

**Lighthouse Bible Church**

**February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

**John 12: 34 - 50      *Scripture Reading: Romans 9: 14 - 24***

**‘They Would not Believe so they Could not Believe’**

**Stand – Read – Pray**

**We left off last time with Jesus right in the middle of teaching the people an important lesson about Himself and His pending death by crucifixion. You remember that He told the people that through His death, burial and subsequent resurrection that the unbelieving world would be judged.**

**He said that as a result of His death, burial and resurrection the ruler of this world, Satan, would be defeated and no longer have the power of death. Jesus also said that as a result of My atoning sacrificial death for mankind, that He would draw those who would believe to Himself in salvation.**

**Jesus acknowledged the titles of the Messiah that the crowd shouted to Him as He approached Jerusalem. But Jesus purpose for coming as the Messiah was far different than that of what the crowd was expecting. They were expecting a Messiah that would, as the Old Testament said, bring in his everlasting kingdom and be king and ruler of Israel.**

**Jesus had another plan, another path, also set out in the Old Testament, for Himself as the proclaimed Messiah, and that was to die and die a cruel torturous death by crucifixion. That is why He said in Verse 27 ‘My soul is troubled’, because He knew what awaited Him but He would willingly do that because that was the Father’s will and through that the Father and the Son would be glorified.**

Well, this talk about the Messiah dying did not compute with some of the people in the crowd and so they ask Jesus about this seeming contradiction about who the Messiah is and why He would have to die when they were taught that He would live forever. And that is where we want to pick it up today in Verse 34.

**Verse 34:** the people answered Him ‘we have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever and how can You say ‘the Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is the Son of Man?

The people are confused about Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah, because they have heard from the law that Christ remains forever. The ‘Christ’ means anointed One and is just another term from the Messiah.

The law they are referring to is in different parts of the Old Testament and they may get their information from such passages as Isaiah 9: 7 that says of the Messiah of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end ... from that time forward, even forever. Or they may be thinking about Ezekiel 37: 25 where it says ...the Messiah will be their prince forever or Daniel 7: 13 – 14 where the Son of Man would have an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away.

And all of that is true of Jesus the Messiah but it is true of His second coming and not at His first coming. They apparently did not understand that at His first coming He would come and die as a sacrifice for sins. They should have known Daniel 9: 27 that says the Messiah shall be cut off but not for Himself. They should have known Zechariah 12: 10 that says they will look on Me whom they Pierced and what about Isaiah 52 & 53 where it says the Messiah have His appearance marred more than any man, He would be despised and rejected, He would be wounded and bruised and chastised for our sins, He would be led as a Lamb to the slaughter and would be cut off

**from the land of the living and make His grave with the wicked but with the rich at His death.**

**So the people say to Jesus how can You say the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is the Son of Man. They are saying ‘what kind of Son of Man do you think you are’? Because you don’t appear to be the One that we know of. Maybe You are not really Him; and they are saying this in somewhat of a mocking way and in their ignorance and a somewhat curious misunderstanding of what they have been taught.**

**The bottom line is; they are saying that you really cant be the Messiah if you say you are the Son of Man and you say you are going to die, because the Messiah, the Son of Man that we know, is not going to die but live forever and set up an everlasting kingdom; so who is the son of Man?**

**Do you want to know something? The Jews of that time and many of the Jews of today, as well as many other people, do not know or understand Jesus and the cross and His substitutionary death. Isn’t that what 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 1: 18 – 25 says for the message of the cross is (what) foolishness ... to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Gentiles foolishness but to those who are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.**

**What God is about to glorify in the death of His Son, the world mocks and what the world mocks God glorifies. So you have to ask yourself the question that Jesus poses to the people in Verse 43 ‘do you love the praise of men, that mock God, more than you do the praise of God, that men mock. Well, Jesus answers their question starting in Verse 35**

