

# AM John 11:45-53 & 12:9-19

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[ 0 : 00 ] Chapter 11 and we're reading from verse 45 to verse 53. Now this is the story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead.

We've been looking at this the last few times I've been here! And we're going to, in a sense, continue and finish the story this morning. But this is a part that we've already looked at and it tells us immediately what happened, or it tells us what happened immediately after Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead.

So we'll read in John's Gospel, chapter 11, from verse 45, and that is on page 1083 in the Bible provided.

John's Gospel, chapter 11, and from verse 45. Many of the Jews, therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him.

But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, What are we to do?

[ 1 : 10 ] For this man performs many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him. And Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.

But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, You know nothing at all, nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.

He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who were scattered abroad.

So from that day on, they made plans to put him to death. Just to there for the moment. May God bless to us this reading.

Our next psalm reading is also in John's Gospel, chapter 12. John chapter 12. We're reading from verse 9. And we're going to continue into verse 24.

[ 2 : 18 ] Not as your sheet says, well, not as I originally said. Verse 19. We'll go on to verse 24. John chapter 12 from verse 9.

And this, too, is a lead on from the story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. It's another aspect of the follow-up from that story.

When the large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there, they came, not only on account of him, but also to see Lazarus, who he had raised from the dead.

So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well. Because on account of him, many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

The next day, the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, Hosanna!

[ 3 : 21 ] Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel. And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Zion.

Behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt. His disciples did not understand these things at first.

But when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him. The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness.

The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they had heard he had done this sign. So the Pharisees said to one another, You see that you're gaining nothing.

Look, the world has gone after him. Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, Sir, we wish to see Jesus.

[ 4 : 31 ] Philip went and told Andrew. Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. And Jesus answered them, The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit.

Just there. May God bless to us also this reading. Now I want us to look at what is generally called the triumphal entry. That's in John chapter 12 and the incident that we already read.

And we're going to look at this whole passage. But the centre of it is that Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it's written, Fear not, daughter of Zion, behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt.

Now, what is Jesus trying to do here? And I think you could say he's making a statement. He's saying, I am your king.

[ 5 : 44 ] I am the Messiah. The promised king of David's line. He's doing that by, he's making that statement by sitting on a colt and riding into Jerusalem in that way.

There's much more to it than that simple idea, but that's the statement he's making. I am the Messiah. What is John doing when he records this incident in the way that he does?

And I think that he too is making a statement. Jesus is the saviour on the way to his death. There's much more to it than that, as we'll hopefully see, but that's the basic idea.

So we've got two roles of Jesus in mind here. Jesus as the great king and Messiah. Jesus as the saviour. And we're going to open up these ideas and see what this passage means in a wee bit more depth than the simple statements we've made, in order that we may see Jesus whom we know so well and perhaps we'll see him a wee bit more clearly and we'll understand him better and we'll appreciate him the more so that we will be moved to submission and devotion to our Lord and Master.

Let's start then with the Messiah. Jesus is the Messiah. That's what's displayed here. It's in fact displayed in two ways, not just by Jesus, but by the crowds.

[ 7 : 22 ] In each case, they take an Old Testament passage as the basis of their doing and the Messiah is displayed through these passages.

Each of these displays is a true picture of Jesus the Messiah, but the second one is more important than the first and the first must be the red in the light of the second.

That's the way we're going to develop this then. The crowds display Jesus as the Messiah and Jesus, as we've said, displays himself as Messiah and it's when we put these two pictures together, the second interpreting the first, that we understand Jesus more fully as the Messiah.

So first of all, we've got here the way that the people are displaying his Messiah. The large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem.

So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel.

[ 8 : 35 ] Now it's quite interesting that they use here words from Psalm 118. We'll mention them in a minute. But this is a psalm that was customarily used at these Jewish big occasions of the feasts.

People would come from all over Palestine, from all over the known world, Jewish people and Gentiles as well, and they'd come up to Jerusalem, which of course was on a hill, and as they came up, they would sing certain psalms.

And these psalms are called psalms of ascents. You see them in the titles of the psalms in the post-version. Psalms of ascents. Because as the people ascended to Jerusalem for the feast days, they would sing these psalms and this is one of them.

