

“Still NOT Believing In Him”

John 12:35-43

June 8, 2014

Intro: VIDEO – Kevin Peck: *“Church Culture & Leadership”*

Review:

John 11:55 – 12:11 = **Dinner party reveals hearts...**

John 12:12 – 19 = **Truthful “triumphal entry”**

John 12:20 – 36 = **His “hour has come”** v.23

➤ *Messianic Model* v.24

➤ *Messianic Message* v.25

➤ *Messianic Mandate* v.26

GAME ON!

***It’s time to stop lovin... (this life)
and start hating... (this life)!***

*It’s time to stop faking...
and start following!*

T/S: Last week... **John 12:37**

*“But though He had performed so many signs
before them, yet they were not believing in Him.”*

by contrast...

Last week we looked at “biblical believing”...

B. E. L. I. E. V. I. N. G. !

1. **B** = Beginning... *The Attitude*
2. **E** = EVERYTHING... *The Christ*
3. **L** = Learn, Love, Live... *The Word*
4. **I** = Individualized... *The Plan*
5. **E** = Emptied of self... *The Response*
6. **V** = Victorious! *The Worship*
7. **I** = Involved... *The Church*
8. **N** = Now! *The Mission*
9. **G** = Good News! *The Gospel*
10. **!** = Passion... *The Proclamation*

T/S: Today's passage (vv.35-43) explains & “unpacks” v.37...

VIDEO: John 12:35-43

Preview:

Revelation

(vv.35-36)

Rejection

(v.37)

Revelation

(vv.38-43)

- **Prophet**
- **Prince**
- **Priorities**

Big Idea: ***Unbelief is NEVER satisfied! (or saved)***

I. (vv.35-36) Revelation (“Hope & Hell”)

*So Jesus said to them, “For a little while longer the Light is among you. **Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you;** he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes.*

“While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light.” These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them.

- A. **Urgent Invitation...**
- B. **Warning of wrath...**
- C. **Adoption available...**
- D. **Hope hides... and hell hovers!**

The Curtain of Light closes...

- Here we see John 1:11 illustrated
- Here we see John 7:21 fulfilled

***** God shows His INTOLERANCE**

- Psalm 81:11-12 (...give over)
- Hosea 4:17 (God walks away)
- Isa 63:10 (God fights against)
- Rom 1:18-32... vv24,26,28!!!
- Heb 10:26-27!!!

Revelation 21:22: Jesus is also the Light of heaven!

II. (v.37) Rejection (“Unbelievable Unbelief”)

*But though He had performed so many signs before them,
yet they were not believing in Him.*

QUOTE: [JOHN 12:37-38](#) IS a watershed in the theology of the Gospel of John. Jesus' public work is completed; his signs have been displayed in the world; his discourses have been delivered. *And yet, the signs have been rejected*. His own people have failed to believe the messenger sent by God. We were warned that this would happen in John's opening prologue, "*He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him*" ([1:11](#)).

Biblical portrait of unbelief

Unbelief is bigger than impersonal miracles... (amazing)

Unbelief is beyond an "apologetics" program... (info)

Unbelief beats being in close proximity to Jesus... (Judas)

Unbelief bellows louder than a mere calling... (Paul)

John echoes the thinking of other New Testament writers when he leads us first to [Isaiah 53:1](#). [Isaiah 53](#) provided the earliest Christians with a poignant description of the Suffering Servant, whose image helped interpret the anguish and suffering of Jesus. And [Isaiah 53:1](#) sums up the Servant's rejection: Neither his words ("our message") nor his deeds ("the arm of the Lord") has found any reception in Israel. John then takes us to [Isaiah 6:10](#), which became the classic New Testament explanation for Israel's rejection of Jesus. Paul cites it in his final speech in Acts ([Acts 28:26-27](#)), and the other Gospels use it to explain why the people cannot comprehend the parables of Jesus ([Matt. 13:13-15](#); [Mk 4:12](#); [Lk 8:10](#)). - Gary Burge

III. (vv.38-43) **Revelation** (*“unbelief unmasked”*)

A.	vv.38-40	Prophet	Isaiah
B.	v.41	Prince	Jesus
C.	vv.42-43	Priorities	“religious people”

v.38 = *This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet which he spoke: “LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT? AND TO WHOM HAS THE ARM OF THE LORD BEEN REVEALED?”*

Biblical portrait of unbelief

Unbelief begins providentially... (God has a plan...)

Unbelief, BOTH rejects God’s truth AND truth-tellers!

