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# “Now”

*“Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, ‘Father, save Me from this hour’?  
But for this purpose I came to this hour” (John 12:27).*

*“Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out” (John 12:31).*

During Jesus’ discourse with His disciples and with the crowd that had gathered around Him in John 12, He used the word “now” three times. This little Greek word, *νῦν* (*nun*), is the particle of present time. He was announcing to them and to the world that His time had “now” come. It was His hour, the hour toward which His entrance into the world and His entire earthly ministry had looked (John 7:30; 8:20; 13:1; 17:1).

It was His hour of death: “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” (John 12:24). It was His hour of purpose: “But for this purpose I came to this hour” (John 12:27b). It was His hour of glory: “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified” (John 12:23). This was His hour of victory, which was about to come through His fulfillment of the Father’s will.

*Jesus’ first use of the word “now,” in John 12:27, brings before us “the now of sorrow,” the time of great suffering that He would experience in connection with His death.* He said, “Now My soul has become troubled” (John 12:27a). This declaration was made by Jesus before Gethsemane, where He suffered the great agony of anticipation (Matthew 26:36–44). His words show us that He suffered throughout His life as He envisioned the death that He would endure. As His death drew near, as the hour arrived, His agony increased. Perhaps the vivid description of His sufferings in Hebrews 5:7 covers not only the tears of Gethsemane but also the totality of His sufferings during His life: “In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the

One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety.”

In spite of the deep troubling of soul that He was going through, Jesus was resolute toward doing what the Father had sent Him to do. He asked, “And what shall I say, ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour” (John 12:27b). Would He turn back when His hour came? No, He had come to offer Himself as the ransom for the world, and nothing could stop Him from completing His mission.

*His second use of the word, in John 12:31, refers to “the now of judgment,” the time when the world would be judged as never before.* As the moment for Him to shed His blood on the cross approached, He said, “Now judgment is upon this world” (John 12:31a). The blade of the cross would have a double edge; it would cut in two ways. It was to be the means of salvation for those who would believe, but it would also be the basis of judgment for those who rejected it. Paul put both views into one sentence in 1 Corinthians 1:18: “For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

Jesus’ word “now” suggests certainty and reality. He had not yet died; in fact, He would not die for another three or four days. Nevertheless, the setting of the cross—the events that stood in its shadows—had begun. It was God’s plan, and nothing could change it. The long years under the Old Testament—with all the sacrifices of the Patriarchal and Mosaical Ages—were now converging into the once-for-all-time sacrifice of Christ (Hebrews 9:28). Jesus was announcing that the apex of history

had arrived.

*The third use that our Lord made of this little word sets forth "the now of victory."* He was not pointing to the victory that would come at the end of time, when all enemies will have been vanquished (1 Corinthians 15:24). The victory He saw was immediate. At this moment in time, "the ruler of this world" was to be "cast out" (John 12:31b). He spoke, no doubt, of crushing the head of the serpent alluded to in Genesis 3:15. Christ's death would set in motion the power that sounded the death knell for Satan's works. John wrote, "The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8b).

The victory of which Jesus spoke was not the victory of the resurrection. Certainly, His rising from the dead is connected to our salvation. Paul said, "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9). In a sense, His resurrection is part of the confession that we make. However, Jesus did not save us through His resurrection; *He saved us through His death.* By offering Himself on the cross, He provided atonement for us and defeated sin. Later, through His resurrection, He confirmed the validity of His death. His coming forth from the tomb proved Him to be God's Son. His death was like no other death in history. His resurrection declared Him to be the Son of God! He "was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 1:4).

So much can be said in one word! The word "now" in this context conveys "the time of suffering," "the time of the judgment of the world," and "the time of the casting out of the prince

of the world." It is a bittersweet word—bitter to those who reject it, but sweet to those who receive it.

Why did Jesus come into the world? He came to save it. "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him" (John 3:17). However, when Jesus provided the way of salvation, He also highlighted the way of death. Ambassadors of Christ draw out those who desire to be saved from those who are perishing (2 Corinthians 2:15; 5:20). These ambassadors go out to save others; but, due to the nature of their work, they become "to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life" (2 Corinthians 2:16a).

The hour that Christ faced had three meanings: It meant suffering for Him, the judgment of sin for those who would turn from the cross, and victory for those who would believe.

Eddie Cloer



*"For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He might nullify the things that are, so that no man may boast before God. But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, so that, just as it is written, 'Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord'" (1 Corinthians 1:26–31).*