**Verses 35 - 36: Then Jesus said to them ‘a little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light,**

**believe in the light that you may become sons of light. These things Jesus spoke and departed and was hidden from them.**

**Jesus, in essence, appeals to them, to the nation of Israel, to the Gentile converts, to the unbelievers, one last time to believe who He is before their time of judgment comes and He, as Verse 36 says, hides Himself from them, giving them no more opportunity. But that is what we have seen all along haven't we and in many cases they, like Jesus will say in Verses 37 – 40, will not believe Him and reject Him. One writer said**

“He offered to men a spiritual Kingdom based on repentance and faith and men refused it. He substantiated all of His claims by marvelous miracles, by matchless words, by a patient intense and all-surpassing love, and still men refused. He offered to men forgiveness and love and grace and peace and praise and hope and blessing and abundant life and joy and eternal life and all other things that were possible in the goodness of God, and men still refused. They doubted Him. They denied Him. They resented Him. They hated Him. They tried to kill Him. They plotted His execution. And finally they executed Him by crucifixion.” *MacArthur John GTY*

**And so in one final appeal Jesus says to them a little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going.**

Jesus, is of course, the **light** that He is referring to, He is referring to Himself. He will say later in Verse 46 ‘I have come as a light’. He is the light that John 1 says ‘shines in the darkness’ and He says **this light will only be with you a little while longer.** Because Jesus knows that He is about to die very soon.

**Jesus likens their walking and believing in Him to someone who walks at night and doesn't know where they are going. Back then you did all of your activities and travels in the day time because when the sun went down it was difficult to see, especially outside of the cities.**

**Our Lord says, in essence, take the walk of faith and belief in Me before the light is gone and you are lost and don't know your way because you are caught in the spiritual darkness of your sin.**

**Remember back in John 8: 12 that Jesus said He was the light of the world and then He says to the unbelieving Jews in Verse 21 I am going away and you will seek Me and will die in your sins...then in Verse 24 He says again you will die in your sins for if you do not believe that I am He you will die in your sins.**

**It is the same appeal that Jesus is giving to them here and for us today because if we don't believe and receive Christ then we are also in the spiritual darkness of fear and sin and guilt and unforgiveness and it will be permanent if we die in our sin.**

**That spiritual darkness is still going on in the lives of many of the Jews today because many of them reject Jesus as the Messiah consequently they are lost in that darkness unless the light of the glorious gospel should shine on them. The very One they are still looking for is the very One who they rejected then and continue to reject today.**

**It is the same way for all peoples today. The light of Christ is offered to all to walk in and escape the darkness of sin and judgment. But there is coming a day, much like Jesus says here, that the light will be gone. Then it will be too late, it will be the removal of God's grace and the beginning of His wrath and judgment. It may be at the rapture, His second coming or your death that the spiritual darkness becomes permanent so believe in the light, the**

**light of Jesus, the gospel of salvation, that you may become sons and daughters of the light.**

**John has made it clear in John 6: 44 that no one can come to Jesus unless the Father draws Him.**

**There is coming a day when God will stop drawing and start judging. He did it in Noah's time with a sin sick world by a flood in Genesis 6: 3 He said My Spirit shall not always strive with men.**

**He did it with the nation of Israel over and over again. In Psalm 81: 11 – 12 God says My people would not heed My voice and Israel would have none of Me. So I gave them over to their own stubborn heart to walk in their own counsels.**

**That sounds much like today in Romans 1: 18 – 32 where God abandons the people to their own sinful desires because they reject Him and worship the creature rather than the Creator and God gives them over to a depraved heart and mind to do those things that are not fitting.**

**Remember what was read earlier in Hebrews 10: 26 – 31 for if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins but a certain fearful expectation of judgment and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. When someone continues to reject the offer of salvation and the light of Jesus they set themselves up for the vengeance and wrath of Almighty God. Then at the end of Verse 36 it says.**

