

Series: John

Title: While Ye Have the Light

Text: John 12: 31-43

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John 12: 31: Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. 32: And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me. 33: This he said, signifying what death he should die. 34: The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?

The Lord Jesus is the great Prophet. He preached the gospel that day. He declared, "*Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.*" He declared, "Now is the deciding point when judgment shall be settled. Now shall I put away the sin of my people and make them righteous in me. Now shall I take away all sin and guilt of my people so that the devil has nothing with which to accuse them before God and taking away all the devil's ammunition." Christ cast him out.

He declared, "*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*" He declared, "Through my death, burial resurrection, through my gospel that I send, I will quicken my people to spiritual life; I will give faith and repentance, making my people willing in the day of my power; I will draw all my redeemed to me."

"*This he said, signifying what death he should die.*" All of this he preached is the accomplishment of his death. He preached the gospel that HE IS THE GOSPEL!

Here was the answer of some. "*The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?*" When our Lord walked this earth he was gracious to receive anyone who came to him seeking mercy. He still is. Anyone who came to him ignorant, the Lord was gracious to receive them and teach them his word. He still is. Any who came to him a sinner begging mercy, needing Christ to be their righteousness, needing Christ to cleanse, the Lord received them and gave them his righteousness, and washed them and their feet. He still does. Anyone who came to Christ asking him to meet all their need, he received them and met every need. He still does.

But that was not the spirit in these people. They "*answered him.*" But he did not ask them anything. "Nay o man, who art thou that repliest against God" (Rom 9: 20). They objected, "*We have heard out of the law*"—out the scripture—"that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?" They are saying *they* knew the scriptures but *he* did not. They said, "*Who is this Son of man?*" He is the perfect Man—the last Adam—by whose obedience alone the believer is made complete and accepted of God.

But these men were not asking to be taught of him. They listened to our Lord's message with a critical ear to find a word to accuse him. They listened not to hear and bow and be saved by Christ but to justify themselves before men for rejecting him. They wanted to receive the praises of the Pharisee rulers whom they feared. They did this the entire time Christ walked among them.

Matthew 22: 15: Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in *his* talk.

Luke 20:20: And they watched *him*, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor.

Luke 11:53: And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge *him* vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things: 54: Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.

This that these people were doing that day was typified in men's rejection of David and Jeremiah. This is Christ's speaking through David. This is the enmity of the natural heart against God.

Psalm 56: 5: Every day they wrest my words: all their thoughts *are* against me for evil. 6: They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they wait for my soul.

Jeremiah 20:10: [Christ's word through Jeremiah] For I heard the defaming of many, fear on every side. Report, *say they*, and we will report it. All my familiars watched for my halting, *saying*, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him.

They exalted Moses and other dead prophets over the Word himself. They put flowers on the grave of dead preachers and rejected the very one God sent to them. But had they lived in Moses' day they would have done the same to Moses. Men just like these rejected Moses. These would have done the same. They are saying to Christ what Korah and his followers said of Moses, "You take too much on yourself; we are all holy!" (Nu 16: 3)

John 12: 35: Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. 36: While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.

Christ is the Light. (Jn 1:4) His gospel is light. He said,

John 8: 12: I am the Light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

John 9: 4: I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. 5: As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

John 12: 35: Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you.

The Lord had just declared that the time of his departure was at hand. Very soon Christ the Light would be taken from them.

John 12: 36: While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.

God had sent the Light *only* to Israel. This is the greatest privilege God can give. The greatest privilege God can give is to give the gospel of Christ. God gave this privilege to no other nation at that time.

What would you be concerned with if the Lord told you today is the last time you will hear the gospel? If he said that he is about to take the light from you what would you be your heart then?

John 12: 26...These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.

The Lord Jesus never closed the door on sinners who came to him for mercy no matter how leprous and sinful and ignorant. He always received sinners and taught them. He still does. The Lord Jesus said,

John 6:37: All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

But the Pharisee's boasted of their wisdom. They gloried in their goodness and their good works. So when Christ declared there is none righteous they objected. When Righteousness declared that he must work the works of God which no man can work, they disputed and objected and accused and refused Christ. And because they did not want Christ the Light, the Light departed and hid himself from them. Did they mourn? Did they seek him? Did they run after him?

John 12: 37: But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him:

These unregenerate religious men did not see one good thing in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is sinless. He is Wisdom. But they thought themselves wiser than Christ our Wisdom and holier than Christ our Holiness. Even worse, they called Christ a "winebibber and a gluttonous man, a friend of publicans and sinners" (Mt 11: 19; Lu 7: 34). They called him an antinomian and a blasphemer. In our text, here, they accused him of

being ignorant of the scriptures, saying, "*We have heard out of the [word] that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?*"

Men say if they saw a miracle, they would believe. No! The Lord said that men will not believe a man if a man were raised from hell to warn them. He saves through the preaching of the gospel of Light! Believe on him while you have the Light (Lu 16: 19-31).