So feast time after feast time, people would come together. A group from one village would meet up with a group from another. And as they went along, they'd get bigger and bigger crowds.

And then as they approached to Jerusalem, they would sing these wonderful psalms. And this Psalm 118 was one of them. They'd done it constantly. But this time, they do it with a new meaning.

[ 9 : 43 ] Perhaps it was sort of automatic, a custom, a nice habit that they had. Now they do it, because they think it's being fulfilled in their sight.

And so they're singing this, not in a general way, about some future king that was going to come. They're singing about Jesus. And they're saying, this is the fulfilment of the psalm that we know so well, Psalm 118, that we sing going up to Jerusalem at the feast times.

Now what the psalm actually says is this. Psalm 118 at verse 25. Save us, we pray, O Lord. O Lord, we pray, give us success.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Now that's what the psalm says. And you can see how that is basically much the same as it is here.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. But there are two differences, apparently. The first is that this says, Hosanna. But it's not a difference at all, because what that word, Hosanna, simply means is, save us.

[ 10 : 53 ] We pray, O Lord. Save us, we pray. So this word, Hosanna, is the same as the bit from the psalms that were mentioned, save us, we pray, O Lord.

So in singing this, they were conscious of using that psalm. They add a bit, however. The king of Israel is what they add. And that's the way that they understood things.

Here is Jesus. He's the king coming to his capital city. And what they're doing is accepting him as such. They welcome him as a king would be welcomed.

Or as some other important figure would be welcomed. These are crowds not coming with Jesus. These are crowds coming from Jerusalem to meet Jesus. And as an important person coming to visit a city, would not be met necessarily at the city gates.

But people would go out for some distance and would accompany them back. That's what they're doing here. This is our king. Here we are, receiving him as such, into our city.

[ 12 : 00 ] And they cut down branches from the trees and so on. And they make a festive occasion of it. Because here they are welcoming their own king into their city.

The king of Israel. Israel. That's their concept of the Messiah. Now I don't want to downgrade that because it's a great thing that they do. They recognise that this one has come from God and he is their king.

But as I suggest, you see, that in the context of what's going on here, that's not, they don't just have the full and complete picture of who the Messiah is.

Because there's no doubt at all that people considered at that time that the Messiah was to be a king that would rule over Israel. That would defeat their enemies.

And in this particular context would defeat the Romans. Because Israel, Palestine at this time was part of the Roman Empire. So when they say he's the king of Israel, they're saying he's the one that's going to destroy our enemies.

[ 13 : 06 ] He's going to restore the kingdom at this time to Israel. He's going to be king on the throne of his father David. And I suggest there's quite a nationalistic, even a militaristic outlook on this.

And that's the way that they see things. Because that's the way that people generally saw things at this stage. Even the disciples themselves were like this. When Jesus said he was going to die on the cross, Peter rebuked him.

Don't think about things like that. They had a different picture of who the Messiah was. James and John come with this request. Granted, we may sit one at your right hand and the other at your left in your kingdom.

In other words, give us the place of honour. That's what we're looking for. Your kingdom is a kingdom of splendour and majesty and we want to share in its glory. And that's certainly the way the Roman, the Jewish authorities thought about the Messiah.

If Jesus is the Messiah and he becomes popular, what's going to happen? The Romans are going to come and destroy us. That's the bit that we read already. In other words, the Romans thought if this person is the Messiah, he's going to, the Jewish authorities thought that if he's the Messiah, he's going to lead a revolt against the Romans which would result in the destruction of everything.

[ 14 : 24 ] So I suggest that this is the way that these people saw Jesus as the king, the king over Israel. That was the limit of their knowledge and it was very much a political one.

Okay, it was the rule of God but they saw it in terms of David sitting on his throne and subduing his enemies and they thought that Jesus would do something like that. So here we've got the picture of the Messiah.

In some sense it's a true picture of the Messiah but it's ill-balanced, it's incomplete. It's missed the main point in fact. But nonetheless, it displays a majestic figure and that, as I suggest, is one way of looking at the Messiah as a figure of majesty.

