

EXPOSITION OF JOHN

Message #50

John 12:37-50

We are about to come to the moment in which Jesus will take His disciples privately into an upper room and give them in capsule form truth that pertains to the Church Age. But before He does that, John wants us to know that there had been a national rejection of Jesus by the nation Israel.

We may recall that right at the outset of this book, John records that Jesus came to His own and His own did not receive Him (1:11). In tracking the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, He comes one more time to this theme. He shows us that just prior to Calvary, this very point was on the mind and heart of the Lord.

Now contextually, Jesus has just opened the door to Greeks, to Gentiles (12:20). He wanted all to know the reason why this program moved out to the Gentiles is because the nation Israel had rejected Him. There is a principle to glean from this:

WHEN THOSE TO WHOM GOD'S PROGRAM IS AIMED REJECT IT, HE WILL TAKE IT ELSEWHERE TO THOSE WHO WILL BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST.

Let me be very pastoral and personal here. God has a plan for you as an individual and for us as a Church. As long as we believe in Him and obey His Word, we can expect that He will accomplish great things with us and through us, but if we reject His Word and we just start doing what is right in our own eyes, God can say, "Fine, I'm done using you. I'll display my glory elsewhere." That is what happens here.

Now this section may be broken down into two main categories:

CATEGORY #1 – John's explanation of the national rejection of Israel. **12:37-43**

In **verse 36**, we see that Jesus is in hiding (**12:36**). He removed Himself from the masses of people. He had given Israel every opportunity and evidence that He was her God/Savior/King and she had rejected Him. John, who himself is a Jew, is very careful to point out what was happening:

(Point #1) - Jesus had performed many sign miracles but the majority of people had not believed on Him and could not believe on Him because he was fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy. **12:37-41**

This is amazing truth here. The national rejection of Jesus Christ by Israel was a fulfillment of Biblical prophecy and that fulfillment of prophecy opened the doors for us who are non-Jewish to have a relationship with Him.

There are five facts we want to observe here:

Fact #1 - Jesus had performed many signs before them but they had not believed in Him. **12:37**

Now there are a couple of points we want to make from this verse: **First**, their rejection of Jesus Christ was completely irrational in view of the overwhelming evidence of the miracles they saw. People who reject Jesus Christ and reject God's Word do so in spite of overwhelming evidence proving them wrong. I like what Dr. Edwin Blum said, "Their unbelief was irrational, as sin always is" (*John*, p. 318). **Second**, the issue at stake was not their works, but their faith. They could have been saved had they just believed in Jesus Christ. But they would rather stick with their works.

Fact #2 - Israel's national and irrational rejection of Jesus Christ was fulfilling a prophecy given by Isaiah the prophet. **12:38**

Perhaps the greatest chapter in all the O.T., one written by Isaiah that predicted this very thing, is Isaiah 53. In that chapter Isaiah predicts with pinpoint accuracy what will happen to Jesus Christ and why it will happen. He graphically describes how Jesus would be despised and rejected by men and how He would be wounded for our transgressions and how the Lord was pleased to crush Him because it would permit offspring to come into the family of God. But Isaiah begins the chapter by saying, "Who has believed our message?" The answer is, hardly anyone. Only a handful from the nation Israel actually believed in Jesus Christ; in fact, when He ascended up into heaven, the discipleship number was about 120 (Acts 1:15). Thousands, millions had heard of Jesus Christ and seen a miracle, but just like Isaiah said, "He was despised and rejected."

Now why is John bringing this up? Because he wants those of us who are non-Jewish to understand the Grace of God. The plan of God included us and in order for that plan to include us as an individual, it had to swing away from Israel as a nation. This was all known to God and all predicted by Isaiah.

Fact #3 - Israel's national unbelief was sovereignly controlled by God in full conformity with prophecy given by Isaiah the prophet. **12:39-40**

Now the phrase "for this cause" refers to Israel not believing in Jesus Christ in fulfillment with Isaiah's prophecy. It wasn't that Israel only would not believe, it was that she could not believe and this too fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy that God would blind Israel's eyes and harden their hearts so she wouldn't and couldn't be converted.

There is within the pages of Scripture certain texts that clearly teach if God's overwhelming truth evidence is rejected, as a way of punishment God can harden someone to the point they cannot believe. For example, in the O.T., God did some amazing things for Pharaoh to see and when he dug his heels in and rejected the miracles, which God predicted he would do, God hardened his heart (Exodus 9:12). In Romans, the Apostle Paul says that God has put within man enough intuitive knowledge of Him and His existence, and when men disregard this He gives them up (Romans 1:24, 26, 28). When the Antichrist is revealed, it will be God who will cause a deluding influence all over the world so that the world will believe what is false (II Thessalonians 2:8-11). Clearly God is involved in election and He is involved in non-election.

Fact #4 - Isaiah saw the glory of God in all of this. **12:41**

There are some people who want to quibble about the sovereignty of God, but Isaiah wasn't one of them. He saw the glory of God in the sovereignty of God. How do you see the glory of God on display when He is blinding eyes and hardening hearts so a nation cannot believe?

In Isaiah 53, Isaiah saw the sacrificial nature of the death of Jesus Christ and he understood how that death enabled God to make sinful people His offspring. He saw the judicial ramifications of the death of Jesus Christ and the glory to follow.

The Apostle Paul in thinking about the elect and the non-elect saw the same thing Isaiah did, the glory of God. In fact, he would say to those who want to quibble about this, "Who are you, O man, who answers back to God?" (Romans 9:20). God is the potter and we are the clay and the riches of His glory are displayed in those upon whom He has mercy and upon those who are a demonstration of His wrath (Romans 9:20-24).

