

**[July 22, 2011 - Introductory Note:** The following was originally posted on an earlier version of the Elihu Books Chat on April 11, 2007, and then in a larger form on an earlier version of the Elihu Books Blog between April and June, 2007. Both were originally intended as parts of a multi-part response to Dr. White concerning several issues and biblical texts. The original link to the earlier Blog version of the following response to Dr. White is <http://www.elihubooks.com/BlogRead.htm?id=61>. However, since then the Elihu Books Blog hosting has changed, the above link is no longer active. Therefore, and since some others have referenced it in their online and other writings as such, I am presenting this earlier Blog article as it was originally titled, “Response to Dr. James White, Part Two: ‘He Saw His Glory, and He Spoke About Him.’” I have made some stylistic and editorial changes, but I have not changed any conclusion or any critical substance of any of my arguments. The changes made to the original version are only for the purpose of making for easier reading apart from the then-intended, multi-part Blog response to White which was to include other texts (such as Philippians 2:6-9). I have also added some reference dates (such as the dates of the referenced aomin.org Blogs written by White in association with this discussion), and I have added page headers and page numbers to make easier any citing or referencing of any part of what follows. Further, this material is based on my 2000 discussion of similar issues in my Second Edition of *Jehovah’s Witnesses Defended*, and my 2003 Tampa, Florida debate with Dr. White as you will see as you read through what follows. Finally, for more on the subject of the “glory” ‘seen’ by Isaiah according to John 12:41, please see my pending *Elihu Online Papers* 4, “The ‘Glory’ “Seen” by Isaiah According to John 12:41,” as well as the accompanying and also pending Blog article with video from my 2003 debate coming soon on “Watching the Ministry” (<http://elihubooks.blogspot.com>), the new Elihu Books Blog. Both of these pending items will further expand upon and address the issues here discussed.]

**Response to Dr. James White**  
**Part Two: “He Saw His Glory, and He Spoke About Him”**

by

Greg Stafford  
(April-June, 2007)

The issue here in Part Two of my response to Dr. James White’s recent Blog series regarding our 2003 debate and related discussions has to do with the apostle John’s reference to Isaiah ‘seeing’ the “glory” of and then ‘speaking about’ Jesus of Nazareth (John 12:41). Since John refers to both Isaiah 6 and Isaiah 53 in the immediately preceding verses, do either of these sections of Scripture contain a reference to Isaiah ‘seeing Jesus’ glory’ and his ‘speaking about him,’ as reported by John? Further, does John 12 elsewhere contain any information that might help us answer the question one way or another? Finally, in what ways might one biblically see in Jehovah’s “glory” the “glory” of Jesus Christ?

## Response to Dr. James White

First consider the texts, then the arguments for each side, followed by a consideration of our published discussions on this subject, and finally a review of what Dr. White and I said about this issue in our 2003 debate.

### The Texts

I here present the texts that are at the center of this discussion, with underlining and bracketed comments added to help keep some of the accounts' particulars clearly in mind. I am also adding bold brackets with numbers next to each underlined portion of the texts which will correspond to my comments below the quoted section. This means that each underlined section to the right of each bold, bracketed number is corresponding to the same number relative to my comments below each section. In the longer selections of Scripture I have also left in the verse and chapter numbers, which numbers are not in brackets.

My comments below each quoted text with respect to the bracketed, numbered section of the text that is underlined are meant to provide as much factual, potentially relevant information about the Hebrew, Greek, or English text as possible, which will then serve as the basis for the later discussion of the arguments presented by myself and by Dr. White concerning these texts:

#### *Isaiah 6:1-13 (NWT):*

In the year that King Uz·zi'ah died [1] I, however, got to see Jehovah, sitting on a throne lofty and lifted up, and his skirts were filling the temple. <sup>2</sup> Seraphs were standing above him. Each one had six wings. With two he kept his face covered, and with two he kept his feet covered, and with two he would fly about. <sup>3</sup> [2] And this one [one of the Seraphs] called to that one [another of the Seraphs] and said: "Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of armies. The fullness of all the earth is his glory." <sup>4</sup> And the pivots of the thresholds began to quiver at the voice of the one calling, and the house itself gradually filled with smoke. <sup>5</sup> And I proceeded to say: "Woe to me! For I am as good as brought to silence, because a man unclean in lips I am, and in among a people unclean in lips I am dwelling; for [3] my eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of armies, himself!" <sup>6</sup> At that, one of the seraphs flew to me, and in his hand there was a glowing coal that he had taken with tongs off the altar. <sup>7</sup> And he proceeded to touch my mouth and to say: "Look! This has touched your lips, and [4] your error has departed and your sin itself is atoned for." <sup>8</sup> And I began to hear the voice of Jehovah saying: "Whom shall I send, and [5] who will go for us?" And I proceeded to say: "Here I am! Send me." <sup>9</sup> And he went on to say: "Go, and you must say to this people, 'Hear again and again, O men, but do not understand; and see again and again, but do not get any knowledge.'<sup>10</sup> Make the heart of this people unreceptive, and make their very ears unresponsive, and paste their very eyes together, that they may not see with their eyes and with their ears they may not hear, and that their own heart may not understand and that they may not actually turn back and get healing for themselves." <sup>11</sup> At this I said: "How long, O Jehovah?" Then he said: "Until the cities actually crash in ruins, to be without an inhabitant, and the houses be without earthling man, and the ground itself is ruined into a desolation; <sup>12</sup> and

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Jehovah actually removes earthling men far away, and the deserted condition does become very extensive in the midst of the land. <sup>13</sup> And there will still be in it a tenth, and it must again become something for burning down, like a big tree and like a massive tree in which, when there is a cutting down [of them], there is a stump; [6] a holy seed will be the stump of it.”

[1]: Isaiah ‘sees’ Jehovah on his throne “lofty and lifted up.” Nowhere in this verse do the words, “I saw his glory” appear. Nowhere in this verse is it stated explicitly that “glory” is the object of the verb “see.” In the Greek translation (LXX) of the Hebrew text represented by the NWT above, where the Hebrew text has “and his skirts were filling the temple,” we read “and the house was full of his glory” (*kai pleres ho oikos tes doxes autou*). But, again, the words “I saw his glory” do not appear. It can easily be argued that Isaiah did see the “glory of him” that he describes as ‘filling the house,’ but the actual expression “I saw his glory” does not appear in either the Hebrew or in the Greek text of Isaiah 6:1 (the translations of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotian translate the Hebrew text more literally here, *kai ta pros podon autou* [lit., “and the toward his feet,” which I take as idiomatic for “skirts”] *epleroun ton naon* [“were filling the temple”]).

[2]: This is the only time that “glory” is explicitly mentioned in the Hebrew text, namely, where it is spoken of by the Seraphs in relation to “fullness of the earth” being Jehovah’s “glory.” The LXX corresponds to the Hebrew text in this reference.

[3]: Here is another instance of the verb “see,” but where “glory” or “his glory” is not its explicitly named object.

[4]: The temporary ‘atonement’ of Isaiah’s sins here may picture the atonement that the Christ would provide for all. The Greek translation is consistent in presenting these events.

[5]: The Hebrew text uses the first person singular in reference to Jehovah’s speech (“Whom shall I send?”), but the plural in relation to the those for whom or on behalf of whom Jehovah will send someone (“Who will go for us?”). This could include Jehovah, the seraphs, and anyone else who may have been in the vision, including the “reflection of [God’s] glory and the exact representation of his very being,” namely, the heavenly person of Jesus of Nazareth (Hebrews 1:3), one who is said to have had ‘glory alongside’ the Father before he came to the earth (John 17:5). The Greek LXX translation, however, uses a different expression in the second instance of Jehovah’s speech in verse 8 (*tis poreusetai pros ton laon touton*) “Who will go to this people?”

[6]: Here we have a reference, a prophetic promise, concerning the Messiah who would become “a holy seed.” The LXX expresses this reference a bit differently, referring to that which will be left over in the land as “an acorn when it falls out of a husk.” Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotian are more in line with the Hebrew text in speaking of “a holy seed” or a “seed that is being made holy.”

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### *Isaiah 52:9-10, 13-53:2 (NWT):*

Become cheerful, cry out joyfully in unison, YOU devastated places of Jerusalem, for Jehovah has comforted his people; he has repurchased Jerusalem. <sup>10</sup> Jehovah [7] has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth must see the salvation of our God. . . . <sup>13</sup> [8] Look! My servant will act with insight. He will be in high station and will certainly be elevated and exalted very much. <sup>14</sup> To the extent that many have stared at him in amazement—so much was the disfigurement as respects his appearance more than that of any other man and as respects his stately form more than that of the sons of mankind [9] [LXX: and your glory (Greek: *he doxa sou* [!]) will not be honored among the sons of men—<sup>15</sup> he will likewise startle many nations. At him kings will shut their mouth, because what had not been recounted to them they will actually see, and to what they had not heard they must turn their consideration. **53** [10] Who has put faith in the thing heard by us? And as for the arm of Jehovah, to whom has it been revealed? <sup>2</sup> And he will come up like a twig before one, and like a root out of waterless land. No stately form does he have, nor any splendor; and when we shall see him, there is not the appearance so that we should desire him.

