

Do you see him

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[0 : 00] So it's John 12, verse 37 to 50. Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him, so that the words spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled.

Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, for again Isaiah said, He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them.

Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him. Nevertheless, many, even of the authorities, believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees, they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue.

For they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God. And Jesus cried out and said, Whoever believes in me, believes not in me, but in him who sent me.

And whoever sees me, sees him who sent me. I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.

[1 : 22] If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him, for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world.

The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge. The word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day, for I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment, what to say and what to speak.

And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me. Well, good morning, everyone.

My name is Dave. I'm one of the pastors here. Would you please pray with me as we come to God's word? Our Father in heaven, have mercy on each one of us.

Give us eyes to see your Son, that we might know you as you truly are. In Jesus' name I pray.

[2 : 36] Amen. Why doesn't God make himself clearer? If someone googled, is God there, and clicked on the top result, they'd read this.

Stephen Hawking's final book says there's no possibility of God in our universe. Someone looking for God will read that.

He says things like this. I think the universe was spontaneously created out of nothing, according to the laws of science. If you accept, as I do, that the laws of nature are fixed, then it doesn't take long to ask, what role is there for God?

God. This is the most publicly accepted and popular belief in the community we live in.

People live by this. If one of the greatest minds of our generation can't see God, it makes you wonder, why doesn't God make himself clearer?

[3 : 59] When I was an SRE teacher at Katara High, I won't forget this one lesson in particular. A year seven class, a 12-year-old boy challenged me.

If God is real, then he can make a bird land on that branch out the window. We're on the second story, a tree outside.

He wasn't making a philosophical point. He was challenging. He wants a sign, prove that God is there. Now, I was really torn at this point. On the one hand, I had this arrogance of a 12-year-old boy and on the other hand, the class was listening to him.

God's reputation was at stake. What do I do? I didn't want to put God to the test. Instead, I read, just the rest of the lesson, I read Mark's Gospel for as long as we got up to to show them Jesus.

At the end of the lesson, a few minutes before the bell, a bird landed on that branch. God was very gracious.

[5 : 17] Why doesn't God make himself clearer by doing things like that more often? Greater things than a bird just landing on a branch. And I think we can ask this question in our everyday experience as well.

We might often think, consciously or not, I just don't feel close to God. Is he there? Is he with me? How can I feel so alone if God really is with me?

When I go to church and hear about God, it just doesn't do much for me. I feel the same temptation to sin as last week.

I feel so weak. Surely I'd feel stronger if God was with me. I have this life-changing decision to make and it just doesn't seem like God is there helping me decide.

Why doesn't God make himself clearer? Here's the Apostle John's answer.

[6 : 29] In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God and the Word was God.

He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him and without him was not anything made that was made.

The true light which gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world and the world was made through him yet the world did not know him.

He came to say he came to his own and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him who believed in his name he gave the right to become children of God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. And we have seen his glory. Glory as of the only Son from the Father full of grace and truth.

[7 : 55] No one has ever seen God. The only God who is at the Father's side he has made him known. If you see Jesus you see God.

Like in a court case John has given his opening statement. He has spent 12 chapters laying out the evidence. In our passage today we come to a closing statement.

From chapter 13 onwards Jesus teaches those who believe in him what it will mean to follow him to the cross. And Gareth will help us through the first section of this next week.

So imagine you're a member of a jury and you're about to go off to deliberate over the evidence and then give your verdict. Is Jesus the Christ the Son of God?

Do you think he is impressive? So impressive that he is like a bright light and this rest of the world is just in darkness.

[9 : 15] so before we hear the closing statement let's remind ourselves of what we've seen so far. You've seen seven signs and you've heard Jesus accompanying words which together reveal who Jesus is.

So sign one at the wedding in Cana Jesus creates a ridiculous amount of wine just out of water. and the twelve disciples see this they see his glory and believe.

Jesus then says he's going to create a new temple in just three days where people can come close to God and know him. He says to Nicodemus unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Sign two Jesus tells the Roman centurion go your son will live. The centurion believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and his son who was sick lived.

Sign three by a pool in Jerusalem a man laid there who had been sick for 38 years. Jesus said to him get up take your bed and walk and at once the man was healed and he took up his bed and walked.

[10 : 39] He declared to the authorities truly truly I say to you whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life.