When you reject God's sovereignty, you rob God of His glory. That is what Isaiah saw and that is what the Apostle John saw.

Fact #5 - Many had secretly believed on Jesus Christ but were not confessing Christ for fear because they loved the approval of men more than God. **12:42-43**

Here is one of the great texts which clearly refutes Lordship salvation proponents. There was a small remnant of people who had believed on Jesus Christ but they were not following Him; in fact, they were secret about it because they wanted the approval of men. They were true believers, but they were secret believers. They were believers who loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Those who teach the heresy of Lordship salvation have a real problem with these verses, for these verses teach that one may have eternal life simply by believing in Jesus Christ and may actually live their lives seeking the praise of men and not God. Will we see these people in heaven? Absolutely, yes. Will they be highly rewarded and honored in heaven? No.

CATEGORY #2 – Jesus final proclamations concerning Him and His Father. **12:44-50**

We do not know exactly when and where Jesus spoke these words, but apparently the words were brought by the Holy Spirit to John's mind years later as being important. Contextually, these words are given in the context of Israel's national rejection and in the context of the Greeks, the non-Jews trying to get to know Jesus Christ. It is possible that this is a final public message Christ gives to Israel in some type of public setting.

Now **verse 44** says Jesus "cried out" these words. The words "cried out" do not refer to Him weeping but to Him preaching. The verb "cry out" (εκραξεν) means to proclaim or to preach as a herald (G. Abbott-Smith, p. 246). **Christlike preaching heralds God's truth with authority; it doesn't open things up for the group to discuss what it means to them.** It proclaims truth.

Now as near as we may determine, there are seven specific proclamatory points Christ makes:

Proclamation Point #1 - The one who believes in Jesus Christ the Son is the one who believes in God the Father. **12:44**

You do not have two options to your faith; you have only one option if you are to be in a right relationship with God. I have had people say, "I believe in God." That is not enough. You must believe in Jesus Christ because Jesus Christ is the one and only option you have for a truth faith in God.

Proclamation Point #2 - The one who sees Jesus Christ also sees God the Father. **12:45**

Do you get this point? If you see Jesus Christ as God, you see God. That is exactly what He meant when He said to Israel, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8). What He was saying is, if you will acknowledge that you are sinful and need Me to save you from your sins, I will purify your heart and you will see Me as God. This is the point Israel missed and this point is missed by Mormons, Jehovah's Witness, Christian Scientists, Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus, and every other false religion. They just don't get this point - Jesus is God and to be saved you must see Him as God.

Jesus is not, as eastern religions would have people believe, a Son of God, or the Lord and Savior of the cosmos or a manifestation of God, He is God and He and the Father are one. If you do not believe this you will be eternally condemned.

Proclamation Point #3 - Christ came as the light of God to this dark world. **12:46a**

Jesus Christ came into this world to call them out of their religious insanity into a true relationship with God. He came to call them from their deep, dark, hidden sin to a righteousness that could take them to heaven. He did not come to this earth just for something to do. He saw this world as dark and evil and He came to offer it light and life.

Proclamation Point #4 - The one who believes in Jesus Christ does not remain in darkness any more. **12:46b**

You get out of darkness by believing on Jesus Christ. You cannot work your way out of darkness, you cannot get yourself out of darkness by trying hard. You get out by faith in Jesus Christ as your only God/Savior.

Proclamation Point #5 - If one hears Christ's message of believing on Him as the God/Savior and does not obey it, He does not judge at the present time for He came to save the world. **12:47**

Since the vast majority of the religious world does not accept that He is their only Savior and that they may only be saved by believing on Him, why doesn't He destroy them? Why doesn't He shower Salt Lake City with His wrath? Why doesn't He cause all leaders of false religions to drop dead and take them to hell? Because that is not what His first coming is all about. He came to offer salvation. He didn't come the first time to bring God's wrath, but to offer salvation.

Proclamation Point #6 - If one hears the message of believing on Christ as the God/Savior and rejects Him, he will have a day of judgment and the Word of God will be the judge on the last day. **12:48**

Each person will have their last day or final day in God's court. Jesus said, when you get your day in God's court, I won't judge you, Moses will (John 5:45). Jesus says, we'll just call up the law of Moses found in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy and we'll compare your life against God's righteous law and your mouth will be shut and the case will be closed and you will be condemned.

There is almost a humorous text in the O.T. law that if it weren't so sad would be funny. Moses called the people of Israel together and read the entire law to them. After he was done the nation said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient" (Exodus 24:7). You would have thought that some person with some theological wits about them would have said, "You know, Adam and Eve were given one simple command and they didn't obey it. Do we actually believe we will obey every single command in the O.T. law?" In fact, apparently the nation missed what Moses did after they said that; he "took blood and sprinkled it on the people" (Exodus 24:8). Israel has never been close to obeying God's law and now the One Person was on earth who had and they were going to kill Him. Israel has never obeyed God's law and neither have we. Christ says, I won't judge you, Moses will.

Proclamation Point #7 - Jesus Christ only and always taught the truth of God, which was what He came here to teach. **12:49-50**

The commandment of God the Father to believe on Jesus Christ for eternal life is exactly what Christ communicated. Christ did not make this message up as He was walking around this earth, this is the plan of the Godhead. Everything He ever said was in perfect conformity to the program and plan of God. This was not idle chitchat Jesus was presenting, He was presenting the truth of God and that truth is this -

The only way any person may have a relationship with God that will give eternal life is by believing on Jesus Christ. It is not by believing in you, your works, your religion, but by believing in Him. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and your dark sin will be washed away and you are saved.