

Spiritual Light and Darkness

By David Harrell

Bible Text: John 12:35-50
Preached on: Sunday, February 1, 2015

In the Providence of God, we find ourselves in John's Gospel, chapter 12, where we will be examining verses 35 through 50 this morning. So if you will turn there. John 12, beginning with verse 35. Follow along as I read our text.

35 Jesus therefore said to them, "For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness may not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. 36 While you have the Light, believe in the Light, in order that you may become sons of Light." These things Jesus spoke, and He departed and hid Himself from them. 37 But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing 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 For this cause they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, 40 "He has blinded their eyes and He hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes and perceive with their heart and be converted and I heal them." 41 These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him. 42 Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; 43 for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God. 44 And Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me. 45 He who beholds Me beholds the One who sent Me. 46 I have come as Light into the world, that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness. 47 If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, 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 sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. 49 For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment what to say and what to speak. 50 I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me."

We now come to the very close of Jesus' public ministry, just a day or so before his suffering in Gethsemane, his mock trial, his torture and his sacrificial death on the cross. The light of the world is about to be extinguished in this scene, a light that had shone brightly to the Jews and the Gentiles, yet the vast majority preferred darkness rather than light as men continue to do this very day. It's appropriate to ask the question: why is that so? Why do so many people prefer darkness over light? What does God mean when he

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speaks of spiritual light and spiritual darkness and what are the consequences of making such a choice?

Well, these are the kinds of questions that affect all of our lives and these are the questions that will be answered in our text this morning. Remember by way of context, Jesus has just entered into Jerusalem presenting himself as the Messiah, King of Israel as approximately 2 million Jews shout, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" He has both cleansed and possessed the temple so as to test the Jews to determine if they will receive him on his terms, not theirs. And instead, we know that they wanted him only on their terms because after Jesus declared his upcoming death in verse 34, the Jews said, "We have heard out of the Law that the Christ is to remain forever; and how can You say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?" Then instead of answering their belligerent question directly, he basically ignored it and gave them a solemn warning and a command and in these, dear friends, we discover some profound and practical truths that can speak to each one of us if we have ears to hear.

I wish to examine these words under 3 headings. First, we will look at the contrast of spiritual light and darkness. Then second, we will examine 2 causes for Israel's rejection of the light, causes which also apply to all men. Thirdly, we will look at the consequences of choosing light over darkness. So let's take ourselves to the scene. The multitude is upset because of Jesus' declaration of his impending death. For them, such a statement was in conflict with their understanding of the law that stated that the Son of Man who they rightly considered to be the Messiah, this Son of Man will "remain forever." So at the end of verse 34 they say, "Who is this Son of Man?" In other words, "What kind of Son of Man are you talking about? Just who do you think you are?" Well, this obviously signaled their rejection of Jesus as their Messiah and now their "Hosannas!" would turn to, "Crucify him! We will not have this man reign over us!"

Declining to answer their angry question that implied that he was an imposter, Jesus says to them in verse 35, "For a little while longer the Light is among you." It's as if he's saying, "Don't focus on my death. Walk in my light while I'm still here. This is your grave responsibility." He goes on to say, "Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light."

Now, it's important for us to understand the contrast, number 1, of spiritual light and darkness. You may recall at the outset of John's Gospel in chapter 1, verse 9, Jesus was described as "the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man." Enlightens, not saves every man. Redemption only comes through faith in the Savior but

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this light is available to all men. No man will ever stand before God and say, "Well, I just didn't have enough light." Enlightened means to make visible. This is not some kind of inner illumination but an objective revelation. The true light, the Incarnate Word. The Lord Jesus Christ invaded this dark world where the prince of darkness reigns. In fact, the word of God says that his kingdom is called "the domain of darkness," therefore those who reject the light of Christ becomes Satan's unwitting followers, people ruled by "all that is in the world," 1 John 2:16: the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life.