He does not come into judgment but has passed from death to life. Sign four a crowd of five thousand men followed to hear Jesus' words and out of five barley loaves and two fish he feeds every single one of them they're full they're stuffed and then they collect twelve baskets of leftovers and Jesus declares I am the bread of life I am the living bread that came down from heaven if anyone eats of this bread he will live forever.

Sign five while his disciples cross the sea in a boat about five kilometers of rowing they see Jesus walking on the sea and coming towards them and they are frightened.

Sign six a man who was born blind Jesus spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud and said to him go and wash so he went and washed and came back seeing Jesus declared I am the light of the world whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life sign seven after four days of Lazarus being dead and

wrapped in burial cloth in the tomb at the mouth of the tomb Jesus cries out in a loud voice Lazarus come out the man who died walked out Jesus said to Martha I am the resurrection and the life whoever believes in me though he die yet shall he live and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die do you believe this you've seen the signs you've heard his words what's your verdict here's the

Jewish people's verdict in verse 37 though he had done so many so great signs before them they still did not believe in him the descendants of Abraham those delivered through Moses those waiting for the promised son of David those who received the words of the prophets came to the verdict not the Christ not the son of God if Jesus is the real deal how come the Jews didn't see him as the son of God just before we explore John's answer to this question quickly notice that the Jews verdict has swung drastically and really quickly something has changed their minds just just hours earlier that had a public celebration welcoming him into

[14 : 25] Jerusalem crying out the king of Israel something has changed in those few hours world will keep it for eternal life a Christ who invites all people not just Jews all people everywhere to come to him no he's no longer impressive they didn't like what they saw so we're left with the question how come the Jews didn't see

Jesus as God and John gives two main answers to this question first through the testimony of Isaiah we can see that they were blind as God said they would be and the second answer is many Jews did believe but they remained silent because their love for this world got in the way of their any love for God so first John calls the prophet Isaiah onto the witness stand Lord who has believed what he heard from us and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed these words are from Isaiah 53 1 and are about God's chosen suffering servant who would be pierced for our transgressions so that God's people their relationship with

God would be healed the rejection of the suffering servant was always what God said would happen in fact under God's sovereign hand the rejection is the very means by which God brings about his plan to save and it shows the utter stubbornness and blindness of sinful people that they would even reject the one who suffers in their place to save them the unbelief of the Jews is exactly what God said would happen and it shouldn't be surprising Israel has always been like this when they were saved from Egypt by the ten plagues through Moses revealing the powerful saving arm of the

Lord brought to the edge of the promised land Moses says this to them in Deuteronomy 29 3-4 with your own eyes you saw those great trials those miraculous signs and great wonders but to this day the Lord has not given you a mind that understands or eyes that see or ears that hear they've always been like this people are always like this and it's a willful blindness and inability to believe you might be objecting how can people be saved if they are not able to believe it's not that God makes seeing people blind it's that he leaves people in their willful blindness and by his grace alone he chooses some to give new eyes to see no one deserves eyes to see it's our own sin that makes us blind remember

Jesus words in John 3 19 this is the judgment the light has come into the world and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil mercy he saw Jesus glory that vision in chapter 6 of God high and exalted on his throne he saw Jesus glory Isaiah 53 he saw the suffering servant he saw the glory the

[19 : 59] Jews blindness to Jesus is just as God said and so their rejection is actually even more confirmation that Jesus really is the Christ God said this would be the case their rejection is more confirmation that Jesus really is the Christ the Son of God so now John has pointed that out to you you have even more light to see what will you do with that if you see Jesus you see God the second answer on the other hand John points out that there were many Jews who did believe in Jesus even some of the authorities who knew their scriptures well we might think of

Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea who gave Jesus an honorable burial they did believe and many others as well but if they believed why didn't they say so why weren't they public about it the reason is a little chilling a little piercing to our own hearts they love the glory the praise that comes from people more than the praise that comes from God it's belonging to those with the power it's having a recognized place and position in the community that was more important than belonging to God they feared the Pharisees they didn't want to be put out of the synagogue they wanted to keep their place their identity their relationships more than they wanted to have

