

## **WE HAVE SEEN HIS GLORY**

### **The Glory of Christ's Authority?**

**TEXT:** [John 12:44-50 \(ESV\)](#)

#### **INTRODUCTION**

You could summarize the theme of John's gospel with one word: **believe**. As a brilliant writer, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, John has structured his entire Gospel to present Christ as God's Messiah, God's Saviour. He divides his Gospel in half: In Chapters 1-12 he presents Christ and His teaching; in the last half he shows us the sacrifice of Christ. The first half shows the righteous obedience of Jesus; the second half we read of His sacrifice for sins. Within the Gospel John organizes his stories around seven signs that together all point to Jesus as the Christ. We now come to the end of the first half.

"This section summarizes Jesus's message and conveys his final appeal, bringing closure to the first major section of John's Gospel."<sup>1</sup> "This is a perfect summary of the message of the Fourth Gospel, drawing together Jesus' message to the Jewish people. Two of John's major theological themes are at center stage—belief in Jesus and his mission from God who sent him as the divine envoy."<sup>2</sup> Remember John's goal: "*but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*" (John 20:31, ESV)

This final appeal really clarifies for us, what it means to **believe**. John has already shown us that:

- a. There are those who believe because of seeing Jesus signs (John 2:23-25) but it's a false faith.
- b. There are those who believe but it did not last (John 8:30-31) which is also a false faith.
- c. There are those who believe but love this world more than Christ (John 12:25) which is a false faith.
- d. Those who believe but don't confess Christ (John 12:42-43) which is a false faith.
- e. There are those who believe but don't obey Christ (John 8:51; 12:47-48 (today's text)) which is a false faith.

As I said before: "It is an inconclusive affirmation that says, 'I believe in Jesus'. It would be naïve and gullible to affirm the salvation of an individual based solely on that statement." Thankfully, we are not left without guidance.

---

<sup>1</sup> Wellum, S. J. (2017). [Incarnation and Christology](#). In E. A. Blum & T. Wax (Eds.), *CSB Study Bible: Notes* (p. 1693). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

<sup>2</sup> Osborne, G. R. (2018). [John: Verse by Verse](#). (J. Reimer, E. Ritzema, D. Thevenaz, & R. Brant, Eds.) (p. 308). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

**MAIN POINT:** The judgment of God is based on our response to the Word of Christ because Christ came to save sinners by speaking what the Father wanted Him to speak.

How do I arrive at this being the Main Point? Well John wrote this in a chiasmic structure<sup>i</sup>. The center of the chiasm points to his main thought. It is evident here:

### **EXEGETICAL STRUCTURE**

#### THE FATHER IS INDIVISIBLY LINKED TO THE SON

**A** Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. <sup>45</sup> And whoever sees me sees him who sent me.

#### THE WORDS OF THE SON BRING LIFE

**B** I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. <sup>47</sup> If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.

#### JUDGMENT IS BASED ON RESPONSE TO THE WORD OF CHRIST

**C** The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day

#### THE WORDS OF THE SON BRING LIFE

**B<sup>1</sup>** <sup>49</sup> For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. <sup>50</sup> And I know that his commandment is eternal life.

#### THE FATHER IS INDIVISIBLY LINKED TO THE SON

**A<sup>1</sup>** What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.”

## **I – THE FATHER AND SON ARE INDIVISIBLY ONE**

*“Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me . . . And whoever sees me sees him who sent me.”* (John 12:44-45, ESV)

This is a critical point that we have already noted. This reality refutes the notion that you can believe in one God (e.g., Islam and Judaism) and deny Jesus Christ and be saved. There is an indivisible union between the Father and the Son, and as Jesus says, “If you had known me, you would have known my Father also.”<sup>3</sup>

## **II – THE SON SPEAKS ON BEHALF OF THE FATHER**

<sup>3</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 14:7). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

*“For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak.”* (John 12:49, ESV)

The Bible clearly teaches that although the Father, Son and Spirit are indivisibly one, they are particular in personhood. And this eternal relationship of equality and diversity provides for us the perfection of relationships. And because the Son was functionally subordinate to the Father, we also have a unique picture of what it means to be of equal value and worth yet submit to whom we are called to submit. But more importantly it was critical that Christ be the obedient Son so that you and I might be beneficiaries of His righteousness. In this case Jesus says, “I obey my Father and say what He wants me to say.”