Now, think with me for a moment about light and darkness. We know that light is the single most important source of energy and heat on the earth. Physically speaking, we know that life cannot exist without light. Folks, spiritual life cannot exist apart from spiritual light. In fact, light is the very essence of God. The word of God says that, "He dwells in unapproachable light," and God has given us the light of his Son. And this light was standing right in the midst of his chosen people. The emblem of light in Scripture is used to describe life. It's used to describe truth and holiness and happiness and even the glory of heaven while the figure of darkness is used to describe just the opposite: ignorance, error, guilt, depravity, desperation, misery, death and even the horror of hell which Jesus described as "a place of outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Earlier in his ministry during the pageantry of the feast of Tabernacles, you will recall that Jesus made a dramatic declaration recorded in John 8:12. He suddenly said, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the Light of life." In other words, the light that produces life. So the Jews knew who he was, what he was talking about. This, of course, was a claim to deity and the Jews would have instantly understood this. They knew of Isaiah's prophecy concerning the Messiah of Israel. The anointed one that God would send would be the "light to the nations," Isaiah 42:6. The one who came to earth in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy in Isaiah 9 that Matthew records in chapter 4, "The people who were sitting in darkness saw a great light and those who were sitting in the land and shadow of death, upon them a light dawned."

So, the question is: how could the Jews have possibly missed this? How could they have missed the light that was right there on earth? We know that his preaching and his teaching caused them to marvel. He performed countless miracles, public miracles. He turned water into wine. He healed the diseased and the paralyzed. He caused the blind to see. He caused the deaf to hear. He created food out of nothing and fed thousands of people. He cast out demons. He even raised the dead. So how could they have missed it? Why would they reject the light? The answer is: because they refused to see. My friends, when it comes to trusting Christ as Savior, the problem is never a lack of light. The

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greatest obstacle is always willful blindness, the natural result of human depravity. Think about it: physically speaking, no rational person would choose to live in total darkness and yet those who reject the light of Christ actually prefer spiritual darkness. Jesus said in John 3:19, "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil."

So, in the scene we have before us in verse 35, Jesus commands them to, "Walk while you have the Light," and then he gives this solemn warning, "so that darkness will not overtake you." Literally, "lest the darkness master you. Walk in the light or the darkness will master you. He who walks in the darkness," he says, "does not know where he goes." Think of all the people that you know and I know walking in the darkness of some false religion that has overtaken them. Think of the proud atheist or agnostic or even the average American that is just utterly indifferent to God. People who have no idea who God is. They really don't know what the Gospel is, don't care. Some have heard it. They remain completely indifferent to it. They don't have a clue what God is up to in the world. They have no idea where they're going to spend eternity. And like blind men, we see unbelievers fumbling their way through life, tripping over countless obstacles that bring misery and ruin into their life and into their family until eventually they fall headlong into the darkness of the grave and ultimately the darkness of an eternal hell. Solomon tells us in Proverbs 4:19, "The way of the wicked is darkness; They do not know over what they stumble."

So, Jesus commands them in verse 36, "While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light." You see, he knew that after his death on the cross it wouldn't be any easier for them to believe, especially with the light of his presence extinguished, leaving them to the spiritual perils of a dark world. But dear friends, Jesus is here alluding to another very important spiritual principle that we see all through Scripture and it is this: conscious, persistent, hard-hearted rejection of the light of Christ will result in divine abandonment. God's patience will finally run out and he will simply abandon such a man to the consequences of his sin, leaving him in the darkness that he prefers. In Psalm 81, beginning in verse 11, God expressed his grief over Israel's hard-hearted rejection of him and there we read, "My people did not listen to My voice, And Israel did not obey Me. So I gave them over to the stubbornness of their heart, To walk in their own devices."

So, Jesus' words here are far more than just an invitation, they are a solemn warning of divine judgment and what happens next is a profound illustration of that judicial warning that he has just pronounced. Notice in verse 36 at the end, "These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them." How unbelievably sad and sobering. He left them in the darkness they preferred. This explains the prevalence of indifference and

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even hostility toward the Gospel that we witness in our world today. I've witnessed this in numerous friends and family members, people who with full knowledge of the truth pertaining to their sin and this Savior, choose their sin. Like those described in Hebrews 10:26 who, "go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth." The writer says, "for them there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire that will consume the adversaries."

