



Adobe Stock Images

# Who Rules the World, Satan or Caesar?

Sunday Musings for the Fifty Sunday in Lent –  
March 17, 2024

In her Sunday Musings for the Fifth Sunday in Lent, author Diana Butler Bass examined some of the underlying questions stemming from John 12:20-33. The piece in its entirety may be found in the hyperlink below. After reading it, consider the following for discussion.

## John 12:20-33

**20** Now <sup>ε</sup>among those who went up to worship at the feast were some <sup>Γ</sup>Greeks. **21** So these came to <sup>Φ</sup>Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” **22** Philip went and told <sup>Α</sup>Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. **23** And Jesus answered them, <sup>ϰ</sup>“The hour has come <sup>Γ</sup>for the Son of Man to be glorified. **24** Truly, truly, I say to you, <sup>ϰ</sup>unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. **25** <sup>1</sup>Whoever loves his life loses it, and <sup>ϰ</sup>whoever <sup>μ</sup>hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. **26** If anyone serves me, he must <sup>α</sup>follow me; and <sup>μ</sup>where I am, there will my servant be also. <sup>α</sup>If any one serves me, <sup>τ</sup>the Father will honor him. **27** <sup>ϰ</sup>“Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? <sup>Γ</sup>Father, <sup>σ</sup>save me from <sup>μ</sup>this hour’? But <sup>Γ</sup>for this purpose I have come to <sup>μ</sup>this hour. **28** Father, glorify your name.” Then <sup>α</sup>a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” **29** The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, <sup>ϰ</sup>“An angel has spoken to him.” **30** Jesus answered, <sup>ϰ</sup>“This voice has come for your sake, not mine. **31** <sup>2</sup>Now is the judgment of this world; now will <sup>τ</sup>the ruler of this world <sup>μ</sup>be cast out. **32** And I, <sup>ε</sup>when I am lifted up from the earth, <sup>α</sup>will draw <sup>α</sup>all people to myself.” **33** He said this <sup>τ</sup>to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

## What Do You Think?

The Greek version of what Jesus declares at John 12:31, tell us that the time for the judgment of the “cosmos” has come, and the ruler of the “cosmos” who will be driven out. But the translations change the word “cosmos” to “world”; thus, the inference that Jesus is speaking of the earth, and hence, the question: “Who Rules the World, Satan or Caesar?”

1. In the total context of John 12:20-33, is there any relevance to the choice between Satan or Caesar, and if so, what might it be?
2. Are there wider implications for the word “cosmos” as opposed to “world,” and what might those implications be?
3. Compare Jesus reference to the “archon” (ruler) of the cosmos, and Pilot referring to Jesus as “the King of the Jews.”

4. What are the implications of the arrival of the Greeks who wish to see Jesus, and why does their request to see him prompt him to launch into his discourse?
5. What might we infer from not being told whether the Greeks actually got to meet with Jesus?
6. What does it mean for Jesus to be glorified, and what does it mean as it pertains to this situation?

**Hyperlink to Sunday Musings for March 17, 2024**

[https://open.substack.com/pub/dianabutlerbass/p/sunday-musings-647?r=45v6o&utm\\_campaign=post&utm\\_medium=email](https://open.substack.com/pub/dianabutlerbass/p/sunday-musings-647?r=45v6o&utm_campaign=post&utm_medium=email)