

## **The Gospel of John (78); The Present Judgment of God on Unbelievers**

### **Introduction:**

We are approaching the end of John's record of our Lord's public ministry. The arrest and crucifixion of Jesus were just a few days before Him. In this intervening time Jesus would devote Himself to His own disciples, particularly His apostles, who would before long carry on His work of the kingdom, after He returns to His Father and is enthroned as Lord over His kingdom.

To this point John has recorded a number of exchanges between Jesus, His disciples, and the Jewish leaders of Jerusalem. We have read of some who had believed on Jesus and of those who had rejected Him. But what was the reason for their unbelief, for their rejection of Jesus? Jesus had shown them many signs, but they refused to believe on Him. Some might wrongly conclude that the people's rejection of Jesus was indicative of a failure on the part of Jesus or His Father to win over His people. But in the verses before us the Gospel writer gave the explanation of why it was that so many of the Jewish people had refused and failed to believe on Jesus as their promised Messiah. It was due to the judgment of God that was upon the Jewish people, just as it had been foretold long before in the Old Testament Prophets. This generation was very much the same as the initial generation of Jews that God had rescued from Egypt under Moses. The entire first generation of Israelites suffered God's judgment for 40 years in the wilderness until all of them had died. Moses declared of Israel in **Deuteronomy 29:3 and 4:**

“You have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land— <sup>3</sup>the great trials which your eyes have seen, the signs, and those great wonders. <sup>4</sup>Yet the LORD has not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this very day.

What was true of that generation of Jews under Moses was true of this generation of Jews who had witnessed the ministry of Jesus. Here is **John 12:37** through **41**.

<sup>37</sup>But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, <sup>38</sup>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?”

<sup>39</sup>Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again:

<sup>40</sup>“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.”

<sup>41</sup>These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him. (John 12:37-41)

Two things are said about the unbelief of the Jews in these verses. First, John declared that the Jews *did not* believe (vs. 37f). Second, John declared that the Jews *could not* believe (vs. 39f). As we consider these verses, let us do so according to this outline:

1. The unbelief of the Jews was in order for the prophecy of Isaiah to be fulfilled. (12:37, 38)
2. The inability of the Jews to believe was due to the sovereignty of God (12:39-40)
3. John identified the occasion when Isaiah spoke these words, when he had seen the glory of God (12:41)

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## **I. The unbelief of the Jews was in order for the prophecy of Isaiah to be fulfilled. (12:37, 38)**

We read in **verses 37 and 38**,

*<sup>37</sup>But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, <sup>38</sup>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?”*

In spite of all of the miracles that Jesus had performed in the sight of the Jews, they refused to believe on Him. What our passage confirms for us is that saving faith is ultimately due to God’s work of grace in the soul. Saving faith is not the result of a sinful soul observing a great display of God’s miraculous power. **J. C. Ryle** (1816-1900) wrote of this,

We may learn... from these verses, *the desperate hardness of the human heart*. It is written of our Lord’s hearers at Jerusalem, that “though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him.”

We err greatly if we suppose that seeing wonderful things will ever convert souls. Thousands live and die in this delusion. They fancy if they saw some miraculous sight, or witnesses some supernatural exercise of Divine grace, they would lay aside their doubts, and at once become decided Christians. It is a total mistake. Nothing short of a new heart and a new nature implanted in us by the Holy Ghost, will ever make us real disciples of Christ. Without this, a miracle might rise within us a temporary excitement; but, the novelty once gone, we should find ourselves just as cold and unbelieving as the Jews.<sup>1</sup>

This statement that John gives in verse 37 speaks beyond the immediate display of unbelief on the part of the Jews. It serves to explain the pervasive unresponsiveness of the Jews throughout our Savior’s ministry. Verse 37 is a summary statement, an indictment against the Jewish people in general. Of John’s statement it was said, “That is his concluding judgment about the basic and lasting negative attitude of the people to Jesus, and that despite Jesus’ revelation of power among them.”<sup>2</sup> Or as another declared,

“The narrator provides an interpretive reflection not only of the scene at hand but also the public response to the entire ministry of Jesus (denoted by the more generic references to “them” and the focus on “all of His signs”).<sup>3</sup>

In a way the public ministry closes as it had opened in John 1. Both at the beginning and at the end of our Lord’s public ministry there is a statement regarding the unbelief of the Jews. We read of their unbelief here before us in verse 37. And we read of their unbelief in John 1:10 and 11, which reads, “He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.”

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<sup>1</sup> J. C. Ryle, **Expository Thoughts on John**, vol. 2 (The Banner of Truth Trust, 1987, orig. 1869), p. 406.