38 = Scriptural fulfillment: ***“to fulfill”***

- * **Shows sovereignty (power)**
- * **Shows providence (plan)**
- * **Shows inspiration (perfect)**

“to fulfill” = This does not mean that the Pharisees rejected Christ *in order* that the prophecy of Isaiah should be fulfilled, but that *by* their rejection of him the same thing had occurred which took place in the time of Isaiah. - **Barnes' N.T. Notes**

- Isaiah 53:1 is quoted in John 12:38...

The Suffering Servant

1Who has believed our message?

And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

2For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot,
And like a root out of parched ground; He has no *stately*
form or majesty

That we should look upon Him,
Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him.

3He was despised and forsaken of men,
A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;
And like one from whom men hide their face
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

Exact context of the "triumphal entry"

Exact parallel to v.37

No excuses!

v.39:

For this reason they could not believe, for Isaiah said again,

Biblical portrait of unbelief

Unbelief is the “bad fruit” of faithlessness...

QUOTE: “*Can*” and “*could*” are often used in the Bible to **denote the existence of such obstacles as to make a result certain, or to affirm that while one thing exists another thing cannot follow...** For example ([Genesis 37:4](#)) tells us the brothers of Joseph “*could* not speak peaceably unto Joseph.” That is, while their hatred continued so strong, speaking peaceably could not follow. See also [Matthew 12:34](#), [Romans 8:7](#), [John 6:60](#), [Amos 3:3](#). In the case of John 12:39, it means there was some obstacle or difficulty that made it certain that while such a condition existed, they would not believe. What that condition was is stated in the next verse; and while that blindness of mind and hardness of heart existed, it was impossible for them to believe, because the two things are incompatible.

- Barnes' N.T. Notes

Augustine: *"If I be asked why they could not believe, I answer without hesitation, because they would not: because God foresaw their evil will, and he announced it beforehand by the prophet."*

v.40 = (quoting **Isaiah 6:10...**)

“HE HAS BLINDED THEIR EYES AND HE HARDENED THEIR HEART, SO THAT THEY WOULD NOT SEE WITH THEIR EYES AND PERCEIVE WITH THEIR HEART, AND BE CONVERTED AND I HEAL THEM.”

Biblical portrait of unbelief

Unbelief begets God’s holy, righteous wrath.

Unbelief births judgment NOW... (AND forevermore).

Unbelief buries any and all hope for salvation.

Unbelief baffles the unbeliever (spiritually).

Unbelief bunkers-down in stubbornness.

Unbelief builds momentum... (won’t turn/repent)

Unbelief breaks (and keeps broken) the human heart.

* Isaiah 5:12-14 = love this life = lose this life

* Isaiah 5:16 = God is exalted in justice... revealed holy in righteousness

- * Isaiah 5:20-23 = WOE to... rejecters
- * Isaiah 5:24-30 = God disciplines with wrath
- * Isaiah 6:1-8 = HUGE context

Vision of The Lord! Holy! Holy!! Holy!!!

God's man = holy humility

God's man = repentance

*** Contrast = Context ***

*** Isaiah 6:8-10 (Great Commission)**

"whom... send? Send me!

Go and say... "

"they keep hearing but not understanding...
seeing but not perceiving...

v10 = God hardens their hard hearts...

&

He blinds their closed eyes.

(See Pastor Jeff's "***Compatiblist Position***" paper)

vv.38-40: (micro-summary)

The theological message of [John 12:38-40](#) is thus anchored to Isaiah's experience. God called Isaiah to speak to Israel but forewarned him that his words would find no acceptance. People would hear, but fail to understand; they would see, but fail to comprehend. Therefore Isaiah did not fail; rather, he fulfilled God's purposes. Likewise, Jesus did not fail in his ministry, but he was continuing the prophetic experience of Isaiah...

John is describing what we might call a "judicial" hardening that settles on a people who are already guilty. When revelation comes, we must believe. But if we refuse to believe, the light disappears ([12:35-36](#)); and when God's light departs from the world, the darkness (which is the default state of the world) closes over unbelieving hearts (In John's literary schema, this is why Jesus disappears in [12:36b](#).) Paul makes a similar argument in [Romans 1](#). The consequence of the world's sin and unbelief is God's judgment, in which he "gives them over" to their sinful instincts ([Rom. 1:24, 26, 28](#)). - NIV Application Commentary

T/S: So... what's the solution...

1. Repent & Believe
2. Both are miraculous gifts of saving grace...
3. If you're not there... It all starts with PRAYER

VIDEO: "PRAYER"

v.41 = *These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory,
and he spoke of Him.*

Biblical portrait of unbelief

Unbelief beckons Christ's Ambassadors to confront it.
(Isaiah 6:8 & Acts 1:8)

In John [10:30](#) we hear Him say, "*I and My Father are one,*"

Mark 12:24 & 27 =
Jesus tells religious leaders that they are deceived BECAUSE
they don't know their Scriptures.

