

GOSPEL OF JOHN

Encounter Jesus – The Son of the Living God

The Final Notice

A wife opening the mail said to her husband, “The bank says that this is our last notice. Isn’t it wonderful that they’re not going to bother us anymore?” It’s never wise to ignore final notices! That’s true of bill collectors, but it’s especially true if you ignore God’s final notice. You may think that it’s wonderful that God won’t bother you anymore but as R.G. Lee entitled his classic sermon – there will be a pay day someday.

As our study in *John* continues, the public ministry of Jesus is drawing to a close. People who had been standing in the Presence of the Light of the World were refusing to open their eyes and see Jesus for who He really is – the Christ, the Son of the Living God! Ironside explains what was happening, “God’s Word has either a softening or hardening effect upon the souls of those who hear it. It has been said, that just as the same sun softens the wax and hardens the clay, so the same gospel message may soften the heart of one and bring him to repentance and to definite faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, or it may harden the heart of another and put him into that condition of soul where he will never yield or break down before God and receive Christ, but will die in his sins and be banished from the presence of God for all eternity.”

This is serious business because when a person starts to resist the Light of Christ, something begins to change within him or her; and the person eventually comes to the place where he or she cannot believe. Wiersbe describes it as a ‘judicial blindness’ that God permits to come over the eyes of people who do not take the Truth seriously. It is a serious thing to treat God’s Truth lightly since this ‘heart condition’ may cause a person to miss his or her opportunity to receive eternal life. If you are without Christ, your desire to ever seek the Lord can be quenched if your heart is hardened toward the Lord. Paul warns in *1 Thessalonians 5:19 (ESV)* ¹⁹ *Do not quench the Spirit.* We begin where we left off last week as Jesus spoke of sons of light.

Read John 12:36-41 (ESV) ³⁶ *While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.* ³⁷ *When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them.* ³⁸ *Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him,* ³⁹ *so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: “Lord, who has believed what he heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”* ⁴⁰ *Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said,* ⁴¹ *“He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them.”* ⁴¹ *Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him.*

Jesus had said in *John 8:12 (ESV)* ¹² ... *“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”* Now after Jesus warns this crowd to become sons of Light

He left. The public ministry of Jesus was over. The *Gospel of John* was the last gospel to be written and John wrote it late in his own life. By that time John had a full understanding of the earthly ministry of Jesus. John connects Jesus' final remarks to the Old Testament prophecy of Isaiah written about 700 years before Christ was born. The first connection is to *Isaiah 53*. This is same prophecy of Isaiah that the Ethiopian eunuch was reading when Philip approached him and led him to Christ (*Acts 8*) in the early days of the church.

Read Isaiah 53:1 (ESV) ¹ *Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?*

The Pharisees did not reject Christ specifically for the purpose of fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah. Isaiah's experience had been similar to that of Jesus as Isaiah preached the message given him by God, but few believed. *The arm of the LORD* was a phrase used to express the power of the Lord and here refers to the power of the Lord revealed in the life of Christ.

Traditionally, Jewish scholars apply *Isaiah 53* to the nation of Israel rather than to the coming Messiah. However, many ancient rabbis did see in Isaiah's prophecy a picture of a suffering Messiah bearing the sins of His people. In Isaiah's day, the people did not believe God's Word. During Jesus' ministry, the people rejected God's Son, the Living Word. Paul said in *Romans 10:16 (ESV)* ¹⁶ *But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?"*

John also made the connection to another passage in Isaiah.

Read Isaiah 6:9-10 (ESV) ⁹ *Isaiah 6:9-10 (ESV)* ⁹ *And he said, "Go, and say to this people: "Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive." ¹⁰ Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed."*

It is normal to wonder why God would blind people's eyes and harden their hearts. It is understandable when we keep things in context. Jesus has presented Himself to them as the Messiah and as their King. They have rejected Jesus personally. Now He rejects them! Because they would not accept Him, there came the day when they **could not** accept Him. I agree with McGee who says, "the most dangerous thing in the world is to hear the gospel and then turn your back on it. If you just go on listening and listening and do not accept it and act upon it, there comes the time when you cannot hear and you cannot see. God is God, and it is He who has the final word."

When Pharaoh repeatedly and willfully hardened his heart against God, the Lord eventually cooperated with Pharaoh and hardened his heart further. If a person persists in pursuing darkness, eventually God will confirm his desire. Be careful what you wish for.