Those born of the Light value the Light. They value Christ and the preaching of the gospel above all because Christ is our Light, our Life. God's people know what a rare and precious gift for God to send the gospel of Christ and reveal himself in our hearts! But these men had *plenty* teachers, they had their religious works. If Christ departed, it would not be a great loss to them. This, too, was typified in Jeremiah. Jeremiah preached that the light would be taken away, prophesying of Christ's day,

Jeremiah 18:18: Then said they, Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words.

Is the word of God of no effect? Is God unable to make his word irresistible? No, their rejection of Christ is what God declared in his word that Israel would do. They believed not,

John 12: 38: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?

They heard Christ preach the gospel but believed not the report. They saw Christ's power in many miracles yet believed not on him. This is what Isaiah prophesied would happen to them. It is what the Spirit of God prophesied will happen in every age—ours included—if God does not give a new heart.

John 12: 39: Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, 40: He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with *their* eyes, nor understand with *their* heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

They *would not* believe therefore Christ left them in darkness so they *could not* believe. It is the responsibility of every sinner to believe on Christ. That does not mean we have ability. If we come to the Light, God alone gets the glory. We are made willing in the day of his power. It is by the Spirit revealing Christ the Power and Wisdom of God that any sinner believes on Christ. But a sinner's inability does not negate every sinner's responsibility. When the creditor comes, tell him you do not have the ability to pay therefore you are not responsible and see how it goes. All who reject Christ, do so willingly. So there is none to blame but self. Reprobation is just because sinners receive not the Love of the Truth—Christ Jesus—that they might be saved.

The problem is two-fold.

One, they thought they were righteous and did not need Christ to be their High Priest and their Lamb. Notice,

John 12: 41: These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

By the Spirit, Isaiah said, "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord." King Uzziah was a good king. God prospered him—until his heart was lifted up in pride. Then Uzziah attempted to by-pass the priest and offer incense himself. So God made him a leper and he died. That is what these men were doing. That is the problem with every unregenerate sinner. Until God shines the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus, sinners see themselves righteous with no need of Christ. The evil deeds for which sinners will not come to the light is their religious deeds. We must be brought to confess that not only are our evil sins sin but all our righteousnesses are filthy rags. Our religion is evil. But when Christ reveals his glory—when the Light shines—there is a different spirit altogether.

Isaiah 6: 1: In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. 2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

Christ is so holy that even the sinless seraphims covered their face and their feet. God is so holy that he charges his angels with folly.

Isaiah 6: 3: And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory. 4: And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

Isaiah was crying woe to the wicked but to Isaiah the wicked were those wicked sinners. Until Isaiah saw the Lord's glory...

Isaiah 6: 5: Then said I, Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. 6: Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, *which* he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: 7: And he laid *it* upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. 8: Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here *am* I; send me. 9: And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. 10: Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. 11: Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, 12: And the LORD have removed men far away, and *there be* a great forsaking in the midst of the land. 13: But yet in it *shall be* a tenth, and *it* shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance *is* in them, when they cast *their leaves*: so the holy seed *shall be* the substance thereof.

Christ the Holy Seed is the Substance in whom all God's holy seed are made holy and righteous. The arm of the Lord, Christ Jesus, must be revealed. It is not education but revelation that sinners need.

But here is the second problem. They feared the threats of the Pharisees and sought their favor rather than fearing God and desiring the praise of God.

John 12: 42: Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: 43: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

The religion of grace is not a religion of threats. Believers are not motivated by the fear of men putting us out of the church. That is Phariseeism. It only results in sinners seeking the praise of men rather than the praise of God. May God shine his light now!

The Lord says, "*Yet a little while is the light with you....While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.*" He delights to show mercy because when we come to him ignorant then he gets the glory for being our Wisdom. When we come to Christ confessing that we are the sinner, confessing all our works filthy rags, begging mercy and forgiveness, he delights to show mercy because he gets the glory for being our Righteousness. Being drawn to Christ with a heart that confesses we are only sin, glorifies him as our Sanctification. Sinners are made Israelites indeed in whom is no guile when they are made to confess that in their flesh they are only guile. He alone gives the heart that says, "Woe is me, I am undone!" The glory for drawing us out of our darkness to his Light and keeping us separated unto him is his glory as our Sanctification. Being *set free* to believe on him alone is his glory for redeeming us from the curse of the law and from our sin-nature.

Come to Christ asking him to be All and he shall receive you and meet every need; it his glory to be All in all his people. A little while is the Light with you, believe in the Light that ye might be children of light.

Amen!