*"Jesus said to them, "Is this not the reason you are
mistaken, that you do not understand the Scriptures or
the power of God? **...you are greatly mistaken.**"*

"The conscience, stirred by the Word, may respond at first and one may feel in his very soul that he should yield to Christ, but it is possible to stifle the voice of conscience, to refuse to heed, until at last, conscience no longer speaks... but becomes seared as with a hot iron... and people are hardened in their sins & die without hope."

Sin tries to close, block, and even barricade
the heart's door of conscience. – JDP

Friend: think to when you have heard God speak to you (conversion &/or other burning bush moments)... that was a sign - perhaps even a miraculous sign (I think of Tom Lyons & Gideon's NICU... - miracle in message & miracle in mercy)...

Friend, hear, heed, & obey... it's that simple & straight forward. To do anything less is to BE the Israelites of John 12 (and today)...

Isaiah's quote (53:1) simply points out that the multitudes (vast, overwhelming majority) will reject Jesus as Lord (and thereby never know Him as Savior)... just like today

"If you spurn the Word, God has no other message for you."
And there will sadly come a day "when His Word will no longer
make an impression upon you."

"Each time you say 'No' to The Lord Jesus (which is an intentional sin of rebellion), your heart gets a little harder... and if you keep on saying 'No,' the heart gets harder and harder and harder - until one day God calls it a heart of stone, and you no longer care about the things of God, but rather persist in spurning His grace... and you will therefore die in your sins."

"Think about it...

'No!' and 'MY way' and 'Because I want to...' are the anthems
of the 'last days' (see 2 Thess 2:9ff)...

Are these not the dialects & declarations of our day?" - JDP

Isaiah saw BOTH the amazing adoration & worship of the seraphim's AND the amazing grace of the cross - what a mind-blowing perspective...

*** Do YOU see Jesus this way?

*** If you're saved... you should.

v.42-43: Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.

Biblical portrait of unbelief

Unbelief beguiles believing... (“believes” superficially)

Unbelief backs down from (a fear of) man vs. God...

Unbelief bathes in “religion” vs. “relationship” with Christ.

Unbelief boasts about love... BUT...

Unbelief begs-for & loves the glory that comes from man...

AND

Unbelief basically balks at the glory that comes from God.

Verse 43. *The praise of men.* The approbation of men. It does not appear that they had a living, active faith, but that they were convinced in their understanding that he was the Messiah. They had that kind of faith which is so common among men—a speculative acknowledgment that religion is true, but an acknowledgment which leads to no self-denial, which shrinks from the active duties of piety, and fears man more than God. True faith is active. It overcomes the fear of man; it prompts to self-denying duties, (see Hebrews 11...) - Barnes' N.T. Notes

"Appealing to human adoration does not help people, rather it hurts them AND their eternal condition. Nevertheless, Satan subtly woos many wayward souls into a watered down form of world-worship, where-in 'nice people' want the world to want them... because deep down inside, they still want the world." - JDP

True, biblical Christians serve an Audience of One!

Close:

Ironside Quote:

"This passage reminds us that God's Word has a softening or hardening effect upon the souls of those who hear it."

"The same sun that softens the wax... hardens the clay"
- Anonymous

Gary Burge Quote:

“People who refuse to believe will experience judgment. For these men and women "the eschatological verdict has already come. For this reason they cannot believe. For them it is too late. Paul has this same view in [2 Thessalonians 2:10-12](#) when he describes those who have aligned themselves with Satan and have refused to love the truth and be saved. *"For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness."*

VIDEO: Platt & Chan – *“Repentance”*

Quote:

“The decision to which we call people is an ultimate decision with eternal consequences. It is not an invitation to "believe" so that in the distant future we will be saved from judgment.

Judgment begins now!

Salvation begins now!

The consequences of our decision begin to work themselves upon our lives in the present. It is like a person with a curable disease. The antibiotic begins to reverse the effects of the disease at once; without it, the doom of the infection grows daily. Jesus' urgent words are therefore grounded in this sort of drastic framework.

To refuse the medicine is to succumb to the disease.

To refuse to have faith is to be swallowed by the darkness.

The implication of this section is sobering. As Jesus hid from his audiences in Jerusalem (12:36)—as God blinded those who refused the sight offered by him (12:40)—likewise, God's judgment can fall in the present on a people who reject Him.”

- NIV Application Commentary

Romans 10:9 is optimistically clear...

*“If you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord,
and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead,
you will be saved.”*

Matthew 10:33 is definitively black and white...

*“...whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him
before My Father who is in heaven.”*

Let's Pray

VIDEO: *“Declaration”*