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***John 12:27-50* -- The Conclusion of Jesus' Public Ministry.**

Notes:

Vs. 27 - *Now My soul has become troubled* -- The word for "has become troubled" is another form of the same word that occurred in 11:33. Here Jesus is emphasizing the ongoing nature of the agitation or unsettledness He feels. It is not just a brief, passing discomfort. *what shall I say, "Father, save Me from this hour"?* -- That would be a natural reaction to the pain. Jesus will wrestle with this very issue again in the garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36-44; Lk. 22:41-44). *But for this purpose I came to this hour.* -- The Greek makes the contrast more distinct, "Rather...". His very presence in this world was ultimately to lead to His atoning death.

Vss. 28-30 - *Father, glorify Your name.* -- The word, "glorify", means to bring honor, praise, good reputation, or exaltation to someone by revealing or clearly demonstrating their true character. The word "magnify" has similar implications. You can magnify something by expanding on or enlarging its visible image so that it can be seen more clearly, or you can magnify something by telling of its greatness. Jesus is saying to the Father, "Make known who You are." *There came therefore a voice out from heaven* -- God responded to Jesus' petition with a loud thunderous verbal response. John is the only reporter of this incident, though there was a similar incident that had occurred at Jesus' baptism recorded by the other Gospel writers (e.g., Matt. 3:16,17). Even though the voice was loud and clear enough for many to hear and understand, others could not make out what was being said, or were unable to process what they were hearing. To them it sounded like thunder. *Jesus... said, "This voice did not come for My sake, but for your sakes.* -- Further evidence to support John's thesis (20:30,31).

Vs. 31 - *Now judgment is upon this world* -- The word "world" can refer not only to the planet Earth, but also to the organized system of things, or the world order. In this latter sense, it means the spiritual/political structure and propaganda that is directed or influenced by Satan, whom the apostle Paul called "the god of this age" (II Cor. 4:4; cf. Eph. 2:1,2). John uses the same Greek word, kosmos, in this way in I Jn. 2:15-17. *now the ruler of this world shall be cast out* -- This phrase clarifies what Jesus meant by kosmos in this verse. The Greek is more emphatic, "he will be thrown out outside". The verb is the same as used for the casting out of a demon.

Vss. 32,33 - *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth* -- The "and I" is a single word in Greek, meant to tie this statement to the previous verse to establish a contrast or a simultaneous action ("also I"). The "if" does not imply that it might not happen, but rather states that whenever the condition of "being lifted up from the earth" might take place, then the consequent in the next phrase will also take place. Jesus had spoken about "being lifted up" twice before in this Gospel (3:14; 8:28). This helps give us some understanding of what He meant. He was referring to His death on the cross, as John explains in vs. 33. *will draw all men to Myself* -- The word for "draw" is the same as in 6:44. It means to "draw, attract, drag, haul in". We know from II Cor. 5:14-17 that somehow Jesus took all men into Himself in His death. In doing so He not only paid for their sins, but somehow they themselves also were put to death with Him. This was an objective act that Jesus did, which Paul encourages those who respond in faith to come to grips with for their progress in spiritual understanding (Rom. 5-7; Gal. 2:20; Col. 2:8-15).

Vs. 34 - The crowd responds to Jesus' words. *We have heard out of the Law that the Christ is to remain forever* -- Passages such as Psalms 89:3,4,36; 110:4; Isaiah 9:6,7; and Daniel 7:13,14 clearly teach that the Christ would have an everlasting kingdom. *and how can You say, "The Son of Man must be lifted up"?* *Who is this Son of Man?* -- Jesus seemed to be teaching something different than what the OT taught. They asked for clarification.

Vss. 35,36 - In response, Jesus does not answer their question, but rather encourages them to, in effect, "keep their eyes open" so that they will be able to see and believe the truth when the opportunity comes. *For a little while longer the light is among you.* -- There is currently an exposure to truth among them which is soon to change and be gone. *Walk while you have the light* -- The word translated as "while" is a comparative particle which could also be rendered "as". Jesus' statement may not only be referring to the time that the light is available, but also may be an encouragement to walk in the amount of light they have. The command to "walk" means that they are to be actively in pursuit of truth while they have the chance. The word literally means to "walk about", implying ongoing activity or one's habitual patterns of life. (The same word is used in Gal. 5:16 for walking in the Spirit.) *that darkness may not overtake you* -- To be passive guarantees that darkness will overtake them, having accomplished nothing. The word, "that", indicates a purpose clause. Jesus instructs them to walk about as they have the light in order to avoid the darkness. The word "overtake" occurred in 1:5, and means to "snatch, grasp, seize, obtain, make one's own". The word picture certainly implies that it is a negative experience to be captured or overcome by the darkness. *he who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going* -- The Greek literally is "and the (one) walking about in the darkness...". This clause is meant to be more of a commentary on what happens when darkness overtakes you than a separate statement about "those people who walk in darkness". The word for "know" is knowledge by observation. If you can't see clearly, then your observations and understanding will be inaccurate as well. Missteps, pitfalls, bumps, bruises, and assorted dangers plague those who travel in the dark. *While you have the light, believe in the light, in order that you may become sons of light.* -- The goal is to be transformed, to "become", or "come to be", something that they are not. Cf. Ephesians 5:6-14. *These things Jesus spoke, and He departed and hid Himself from them* -- He did not bask in the popularity of the multitude. It was a dangerous place to be for a number of reasons. Cf. Jn. 2:23-25; 6:15; 11:47-57.

