

God's Voice in The Thunder: It Feels Like Something's About to Happen John 12:20-33

What is anticipation? *To look forward to; expect. Sometimes it involves foreknowledge; you know it is coming.*

Anticipation is in the air in John 12. Not only are the Jews anticipating Passover, but everyone is buzzing about Jesus' actions in recent days. He cleansed the temple and raised His friend Lazarus from the dead.

So, people are thinking, *what was Jesus about to do next?* He seemed to have no fear of the religious leaders in the Temple. He overcame death by the power of His word when He raised His friend, Lazarus, from the dead. Death was not an issue for Him.

In John 12:20-23, some Greeks (Gentiles), proselytes to Judaism, want to have an audience with Him. What started as an invitation to Jesus from some Greeks would quickly turn into a response about death and what was about to happen in the coming days for Jesus.

In v 20, these Greek men approach Philip who in turn approaches Andrew who in turn seeks out Jesus to bring forth their request for an audience.

In v 23, when Jesus heard this request, He didn't answer their request directly. Instead, their request triggers what was about to happen—His impending death. He does so by using an agricultural metaphor of a wheat seed dying to give birth to several kernels.

What Jesus is saying in vs 23-26 is that His death will give eternal life to many people. And if anyone wants to follow Him, they too must die to self and live for Christ. If anyone does this, the Father will honor them just as the Father honors His Son for what He will do for His people.

In vs. 27-28, you can hear the anguish in His voice. He is doing everything possible to keep his emotions in check knowing that He was about to experience the full wrath of God on the cross. His glory would come not first with a crown, but with a cross. The moment was upon him for which he had left the majesty and worship of heaven. All hell was about to break loose on his life so that all heaven might be experienced by those who would call Him their Lord. The only way this was possible was for His life to be as the single kernel of wheat that falls into the ground and dies. When it does, such a sacrificial death produces much fruit.

Jesus' soul is troubled. The verb "troubled" is from the word *tarasso* which means literally "to shake" or "to stir up." It implies a strong or severe mental and spiritual agitation that disrupts one to the core. The verb is in the perfect tense which means *this was an ongoing struggle at the thought of what was on his horizon*. His thoughts dwelled on all the pain and anguish that was about to fall upon him with such force. He who knew no sin was about to become sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God. The great exchange was about to take place as the innocent one might become guilty so that the guilty might become innocent. This death of the perfect one would bring great glory to the Father who had sent him to rescue humanity from sin, death, Satan and hell. And thus, he moved forward to the cross with deliberate steps of destiny that would lead to our eternal security in the coming days.

The OT prophets foretold His death. Even though Israel did not comprehend it, the Old Testament clearly portrays that the Messiah was to come and was to die.

Psalms 41:9 foretells of his betrayer. (cf. John 13:18)

Zechariah 11:12-13 speaks of the price paid to betray the Messiah. (cf. Matthew 26:15)
Isaiah 50:6 tells of the physical abuse Christ would suffer at his trial. (cf. Matthew 26:67; 27:26)

Psalms 22:6-8, 14-18 speaks of Christ's death by crucifixion which at the time it was written was a form of execution that the Jews found to be foreign. (cf. Matthew 27:39-43; John 19:23-24, 37)

Psalms 69:21 speaks of what would unfold for Jesus on the cross when they tried to give him something to drink to help with his thirst. (cf. Matthew 27:34, 48)

Psalms 31:5 gives the words that Jesus would say on the cross before he breathed his last. (cf. Luke 23:46) "Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God."

Psalms 34:20 depicts that none of the Messiah's bones would be broken at his death. (cf. John 19:32-36)

The most well-known and referenced Old Testament prophecy of the Messiah's death is found in *Isaiah 52:13-53:12* known as the Suffering Servant passages. Look closely at these verses, and they describe what happened to Jesus, especially during the time from after His last supper through His crucifixion. The person in this passage fits Jesus to the tee!

These (and other) Old Testament prophecies foretold what Jesus *already knew* before He came to the world. *This troubled his soul*. How He desired for the cup of the Father's wrath to be removed from in front of him. He knew, however, that the time had come for Him to drink this cup empty so to secure the redemption and rescue of His people. *No cross of suffering would mean no crown of glory*. And it was for the glory of God that Jesus was most interested. John 12:28-30

In vs. 31-32, Jesus speaks of what is about to happen. Satan would be cast out!

Without the cross, any gospel preached is not a true gospel. For it was the cross that led to the rescue, and the fulfillment, of all that Jesus came to do-- *save His people from the eternal punishment of their sins*.

His people would be both the Jews and Gentiles who believe in Him for generations to come. Jesus saw these Greeks as the first among many who soon would have access into the family of God.

Application

What about you? What are you anticipating?

-Are you anticipating that God will do something big in your life? Like, say, birth salvation in you?

-Or perhaps you are anticipating that He will open the spiritual eyes of a relative, soon.

-Maybe the Spirit will use you in the harvest of this soul.

-Or maybe, you're anticipating the Spirit to transform you in some area of your life, because you know you need to die to self so that you can find life and prosper in this area.

-Or maybe you are anticipating seeing Christ.

For Phillip, Andrew and these Greek worshipers, something big was about to happen. They knew it. They could feel it.

May God use us to bring Christ to the nations.