God's approval and his welcome his praise for following God's son I think we all know this very well don't we I think it hits each of us different ways it's not taking any step that would threaten your position in the people that you belong to I'll follow Jesus just I won't take any step that threatens my place in that people group I think we know that very well I do it's the teenager who follows Christ as long as it doesn't cost them anything with their friends at school they do whatever it takes to stay in the group it's the uni student who follows Christ as long as their place in the group is not at stake it's the worker who goes along with the gossip in the workplace for fear of their own reputation it's the person who needs constant interest from the opposite sex to feel affirmed it's the class clown it's the know-it-all it's those who have to look good all the time it's the career obsessed it's even the preacher who cares more what people think of them than what people think of

Christ not taking any step that would threaten your position in the people you belong to like usual we settle for less we settle for a fake imitation of what we're truly created for and the dangerous thing for ourselves is that it gets in the way of belonging to God and knowing his love and his rejoicing over us gets in the way of us living for him and the damaging thing to God's reputation and the damaging thing to others being able to see God through us is that like the Jews it undermines our witness to the all surpassing goodness of belonging to

Jesus of knowing the Father's love for us Jesus has promised in verse 26 if anyone serves me the father will honour him well done good and faithful servant come and share in your master's happiness praise they will be good words to hear it's not that you shouldn't seek praise at all just seek the right praise which one will you seek and this isn't a small issue it's because of everyone's lack of love for the praise that comes from God that Jesus needed to die if anyone was going to live it's not a small issue you are going to constantly be witnessing to everyone around you which one you think is more desirable which one you think is worth striving for

[25 : 58] God's reputation is at stake others seeing Christ through you so that they might have life in God is at stake your joy and salvation in seeing Christ is greater than what this world has to offer is at stake Jesus isn't exaggerating when he calls us to hate our life in this world well done good and faithful servant so we may question why God doesn't make himself clearer we see so many people who are blind to Jesus but that's as God said it would be and we see others who believe but they show by the way they live that this world is worth having more than

God and so Jesus makes a final public tender appeal look and see and receive everlasting life whoever believes in me believes not in me but in him who sent me and whoever sees me sees him who sent me for I have not spoken on my own authority but the father who sent me has given him has himself given me a commandment what to say and what to speak and I know that his commandment is eternal life what I say therefore I say as the father has told me it almost sounds like Jesus is distancing himself from his message don't look at me

I'm just saying what I've been told to say take it up with the father he's not ashamed of the message he is the message he's not ashamed of it and anyone who believes receives eternal life so what's he pointing out here Jesus entire ministry all this time he has been serving the command he received from God the father every word what to say what to speak the father himself no one else has told him what to say therefore to hear Jesus words is to hear the father to believe in Jesus is to believe in the father to reject Jesus is to reject the father to know the love of

Jesus is to know the love of the father whatever other way you think you know God it is bogus it is rubbish if you bypass Jesus therefore it's right that if you reject Jesus words it's Jesus words that will judge you on the last day how you respond to Jesus words is how you treat God these words we've been studying in John's gospel are not only evidence that point to a conclusion the words themselves reveal Jesus and because they reveal Jesus they show us the father if you see Jesus if you listen to him you see God you know God I have come into the world as light so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness you and every person is born into this world in a natural state of darkness not knowing God not wanting to know God but Jesus has come as the light to make God known he didn't come to judge he came to save you this is eternal life says Jesus that you that they know you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you sent do you see him let me finish by showing you a man who had eyes to see we pick up the story with a man born blind whom

[31 : 25] Jesus healed when he's being interrogated by the Pharisees and he knows that anyone who confesses Jesus as the Christ is going to get kicked out of the synagogue the man answered them why this is an amazing thing you do not know where he comes from and yet he opened my

eyes we know that God does not listen to sinners but if anyone is a worshipper of God and does his will God listens to him never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind if this man were not from God he could do nothing they answered him you were born in utter sin and would you teach us and they cast him out Jesus heard that they had cast him out and having found him he said do you believe in the son of man he answered and who is he sir that

I may believe in him Jesus said to him you have seen him and it is he who is speaking to you he said Lord I believe and he worshipped him he had eyes to see do you see him the light has come into the world making the invisible God known will you remain in darkness waiting for judgment because you prefer this world to knowing God or will you receive the welcome from the father because you want true life knowing Jesus as you look at Jesus as you hear his words do you see