**These things Jesus spoke and departed and was hidden from them. I don't know about you but that is a frightening verse; when Jesus hides Himself and will no longer reveal Himself to the people. The statement Jesus made in John 8: 21 is coming to pass here. He said I am going away and you will seek**

**Me and will die in your sins. Because they chose to reject Jesus as the Messiah, Savior. His grace had ended and the reason is because of what He says in Verses 37 – 41.**

**Verse 37: but although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him.**

**John tells the readers that Jesus had done enough signs and miracles that they should have believed that He is who He claimed to be and who the miracles attested Him to be but they did not believe. All that they had seen and heard about Him raising the dead, healing the sick, making the lame walk and the blind to see, controlling the wind, walking on water should have been enough: but not for a heart of unbelief. Miracles will not save a depraved heart.**

**You say, ‘why wouldn’t they believe?’ Well Jesus gives us the answer in Verses 38 – 43.**

**Verses 38 – 41: *Read***

**First of all, their unbelief was not outside of Gods plan because it was prophesied that it would happen but it would happen not only because of His divine decree but because of their willful rejection and unbelief and hard heartedness.**

**It is the paradox that we have seen before in John with the sovereign decree of God and the free will of mankind in salvation or judgment. John presents the reason they didn’t believe in Verse 38 as being God’s plan for their unbelief. They wouldn’t believe because God prophesied they wouldn’t, that’s what Verses 37 – 38 say.**

One writer said “the Jewish people through their own fault failed to receive Christ in genuine faith and when they did that, of their own choice, they were fulfilling the absolute plan of God prophesied in Isaiah.” *MacArthur GTY*

When Isaiah asked **who has believed our report?** The answer is ‘very few did’. Even though **the arm of the Lord**, His power displayed through the miracles and signs, was **revealed** to them. The nation of Israel rejected the words and works of Christ the Messiah. John, in verse 38, quotes from **Isaiah 53: 1** and the people of Jesus day and in our day, as well, are a fulfillment of that.

**You remember the account in Exodus when God sent Moses to Pharaoh to tell Him to let God’s people go? Before Moses ever went to Egypt God said to Him in Exodus 7: 3 and I will harden Pharaoh’s heart and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt.**

**In other words, God prophesied that He would harden the heart of Pharaoh even though He would show Him all the signs and wonders that He would do through Moses and Aaron.**

**Then, In Exodus 8: 32 you read something interesting; after the 4<sup>th</sup> plague of flies it says but Pharaoh hardened his own heart at this time also neither would he let the people go.**

**So then later in Exodus 9: 12 it says but the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh and he did not heed them just as the Lord had spoken to Moses.**

**God prophesied that He would harden Pharaoh’s heart, Pharaoh hardened his own heart and God then hardened his heart. Pharaoh hardened his own heart by his own choice and then God hardened it for him.**



**God prophesied that the nation of Israel would reject their Messiah in spite of all the evidence to the contrary through the strong arm of the Messiah's signs, and they chose to reject their Messiah in their hard hearted unbelief so God didn't allow them to believe.**

**Think about this in the sovereign plan and purpose of God. If Israel had not rejected Christ their Messiah then they would not have killed Him and there would have been no plan for our salvation. Not only that but if Christ did not die then the church would not have come into existence. *Life of Joseph in S.S. shows sovereign hand of God.***

**That is why verse 37 says they wouldn't believe and Verse 39 says they couldn't believe and the reason they couldn't believe is because Isaiah said so because that was God's sovereign plan.**

**As we have said before, that is a frightening place to be; willful rejection of Jesus Christ and His salvation because you love your sin more and have hardened your heart in unbelief towards His offer of grace and mercy and forgiveness; so He then does not allow you the opportunity to believe. Then Verse 40 says**

**Verse 40 - 41: He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts lest they should see with their eyes lest they should understand with their hearts and turn so that I should heal them. This Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.**

**John is again quoting Isaiah, this time in Isaiah 6: 9 – 10 where it says He, talking about God, would blind their eyes and harden their hearts so they could not believe. Hundreds of years before this happened, God prophesied that it would happen by His sovereign decree and their unbelieving hearts.**