Paul describes this very vividly in Romans 1, in verses 28 and following. Three times he explained the wrath of divine abandonment when God judges those who suppress the truth in unrighteousness. He gives them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity. Next, he gives them over to the degrading passions of homosexuality. Then finally, he gives them over to a depraved mind. The text says, "to do those things which are not proper," and he gives a long list of the insanity of sin. We see this occurring at an escalating rate in our culture.

The other day I noticed an article, January 30, in the New York Post on the Internet. It caught my attention. Here was the headline, "Birth certificates ask parents if 'woman giving birth' is a female." I had to read it a couple of times. The article basically says that the New York City Health Department form for new parents requesting birth certificates asks the "woman giving birth" if she's a male or a female. It says on the form, "What is your date of birth? Current age? Sex?" Folks, this is beyond absurd, this is insane. Reading on, I learned a bit of the explanation. They said, "Susan Sommer, a lawyer for Lambda Legal, an advocacy group for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgender people, says, 'To be clear, it is possible for a person who has given birth to a child to identify as male.'"

You see my friends, this is what happens when man prefers darkness rather than light, God gives them over to the darkness. We see this happening at an alarming rate in the so-called Christian church today. My mind goes to 2 Timothy where Paul described phony believers as "those who will not endure sound doctrine but wanting to have their ears tickled," he says, "they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths." The grammar in the original language indicates that the turning away from the truth in the active voice means that there will be a deliberate, conscious resentment of the truth and they will turn their back on it. Then when they turn aside unto myths, it's in the passive voice which indicates that the myths will take them over without them realizing it is happening. You tell me how else can people possibly believe in the prosperity Gospel that is so prominent today? The word faith movement of Joyce Meyer and Joel Osteen and so forth, a movement that teaches folks how to manipulate the Holy Spirit to somehow make them successful and wealthy and healthy. This has turned Christianity into a

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laughingstock in the eyes of the world that sees this type of stuff as tantamount to religious world wrestling. Yet this is the defining feature of Pentecostalism and a large part of the whole charismatic movement. In fact, a recent survey found that in the United States, 46% of self-proclaimed Christians agree with the idea that God will grant material riches to all believers who have enough faith.

Dear friends, this is what happens when people turn away from the truth. My friends, I warn you as a minister of the Gospel: if you know the truth of who Christ is and yet you reject it, if you try to redefine it, if you remain just indifferent to it or worse yet hostile to it, you are walking in a cave with a candle that is about to burn out. If you reject the light of truth long enough, God will extinguish it in your life and you will perish in the darkness. So Jesus, the Light of truth, suddenly hides himself from the multitude. He withdraws himself from their presence. This reminds me of his warning in John 8:21, "I go away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come."

Well, John goes on to explain the profound significance of what Jesus just said and what he did and here we learn there were, number 2: two causes for Israel's rejection of the Light. I might add, that these causes illustrate the inscrutable mystery of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility, both of which are perfectly compatible in infinite wisdom and holiness of God. The first reason Israel rejected the Light is because they refused to see. Verse 37, "But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him." The grammar in the original indicates that this was an habitual, progressive refusal to believe in Jesus. This really illustrates the power of human depravity, doesn't it? That innate inability to conform to the moral character and desires of God. It speaks to man's rabid commitment to self-will and self-determination and the satisfaction of his lusts for which he is going to be held accountable. Think about it: the numerous miraculous signs that Jesus did which so clearly bore testimony to the exalted character of the one that performed them, all of those things were callously rejected by the Jews. Instead of believing in him based on who he said he was, they only believed in a person they wanted him to be like so many people today. Therefore, they rejected him completely when they discovered he was going to die rather than live for their temporal benefits because like most people, it's part of our sinful nature to assume that God exists for us rather than we exist for him.