[7]: Reference is made to Jehovah’s “holy arm” being ‘bared before all the nations’ and the ‘ends of the earth seeing the salvation by him.’ The LXX agrees with the Hebrew text.

[8]: Jehovah uses a demonstrative particle “Look!” or “Behold!” (Hebrew: *hineh*) pointing to his “servant” who will be “elevated and exalted very much,” which translates three different Hebrew words (*rum* [“lift up,” or “be exalted”], *nasa* [“lift up,” or “be exalted”], and *gavah* [“be high,” or “exalted”]). The LXX translates the underlined portions of 52:13 as “Look! My servant ... will be lifted up [Greek: *hypsothesetai*] and glorified extremely [*doxasthesetai sphodra*].” *Sphodra* is a Greek adverb meaning “extremely” or “greatly,” and here it modifies the Greek verb *doxazo*, which in reference to the Messiah or Christ means to “glorify.” Isaiah then proceeds to ‘see’ this ‘extreme glory’ in the manner in which the Christ would appear and the affect he would have on “many nations.” John uses the same verb, “‘lifted up” or “exalted” (*hypso’o*) in John 12:32 that is used here in Isaiah 52:13 (LXX), both in reference to the humanity and death of the Christ. Additionally, the ‘glorification’ of the Messiah described here in Isaiah 52:13 is similar to the “glory” that the author of Hebrews sees in Christ’s humanity, suffering, and death as a man:

### **Hebrews 2:6-9 (NWT)**

But a certain witness has given proof somewhere, saying: “What is man that you keep him in mind, or [the] son of man that you take care of him? You made him a little lower than angels; with glory and honor you crowned him, and appointed him over the works of your hands. All things you subjected under his feet.” For in that he subjected all things to him [God] left nothing that is not subject to him. Now, though, we do not yet see all things in subjection to him; but we behold Jesus, who has been made a little lower than angels, crowned with glory and honor for having suffered death, that he by God’s undeserved kindness might taste death for every [man].

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[9]: I noticed something in preparing this response to Dr. White that I did not notice before, and which White has, of course, never mentioned himself: The “glory” (*doxa*) of the Christ, not just the ‘extreme glorification’ (*doxazo* modified by *sphodra*), is explicitly mentioned by Isaiah in its substantive form in the LXX of Isaiah 52:14! Though the ‘extreme glorification’ seen by Isaiah in 52:13 naturally entails ‘seeing the glory of the Messiah,’ which Isaiah then explicitly describes in terms similar to Hebrews 2:6-9, the use of the substantive *doxa* in 52:14 directly refutes Dr. White’s assertion (see below) that there is some difference between the verbal and substantive forms. Further, as we will also see below, the use of *doxa* here for the Christ’s “glory” that would not be “honored among men” fits perfectly with John’s use of Isaiah 6:10 in reference to those who rejected Jesus. But the “glory” that Isaiah ‘saw’ is in Isaiah 52:13 *and* Isaiah 52:14, and it is here, from Isaiah 52:10 through to the end of Isaiah 53, that he also, clearly, ‘speaks about him.’

[10]: As in Isaiah 52:10, Jehovah’s “arm” is again referenced in connection with salvation, this time as the object of people’s faith. Those who ‘see’ this “arm” do so through the “glory” of the form described in 53:2 in just the same lowly, yet “glorious” (52:13) manner as 52:14, which is consistent with the “glory” of the one ‘made a little lower than angels’ who in such a form “suffered death.” Indeed, it is this very text, Isaiah 53:1, that John quotes in John 12:38 in reference to the things Isaiah ‘said’ after ‘seeing’ the “glory” of the Christ! This “glory” is not only described as ‘extreme’ in Isaiah 52:13 and described throughout Isaiah 52:10-53:2, but it is ‘spoken about in the entire 53rd Chapter of Isaiah after Isaiah “saw his glory,” which I here quote starting with verse 3 to complete and to compliment my earlier citation of Isaiah 52:9-10, 13-53:2:

### **Isaiah 53:3-12 (NWT)**

He was despised and was avoided by men, a man meant for pains and for having acquaintance with sickness. And there was as if the concealing of one’s face from us. He was despised, and we held him as of no account. <sup>4</sup> Truly our sicknesses were what he himself carried; and as for our pains, he bore them. But we ourselves accounted him as plagued, stricken by God and afflicted. <sup>5</sup> But he was being pierced for our transgression; he was being crushed for our errors. The chastisement meant for our peace was upon him, and because of his wounds there has been a healing for us. <sup>6</sup> Like sheep we have all of us wandered about; it was each one to his own way that we have turned; and Jehovah himself has caused the error of us all to meet up with that one. <sup>7</sup> He was hard pressed, and he was letting himself be afflicted; yet he would not open his mouth. He was being brought just like a sheep to the slaughtering; and like a ewe that before her shearers has become mute, he also would not open his mouth. <sup>8</sup> Because of restraint and of judgment he was taken away; and who will concern himself even with [the details of] his generation? For he was severed from the land of the living ones. Because of the transgression of my people he had the stroke. <sup>9</sup> And he will make his burial place even with the wicked ones, and with the rich class in his death, despite the fact that he had done no violence and there was no deception in his mouth. <sup>10</sup> But Jehovah himself took delight in crushing him; he made him sick. If you will set his soul as a guilt offering, he will see his offspring, he will prolong [his] days, and in his hand what is the delight of Jehovah will succeed. <sup>11</sup> Because of the trouble of his soul he will see, he will be

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satisfied. By means of his knowledge the righteous one, my servant, will bring a righteous standing to many people; and their errors he himself will bear. <sup>12</sup> For that reason I shall deal him a portion among the many, and it will be with the mighty ones that he will apportion the spoil, due to the fact that he poured out his soul to the very death, and it was with the transgressors that he was counted in; and he himself carried the very sin of many people, and for the transgressors he proceeded to interpose.

Again, there is no question that in the above and in the previously quoted sections of Isaiah 52/53 that Isaiah here ‘sees his glory and speaks about him.’

### ***John 12:16, 23, 32-41 (NWT):***

<sup>16</sup> These things his disciples took no note of at first, but **[11]** when Jesus became glorified [edoxasthe], then they called to mind that these things were written respecting him and that they did these things to him ... <sup>23</sup> Jesus answered them, saying: **[12]** “The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified [doxasthei] ... <sup>32</sup> I, if I am lifted up [hypsotho] from the earth, will draw men of all sorts to me.” <sup>33</sup> This he was really saying to signify what sort of death he was about to die. <sup>34</sup> Therefore the crowd answered him: “We heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever; and how is it you say that the Son of man must be lifted up [hypsothenai]? Who is this Son of man?” <sup>35</sup> Jesus therefore said to them: “The light will be among YOU a little while longer. Walk while YOU have the light, so that darkness does not overpower YOU; and he that walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. <sup>36</sup> While YOU have the light, exercise faith in the light, in order to become sons of light.” Jesus spoke these things and went off and hid from them. <sup>37</sup> **[13]** But although he had performed so many signs before them, they were not putting faith in him, <sup>38</sup> so that the word of Isaiah the prophet was fulfilled which he said: “Jehovah, who has put faith in the thing heard by us? And as for the arm of Jehovah, to whom has it been revealed?” <sup>39</sup> **[14]** The reason why they were not able to believe is that again Isaiah said: <sup>40</sup> “He has blinded their eyes and he has made their hearts hard, that they should not see with their eyes and get the thought with their hearts and turn around and I should heal them.” <sup>41</sup> **[15]** Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory [eiden ten doxan autou], and he spoke about him.

**[11]:** Early on in Chapter 12 John references the glorification of the Christ, through his death and resurrection. In fact, in his Gospel account John uses forms of the Greek words for “glory” (1:14 [twice]; 2:11; 5:41, 44 [twice]; 7:18 [twice]; 8:50, 54; 9:24; 11:4, 40; 12:41, 43 [twice]; 17:5, 22, 24) and “glorify” (7:39; 8:54 [twice]; 11:4; 12:16, 23, 28 [three times]; 13:31 [twice], 32 [three times]; 14:13; 15:8; 16:14; 17:1 [twice], 4, 5, 10; 21:19) nineteen (19) and twenty-three (23) times, respectively, more than any of the other Gospel writers.