**That is a frightening thing that still applies to us today. Anyone who hardens themselves against the truth of the gospel and the warning to repent or suffer in the pain and torment of hell forever by their rejection of Jesus may someday experience God withdrawing His grace from their life giving them over to their hardened heart of unbelief and blindness to their own sin. It is a sobering reality that those who persistently harden their hearts against God may find themselves hardened by Him.**

**Because only the power of God through the word of God and by God's Spirit can anyone see their own sin and understand their need for a Savior and turn in faith and repentance to Christ alone for their salvation. Well, look at what Verses 42 – 43 say**

**Verse 42 – 43: nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him lest they should be put out of the synagogue for they loved the praises of men more than the praises of God.**

**At first that sounds good but as we have seen before their belief in Jesus is only superficial because they do not confess Him openly as the Messiah the Christ for fear of being put out of the synagogue, like John 9: 22 said would happen to anyone who did, and because they love the praise of men more than God.**

**Some people today would rather enjoy the popularity and praise of others for a while rather than the praise and honor of God forever. It seems foolish to most of us that someone would make a choice like that but they do. We ask the question 'what would it profit if they gain the whole world but (what) lose their soul. You see James said in James 4: 4 that friendship with the world is enmity with God. But if you do believe, Jesus says this is what happens.**

**Verse 44: You can't believe in Jesus without believe in God and you can't believe in God without believing in Jesus. John 8: 18, 10: 38**

**Verse 45: You see Christ and you see the Father because they are One in the same, as we have seen before in John 10: 30, Colossians 1: 15**

**Verse 46: He has stated over and over again that He is the light of the world John 8: 12, John 9: 5, earlier in John 12: 35 – 36.**

**Verses 47 - 48: Jesus said the same thing in John 3: 17, and John 5: 24 It is the words of Christ, the words of God that save and those who do not believe are judged by that same word in their unbelief. We saw that in John 8: 37, 43, 47.**

**Verses 49 – 50: Jesus always did the Father's will and spoke only what the Father wanted Him to speak. We have seen that in John 3: 34, 4: 34, 5: 30, 6: 30, 7: 16, 8: 26 – 28.**

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**Introduction and Review:**

**Verse 34:**

**Isaiah 9: 7, Ezekiel 37: 25, Daniel 7: 13, 9: 27**

**Zechariah 12: 10, Isaiah 52 – 53**

**1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 1: 18 – 25**

**Verses 35 – 36:**

**John 8: 12, 21, 24, John 6: 44, Genesis 6: 3**

**Psalm 81: 11 – 12, Romans 1: 18 – 32**

**Hebrews 10: 26 – 31**

**Verses 37 – 41:**

**Isaiah 53: 1, Exodus 7: 3, Exodus 8: 32, 9: 12**

**Isaiah 6: 9 – 10**

**Verses 42 – 43:**

**John 9: 22, James 4: 4**

**Verses 44 – 50:**

***John 8: 12, 18, 10: 30, 38, Colossians 1: 15***

***John 9: 5, John 12: 35 – 36, John 3: 17, 5: 24***

***John 8: 37, 43, 47, John 3: 34, 4: 34, 5: 30, 6: 30***

***7: 16, 8: 26 – 28.***

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**Verses 37 – 41:**

**Isaiah 53: 1, Exodus 7: 3, Exodus 8: 32, 9: 12**

**Isaiah 6: 9 – 10**

**Verses 42 – 43:**

**John 9: 22, James 4: 4**

**Verses 44 – 50:**

***John 8: 12, 18, 10: 30, 38, Colossians 1: 15***

***John 9: 5, John 12: 35 – 36, John 3: 17, 5: 24***

***John 8: 37, 43, 47, John 3: 34, 4: 34, 5: 30, 6: 30***

***7: 16, 8: 26 – 28.***