But then there's this other way of looking at him. He's not just a figure of majesty, he's rather a figure of meekness and that is the way that Jesus displays himself in doing what he does here.

Now, what we've got here is a fulfilment of another passage of scripture. If we had a time we would have read that as well. But Zechariah chapter 9 and verse 9 says this, Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion.

[ 15 : 37 ] Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, your king is coming to you, righteous and having salvation. Is he humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

And here is that quotation from the Old Testament from the book of Zechariah. It chimes in with the book of Psalms. Here is the king.

Here is rejoicing because of it. But it gives a different slant to whom this, as to who this is. Here he comes riding on a donkey.

Meekness. A king wouldn't come into a city riding a donkey. He would come in a chariot perhaps led by horses or he would come riding a great war horse or something like that.

But this isn't even an ordinary horse. This is a donkey. A beast of burden. In Peru where we were for years people in the hills rode horses.

[ 16 : 43 ] Donkeys were beasts of burden that people didn't ride. they were uncomfortable. I'm telling you people didn't normally ride them because of that.

They weren't used for that. People riding on them. Beasts of burden they were. And that's the sort of thing we've got here. Who rides upon a donkey? Nobody of any consequence.

Nobody of any importance. But Jesus did. What a strange turnaround in the picture we've got of the Messiah. not a conquering hero who rides in on a war horse but a humble man who rides in on a donkey.

And that's the feature that we're meant to think about because that's what it says in the book of Zechariah. Humble and mounted on a donkey.

The two things go together. This shows his humility. And that's the picture that Jesus is trying to put over to them. He's saying to them okay yes that's the picture you have it's a good picture because he's based upon the book of Psalms and I am the king the king of Israel and more than that.

[ 17 : 51 ] But it's not an outward rule my kingdom is not of this world. It's not a rule conducted according to the normal standards with outward display and force of arms.

My kingdom is an inner kingdom and the power of this is meekness and humility. These are the key features of my kingdom and that's why I pointed out to you in the book of Psalms as we sang it just that fact.

Here he is depicted in the Old Testament riding out with meekness and here he is in the New Testament riding in with meekness displayed in the donkey that he was riding.

And so he's saying to these people yes I am the Messiah but just think what sort of Messiah I am. Not a warlord not putting down people with force of arms.

I am here to act gently in meekness and to win my people in a gentle sensitive and persuasive manner. Meekness humility humbleness was the whole picture of Jesus life.

[ 19 : 07 ] He was born not into a palace or anything like that not amongst witches and noble people in circumstances of majesty.

He was born in a humble home laid in a manger. Poor people. What was his early days like? He was a refugee.

He had to get up in the middle of the night with his parents to go up in the middle of the night because the king was wanting to destroy him. And he fled like a refugee to Egypt. Asylum seeker where he was received for some time.

An inauspicious beginning. And he lived among normal, humble people and was himself a carpenter. Not that we're downplaying carpenters, but you don't expect carpenters to arrive at kingship.

At least in those days you didn't, even now you don't. And that was the style of his life. And it was the style of his ministry. He was gentle and kind and sensitive to people.

[ 20 : 15 ] He didn't come with an iron fist. He came with a symbol of peace we might say. And he spoke gently to them and carefully, sensitively.

Son, daughter, he said to them. Not making great demands with force and vigour, but making great demands through the power of love and grace and gentleness.

This figure that I like a lot, it's about the bruised reed. A reed is a plant that grows up straight, very slender, and therefore sways in the wind.

But if you get that stem bruised, damaged, then the reed bends over like that and doesn't grow straight at all. And people would say, it's useless now.

Jesus says, I will be one that will take that bruised reed and I'll make it grow straight again. That's just a picture of course. Here's a person that's bruised and battered by circumstances.

[ 21 : 21 ] They're lowly in their own eyes and in the eyes of others. And people say, rubbish, write them off. And Jesus says, no, I'm not like that. I'll bind up that bruised reed.

Or the same idea. He's got a flickering wick. It's in the modern translations, I think. Here's a lamp, an oil lamp that's got a wick in it that burns, okay?