**[12]:** Jesus refers to his upcoming death as “the hour” for him to be “glorified” and “lifted up,” using exactly the same verbs (*doxazo* and *hypso’o*) found in the LXX of Isaiah 52:13. The crowd also understands his words in this way, as they are confused about why he speaks of being “glorified” and “lifted up” or “exalted” in death, when they think that “the Christ remains forever.”

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[13]: John recounts how in spite of the signs Jesus performed the crowd was “not putting faith in him.” John further notes that the fact that they did not put faith in the Christ fulfills Isaiah 53:1, which he then quotes, concerning those to whom “the arm of Jehovah” has or has not ‘been revealed.’

[14]: John then gives the reason why the crowd did not ‘put faith in the arm of Jehovah,’ namely, according to what was stated to Isaiah when he first received his commission from Jehovah (Isaiah 6:8) concerning the people of Israel, as referenced by John: “He has blinded their eyes and he has made their hearts hard, that they should not see with their eyes and get the thought with their hearts and turn around and I should heal them” (John quoting Isaiah 6:10).

[15]: John explicitly states that “these things” (Greek: *tauta*) were said by Isaiah “because he saw his glory and spoke about him.” Again, the reference in John corresponding to my [14] above is where Isaiah speaks about ‘them,’ the crowd that did not believe in ‘him.’ It is the portion of John corresponding to my [13] where Isaiah speaks “about him,” namely, the “arm of Jehovah” in whom the crowd did not put faith (compare the use of *pistueo* [“believe”] in John 12:36, 37, and 38, with the use of the same verb in Isaiah 53:1 LXX, relative to the Messiah). The words in Isaiah 6:10, which John quotes to explain “why they were not able to believe” (John 12:39) were spoken not by Isaiah, but by Jehovah to Isaiah, regarding the people to whom he was being sent, which words Isaiah then recorded and therefore in one sense “said.” But Isaiah also recorded and spoke the words of Isaiah 52:13 and, indeed, from Isaiah 52:9 through to the end of Chapter 53, not only because Jehovah spoke them first, but because Isaiah “saw his glory and spoke about him” after seeing his “glory,” which “glory” is explicitly referenced verbally (Isaiah 52:13 [LXX]) and substantively (Isaiah 52:14 [LXX]), and described in detail from at least Isaiah 52:9 through to the end of Chapter 53.

### The Arguments

I have already provided some of my arguments and alluded to several of Dr. White’s arguments in presenting the relevant texts. Now let me put things in clearer perspective so that both positions are better understood as we proceed. Then, after making clear the positions of both sides, I will interact with the specifics of these arguments as they have been used in our published writings on the subject and as they were presented and discussed during our 2003 Tampa, Florida debate.

**Dr. White:** As we will see below in my review of Dr. White’s *The Forgotten Trinity* and in the transcription of our 2003 debate, White believes that in John 12:41 when John said, “Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory, and he spoke about him,” John meant the “glory” of Jehovah that the LXX speaks of in Isaiah 6:1 (“the house was full of his glory”), and Dr. White believes that this looking back of John to the “glory” seen by Isaiah as recorded in the LXX of Isaiah 6:1 is an ‘identification of Jesus as Yahweh.’— See “A Test for Your Listening Skills -- Part II,” [aomin.org](http://aomin.org) Blog for April 11, 2007.

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Dr. White absolutely denies that the “glory” Isaiah ‘saw’ and where Isaiah then “spoke about him,” as John records it, is not the “glory” seen by Isaiah in Isaiah 52 or in Isaiah 53. The place where Isaiah ‘spoke about him [Jesus]’ after ‘seeing his glory’ in Isaiah 6:1 is, according to Dr. White, “in the Temple, surrounded by the angels [in Isaiah 6], for his point is that Jesus is Yahweh!” (see James White, “A Test for Your Listening Skills -- Part II,” aomin.org Blog for April 11, 2007). Finally, White believes my “interpretation is completely disconnected from John's purposes in his Gospel” since, according to White, “What connects the citation of Isaiah 53:1 with Isaiah 6:10 is not a discussion of glory, but a discussion of judgment” and this “is the theme that connects the two citations” (James White, “Greg Stafford Attempts to Reply,” aomin.org Blog also for April 11, 2007).

Of course, in identifying Jesus as “Yahweh” White does not mean Jesus is the Trinity, though according to White the one God is Yahweh, who is the Trinity:

**Monotheism. One God, Yahweh. No other gods besides me. These are basic fundamental truths confessed by Jews and Christians alike** [James White, *The Forgotten Trinity*, page 35].

