- **Son of Man:** A title Jesus frequently used for himself. It has roots in Old Testament prophecy (Daniel 7) and emphasizes both his humanity and his divine authority and future glory.
- **Glorification:** In the Gospel of John, this term often refers to the exaltation of Jesus through his death, resurrection, and ascension, which reveals God's glory.
- **God-fearers:** Gentiles in the Greco-Roman world who were attracted to Judaism, believed in the God of Israel, and often attended synagogues but did not fully convert (e.g., through circumcision for men).
- **Hellenized:** Influenced by Greek culture, language, and thought. This term is used to describe Jews living in the Diaspora who had adopted aspects of Greek life.
- **Synagogue:** A Jewish house of worship and communal gathering place for religious instruction and prayer.
- **Pharisees:** A prominent Jewish religious and political party in the time of Jesus, known for their strict adherence to the Law and their influence among the people. They often opposed Jesus' teachings and claims.

5. FAQs on Turner, John, Session 14, John 12:1-50, Biblelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions: John 12

1. What was the immediate aftermath of the raising of Lazarus, and how did Jesus respond to it? The miraculous raising of Lazarus led many bystanders to believe in Jesus. However, it also intensified the resolve of the religious leaders to have Jesus killed. In response to this growing threat, Jesus withdrew to the obscure location of Ephraim, similar to a previous retreat to Bethany beyond the Jordan, seeking to ensure his personal safety as the Passover approached and the council had ordered his arrest if found.

2. What is the significance of Jesus' return to Bethany and entry into Jerusalem in John 12? Jesus' return to Bethany and subsequent entry into Jerusalem mark a crucial point as it's his final time in the city before his crucifixion. This event aligns with the synoptic Gospels' account of the triumphal entry. Furthermore, Lazarus, having been raised from the dead, becomes a powerful living testament to Jesus' power, leading the religious leaders to plot against both Jesus and Lazarus.

3. Who were the "Greeks" who sought to see Jesus, and why is their appearance significant at this juncture in John's Gospel? The "Greeks" who came to worship at the Passover were likely Gentile God-fearers, individuals who believed in the God of Israel but had not fully converted to Judaism. Their appearance at this point, as Jesus' public ministry to Israel was nearing its end, hints at the future universal reach of the gospel message. It suggests that God's plan extends beyond Israel to include all nations, foreshadowing the explicit commission found in the synoptic Gospels.

4. What is the "saddest verse" in the Gospel of John according to the speaker, and why is it considered so poignant? According to the speaker, John 12:37, "Even after Jesus had performed so many signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him," is the saddest verse. It reflects the disappointing reality that despite the overwhelming evidence of Jesus' miraculous works, culminating in the raising of Lazarus, many people still refused to believe in him. This elicits a sense of defeat, as Jesus seems to have done everything possible to elicit faith.

5. How does John explain the lack of widespread belief in Jesus despite his powerful signs and teachings? John attributes the lack of widespread belief to the providence of God, citing prophecies from Isaiah (Isaiah 53:1 and Isaiah 6:9-10). He suggests that this unbelief was part of God's plan, even stating that Isaiah spoke of this because he saw Jesus' glory. This theological perspective emphasizes that God was not surprised by the rejection and that everything remained in His hands.

6. What was the response to Jesus' ministry among the Jewish leaders, and why is the concept of "ambiguous faith" discussed in relation to them and others? While the majority of the religious leaders opposed Jesus, John mentions that "many even among the leaders did believe in him" (John 12:42), likely referring to individuals like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. However, these believers often kept their faith private due to fear of being ostracized or put out of the synagogue by the Pharisees, who valued human praise over God's approval. This leads to the concept of "ambiguous faith" — where many believed in some sense but did not openly acknowledge or fully commit to following Jesus, raising questions about the nature and depth of their belief.

7. How does John 12 indicate that Jesus' "hour" had come, and what did Jesus say about his impending death? In John 12:23, Jesus declares, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." This signifies that the time for his suffering, death, and subsequent glorification had arrived. He then uses the analogy of a kernel of wheat falling to the ground and dying to produce many seeds (John 12:24), plainly speaking about the necessity of his death for the sake of bringing forth spiritual fruit and a larger body of believers.

8. How does the encounter with the Greeks and Jesus' subsequent reflection connect to the broader themes of John's Gospel and the request to "glorify your name"? The encounter with the Gentile God-fearers wanting to see Jesus, coupled with the earlier hints of a mission beyond Israel, reinforces the universal scope of God's love and salvation as presented throughout John's Gospel (e.g., Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, God's love for the world in John 3:16). Jesus' troubled soul and his prayer, "Father, glorify your name" (John 12:27-28), even in the face of his impending suffering, serve as an example for believers to prioritize God's glory above personal comfort or deliverance from difficulty.