And it's just flickering, about to go out. And people say that's useless. But Jesus doesn't say that's useless. He puts his hand around it to protect the flame that's there or he blows gently on it to build up the flame and he makes it glow brightly again.

Again, a picture. The person whose faith is weak and who's at the end of the tether and people think that there's no flame there, there's no life there.

And Jesus says, don't discard that person. I'll take that person, I'll bind them, I'll make them strong again. And he puts his hand around that person and he gives personal attention and he blows his spirit on them, we might say, until the flame of devotion glows brightly again.

[ 22 : 32 ] That was Jesus' ministry. The nature of his ministry, he came with meekness and in humbleness. Not the great warrior that people expected who would overthrow the Romans, but the person that would come and deal gently with people that were in distress and build up something that people thought was useless.

And so, one of the calls that he makes is simply this, come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. The great military reader doesn't say, come to me, all you who are weary and burdened.

He says, if you are weary and burdened, don't come with me. He says, lose your strong and confident, you come with me. But Jesus says, come, you who are weary and burdened, I will give you rest.

And how is it that he can give you rest? He says, take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble and lowly in heart. It's because of who he was that his message was like this.

And that's the way that we're meant to see Jesus. And it's interesting that in the book of Zechariah, we read verse 9, but verse 10 says this, sorry, I lost it, oh, there, I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem and the battle bow shall be cut off and he shall speak peace to the nations.

[ 24 : 06 ] His rules shall be from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth. He's going to finish with chariots. Chariots aren't necessary, war horses aren't necessary, battle bows aren't necessary.

He'll speak peace. And he'll not speak peace to Israel, he'll speak peace to the nations. That's the prophecy that Jesus is fulfilling. We haven't read that bit, we don't usually read that bit from Zechariah, but that's what the prophecy in Zechariah says.

He'll speak peace to the nations. And he ruled from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth. In meekness and gentleness with the power of grace. So we've pictures of the Messiah.

The strong, energetic, nationalistic figure, like David sitting on a throne, bringing his enemies into submission, enlarging his kingdom in more or less worldly and material terms.

And we've got Jesus in his humility and meekness speaking gently to people and with the power of love and the power of grace, bringing them to know him. Two pictures of the Messiah.

[ 25 : 16 ] They're both true. There's a certain truth in them. Jesus will rule. His kingdom will be extended. All nations will be submissive to him. He shall bring people low.

But he'll do it with the power of this truth, with the power of the spirit, with the power of the word. He'll loose off sharp arrows into the hearts of his enemies, as we were singing in Psalm 45.

But these are the arrows of his word too. The word coming to people and piercing their hearts and making them feel bad for their sin. There is force to some degree, but it's the force of a spiritual power, bringing folks low, so that they come and listen to the Saviour who says, come to me, all you who labour, and I will give you rest.

That's the picture of the Messiah that we've got. Okay, what does this say to us about him? Well, let's make sure we hold these things in proper balance. We do think of Jesus as the Messiah sitting on the throne of his father David.

We think about it because the Bible does speak in these terms. But remember that the throne of David, the kingdom of David, was not a model for Jesus, it was a parable for Jesus.

[ 26 : 32 ] It wasn't that he was patterning the style of his kingdom on the kingdom of David. It was a parable, a picture of his kingdom.

Whereas David ruled in might and power externally, he rules in might and power internally, spiritually. It's a spiritual kingdom, a kingdom that's not of this world.

That's the thing we have to remember when we read the Old Testament passage that speak about the Messiah. That's the message that the disciples didn't have at that time. But it's the message that they got from this passage.

Because it says here in verse 16, his disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him.

So this is something they hadn't grasped. They had grasped that he was the Messiah, but they hadn't grasped that he was a meek and humble one. They were thinking, as we say, in nationalistic terms.

[ 27 : 34 ] And this is the event that changed their minds, an event that changed their minds about them. Looking back, they said, ah, now we get it. He is the Messiah. He is the son of David who sits on David's throne.

But his kingdom is one of meekness and truth through the power of the Spirit. That's what they understood from this looking back. And that's the way we have to see things.

when we read old testament accounts. Remember to interpret them as a parable spiritually about the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour. It asks us questions about our experience.