This is at the heart of every unsaved person. In Ephesians 4, beginning in verse 17, Paul describes the unregenerate as those who "walk in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart." You see, for the unsaved person, no matter what they see with their eyes, they cannot perceive with their hearts apart from

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divine intervention. Apart from the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, man will always choose darkness over light. He will always choose self over Christ.

The Jews in Jesus' day responded in the same manner as their ancestors many years before. In Deuteronomy 29, beginning in verse 3, Moses lamented over this saying to them, "the great trials which your eyes have seen, those great signs and wonders. Yet to this day the LORD has not given you a heart to know, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear." In other words, in spite of the miraculous deliverance from Egypt that they had just witnessed, they were so spiritually blind that they could not understand the significance of what God had done for them and the Lord had not given them understanding in their heart because the people had not sought after it. In 2 Chronicles 7:14, we read of this thing, this very thing. There we read if "My people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land." By the way, as a footnote: this is a reference to the theocracy of Israel. It has absolutely nothing to do with the United States of America. We are not a people who are called by his name.

The conditions of Israel's national forgiveness depended upon 4 things: humility, prayer, a longing for God and repentance and sadly, these elements remained absent when their Messiah came to offer them the kingdom. And because of their rebellious attitude, God kept them in a state of blindness. He just left them there. A blindness that continues to this day and one that will not be healed until Israel's future day of salvation, all of which Paul details in Romans 9, 10 and 11. Once again, Jesus described this earlier in John 3, verses 19 and 20. "This is the judgment," he says, "that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed."

So the first reason Israel rejected the light is because they refused to see but the second reason they rejected him is because their rejection was foreseen in Scripture and was therefore an active judgment that was part of God's sovereign plan. Let me explain this. Notice verse 38, "this was," in other words their rejection, "this was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet which he spoke: 'Lord, who has believed our report?'" That is, in spite of these and other prophecies only a few would recognize the Messiah when he would appear. They even rejected our Lord's oral ministry. "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" A prophecy speaking to the fact that the nation would not recognize the mighty power of God in the person of Jesus, their Messiah.

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So verse 39, "For this reason they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, 'He has blinded their eyes and He hardened their heart, so that they would not see with their eyes and perceive with their heart, and be converted and I heal them.'" Because they rejected their Messiah, God judicially blinded the nation as a whole leaving them in the darkness of ignorance and evil, the very thing their hard hearts craved.

If we just look at verses 37 and 39, we can see in summary the twofold cause of Israel's rejection. In verse 37, John says, "they were not believing in him," which underscores their culpability. But then in verse 39, he says, "For this cause they could not believe," which underscores God's sovereignty in salvation. His sovereign judicial hardening did not negate their culpability, I want you to see that. They were not blinded against their will but because of it. D. A. Carson says, "God's judicial hardening is not presented as the capricious manipulation of an arbitrary potentate cursing morally neutral or even morally pure beings but as a holy condemnation of a guilty people who are condemned to do and be what they themselves have chosen."

My friends, there is a point in a man's life, a time God only knows when God's patience runs out; a time when he will no longer bear with a sinner's rejection of the truth, his refusal to respond to the most compelling evidences. A time when God will harden the very heart that has been hardened against him and this is what happened to Israel as a nation. John MacArthur says, "Israel's rejection of Jesus Christ was the culmination of years of rebellion, misused privileges and forsaking of divine truth. The terrible result was that when the truth came in the person of Jesus Christ, many could not believe. Thinking they could see, they were in reality spiritually blind." How sad to see the truth of the light in Christ and yet refuse it.

