

Dr. David L. Turner, John, Session 14, John 13:1-30

6-Min. Video Overview

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So, how does this happen? How does someone's greatest public triumph- I mean, a miracle that literally reverses death- become the very thing that signs their death warrant? We're about to dive into John chapter 12, which is this incredible, pivotal moment where a king's welcome actually sets the stage for a crucifixion. Okay, so to really get chapter 12, you've got to back up just a little. To the end of chapter 11, Jesus has just performed what is arguably the most staggering miracle in the entire Gospel of John.

He calls his friend Lazarus, who's been dead and buried for four days, to just walk out of his tomb, alive. And this single, unbelievable act of life has two immediate and completely opposite results. On the one hand, a whole lot of people see this, and they're convinced.

It leads to this huge hero's welcome. But on the other hand, for the religious leaders, it's the last straw. It leads directly to a warrant for his death.

And that's the central paradox we're digging into. All right, so let's break that down. These are two totally different reactions.

Because raising Lazarus didn't just cause a stir. No, it was more like an earthquake. It split the world in two and created this really clear and frankly, very dangerous division.

I mean, the polarization here is just off the charts. You've got this massive surge in public belief, because how do you deny a miracle like that? But at the exact same time, for the leaders, that very success just fueled their rage. It's like the better things got with the people, the worse they got with the establishment.

Dr. David Turner just nails their logic here. He says Lazarus was basically living, breathing proof of Jesus's power. He was Exhibit A. So in their minds, if you're going to shut down the message, you have to destroy the evidence.

And that meant getting rid of not only Jesus, but Lazarus too. So all this tension is just simmering, right? And it all comes to a head as we get to the famous triumphal entry into Jerusalem. But here's the twist.

The story frames this whole event, not as a coronation, but as a paradox. This is a king riding not to a throne, but to a cross. You can just picture it, right? The massive crowds, waving palm branches, shouting Hosanna, which basically means Save us now.

They're treating him like a king, and it's fulfilling this ancient prophecy. But here's a fascinating little detail. At that moment, even his own disciples didn't really get what was happening.

It was only later, looking back, that they finally connected the dots. And then this is the moment, the big shift. For years, all through this gospel, Jesus has been saying stuff like, "My hour has not yet come.

But now, right after this parade, he says the exact opposite. The hour has come. It's Jesus himself signaling, okay, it's time.

There's absolutely no turning back now. And right then, at that very moment, something really unexpected happens that kind of shifts the entire focus. A group of visitors shows up, and their arrival is this quiet but incredibly powerful signal of everything that's about to unfold.

So you've got these Greeks who approach the disciples, and their request is simple. Sir, we wish to see Jesus. But who are these guys? And why is this simple question such a huge deal at this critical moment? Well, Dr. Turner suggests these weren't just some random tourists.

They were most likely what you'd call God-fearers. These were non-Jews, Gentiles, who had come to believe in the God of Israel. You know, they were sort of on the bridge between the Gentile world and the Jewish faith, representing the entire outside world knocking at the door.

You see, the arrival of these Greeks is what makes this theme, which has been bubbling under the surface the whole time, finally burst into the open. Think back to chapter 1. John the Baptist didn't call Jesus the Lamb of Israel. He called him the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

And then in chapter 3, you get maybe the most famous verse in the whole Bible, for God so loved the world. Again, that scope is absolutely universal. And later on, Jesus himself says, I am the light of the world.

So here's the key takeaway. This small, seemingly random visit from the Greeks is the hinge. It's the moment the mission officially goes global.

Right as the leaders of Israel are shutting the door on him, these representatives from the rest of the world show up. As one door closes, another one swings wide open. So at this point, the writer of the gospel kind of hits pause.

He has to grapple with this really tragic and confusing question. After all the signs, after raising a man from the dead, why did so many people still refuse to believe? Dr. Turner actually calls this the saddest verse in the gospel of John. And you can feel it, can't you? He describes it as a plaintive wail.

It's just this moment of profound sadness in the story. After everything he had done, for so many, it just wasn't enough. So how do you make sense of that? Well, the narrative turns back to the ancient prophet Isaiah.

And the idea here isn't that God caused the unbelief, but that this rejection wasn't a surprise. It wasn't a cosmic plan B. It was something that had been tragically foretold centuries before. But it's not that simple.

It's not just black and white, believer versus non-believer. The story adds this really interesting layer. There was also secret belief.

Even some of the leaders were convinced, but they were too afraid to say it out loud because they'd get kicked out of the synagogue. They loved human praise more than praise from God. So before Jesus turns his focus inward to his disciples, which is where the rest of the gospel is going to go, he makes one last powerful public appeal.

Think of it like a final summary of his entire mission, his closing argument to the world. And he basically boils his whole mission down into four key takeaways. First, if you see me, you see the one who sent me.

I am a perfect reflection of the Father. Second, I came as a light, and my job is to drive out the darkness. Third, I didn't come to judge the world.

I came to save it. And fourth, my command, my whole message, is the source of eternal life. It's his entire mission statement right there.

And then the chapter gives us this really raw, honest look into Jesus's own heart as he's facing this moment. He admits his soul is troubled, but he doesn't pray for an escape hatch. He actually rejects the prayer.

Father, save me from this hour. And instead, he prays for his purpose. Father, glorify your name.

And that really leaves us with a powerful question, doesn't it? When we face our own defining moments, our own final hours, big or small, what does it look like to shift our focus away from self-preservation and instead pray for a greater purpose? That's really the challenge that John chapter 12 leaves us with.