Jesus speaks gently to us. But there are times, comes a time when some people harden their hearts and are unreceptive. And there are times even in this one who is meek and humble when he has to speak severely.

And it's then that he looses his arrow of conviction. And he crushes people with a rod of iron, the Psalm 2 speaks about. He crushes them with the power of the Spirit, breaking their hearts and bringing them low.

[ 28 : 41 ] So the message is be sensitive to the message of the Gospel. Receive the words of grace that are spoken in meekness gently.

Lest there come upon us this more painful experience where we need to have our hearts broken bringing us low before we receive his grace.

And that means that we have to take his yoke upon ourselves. We have to come to him. We have to find rest in him and go on to serve him because his yoke is light.

He himself is humble and gentle. He speaks to us about the only experience of grace of coming to know the Lord. Well, that's the Messiah.

There's more that could be said, a lot more, but we'll leave it at that. Here's the Messiah who is both majestic and meek and the meekness is the keynote and the majesty is to be interpreted in that light.

[ 29 : 45 ] Now, we also said that John is telling us something by telling the story the way that he does. Now, this is not so clear and you may not think it's too obvious, but I've been saying this all along the series that I've taken that this is one of the aspects of the story of the raising of Lazarus.

Because, you see, these are the people that are forming these crowds. The people that have told the story about Jesus raising Lazarus or the people that have received that story about Jesus raising Lazarus.

It says here in verse 17, the crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign.

So, you see, John is deliberately connecting this with the story of the raising of Lazarus. the raising of Lazarus in John's picture is the big event that led people to believe in Jesus and led the authorities to act against him.

And that's what happens here. Having told us about the connection with Lazarus, he said, so, the Pharisees said to one another, you see that you're gaining nothing.

[ 31 : 06 ] Look, the world has gone after him. But that's just what happened previously in the verses that we read introducing this, the plot to kill Lazarus.

We've read here about the large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there. They came to see him, not only on account of him, but also to see Lazarus, who we had raised from the dead.

And then we've got this refrain. So, the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well. And all that goes back to that larger section that we read in the previous chapter where we're told that the people that had seen Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead went back to Jerusalem and told the authorities about it.

And in verse 47 of the previous chapter, so, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, what are we going to do? And it seems to me that here is a refrain, here is a theme that is constantly recurring.

This is the way that John wants to display it. What happened at the resurrection of Lazarus, it stirred up the authorities. They came together and wanted to act against Jesus.

[ 32 : 16 ] They came together another time and did the same thing. They came together the third time and they took further counsel against Jesus. It's a recurring theme. The story of the raising of Lazarus is the story of Jesus being led to his death.

That's the way that John wants to display him. And this is what we've got in this story as well. What did the Pharisees say to one another?

You see that you're gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him. Now it seems to me that these are simple words that maybe don't have very much meaning attached to them.

But if we connect them up with what we've already said, the other occasions where the Pharisees were stirred up to act against Jesus, we see that it fits into the same pattern.

Here they are, they're looking for his death. That's what happened originally. The council came together and they discussed doing this or doing that and somebody said, the high priest said, it's necessary that one man should die for the people and not that the whole people should perish.

[ 33 : 23 ] In other words, if Jesus goes on and becomes more and more popular, the Romans are going to come and destroy us and the nation is going to be destroyed. So it's far better that this man, Jesus, be destroyed and that will save the nation.

And that's what the high priest said then. And it's the same line that they're following. What are they wanting to do? They're wanting to kill. They're wanting to use violence to put this to an end. So they wanted to kill Lazarus as well as Jesus.

And here they recognize that this is what needs to be done because nothing else is working. And that's what it means. You see that you're gaining nothing. As long as you let Jesus live, there's going to be no progress made in this matter.

As long as he continues to go about and minister, he's going to draw people to him, he's going to get more and more popular and you're never going to stop him. And when they say here, see you're gaining nothing, they're really saying the only solution is to put him to death.

It's a suffering saviour that John is displaying here. A suffering saviour. He's on the path to Calvary. Ever since the resurrection of Lazarus, this is a path that is marked out for him.