So God judged them so they could not see. As predicted 700 years earlier, God gave them over to their sins. Again, verse 40, "He has blinded their eyes and He hardened their heart, so that they would not see with their eyes and perceive with their heart, and be converted and I heal them." Next, John makes an amazing statement that reaches back to Isaiah 6:10. Verse 41 says, "These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him." Sometimes we come to passages like this and we just kind of breeze by them rather than asking the hard question, "Holy Spirit, why have you placed this passage before us?" Think about it: Isaiah 6 is that magnificent account of Isaiah's vision of the Lord of hosts and that John would use this text out of Isaiah 6 in this context tells us that the Lord sitting on a throne lofty and exalted with the train of his robe filling the temple that was described in Isaiah 6, the one surrounded by the seraphim who called out, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts! The whole earth is full of his glory!" That person was none other than the pre-existent Christ. What an amazing passage that bears testimony to the deity of Christ. Think about it: Isaiah was allowed to see the glory of the Lord of

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hosts seated upon his throne. This is the same Jesus that was once in a manger that was then hanging upon a cross, the one who is coming again to take us unto himself. He was allowed to see all of this, an event so terrifying that it produced within him instant repentance which resulted in immediate cleansing. Then you will recall how he volunteered to be the Lord's messenger and so God commissioned him to do that but the Lord gave him an unnerving warning. You will remember that he told Isaiah that his preaching would fall on deaf ears: that he would be ignored; that he would be ridiculed; and that he would be rejected.

So why did he go on to do that? Isn't that a fair question? How would you like to start your ministry out that way? "Lord, I'll go for you." "Great, let me tell you what's going to happen: nobody's going to listen to you. You're going to be ignored, ridiculed and rejected." Why would you do that? Why did Isaiah do it? Friends, the answer is because he had seen the majesty and the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ and that's what should motivate every one of us. You see, John's reference to Isaiah's vision of the glory of Christ in this context also makes Jesus himself the one who judicially hardened Israel. It was Jesus who blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts against him. So, in order to explain Israel's hardening was not only their fault and the means whereby God's sovereign plan was carried out, John takes us back to when Isaiah saw the glory and holiness and the transcendent majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ and I find it interesting because of what Isaiah witnessed. Isaiah did not charge God with injustice or cruelty for judicially hardening the people. He did not protest the judicial hardening that would render their ears deaf to the truth and their eyes blind to the light. Moreover, here we see the horrifying consequences of what happens when a man hardens himself against the solemn admonitions and warnings of the Lord.

Then John tells us something very fascinating, something that he probably learned from Nicodemus or maybe Joseph of Arimathea, genuine converts to Christianity. We don't know where he learned this but he tells us this in verses 42 and 43, "Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God." Now, their fear was no doubt inspired by the Sanhedrin's order that anyone confessing Jesus would be banished from the synagogue. That meant that you would be cut off completely from all of the social life and religious life of your community. Basically your life would be over. So these men concealed their convictions in an effort to protect themselves and perhaps in their mind wait for a time yet future when Jesus might prove himself powerful in some way that would make it safe for them to make their supposed allegiance public. My friends, this describes an inadequate, cowardly, spurious faith that cannot save. Any faith that does not confess Christ is not a saving faith. Jesus made this clear in Luke 12, beginning in verse 8. He

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said, "everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man will confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God." And true believers, by the power of the Holy Spirit, will have the boldness to do just this. These rulers preferred the position and power and prestige that they enjoyed over Christ. They were ruled by the fear of man rather than the fear of God. They loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God. You might say they loved the world more than God. James addressed this in James 4, he said, "You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." Such is true of many people today, perhaps you, and if so, may I remind you of Jesus' warning in Matthew 16:26. He said, "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

So Jesus hides himself from the multitude, again, a picture of the removal of the Light of the world. Thirdly, we want to understand what is said next regarding the consequences of choosing light over darkness. First of all, you must understand that verses 44 through 50 constitute a summary statement concerning the close of Jesus' public ministry and these are words that were not spoken on this occasion since Jesus had already withdrawn himself. But what John records are words from Jesus at another time in another place that underscore his total subordination to the Father which testifies to the fact that his words are those of the Father therefore if you reject him, you reject the Father. Verse 44, "And Jesus cried out and said, 'He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me. He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me. I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness.'" Everyone will include both Jew and Gentile. You see, the light of the Gospel exposes our sin and it illuminates the person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ in order that all who believe in him as Paul said, could be "delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of his beloved Son in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

Jesus goes on to say, "If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world," referring to his priority in his first coming. But then he says this in verse 48, "He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him." And what would that be? He tells us, "the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day." Dear friends, don't miss this: the same Gospel message that offers forgiveness of sins and eternal life to those that believe proclaims judgment to those who don't. The Gospel both saves and it condemns.