### **III – THE WORDS THE FATHER HAS GIVEN TO THE SON BRING LIGHT AND LIFE**

These words that the Father has given to the Son bring salvation.

*“I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness . . . And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.”*  
(John 12:46, 50a, ESV)

In John’s Gospel, walking in darkness does not mean walking in ignorance or lack of knowledge. It is caused by rejecting God’s message of salvation through Christ. In John’s writings light is equated to life as we see in John 1:4 (ESV), “In him was life, and the life was the light of men.” Darkness is the absence of eternal life. Darkness is eternal death.

### **IV – JUDGMENT IS BASED ON RESPONSE TO THE WORD OF CHRIST**

We have heard the statement that at the end of the day its what you have done with Jesus that matters. There is truth there, but that statement is vague and leaves room for serious problems. Its akin to what I’ve said before, “Belief in Jesus is synonymous with obedience to Jesus” (*“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.”* (John 3:36, ESV))

John clarifies this by quoting Jesus’ words: *“If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him . . . the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.”* (John 12:47–48, ESV)

Or as Kenneth Gangel correctly states: “The focus of judgment will be the actual Word of God. God’s words through Jesus as well as through the prophets and other biblical writers form the final authority for obedience. They are the message of faith. God will ultimately judge people by how they received and responded to what the Bible says.”<sup>4</sup> [Emphasis mine]

---

<sup>4</sup> Gangel, Kenneth. Holman New Testament Commentary - John: 4 (p. 239). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

This is not a new idea in the Gospels. Notice the words of Jesus in Matthew 7:

*“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. **And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them** will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”* (Matthew 7:24–27, ESV) [Emphasis Mine]

## **V – ONE OBJECTION**

Someone might say, “Pastor Jim, I thought salvation was by grace, through faith. It sounds like you’re adding works to this by adding obedience.” I would say to that person that they are right. The Bible affirms that salvation is a gift, received by faith. But I would add that “faith” intrinsically includes obedience. Notice Hebrews 11. “By faith Abel offered . . . ; by faith Abraham obeyed . . . ; by faith the people crossed the Red Sea . . . , etc.”

Imagine the age-old story of the little child standing on a tabletop. Daddy says to the child, “Do you believe I can catch you if you jump?” The child says yes. “Then jump,” says the Daddy. If the faith is real and genuine the child acts on his or her faith and jumps. If they don’t jump, they don’t really believe.

James speaks of Abraham’s faith as an obedient faith<sup>5</sup>. Faith is not a passive feeling Faith is realized in active obedience. So, my answer to the objection is that the very nature of faith includes response. This concept is critical to our modern era. Many people think faith is simply understanding (cognition) or a feeling (emotion) but it is also volitional – it acts.

I’m going to be blunt here and tell you what I often hear. I hear of people whom I learn never read and seek to obey their Bible, rarely pray unless they are in trouble, have no desire or passion for holiness, who care very little about the things of God as compared to this world – but they believe in Jesus. John’s Gospel corrects that notion. The faith that God gives is an obedient, persevering faith. Obedience is not a prerequisite to salvation; it is a necessary companion of salvation. As the writer to the Hebrews wrote when he warned professing Christians: *“Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—things that belong to salvation.”* (Hebrews 6:9, ESV)

## **VI – APPLICATION**

The judgment of God is based on our response to the Word of Christ. This brings us back to a very basic, simple but profound point. We say we are Christians. We say we “believe”. Then how do we respond to God’s Word. This Word that came to us from God the Father, spoken accurately and

---

<sup>5</sup> James 2:18-26

authoritatively by the Son and communicated to us in writing by His Apostles and Prophets – HOW DO WE RESPOND TO HIS WORD. That is the basis of judgment. Hear the Word of the Lord:

*“If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.”* (John 12:47–48, ESV)

How have you responded to the word Christ has spoken?

---

<sup>i</sup> A chiasm (also called a chiasmus) is a literary device in which a sequence of ideas is presented and then repeated *in reverse order*. The result is a “mirror” effect as the ideas are “reflected” back in a passage. Each idea is connected to its “reflection” by a repeated word, often in a related form. The term *chiasm* comes from the Greek letter *chi*, which looks like our letter *X*. Often, a chiasm includes the main idea in the middle of the repetition: ABXBA.