[ 34 : 38 ] The council gets stirred up, gets stirred up, gets stirred up. They're all against him. And the ultimate outcome is that they put him to death on the cross. We've got here the suffering servant.

But I wonder if we've got a bit more than that. I'm just saying this for you to think about. He didn't just say you gain nothing. Look, the world is going after him, they said.

And what they meant was an awful lot of people from Jerusalem are following him. But he says it in this fairly extravagant fashion. The world is going after him.

Now, what I'm asking is this. I'm just asking this question. Is this a prophecy? Because you see, it would fit well into the context if this were a prophecy. This would happen in the first case that we've mentioned.

the council came together and they said we've got to put Jesus to death or else the nation will be destroyed. And the high priest said it is expedient that one man should die for the people and not that the whole nation should perish.

[ 35 : 40 ] And John goes on and says that's a prophecy. He was saying more than he realized. He was speaking the truth of the gospel. It's necessary that Jesus should die in order to free people from their sins.

There was an unintentional prophecy there. Here's something that follows the same pattern. Is this also an unintentional prophecy? Is he saying this is the outcome of it all?

The whole world is going to go after him. Is that what he's saying here? Well, there's another reason why I think it might well be this because of what he immediately goes on to speak about next.

Now among those who went up to worship at the feast there were some Greeks. Here are the nations and they're coming to seek Jesus. And Jesus thinks this is a big deal.

He's very moved by it. And Jesus answered them, The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly I truly say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone, but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

[ 36 : 44 ] Why does Jesus, why does John go on to record this? Unless he's expounding this idea that the whole world has gone after him. and to me that is what John is trying to say here.

Yes, we're looking at a saviour that's on the way to the cross, but we're looking at a saviour and the ultimate outcome will be this. The whole world will go after him.

And that's what happened. It's happened symbolised in these Greeks that came to see him. It happened on the day of Pentecost, when Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia and all these other places, a dozen other places that are mentioned.

They all receive the work of the Holy Spirit and come under the influence of the gospel. The whole world has gone after him. He's not talking about Jesus now as the king of the Jews.

He is the king of Israel in a sense. But he's one after whom the nations have gone out. One whom the nations are going to follow.

[ 37 : 48 ] And we see it in the preaching in the Acts of the Apostles. People that were scattered everywhere preached the gospel. We see it in the work of Paul. In his ministry to Cyprus and Turkey and Greece and Rome.

The whole world was embraced by the power of the gospel. We see it in history. We see it in our own history. We see it in the experience of God's church. We see it throughout the world today.

In most of the nations of the world today, people are acknowledging Christ and worshipping him as we are. The whole world has gone after him. And all that is in mind, I suggest, when John records this.

Look, the world has gone after him. An inadvertent prophecy. Something that was said that contained more than what the person imagined. Something that we can see is indeed what happened.

This is a saviour who suffers, but he's also a successful saviour. He will die like a grain of wheat falling into the ground.

[ 38 : 55 ] But if it dies, it will produce a harvest. That's Jesus. He dies on the cross, but the harvest cannot be counted because all the nations are going after him.

And that's the hope that we have. We look around and, well, I can't say that I see it about yourselves because when I was a student here, six people regularly came to the service and now we're an awful lot better than that.

But most places where we go around, there's dozens and dozens of places where I preached as a student that are now closed. And that's the way we see things. And we tend to think things are in the downgrade.

If we look around the world, we don't see it that way. And if we look at the promises of God, we don't see it that way. And that's what this reminds us to do. Okay, don't look at things in accordance with our own circumstances.

Look at things in accordance with the promises of God. Yes, we've got a suffering saviour, but we've got a successful saviour. And that's the message for today. A Messiah who is majestic, but also meek.

[ 40 : 06 ] A saviour who suffered, but was also successful. And that's the sort of thing that would enable us to say, here's one to whom we should be devoted. Here's one that we can trust for our own salvation.

Here's one that we can honour and serve in daily life. And we can do so in the hope that his kingdom will come and his will shall be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

Because the world has gone after him. May God bless to us his word. Amen. Thank you.