Vss. 37-43 -- The effect of Jesus' ministry. *Though He had performed so many signs before them, they were not believing in Him.* -- A ministry of miracles will not necessarily produce real faith. They were not perceiving the message that the "signs" were pointing to. This resistance had been foretold centuries before by Isaiah the prophet (53:1). *For this cause they could not believe* -- John goes on to quote another passage from Isaiah 6:10 to explain that God Himself was interfering with their ability to clearly perceive the truth. At first blush, this is a difficult and awkward concept to have to deal with, "Does God really keep people from seeing the truth? Does He harden their hearts?" This does not seem to square with a God who is "not wishing for anyone to perish, but for all to come to repentance" (II Pet. 3:9) or, "who desires all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:4). There is an apparent contradiction between these conflicting statements concerning God's actions and motives. This difficulty can be explained if we carefully examine some other passages that will add some light to our dilemma. First of all, an important principle of interpretation is that we should rely on the clear passages of Scripture to help us interpret the more difficult passages. The passages from II Pet. and I Timothy, and many others like them, clearly teach that God does want everyone to turn from the darkness and vanity of sin and idolatry to an honest, real relationship with Him. Whatever this difficult verse from Isaiah is meant to teach, it is not meant to contradict that clear teaching about God. Secondly, Jesus gives us a clue in Matt. 13:10-17. Here, He explains to the disciples that He could not speak clearly to the people because they did not want to see the truth. The same passage from Isaiah is quoted, only it is expressed entirely as though the people have done this to themselves, e.g., they have closed their eyes and ears so as not to perceive truth. Third, throughout the Gospels we see Jesus speaking in figurative language, answering direct questions about who He was with somewhat indirect or obscure answers (if He answered them at all), telling people who were healed to not publicize what He had done, slipping away from boisterous crowds who wanted to make Him king, etc. There seems to have been two things going on at the same time. On the one hand, He was demonstrating and teaching that He was the Messiah. On the other hand, He would not allow Himself to be misunderstood and pinned down by His words. He kept speaking in parables and avoiding the misguided popularity of the crowds. As He Himself said in Matt. 7:6, "Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample you under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces."

Almost as an example of these latter two points, John mentions that *many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees... were not confessing Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue, for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.* -- These rulers could see the truth, but by their reticence to acknowledge it, they were acting like the people in Isaiah's prophecy. Jesus had correctly identified this stumbling block to their faith two Passovers previously. They were more concerned about what people thought of them than what God did (5:44). The Pharisees had taken such a negative stand against Jesus that they had obviously made it quite clear that they would use anything He said against Him. They were like the swine or dogs in Jesus' word picture.

Vss. 44-50 - The final words of Jesus' public ministry. Vss. 44,45 emphasize Jesus' unity with the Father. To believe in Him is to believe in the One who sent Him. The Greek presents an even more significant picture: "The (one) believing into Me does not believe into Me, rather into the One having sent Me". To identify with Jesus is to identify with God. *And he who beholds Me beholds the One who sent Me.* -- Jesus is so fully identified with God that He expresses the character of God. To see Him is to see God who sent Him.

Vs. 46 - *I have come as light into the world* -- Finally, He clearly states what the light was that He had been talking about earlier. He Himself was that light. Think about what He had said in 35,36. The light was only going to be with them for a short time. He had encouraged the people to believe in Him in order to become "sons of light". How strange all of this must have sounded. *that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in the darkness* -- The darkness was already in place. He came to reveal truth and to become a guiding light for those who would choose to walk with Him.

Vss. 47-48 - There is accountability that accompanies the presentation of truth. *And if anyone hears My sayings, and does not keep them, I do not judge him* -- Jesus is saying that those who reject His words won't have to answer to Him. *for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world* -- Cf. 3:17; 8:15. His present mission is not to judge, but to be the sin-bearer and revealer of God's heart. There will come a time when it will be His responsibility to judge mankind (Jn. 5:22-29; Acts 10:42; 17:30,31). *He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.* -- Jesus will not take personal revenge, rather the person will be accountable for the truth he heard and rejected. He will be measured against the standard of what he heard and knew.

Vs. 49 - *For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment, what to say, and what to speak.* -- The authority of Jesus' words come from God. It is for that reason that His words are so important. Note also that we have another glimpse here of Jesus' modus operandi (cf. 5:19,30,36; 7:16,17; 8:28; 10:37,38). He emphasizes that He did not speak from Himself (the Greek for "on My own initiative" is literally "out from Myself"). He received direction from His Father as to what He should teach and say.

Vs. 50 - *And I know that His commandment is eternal life* -- The word for "know" here is knowledge by observation, I-know-because-I-have-seen. God's consistent communication to and through Jesus has been to bring about age-type life, life of the coming kingdom of God into people's lives in this world. *Therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me.* -- The NASB phrase here attempted to smooth out the original, probably because it seemed redundant. Undoubtedly, it was stated with the redundancy for the sake of emphasis. Literally, "Therefore what (things) I speak, according as the Father has spoken to Me, in this manner I speak". The original allows for the possibility of a little more freedom for Jesus to put the communication from the Father into His own words, than the image of mere dictation that seems to be implied by the NASB version. Nevertheless, Jesus' point is that His communication is authoritative because He faithfully presents the message of the Father.