

Jesus is Rejected by the Jews

“Why Salvation Must Be By Grace Through Faith”

John 12:37-50

But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, 38 that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?"

39 Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again:

40 "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."

41 These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.

42 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; 43 for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

44 Then Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me. 45 And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me. 46 I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness. 47 And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. 48 He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him — the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. 49 For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. 50 And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak."

In John's Gospel this is the last of Christ's public discourses.

In Chapters 13-17 John records the last words of Jesus to His disciples.

Chapters 18-20 records the trial, death, burial, and resurrection of Messiah.

In this last public discourse we have the Word of God on

“Why Salvation Must Be By Grace Through Faith”

In the context of this passage Jesus has proclaimed that He is Messiah in His Triumphal Entry by fulfilling Zechariah 9:9.

The Pharisees panicked because the “world” has gone after Him. John reports that indeed the world has gone after Him as represented by “certain Greeks” who said to Philip, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.”

Jesus answered this request by declaring the absolute necessity of His death by a particular method, viz. to be “lifted up”, which means to be hung on a tree as the OT had predicted would be the way Messiah must die.

The Jews reject His statement that Messiah must die by saying that they had been taught that Christ must live forever.

While it is true in one sense that the Christ does live forever; but first He must die on a cross for the sins of His people. The Christ will be crucified and die as an atonement for sin but He will come back from the grave after three nights and three days just as promised by the OT prophet Jonah.

But why couldn't the people accept what Jesus was saying to them?

They have the light before them and He is telling them plainly to believe in the light that they might be “sons of light.”

Here is the condition of every unsaved person!

But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, 38 that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?"

39 Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again:

40 "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."

But preacher, that sounds like God has complete control over who will believe and be saved and who will remain in spiritual darkness.

What about man's free will?

Romans 9:14-21

What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! 15 For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." 16 So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. 17 For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth." 18 Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.

19 You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?" 20 But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?" 21 Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?

Jesus told the people the truth in Chapter 6:

John 6:37

All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.

John 6:43-45

43 Jesus therefore answered and said to them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. 44 No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. 45 It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.

John 6:60-65

60 Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?" 61 When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you? 62 What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before? 63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. 64 But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. 65 And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father."

(12:37) “They were not believing.” The language indicates a constant and progressive unwillingness to accept Jesus with genuine faith. Though many believed He was Messiah, they would not respond in living faith.

(12:38) Israel’s rejection was not a frustration of God’s plan. Isaiah 53 says His own people will kill Messiah. It is Jehovah who “put Him to grief” but the LORD used the wickedness of man to serve His eternal purpose.

(12:39-40) We cannot alter the meaning here. God is love. He tenderly warns. However, when people refuse the warnings from God, He hardens them until those who were not willing to repent will not be able to repent.

41 These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.

(12:41) Whose glory? Isaiah 6:1-3; the deity of Jesus Christ!

Isaiah 6:1-3

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. 2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one cried to another and said:

**"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;
The whole earth is full of His glory!"**

Isaiah saw the glory of the Lord sitting on a throne and John says he saw Jesus the Christ!

42 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; 43 for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

(12:42, 43) Believed, but were not confessing. There are different levels of belief in Jesus. Some people believe that He really did live as a real person but that was about all it amounted to. A “good” man they say but He has no demands on their life.

Others go further around the edges of Christianity. They attend worship services and live just good enough that most people consider them to be Christians. But when they are sure that no one will find them out they go ahead and continue in their favorite sin.

But what is demanded is a faith that puts Jesus before anything and anyone.

What does the Word of God say about confessing Jesus before men and the “fearful”?

Luke 12:8-9

"Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God. 9 But he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.

Revelation 21:6-8

6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. 7 He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. 8 But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

John 5:44

How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?

To put this in 21st century terms the way a person publicly confesses their commitment to Jesus Christ is in believer's baptism.

Baptism does not save and a person may be saved and not be baptized. But there is a problem when a person knows and understands what baptism is and yet refuses to submit. Are they afraid of offending someone?

The final words that Jesus spoke to the public at large (12:44-50) is a recapitulation of some of the things that Jesus has already spoken.

44 Then Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me.

Cf. John 5:24

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

45 And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me.

John 1:18

No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

John 8:19

Then they said to Him, "Where is Your Father?"

Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also."

John 10:37-38

37 If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; 38 but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him."

46 I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.

John 8:12

Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

John 9:5

As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

47 And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.

John 3:17

17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

John 5:45

45 Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you — Moses, in whom you trust.

48 He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him — the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.

John 3:18

"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

49 For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak.

John 5:30

30 I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

John 7:16

Jesus answered them and said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.

John 8:26-28

26 I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him."

27 They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father.

28 Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things.

50 And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak."

John 8:55

Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, 'I do not know Him,' I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word.

John 5:31-32

"If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true. 32 There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true.

What is the commandment of 49 & 50?

The gospel is more a command than an “invitation.” The gospel is certainly not an “invitation” to the will of man. John 1:13; 1 John 3:23

John 1:10-13

10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

1 John 3:23

23 And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.

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July 9, 2014