<sup>2</sup> Herman Ridderbos, **The Gospel of John; A Theological Commentary** (William B. Eerdmans, 1997), p. 443.

<sup>3</sup> Edward W. Klink, III, **John**. Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Zondervan, 2016), p. 558.

But John did not just state forthrightly the unbelief of Israel in Jesus. He declared in verse 38 that God's purpose for the Jews not believing in Jesus was so that the prophecy given by Isaiah the prophet would be fulfilled. He then quoted Isaiah 53:1, "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?"

This statement of Isaiah 53:1 is within the *Fourth Servant Song* of Isaiah, in which the prophet foretold of the rejection of Israel of its Messiah, causing Him to suffer and die. Here are the verses of that song, which was a prophecy of the coming Messiah:

<sup>13</sup>Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently;  
He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high.

<sup>14</sup>Just as many were astonished at you,  
So His visage was marred more than any man,  
And His form more than the sons of men;

<sup>15</sup>So shall He sprinkle many nations.  
Kings shall shut their mouths at Him;  
For what had not been told them they shall see,  
And what they had not heard they shall consider.

<sup>1</sup>*Who has believed our report?  
And to whom has the arm of the LORD been  
revealed?*

<sup>2</sup>For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant,  
And as a root out of dry ground.

He has no form or comeliness;  
And when we see Him,  
There is no beauty that we should desire Him.

<sup>3</sup>He is despised and rejected by men,  
A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.  
And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him;  
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

<sup>4</sup>Surely He has borne our griefs  
And carried our sorrows;  
Yet we esteemed Him stricken,  
Smitten by God, and afflicted.

<sup>5</sup>But He was wounded for our transgressions,  
He was bruised for our iniquities;  
The chastisement for our peace was upon Him,  
And by His stripes we are healed.

<sup>6</sup>All we like sheep have gone astray;  
We have turned, every one, to his own way;  
And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

<sup>7</sup>He was oppressed and He was afflicted,  
Yet He opened not His mouth;  
He was led as a lamb to the slaughter,  
And as a sheep before its shearers is silent,  
So He opened not His mouth.

<sup>8</sup>He was taken from prison and from judgment,  
And who will declare His generation?  
For He was cut off from the land of the living;  
For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.

<sup>9</sup>And they made His grave with the wicked—  
But with the rich at His death,  
Because He had done no violence,  
Nor was any deceit in His mouth.

<sup>10</sup>Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him;  
He has put Him to grief.  
When You make His soul an offering for sin,  
He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days,  
And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His  
hand.

<sup>11</sup>He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied.  
By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify  
many,  
For He shall bear their iniquities.

<sup>12</sup>Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great,  
And He shall divide the spoil with the strong,  
Because He poured out His soul unto death,  
And He was numbered with the transgressors,  
And He bore the sin of many,  
And made intercession for the transgressors.

(Isa. 52:13-53:12)

If you pay careful attention, you may see that God the Father is the one speaking of His Son in the first three verses of this song (Isa. 52:13-15). In verse 52:13 "My Servant" is the Servant of God (the Father). He declared that His Son, though experiencing terrible suffering (unto death), would nevertheless "sprinkle many nations" (52:15), even as He is "extolled" or exalted above even the kings of the earth. But beginning with 53:1, God is not speaking, but rather the prophet Isaiah complained to God that hardly anyone (among the Jews) believed his proclamation concerning the Servant of God. John picks up Isaiah's declaration of the unbelieving Jews in his day (8<sup>th</sup> c. BC), and declares that this "prophecy" was being

fulfilled in the days of Jesus' manifestation to Israel. What this indicates is that not just the generation in Isaiah's day and the generation during Jesus' earthly ministry failed to believe, but that *the entire history of Israel's response to God was one of unbelief.*

The Jews' failure to believe during Jesus' day is shown to be part of the trajectory of Jewish unbelief throughout Israel's history reaching back at least as far as to unbelief of the wilderness generation, which had witnessed God's mighty acts of power (displayed through Moses) at the exodus.<sup>4</sup>

Unbelief was characteristic of the Jews way back in the days of Moses and it was true in the days of Isaiah, and it was also true in the days of Jesus, that the people of Israel were characterized by unbelief and rebellion throughout its history. Of Isaiah it was said:

The prophet here complains to God that hardly anyone ("who?") has believed what the people (himself included) have heard and what has been revealed to them as proof of God's almighty power ("the arm of the Lord," Deut. 5:15). And, as is evident from the final clause in verse 38 ("that the word might be fulfilled"), the Evangelist intends not merely to refer to the similarity between unbelief in Isaiah's day and in Jesus' day, but rather places this unbelief in the light of God's ongoing dealings with His backsliding people in the whole history of revelation (cf. e.g., also Deut. 29:3, 4).<sup>5</sup>

Now this pronouncement of the unbelief of Israel is within the context of the Lord declaring the soon great expansion of the kingdom to the Gentile world. We have considered this in some detail the past several weeks from the episode we just completed (12:20-36). Jesus would be "lifted up", that is, "glorified" on His cross which resulted in His enthronement as King over the inaugurated Kingdom of God. The result of His enthronement was that he would "draw all people" (12:32), that is, Gentile peoples unto Him. Therefore, the Jews' unbelief and rejection of Jesus as their Messiah led to and resulted in Jesus becoming the Lord over the Gentile nations of the world.

The Apostle Paul set forth the same teaching in a different way. In Romans 11 Paul wrote of the work of God in history to expand the Kingdom of God to the Gentile world. Here is Romans 11:

I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. <sup>2</sup>God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, <sup>3</sup>"LORD, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life"? <sup>4</sup>But what does the divine response say to him? "I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." <sup>5</sup>Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. <sup>6</sup>And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.

<sup>7</sup>What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded. <sup>8</sup>Just as it is written:

"God has given them a spirit of stupor,  
Eyes that they should not see  
And ears that they should not hear,  
To this very day."

<sup>9</sup>And David says:

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<sup>4</sup> G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, eds., **Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament** (Baker Academic, 2007), p. 479.

<sup>5</sup> Ridderbos, p. 444.

“Let their table become a snare and a trap,  
A stumbling block and a recompense to them.  
<sup>10</sup>Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see,  
And bow down their back always.”

<sup>11</sup>I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. <sup>12</sup>Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness! (Rom. 11:1-12)

The rejection of Jesus by the Jews resulted in the Gentiles coming to faith in Jesus Christ. This was the essence of the worldwide expansion of the kingdom of God. God’s purpose is to redeem people from all the nations of the world.

Had the Jews accepted the gospel it is difficult to see how it could have gone out to all the nations. But when the Jews rejected it, it became a world religion. We cannot think that it took place apart from the will of God.<sup>6</sup>

## II. The inability of the Jews to believe due to the sovereignty of God (12:39-40)

But John takes the matter a step further, attributing the cause of the Jewish unbelief to the sovereignty of God.

<sup>39</sup>*Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again:*

<sup>40</sup>*“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.”*

It was the decree of God in eternity that these unbelieving Jews would remain in their unbelief. God judicially hardened them in their sin for He purposed to judge them and condemn them in their sin.

Here John says not only that it was God’s intention that the Jews should not believe in Jesus but that they could not believe because their unbelief had been foretold. It was impossible for them to believe because of the prophecy spoken by Isaiah.<sup>7</sup>

There is such a thing as God’s judicial hardening of sinners. It is not unjust for God to turn people over to their sin in order to punish them judicially for their sin. “Judicial blindness and hardness are in the word of God threatened against those who willfully persist in wickedness” (Matthew Henry).

God had revealed to Moses of His intentional hardening of Pharaoh in his sin for which He judged him when delivering Israel from bondage. In Exodus 4:21 we read, “And the LORD said to Moses, ‘When you go back to Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in your hand. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go.’”

Later we read of the Lord’s judicial hardening of the people of Canaan who were displaced by the Israelites under Joshua.

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<sup>6</sup> Leon Morris, **The Gospel According to John** (William B. Eerdmans, 1971), p. 605.

<sup>7</sup> R. C. H. Lenski, **The Interpretation of St. John’s Gospel** (Augsburg Publishing, 1942), p. 887.

Joshua made war a long time with all those kings. <sup>19</sup>There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon. All the others they took in battle. <sup>20</sup>For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that He might utterly destroy them, and that they might receive no mercy, but that He might destroy them, as the LORD had commanded Moses. (Josh. 11:18-20)

And then in the New Testament we read that this is a common manner in which He deals with wicked, unbelieving people within history. Paul wrote of God judicially blinding and hardening of people in their sin.

<sup>24</sup>Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, <sup>25</sup>who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

<sup>26</sup>For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. <sup>27</sup>Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

<sup>28</sup>And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; <sup>29</sup>being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, <sup>30</sup>backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, <sup>31</sup>undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; <sup>32</sup>who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them. (Rom. 1:24-32)

God is sovereign in His dealings with people whom He has made for His own glory. He glorifies Himself in saving His people from their sin. But He also glorifies Himself in damning sinners. Paul wrote of this in Romans 9. He reasoned against some who would object to this doctrine:

What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! <sup>15</sup>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." <sup>16</sup>So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. <sup>17</sup>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." <sup>18</sup>Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.