In this light, Dr. White understands the subject ‘identification’ according to the post-biblical articulation of the doctrine of the Trinity, which holds that such an identification is possible without at the same time identifying Jesus as the Trinity since the Trinity is said to be three “persons” (not to be confused with three individual *beings* with the same or with similar though distinct or separate natures), one of which “persons” is Jesus. This means that, as with each and every other time when Dr. White utters or uses the word “God” or the name “Yahweh,” White must first assume Trinitarianism in understanding Jesus as “Yahweh,” including in his interpretation of John 12:41/Isaiah 6.

Here, however, our concern is not over White’s reading back into the texts of John or Isaiah such post-biblical articulations and distinctions for “persons,” *beings*, or the words for “God,” but with whether White is correct in claiming that John meant the “glory” of the LXX of Isaiah 6:1 rather than the “glory” or ‘glorifying’ of the Messiah in Isaiah 52 and 53 (LXX), and also with whether Isaiah then proceeded to ‘speak about him’ (= Jesus) in Isaiah 6:1 or in Isaiah 52/53.

**Stafford:** It is my contention that the “glory” seen by Isaiah as referenced by John in John 12:41 is not the “glory” of Jehovah that ‘filled the house’ according to the LXX of Isaiah 6:1, but that Isaiah saw the future “glory” of the Messiah through his being ‘lifted up’ and ‘glorified’ (Isaiah 52:12 [LXX]) by his death in ransom for “the very sin of many people” (Isaiah 53:12), which redemption Isaiah experienced temporarily in Isaiah 6:6-7, but the “glory” of which he saw in a complete sense from Isaiah 52:10 through to and including Isaiah 53:12, which he also then there “spoke about.”

I contend that there is no place in Isaiah 6 where Isaiah “saw his glory and spoke about him,” that is, about Jesus’ heavenly “glory,” but that in Isaiah 6:1 and following it is Jehovah’s glory which Isaiah saw in heavenly vision. Thereafter, Isaiah was commanded

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by Jehovah to speak to the nation of Israel a message that ultimately involved Isaiah ‘seeing the glory of the Messiah, and speaking about him’ as a result of what he saw in Isaiah 52:9-53:12.

I further contend that in John 12:38 John quotes Isaiah 53:1 for just this reason, namely, to show that Isaiah “spoke about him” (Jesus) because Isaiah saw his “glory,” which “glory,” again, Isaiah described in detail from Isaiah 52:9/10 through the end of Isaiah Chapter 53. John, in John 12:40, quotes Isaiah 6:10 to explain “why [the crowd before Jesus was] not able to believe” (John 12:39). The “glory” that Isaiah ‘saw’ and then ‘spoke about’ is referenced by Isaiah according to the LXX which John uses in John 12, both verbally by means of *doxazo* (Isaiah 52:13 [LXX]) and substantively through use of *doxa* (Isaiah 52:14 [LXX]).

I believe John has, in fact, constructed the narrative of John 12 in a way that progressively leads to the conclusion that the “glory” of the Messiah as ‘seen’ by Isaiah was that which was fulfilled in Jesus through his rejection by others, through his death, and by his being “glorified” and “lifted up” according to John 12:16, 23, 32-34, 36, 37, and 38, which texts use exactly the same verbs [*doxazo*, *hypsōo*, and *pistueo*] as are found in the LXX of Isaiah 52:13 and 53:1, in reference to the future Messiah.

Now I will further consider how the above two positions have been discussed through publication and in public debate by each party. First I will consider White’s arguments from his book *The Forgotten Trinity* (1998) and then from my Second Edition of *Jehovah’s Witnesses Defended* (2000). Then I will present a complete transcription of the portion of our 2003 debate regarding this issue, which White put up on YouTube back in 2007 when we each began blogging and ‘chatting’ with each other through our respective web sites.

### **The Books**

In 1998 Dr. White published *The Forgotten Trinity: Recovering the Heart of Christian Belief* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Bethany House, 1998). In 2000 I published the Second Edition of my *Jehovah’s Witnesses Defended: An Answer to Scholars and Critics* (Elihu Books, 2000). In my Second Edition I revealed numerous mistakes in the scriptural reasoning of Dr. White from his *The Forgotten Trinity*. However, without direct reference to White’s published discussion on John 12:41/Isaiah 6, I wrote on the subject of the alleged connection and the subsequent identification made by Trinitarians involving the “glory” mentioned in the LXX of Isaiah 6:1 as it relates to the “glory” spoken of in John 12:41, which was based on conversations I had previously with other Trinitarians who view these two texts as does Dr. White.

