

JOHN 12:20-36 | JESUS TELLS OF HIS DEATH

- Verses 20-34 included on session 50
- Verse 35 -
 - Jesus, speaking figuratively, warns the Jewish people that **the light** will soon be gone **darkness will come upon you**. In a few verses ([Jn. 12:46](#)) Jesus will declare Himself as **a light**.
 - Presumably Jesus here speaks of Himself and His forthcoming departure, but He could potentially be speaking more broadly of *the light of knowledge* which would be the opportunity of repentance and receiving of her kingdom, and opportunity that would go away when *the darkness* (i.e.; the Tribulation) would arrive.
- Verse 36 –
 - The nation would soon have an opportunity to become **the children of light**, but this was contingent upon their acceptance of the Light. Further in scripture we learn that the nation rejected the Light, and entered into a period of blindness, and thus the inability to be **children of light**.
 - Jesus went and **hid himself**. The Greek is passive, thus *was hidden*. While this could lend itself to speaking of a *spiritual* condition, it seems the better interpretation is physical, and thus the KJV translation most effectively communicates the situation (though is not the most literal translation).

JOHN 12:37-43 | “THEY BELIEVED NOT” - THE AUTHOR’S EXPLANATION

- Verse 37 –
 - The author writes with the assumption that the miracles performed was sufficient proof that Jesus was Messiah (indeed, this is the ultimate purpose of the book - see [John 20:31](#)).
- Verse 38 –
 - Quoting from [Isaiah 53:1](#), the author assumes prior knowledge of the passage.
 - The question, in the context of Isaiah 53, comes with the implied answer of “no one.”
 - Isaiah 53 is the passage of the Suffering Servant, and the Gospel writer is here making the connection between the rejected Lord and the Suffering Servant.
 - The passage is also used by Paul in [Romans 10:16](#), and its use there gives insight into **the gospel** of which Paul speaks.
 - Because he bases his message upon an Old Testament passage, it cannot speak of the mystery Gospel (as yet unrevealed in Isaiah’s time).
 - This helps clarify the application of Romans 10 as speaking of the Kingdom Gospel, not the Gospel of grace, which clarifies the works of Romans 10:13.
- Verses 39-40 –
 - The author goes so far as to say that **they could not believe** (v. 39). There are two possible interpretations:
 - A failure to believe leads to an inability to believe. This is Bullinger’s position: “Judicial blindness follows persistent unbelief” (*The Companion Bible*).
 - The death of the Messiah was so fixed in prophecy that it was the plan and purpose of God and belief was made impossible. While this sounds like a Calvinist point of view, Calvinism takes such a position, true for a single generation, and makes it true for all people of all times.
 - The interpretive question lies in the word **therefore** (v. 39). If it is *on account of their unbelief (of v. 37)*, then the Bullinger position would be correct. If it is *on account of the prophetic decree of Isaiah*, then the second view would be correct.

- Under either view, the result was given from Isaiah’s words in [Isaiah 6:9-10](#) (of which the author shares the truth but not a direct quotation).
 - The Isaiah passage is used by Paul in [Acts 28:26-27](#), where Paul is speaking to Roman Jews about the Kingdom of God. Paul’s meeting was dismissed when he brought up the Isaiah passage and some believed, and others did not ([Acts 28:24](#)). The use of this passage in its context shows Paul speaking a Kingdom Gospel in the last chapter of Acts, thus requiring an overlap of both Kingdom and Grace gospels.
 - The passage is also quoted by Paul in [Romans 11:8](#), in clear connection with Israel (see [Rom. 11:7](#)).
- The use of the Isaiah passage in [John 12](#) is solid proof that the “belief” of the Gospel of John is *kingdom related belief*, namely in Jesus as Son of God and Messiah.
- Verse 41 –
 - This fabulous little commentary irrefutably connects Isaiah 53 (the Suffering Servant passage) with Jesus Christ. Both Isaiah 53 and Isaiah 6 **spoke of him**, (and not of *the nation* or some other person), and we know this by Biblical decree. This is the only interpretation we are allowed to hold if we hold to the accuracy of God’s Word.
- Verse 42 –
 - **Nevertheless** (that is, though most did not believe) **many** of the **chief rulers** (presumably among the Sanhedrin) **believed on him**. Of these, we learn later of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, but there were surely more. However, the Pharisees had such a stronghold on **the synagogue** that **they did not confess him**.
 - We must remember that this is in a time in which **whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven** ([Matt. 10:33](#)).
 - We must also remember that we are *not* in such a time. Our public profession is not required, though most often springs forth nonetheless.

JOHN 12:44-50 | “THEY BELIEVED NOT” - THE LORD’S EXPLANATION

- This section elaborates on the words of verse 37, **they believed not**. In these verses, the Lord Himself gives commentary.
- Verses 44 – 45 –
 - As Jesus has consistently been shown to do in the fourth Gospel, He insists that belief in Him has a prerequisite: belief that Jesus was sent from the Father. Furthermore, the one that **seeth me seeth him that sent me** (v. 45). The word **seeth** is used in its deeper meaning, beyond eyesight, and is another way of stating that which had been stated in verse 44.
 - In truth, a person of any dispensation cannot *see* Jesus unless he *sees* that Jesus is the Son of God. This is so much part of the identity of Jesus that it is unacceptable to say “I believe in Jesus” but also say “He is not the Son of God.”
- Verse 46 –
 - Jesus said similar words in [John 8:12](#). Just as *seeing* was used with deeper meaning in verse 45, **light** and **darkness** are used more deeply as well.
- Verses 47-50 –
 - Verses 47-50 cannot be understood independently, but the full thought must be taken as a unit.
 - The Lord says that *His words*, in and of themselves, would not be worth anything more than any other Jewish man’s words to Israel. However, Jesus never claimed to give *His own words*. Rather, the Lord gave *the Father’s words*, and therefore they must be taken as words of God, and rejecting the words that Jesus spoke becomes a rejection of God Himself.
 - Because these words are given as a response to the unbelief of verse 37, they effectively pronounce judgment upon the unbelievers.