



John: The Great "I AM" Gospel
John 12:20-26
From sermon 7.14.24

Read *John 12:20-26*

Overview from Sunday's sermon: These few verses of a very brief account actually open the door for a major shift in redemptive history. Not only are Greeks (Gentiles) introduced and found seeking Jesus, but history will show that the chosen of God will not be exclusively Jewish. With their previous prophesied rejection of Messiah, the Jews will move to the "back burner" and now the Gentiles will take the lead until the Tribulation. Evangelizing the Greco-Roman western world will bring its own set of challenges.

1. Who were these seeking Greeks and what was their religious background? Options:

- Full-fledged accepted Jewish converts. See *Acts 13:43* (best read in the NKJV).
- "God fearers". Mentioned numerous times in the New Testament. See *Acts 10:1-2 & 17:17*.
- Pagan tourists just there for the holidays.

2. Read *1 Corinthians 1:20-24*. Paul's inclusion of these two broad groups symbolically covers all pre-evangelism conditions: the highly religious & indifferent pagan. Think of biblical examples of each.

2a. Now, review evangelism issues for each with the cross and the biblical Jesus.

Jewish/Religious issues: Holy days, customs, rituals, Law, diet, exclusivity, reality of being wrong.

Pagan/irreligious issues: Standards, absolutes, holiness, sin as defined by God.

Discuss: The new Church is going to be made up of both groups and there will be far more Greek/Roman/Gentile than Jewish. Both will have Church issues going forward.

Read the passage and note the issue.

Galatians 3:1-3—believing someone had to be Jewish before being Christians. Circumcision.

1 Corinthians 5:1-2—unaddressed sin within the Church.

3. What are some hurdles/issues you've faced in sharing the Gospel, your testimony, or with church invites? Various answers.

4. What were the components of Christ's response and how would they be a stumbling block for the Greek/Gentiles? Death to Self vs live for pleasure, fulfillment. Unwavering service to Christ vs the free man, democracy. A hatred of Sin & the world System vs. lawlessness and experience.

5. The Cross is shown to be foolishness to both the Jews and the Greeks. Therefore, we are fools to the world for following the biblical Jesus. What beliefs, practices, and aspects make the culture mock us? Various answers. Money/giving, devotion of time/ministry. "Science"-deniers/Creation literalists. To love our enemies. Martyrdom for what we believe. Taking the Word literally regarding sin vs inclusive principles. God's ordained authorities: Home, Church, Human Government.

6. The religious group views us as too liberated and lawless while the irreligious group views us as too holy and exclusive. What is the danger of slipping into the mindset of either camp? We can become exclusive and stop interacting with the world we're supposed to reach. We can live and look just like the world and misrepresent Holy God. See also *Colossians 2:8*.