

The Time is Now

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James Heffington / General
Gospel of John / John 12:35–41

Introduction

1. **They did not believe** — Jesus had performed many signs before the people. So many wonderful and inexplicable things had happened. It was obvious that God was at work in Jesus.

2. **The teachings of Jesus, which accompanied His great miracles, also confirmed the presence and activity of God among the people.**

Everything about the life, teaching and ministry of Jesus gave evidence to the fact that He truly was the long awaited Messiah. Yet, one could generally say the Jewish nation as a whole, had rejected Jesus as their Messiah.

3. **The words of John 1:11 are reiterated here in chapter 12. Jesus, in spite of His life, teaching and ministry was rejected by His people.**

John 1:11 NASB95

He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.

4. **This left John and the other apostles to question why???** The evidence was strong and it seemed to them a quite obvious conclusion, Jesus is the Messiah!

5. **Their hearts must have been broken for their**

people. We certainly see this to be the case when the Apostle Paul considered the rejection of Israel in Romans 9:1-3 Paul was brokenhearted and John must have been as well.

Romans 9:1–3 NASB95

I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit,

that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart.

For I could wish that I myself were accursed, *separated* from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,

6. So John looks for his answer in the same place you and I look for our answers, the Bible. His Bible was the Old Testament so he went to the book of Isaiah.

Who Can Believe This Stuff?

1. **“Lord who has believed this report”** — In the passage quoted here from Isaiah 53 the prophet is writing of a group of people who had received a revelation from God and believed it. Upon their belief they ask the question, “who in the world would ever believe this?”

2. It was as if they had come to believe something so

wonderful, so incredible that they wondered if anyone they told would ever believe them.

3. As one commentator on the passage said, “Belief and trust are always at the heart of every person’s relationship with God, but sometimes God reveals things that are hard for people to accept.”

4. John felt the revelation of Jesus was something parallel or akin to that which the people of Isaiah’s day had received. Something wonderful, incredible and unusual had been revealed to the people of his day...The Messiah had come...and it was hard for people to accept that it was actually true.

5. Arm of the Lord — The arm of the Lord represented His power to save. We see reference to this in several places in the Old Testament. One notable place was in God’s promise to deliver the Israelites from Egypt in Exodus 6:6

Exodus 6:6 NASB95

“Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, ‘I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.

6. The arm of the Lord is a reference which brought to mind God’s saving power. Certainly the miracles and teaching of Jesus had been incredible to see...the power of God had been revealed...a power to save!

7. The arm of the Lord had been revealed to the people of John’s day. They were the ones given this

precious gift. This extraordinary revelation was entrusted to them. Jesus was their Messiah.

8. What the people had seen and heard was beyond words...was seemingly too good to be true...too incredible to believe...Yet it had been revealed to them, was true and they were meant to believe.

9. So why could they not believe? Why wouldn't they??? The problem couldn't be found in Jesus...He was the perfect message and Word of God. He had perfectly revealed Himself. So John ask the question...why???

The Why

1. John goes back to the Word of God for the answer to his question. He quotes Isaiah again, this time from chapter Isaiah 6:9-10

Isaiah 6:9-10 *ESV*

And he said, "Go, and say to this people:

“ ‘Keep on hearing, but do not understand;

keep on seeing, but do not perceive.’

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.”

2. To understand what John is saying here we have to understand what God was doing back in the day of Isaiah. God had given the people of Israel many, many opportunities to repent of their sins and get right with Him. But, they instead chose idolatry and immorality. They had rejected God again and again and again.

3. So God sent them a prophet in the person of Isaiah, Isaiah would preach God’s message to a people with hardened, unrepentant hearts...**and his preaching would never bring the people to repentance... instead it would harden their hearts even further. The preaching of Isaiah would confirm their unresponsiveness to God’s call to repentance.**

4. God was punishing the hardened people of Isaiah’s day. For the people of Isaiah’s day the time for repentance had passed and the time of judgement had come. **The opportunity for repentance was gone.**

5. John makes a clear comparison here. The people of his own day had been given their opportunity to repent and receive Jesus as their Messiah.

