

HIS COMMAND LEADS TO ETERNAL LIFE

John 12:37-50
Key Verse: 12:50

#35

First, Continuing unbelief of the Jews (37-43). Look at verse 37. "Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him." Up until now Jesus had done marvelous miraculous signs in their presence. It was neither to show off himself to draw people's popularity nor to crumble the political power of the hierarchy. His signs were done only to manifest divine glory that Jesus himself is God and that he came to this world to draw all precious children of God to God through his Messianic work, ultimately through his death on the cross and resurrection.

But the religious leaders didn't understand the spiritual meaning of the miraculous signs. Rather they were greatly challenged by them and groaned, saying, "What shall we do? The whole world is going after him" (19). Jesus is the incarnation of God's love and Jesus is the demonstration of God's compassion. But the religious leaders were spiritually blind, and even though they saw God in Jesus--they saw divine mercy and compassion and life-giving power in his miraculous signs--they still would not believe in him. But Jesus understood that their unbelief was prophesied by the prophet Isaiah. Verse 38b says, "Lord, who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" This is Isaiah 53:1, the introduction to Isaiah's message of the cross of Christ. This is the most beautiful and poetic expression of God's heart. After the Flood, God knew that all the inclination of men's hearts are evil, so he had a new plan of world salvation. He looked forward to sending the Lamb of God, the Christ who would bear all our sins and heal all of our diseases. God gave his promise to Abraham, that through his descendant all people of all nations would be blessed. This promise was reiterated in his promise to King David. A descendant of King David would sit on the throne of the Eternal Kingdom. This message of salvation was from God. But the people did not believe this wonderful message of good news. They should have believed, but they would not believe. This was a prophecy of what would happen when the Christ appeared. "Who has believed our message? To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"

The "arm of the Lord" is God's saving power. God revealed his saving power in Jesus. But they would not believe. When they would not believe, then they could not believe (39). Isaiah wrote about this in Isaiah 6. In the first part of Isaiah 6, Isaiah went into the temple and got a glimpse of the glory of God. He heard God's call and he was ready to answer. God cleansed his dirty lips, then sent him to go and tell the message to the people. But the people were blinded by sin and pride. They were blinded by unbelief. They lived according to their sinful natures. The message of God's love only hardened their hearts and blinded their eyes. They had ears but they could not hear. They could not understand with hardened hearts. Love made their hearts even harder. They did not turn to God, so he could not heal them.

"Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him." Isaiah saw the Lord almighty seated on the throne in glory. He saw that the Lord is the sovereign

ruler of heaven and earth. He saw that the whole world is filled with his glory (Isa 6). Isaiah also saw the glory of the Son on the cross, dying for the sins of the world. (Isa 53; Jn 12:23,28-29)

Second, Jesus came as light (42-50). An unbelieving atmosphere was the social consensus. But many believed. Even many Jewish leaders believed in Jesus, but they stayed in the dark. Many of the Pharisees believed but they would not confess their faith, for they feared they would be put out of the synagogue. They wanted to maintain their social position, so they believed in Jesus secretly. This kind of belief will not last. It is not saving faith. Jesus cried out, "One who believes in me does not only believe in me. He believes in God who sent me." "When one looks at me he sees the one who sent me."

One cannot believe in Jesus and remain in the dark. Jesus said, "I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness." Darkness is fear and sin and despair and unbelief. When Jesus the Light shines in our darkness we must receive him and become sons of light. He said, "Put your trust in the light while you have it so that you may become sons of light."

Jesus does not judge those who choose to stay in the dark. He did not come to judge but to save. Jesus works through his word. Those who hear Jesus' word but choose to reject his word miss his saving grace. He does not judge. Men who reject his word judge themselves. Jesus' word is God's word. God's word is Jesus' word. His command leads to eternal life. To reject his command is to reject life. In Jn 5:24 Jesus said, "whoever hears my voice and believes in the one who sent me has eternal life. He will not be condemned. He has crossed over from death to life." Jesus says here in verses 49-50, "For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So what ever I say is just what the Father has told me to say."