Isaiah understood about the glory of the LORD because he had seen it. I have not seen the glory of the LORD in the same manner as Isaiah but I see a beautiful picture of what Isaiah experienced in *Isaiah 6:1-3 (ESV)* ¹ *In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up;*

and the train of his robe filled the temple.² Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.³ And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”

Keep in mind that God’s children are the vessels who contain His glory. **2 Corinthians 4:7 (ESV)**⁷ *But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. All the things we are able to do and to be find their source in Him. Give God the glory in all things. I know sometimes it is easier said than done but we can do it through the power of God within us.*

Read John 12:42-43 (ESV)⁴² *Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue;⁴³ for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.*

John did not want to leave the impression that none of the authorities believed in Jesus because that would not have been true. After the death of Christ Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea both members of the Sanhedrin revealed their loyalty to Jesus by taking Him from the cross and seeing to His burial which we will study later. People remained silent concerning Jesus because they were afraid of being put out of the synagogue. Recall how the parents of the blind man who Jesus gave sight were afraid to admit that Jesus had healed their son for fear of being put out of the synagogue. (**John 9:22**)

It is an age-old battle that continues to rage in the hearts of people still today – who are we going to serve. It reminds me of the words that Joshua spoke so long ago to the children of Israel. **Joshua 24:15 (ESV)**¹⁵ *And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”*

The glory of man does not last. You may be at the top of your game now and in all ‘your glory’ but what about later? Many people continue to make the mistake of trusting in earthly things, earthly relationships, etc. But when these things fade these people despair. Gotquestions.org says, “What we all need to realize is that God’s glory is constant, and as we journey through life we will see it manifest here and there, in this person or that forest, or in a story of love or heroism, fiction or non-fiction, or our own personal lives. But it all goes back to God in the end. And the only way to God is through His Son, Jesus Christ. We will find the very source of all beauty in Him, in heaven, if we are in Christ. Nothing will be lost to us. All those things that faded in life we will find again in Him.”

Book of Signs Ends! Book of Glory Begins!

The book of John is basically divided into two parts. The first part, **John 1:19-12:50**, is the Book of Signs and the second part the Book of Glory **John 13-20**. The next few verses we will study give the conclusion of our Lord's presentation of Himself to the world.

John does not say when or where Jesus spoke verses 44-50. As always there are different ideas. Some believe that these words are a summary of Jesus’ teachings as shared by John. Others believe these were

Jesus' last message before He hid Himself connected to what He had just spoken. Still others believe these words may have been spoken at another time when He did make a public appearance. When and where do not really matter. What Jesus said is our focus. There is nothing in this passage that Jesus has not already said before. But these are His last words to unbelieving Israel before He was crucified.

Read John 12:44-46 (ESV) ⁴⁴ *And Jesus cried out and said, "Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. ⁴⁵ And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. ⁴⁶ I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.*

The raising of His voice and crying out is intimate but bold. Those who were following Him were not bold. Jesus proclaims His unity with the Father similar to **John 10:30 (ESV)** ³⁰ *I and the Father are one.*"

Jesus then speaks in terms similar to His Light of the World proclamation. Shortly after this proclamation, He opened the eyes of the blind man. He will open the eyes of *whoever believes!* Jesus being the Light of the World is an extension of Old Testament inspiration. **Psalms 27:1 (ESV)** ¹ *The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*

Read John 12:47-48 (ESV) ⁴⁷ *If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. ⁴⁸ The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.*

Again, this is a truth that has been spoken before in John's gospel. Even though Jesus says here that He did not come to judge the world, there are other places in this gospel which imply that Jesus will pass judgment such as **John 5:22 (ESV)** ²² *The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son.* The explanation is that as long as Jesus was in this world He did not pass judgment, because His purpose in coming into the world was to save, not to condemn. On the last day He will exercise judgment.

Read John 12:49-50 (ESV) ⁴⁹ *For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. ⁵⁰ And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me."*

The Word of Jesus was the Word the Father had given Him. Rejecting Jesus' Word is rejecting God the Father's Word. The rejection of God's Word comes with consequences – that is the loss of eternal life. We will be judged by the Word of God not our own 'good works' or what we 'think' God should or should not do.

The first 12 chapters of the **Gospel of John** have given us a picture of the life of Jesus Christ including His ministry and miracles, His message, and His desire to save lost sinners. You have considered the evidence. Have you come to the conviction that Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of God, the Savior of the world?