In his recent “A Test for Your Listening Skills -- Part II,” aoin.org Blog for April 11, 2007), Dr. White reproduced the entire discussion of John 12:41/Isaiah 6 from his *The Forgotten Trinity* book, with notes, which I will here also therefore reproduce and discuss as he has there cited it. Then I will reproduce the relevant sections of my published

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discussion from 2000. I will block quote all quotations from both publications, followed by comments specific to each quoted section.

### *The Forgotten Trinity:*

#### **WHO DID ISAIAH SEE?**

Toward the end of Jesus public ministry as recorded by John we find an incident where a group of Greeks seek out the Lord Jesus. The significance of the passage often goes right past us because we are looking more at the encounter than a little comment John tacks onto the end of his citation from Isaiah:

Actually, Jehovah's Witnesses do not miss the significance of this passage. It is quite clear just how significant John's reference to the "glory" of the Messiah's death and 'lifting up' is as it is built up all throughout John Chapter 12, as seen by Isaiah from Isaiah 52:9/10 through to and including Isaiah 53:12, nor do we miss the significance of John's use of Isaiah 6:10 for the purpose of explaining "the reason why they were not able to believe" Jesus (compare John 12:39).

[White quotes John 12:37-41 (for which, see above under "The Texts") and then he writes:]

The struggle with the meaning of the words from Isaiah often causes us fly right past verse 41. Yet, what does John mean when he says that Isaiah said these things because he saw His glory and spoke of Him? Who is the Him to which Isaiah refers?

We have to go back a little to see that John cites two passages from the book of Isaiah. In verse 38 he quotes from Isaiah 53:1, the great Suffering Servant passage that so plainly describes the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. John says the unbelief of the Jews, despite their seeing signs, was a fulfillment of the word of Isaiah in Isaiah 53. He then goes beyond this to assert their *inability* to believe, and quotes from Isaiah 6 and the Temple Vision Isaiah received when he was commissioned as a prophet:

So far so good, but I do not know anyone who does not recognize Jesus as the "him" of John 12: 41. White makes it seem like this is some point of contest, creating a question where none exists that I can see or that he has sufficiently documented. Indeed, the question and the present conflict really only exists when it comes to the "glory" John says Isaiah 'saw' and where it concerns what "things" Isaiah then 'spoke about him,' but not concerning the identity of the "him." White continues:

[White then quotes Isaiah 6:1-4 (for which, see above under "The Texts") and then he writes:]

In this awesome vision, Isaiah sees Yahweh (the LORD) sitting upon His throne, surrounded by angelic worshipers. The glory of Yahweh fills his sight. Isaiah recognizes his sin, and is cleansed by the Lord, then commissioned to go and bring a message to the people. But the message is not one of salvation, but of judgment.

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[White then quotes Isaiah 6:9-11 (for which, see above under “The Texts”) and writes:]

John cites the heart of the message of judgment given to Isaiah, and sees the hard heartedness of the Jews who had seen the miracles of the Lord Jesus, and heard His words of grace, as the fulfillment of these words.

No, John cites Isaiah 53:1 for the purpose of showing “that the word of Isaiah the prophet was fulfilled” (John 12:38), and then John explains how it was that the scripture he just quoted, from Isaiah 53:1, came about, “The reason why they were not able to believe is that again Isaiah said: [after which, then is quoted Isaiah 6:10]” (John 12:39-40). The “heart of the message” of John and Isaiah is the ‘glorification’ of the Messiah through his being ‘lifted up’ in death, which is accomplished through the rejection of him by the Jews of that time, belonging to the crowd to whom Jesus then spoke. Dr. White does not put things in their proper perspective here, yet he goes on to write:

Then John says, These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him. John has quoted from two passages in Isaiah, Isaiah 53:1 and Isaiah 6:10. Yet, the immediate context refers to the words from Isaiah 6, and there are other reasons why we should see the primarily reference as the Isaiah 6 passage.

If there is a proverbial “deep end” in this discussion, Dr. White has just jumped off of it. Clearly, he does not want Isaiah 53:1 figuring in anywhere significantly relative to John 12:41. But that is the only one of the two quoted texts immediately preceding John 12:41 and where Isaiah actually ‘speaks of him,’ the Messiah, after ‘seeing’ his “glory” through the verbal use of *doxazo* in Isaiah 52:13 (LXX) and through the substantive use of *doxa* in Isaiah 52:14 (LXX).