<sup>19</sup>You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?" <sup>20</sup>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?" <sup>21</sup>Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?

<sup>22</sup>What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, <sup>23</sup>and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, <sup>24</sup>even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? (Rom. 9:14-24)

This biblical doctrine of God's sovereign grace in His bestowing salvation or dispensing His just judgment is one that is not commonly taught, for it tends to be offensive to people. They want to hear that they are the determiners of their eternal destiny, that they have the power to gain salvation. They want to believe in a god that offers salvation to everyone indiscriminately and leaves it up to the individual to decide for himself his eternal destiny. They do not want to hear that salvation is wholly due to the sovereign will of God that He purposed in eternity and that His judgment of sinners was also determined by God to take place in His dealings with mankind in history. Even so-called religious people

find this idea objectionable. **Charles Spurgeon** (1834-1892) gave a sermon in which he declared that sovereign grace is hated by the modern religionist. He wrote:

If anything is hated bitterly, it is the out and out gospel of the grace of God, especially if that hateful word “sovereignty” is mentioned with it. Dare to say “**He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and he will have compassion on whom he will have compassion**” (Rom. 9:15), and furious critics will revile you without stint. The modern religionist not only hates the doctrine of sovereign grace, but he raves and rages at the mention of it. He would sooner hear you blaspheme than preach election by the Father, atonement by the Son, or regeneration by the Spirit. If you want to see a man worked up till the Satanic is clearly uppermost, let some of the new divines hear you preach a free grace sermon. A gospel which is after men will be welcomed by men; but it needs a divine operation upon the heart and mind to make a man willing to receive into his inmost soul this distasteful gospel of the grace of God.

My dear brethren, do not try to make it tasteful to carnal minds. Hide not the offence of the cross, lest you make it of none effect. The angles and corners of the gospel are its strength: to pare them off is to deprive it of power. Toning down is not the increase of strength, but the death of it. Why, even among the sects, you must have noticed that their distinguishing points are the horns of their power; and when these are practically omitted, the sect is effete. Learn, then, that if you take Christ out of Christianity, Christianity is dead. If you remove grace out of the gospel, the gospel is gone. If the people do not like the doctrine of grace, give them all the more of it. Whenever its enemies rail at a certain kind of gun, a wise military power will provide more of such artillery. A great general, going in before his king, stumbled over his own sword. “I see,” said the king, “your sword is in the way.” The warrior answered, “Your majesty’s enemies have often felt the same.” That our gospel offends the King’s enemies is no regret to us.<sup>8</sup>

### III. John identified the occasion when Isaiah spoke these words having seen the glory of God (12:41)

John recorded in **verse 41**, “*These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.*” This is a reference to the experience of Isaiah the prophet when he had been caught up to heaven and saw the glory of God displayed before him. Here is that passage in **Isaiah 6:8ff**:

<sup>8</sup>Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying:

“Whom shall I send,  
And who will go for Us?”

Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.”

<sup>9</sup>And He said, “Go, and tell this people:

‘Keep on hearing, but do not understand;  
Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.’

<sup>10</sup>“Make the heart of this people dull,  
And their ears heavy,  
And shut their eyes;  
Lest they see with their eyes,  
And hear with their ears,

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<sup>8</sup> Charles Spurgeon, **Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit**, 1891 (Pilgrim Publication), p. 49.

And understand with their heart,  
And return and be healed.”

We see that Isaiah 6:10 is used by John in his Gospel to describe God’s work of hardening the hearts of those who refused to believe on Jesus Christ. As **John 12:40** reads,

<sup>40</sup>“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 there is another matter of verse 41 that is quite significant. Again, John wrote, “*These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.*” The pronouns *His* and *Him* have their antecedent, Jesus Christ. What John was stating is that when Isaiah was in the throne room of God, when Isaiah said, “I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple”, he saw the preincarnate Son of God sitting on the throne of God.

Since John declared that Isaiah saw the preincarnate Son of God sitting on the throne of God, he was declaring that it was the person of Jesus Christ Himself, who was rejected of the Jews, who had blinded their eyes so that they could not “see” and hardened their hearts so that they could not understand who He was and what He was doing as the Messiah.