6. They had rejected God’s son so completely

that the message concerning Jesus would now only serve to further harden their heart. God was judging them by confirming their spiritual blindness. He would no longer call them to repentance.

7. Only God can move the heart of a person to repentance and belief in Christ for salvation. God calls every man to this opportunity but He will not call forever. The Jewish listeners of John's day had been given every opportunity but had rejected God to the point of no return.

8. God calls all people to repentance and the time of our our opportunity to do so is when He makes the call. Isaiah 55:6-7

Isaiah 55:6-7 NASB95

Seek the Lord while He may be found;

Call upon Him while He is near.

Let the wicked forsake his way

And the unrighteous man his thoughts;

And let him return to the Lord,

And He will have compassion on him,

And to our God,

For He will abundantly pardon.

9. If this scares you then be assured of this...you are not beyond the opportunity for repentance. But if you haven't repented of your sin and come to a relationship with Christ just know your days to do so are numbered. God will one day give you what you want and stop calling you to anything else.

10. **This is not simply an Old Testament principle. We see Paul speak to the same subject matter in Romans 1:28**

Romans 1:28 ESV

And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.

11. **God is a God of grace, love and mercy. He mercifully woos the heart of the sinner. He gives ample evidence of Himself and the opportunity for faith but should a person refuse and reject the Lord, He will eventually withdraw His hand and turn them over to their own choice.**

12. When this happens they no longer have the eyes to see or ears to hear. God blinds their eyes and shuts up their ears...this is to say, He is no longer opening their ears to hear or their eyes to see His revelation any longer.

13. **Illustration: Stand Up...**

80,70,60,50,40,30,20,10,0-10

14. It is a dangerous thing to say no to the Lord. It is a dangerous place to be

15. **Verses 12:35-36** — Look at the preceding verses for context here. What Jesus spoke to His hearers was true for both His day and ours as well. The light of revelation and the conviction of truth comes to a person for a time but that time will pass.

16. Once that time has passed those who rejected the truth and hardened their heart to it will become blinded by the darkness. This is where we find the people spoken of in our passage today. They had hardened their heart to Jesus to the point that they were beyond the ability to see or hear the truth about Him.

Conclusion

1. We are God's mouthpiece and one of the means by which He shares the Gospel with the lost. However it is His Spirit that calls people to salvation. Only He can convict, convince and lead one to faith. John 6:44-45

2. God takes the initiative...Without the Spirit of God no one can be saved. God must call us to Himself in order for us to have any opportunity to be saved.

John 6:44-45 NASB95

“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.

“It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught of God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me.

3. The Father brings understanding to the message of the Gospel, convicts of sin and leads a person to faith.

Human beings either hear and receive or reject the message.

4. God, in His sovereignty gives a choice and all of us make that choice. But the decision to offer that choice is not without its limits and one day that choice is gone...at some point the Father no longer calls and the heart grows hardened against Him.

5. Do you see and feel the urgency to share? Especially when it comes to children?

6. I think we often lack urgency because we somehow believe the choice to accept Christ is never rescinded. That there will be limitless opportunities or that the opportunities always exist until a person has died. But scripture never teaches this. In fact, it teaches, as we see in this passage today, something quite to the contrary.

7. We are in a battle against a clock has nothing to do with death or the rapture but everything to do with the heart of the lost and their continued rejection of Christ.

8. Adults can be saved but most won't be. Most of the lost older than 20 years of age will die in their sin and go to hell. They are not all of a reprobate mind but many are. **Everything we do to win them to Christ must be done urgently.**

9. Children — How much more should we see the urgency to share the Gospel with kids. We have to change some things...change our ideas...where we spend our money and how we see ministry. **If most**

people receive Christ before the age of 20 then our evangelistic efforts should be primarily focused on this age group.

10. Mother's Day out? Preschool? Parent's night out? We must do everything we can to regularly put ourselves in the life of children so that we might share the Gospel with them.

11. Finally...If you have not repented of your sin and been saved...today might be the last day God ever deals with you. Your repeated rejection of the Gospel has put you in grave danger. Your hardened heart may become the final state of your soul... hardened, blind and deaf to the revelation of God. Will you come and be saved today?