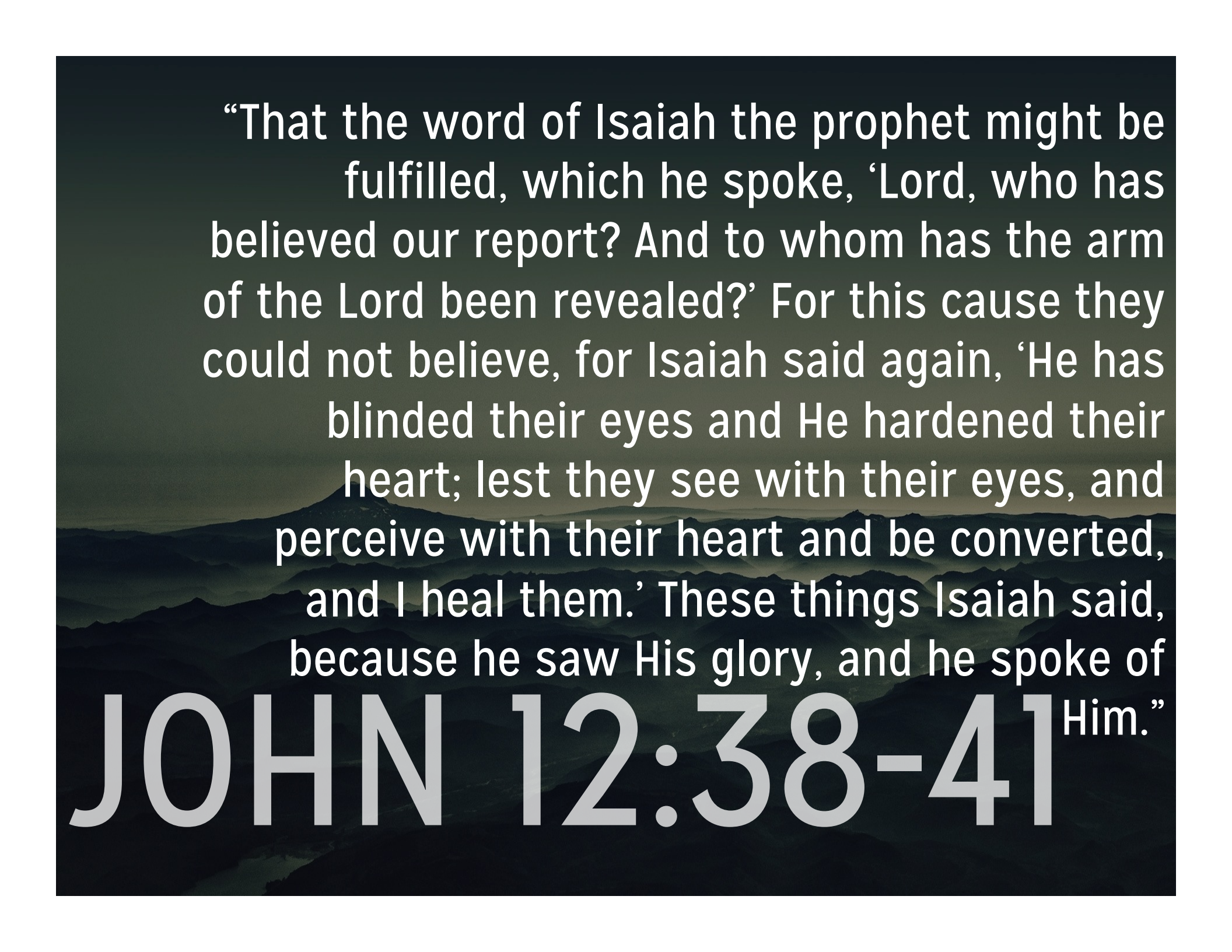


A landscape photograph of rolling mountains at dawn or dusk. The sky is a gradient of dark blue to light green, with a soft glow on the horizon. The mountains are layered, with the foreground in deep shadow and the background catching the light. The word "APPROVAL" is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image.

APPROVAL

SO MANY SIGNS

- John 12:37 - “But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him;”
- Does this statement surprise us? It probably shouldn't, since Jesus repeatedly warned His listeners to be wary of a shallow belief based only on signs (Matthew 16:1-4, Luke 16:31).
- This is the decisive moment we all face: either accept the evidence, or no evidence will ever be good enough.



“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?’ For this cause they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, ‘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.’ These things Isaiah said, because he saw His glory, and he spoke of

JOHN 12:38-41 Him.”

REVEALED

- “And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”
- Indeed, who was it who was most passionately opposed to Jesus, who kicked at the goads the hardest, who resisted Him in spite of their knowledge of the scriptures?
- This provides some background for the statement “They could not believe...”

“In their condition of heart, no amount or degree of signs could produce faith. The cause of their failing to believe is not the fact that God, through Isaiah, said thus and thus, but he simply points out the cause of their unbelief in what he said. The reason why they could not believe was not that God had decreed their unbelief and destroyed their free agency, but that, in the exercise of their free agency, they had made themselves, by the operation of God’s moral laws, incapable of belief”

Commentary On John, Lipscomb, p. 198



JOHN 3:17-21

BECAUSE OF THE PHARISEES

- John 12:42 - “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;”
- Their power over the people is not surprising. They were considered the most knowledgeable and pious of all the Jews, and used their reputation to influence others.
- John 9



FOR THEY **LOVED** THE
APPROVAL OF MEN, RATHER
THAN THE APPROVAL OF
GOD

APPLICATIONS

- Ignoring sin in your own family
- Awkwardly playing along with sin at work
- We value our reputation so much that we forget how our actions affect Jesus' reputation.
- Our lives are supposed to stand out, not blend in (Matthew 5:13-16).
- Our uniqueness makes us effective Christians (1 Peter 2:11-12).