Jesus made it clear that the words that he proclaimed were that of his Father's. In verses 49 and 50 he says, "For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak. I know that

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His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me." What an amazing scene. Imagine what it would be like. I'm sure the disciples are standing around and you've got this multitude in the temple and suddenly, "Where's Jesus?" He's gone.

Well, as we know, despite all of the blessings given to Israel as God's chosen nation including having their Messiah come and reveal himself to them, they refused to believe in him so God hardened their hearts so they couldn't believe in him. It's fascinating because of this, Jesus declared in Matthew 23:38, "Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!" referring to the temple and Jerusalem and we know that a few years later it would be utterly destroyed by the Romans. But then he added this, "For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until..." Oh, dear friends, what a word of hope. "You shall not see Me until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'" You see, in the historical kingdom of the Old Testament, the visible presence of Jehovah, the Shekinah glory, had been manifested in the temple but because of Israel's persistent rebellion, Ezekiel describes how that it rises above the Holy of Holies and eventually leaves the temple precincts and the city and over the Mount of Olives and is gone. Now think about it, once again: the glory of God in the person of the Messianic King who had been present in the temple, leaves, withdraws himself once again. But Jesus' words again signal such a blessed hope, "I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'" These are words that clearly point to the future return of Christ when he comes to establish his millennial kingdom. They beg for relevance if they don't mean that. And that day is recorded in Isaiah 62:4 where Isaiah says, "It will no longer be said to you," referring to Israel, "'Forsaken,' Nor to your land will it any longer be said, 'Desolate'; But you will be called, 'My delight is in her,' And your land, 'Married'; For the LORD delights in you, And to Him your land will be married. For as a young man marries a virgin, So your sons will marry you; And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, So your God will rejoice over you." My friends, obviously God is not finished with the nation Israel as many would have us believe.

A few years after all of this, a man, a Pharisee, that hated Christians and killed them, saw the light on the road to Damascus. The Apostle Paul later wrote about Israel's unbelief, their judicial hardening and the hope of future restoration and blessing and he said this in Romans 11, beginning in verse 25, "For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery - so that you will not be wise in your own estimation," and here's the mystery, "that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, 'The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob. This is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.'"

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Spiritual Light and Darkness

By David Harrell

Bible Text: John 12:35-50
Preached on: Sunday, February 1, 2015

Oh dear friends, we serve a faithful, merciful God. Every person in the world today either walks in the light or in the darkness and if you live in the darkness of depravity and you walk in the ignorance of the glory of self, you will perish in the darkness of your sin. So I plead with you to come to the Light and by God's grace place your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and miracle of miracles, I can remember it in my life as a young boy and down through the years as the light becomes more and more brilliant. Isn't that the way it works? The light just becomes more and more brilliant to you, when by the light of God's grace we are given spiritual life and somehow the veil of ignorance and unbelief is lifted. Then as Jesus said to Paul at his conversion, "You will turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God and you will receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in God." What an amazing promise.

Dear Christian, I challenge you to meditate upon these truths and rejoice in them and walk in the Light.

Let's pray together.

Father, thank you so much for all that you have given to us in Christ. Lord Jesus, thank you for your saving work on our behalf. And Holy Spirit, thank you that by your power you gave us eyes to see the light of the glory of Christ in whose name we pray. Amen.

We pray you've been edified by this presentation. You've been listening to Pastor, Bible Teacher and Author, Dr. David Harrell. For more information or for other messages from Dr. Harrell, please visit the Olive Tree Christian Resources website at otcr.org.