As our Lord’s public ministry comes to its end, we read of the Jews’ unbelief in Jesus and their rejection of Him as their Messiah. Some might conclude that our Lord’s ministry ended in failure, but they would be wrong in their conclusion. Through John’s use of the Old Testament quotations, we read that all had transpired according to the plan and purpose of God. Here is a good summary of this John’s emphasis in John’s Gospel:

What is more, Jesus’ own mission to the Jews, as narrated in the first twelve chapters in John’s Gospel, although appearing to end on a note of rejection and failure, in fact accomplishes God’s purpose: God’s glory has been revealed in and through Christ, in keeping with the Baptist’s vision (1:23; cf. Isa. 40:3; see also John 1:32), both as a result of the Son’s perfect submission and complete obedience to the Father (the Johanne “sending” theme) and through Jesus’ messianic “signs” and fulfillment of the symbolism inherent in various Jewish festivals and institutions. Both Jesus and the evangelist perceive in the Jews’ rejection of the world’s opposition and Satan’s antagonism but look to God to glorify Himself in and through, rather than apart from or in spite of, the cross.

...Thus John, by citing Isaiah 6:10, does not refer merely to that passage, but rather taps into a trajectory that spans all the way from Israel’s beginnings as a nation under Moses through the prophetic period to Jesus’ day. The people’s unbelieving response to the revelation of God mediated through Moses, Isaiah, and Jesus is part of a web of typology that links God’s people throughout salvation history and presents human resistance to divine revelation in the face of God’s provision of redemption in an escalating manner.<sup>9</sup>

Isaiah had foresaw the suffering Servant who would die in order to atone for the sins of His people. “Isaiah knew that God’s glory would be revealed through a suffering Messiah, something deemed impossible by the crowds” (John 12:34).<sup>10</sup> The suffering and death of Jesus the Messiah would be inflicted by His own (Jewish) people, for they will have refused to see and believe the report regarding Him and by Him. Nevertheless, He would be “exalted and extolled and be very high” (Isa. 52:13), being lifted upon His cross,

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<sup>9</sup> G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, eds., **Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament** (Baker Academic, 2007), p. 482.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.



even when many would be “astonished” at Him, as “His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men” (Isa. 53:14). But in His death He would “sprinkle many nations” (Isa. 53:15), that is, many Gentiles would come to embrace Him as their Lord. Israel’s rejection of our Lord in which he died on His cross, was the great paradox through which He would be enthroned and His kingdom be extended throughout the world.<sup>11</sup>

### **Conclusion:**

We might be prone to wonder and maybe even protest to God of what we see to be the common disinterest or dismissal of our gospel to an unbelieving world. We may cry out as Isaiah, “Lord, who has believed our report?” On one hand we should not think that the failure of people to believe is due to God’s failure. Many assume wrongly this to be the case. The God they believe in has the best of intentions and is trying the best He can to save everybody, but they will not let Him do so. That is a terrible understanding of who God is and how He works in His world. On the other hand we might think that the failure of people to believe, even those who are close to us, is due to our failure. We perhaps think that we had not born faithful witness as we should have done, that is the reason for their persistent unbelief. But it may be in the purposes of God to judicially blind people in their sin so that they will not hear, for they cannot hear due to their sin and because God has purposed to judge them in their intractable resistance to the truth and their dogged refusal to believe. But thankfully God is a God of great mercy and grace. He is willing and able to freely forgive all those who come unto Jesus humbly and trusting, believing in Him and submitting to Him for who He is, the crucified and risen Savior and Lord. Some of the greatest sinners have become the greatest saints through the great grace of God.

Lastly, you might be here as an unbeliever, that is, you have never placed your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ so as to impact the way you think and live. You may be somewhat fearful that you are the object of His just, judicial hardening. And that may be the case. But on the other hand, if you have concern for your soul and you want to be identified as one of His disciples, there is hope for you. Get alone with God and confess your sin and your need of Him as Your Lord and Savior. Trust Him to do for you that you are unable and, to this point, have been unwilling to do. Look to Him as the crucified savior who paid for the sins of His people. Become one of them. Confess Him before others. “Jesus is MY Lord and MY Savior.”

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“O LORD, you are our God;  
we will exalt you; we will praise your name,  
for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure.  
(Isaiah. 25:1)

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<sup>11</sup> This essential message of John’s Gospel, which shows forth the successful work of Christ through being rejected by Israel so as to be exalted as the king over the world-wide kingdom of God, repudiates the blatant error of classical dispensationalism which teaches that the Jews’ rejection of Christ resulted in the withdrawal of God’s offer of the millennial kingdom to Israel, thereby postponing the enthronement of Jesus as King until His second coming.