Dr. White tries to shove Isaiah 53:1 out of the picture by claiming that John’s use of Isaiah 6:1 is the ‘primary reference,’ when that reference is used by John to explain *why* the crowd was unreceptive to Jesus. In fact, Isaiah 53:1 is actually ‘primary’ as it relates to John 12:41, for it is here where Isaiah ‘speaks about him’ while ‘seeing his glory.’

White has misinterpreted “glory” in John 12:41 as the heavenly, ‘outshining’ of Jehovah seen according to Isaiah 6 (which could only involve the heavenly Jesus’ glory in a sense related to how he is described in Hebrews 1:3) when, in fact, the “glory” spoken of by John (12:41) relative to what Isaiah “saw” and “spoke about” is the “glory” and ‘glorifying’ of the future Messiah ‘seen’ and ‘spoken about’ in Isaiah 52 and 53, as it relates to his eventual “lifting up” in death. This is precisely what John describes elsewhere in John 12 (see verses 16, 23, 32-34) as well as in John 8 (see verse 28).

Dr. White continues, writing:

John speaks of Isaiah seeing glory. In Isaiah 6:1 the very same term is used of seeing the LORD, and the very term glory appears in verse 3.[7] ... [7] The connection is actually closer than first glance might indicate, for the Greek Septuagint (the LXX) contains both the verb form John uses in verse 1, [*eidon*],

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and departing from the Hebrew text, it contains at the end of the verse the reading [*tes doxes autou*] meaning the house was full of His glory. This is the same phraseology used in John 12:41, [*ten doxan autou*], (the accusative for the genitive) meaning he saw His glory. The use of the same phraseology makes the connection to the John [*sic* (Isaiah)] 6 passage unbreakable.

You cannot break what was never made in the first place. But let us consider further White's creation here, one which does not exist in the text or in the manner in which he describes it above. In Isaiah 6 there is no expression in the Hebrew or in the Greek text which reads, "I saw his glory." Isaiah does "see" Jehovah (not "the LORD"), and in the LXX in verse 1 of Isaiah 6 the vision of Jehovah includes the filling of his house with "his glory." Therefore, one can reasonably conclude according to the circumstances of the vision that Isaiah does 'see' the glory that 'fills the house.' Yet, there is better justification for concluding as I do, namely, that the "use of the same phraseology makes the connection to [Isaiah 52/53, quoted in part also in John 12] unbreakable."

Again, not only do we have the use of the verb *doxazo* for the 'glorifying' of the Messiah 'seen' by Isaiah according to 52:13 (LXX), but in Isaiah 52:14, right before Isaiah 53:1 which is quoted by John in John 12:38, we have *he doxa sou*, "the glory of you," or "your glory" (speaking of the future Messiah)! This is the "same phraseology" of John 12:41 only spoken in the second person rather than in the third person.

Indeed, in Isaiah 53:2, right after Isaiah describes the Messiah being "glorified" (52:13 [LXX]) and speaks of 'his ["your"] glory' (52:14 [LXX]), and one verse after Isaiah 'speaks about him,' that is, the one whose "glory" he just 'saw' and described, we have the same verb of sight used by John in John 12:14 used also in Isaiah 53:2 (LXX), "We saw him" (*eidomen* [form of *horao*] *auton*)!

Therefore, to argue as does Dr. White that we do not have the elements in place in Isaiah 52/53 necessary to make Isaiah 53:1 the primary reference for John 12:41, when that is the *only* text of the two quoted by John in John 12:38-40 from Isaiah where Isaiah "spoke about him" is to run away from the conclusion that is based on the best available evidence. It is running away from the truth, or at the very least, again, it is to prefer the conclusion that is not supported by the best available reasons, all apparently for preconceived views, views which also involve some level of misrepresentation and evidence suppression, to wit:

Even if we connect both passages together, the fact remains that the only way to define what glory Isaiah saw was to refer to the glory of Isaiah 6:3.[8] ... [8] Or, more likely, the term glory used in the LXX in verse 1.

Again, anyone who reads the LXX of Isaiah 52/53 concerning the "Suffering Servant," a key passage from which forms the basis for John's discussion in John 12:37-41, can see that far from Isaiah 6:1, 3 (LXX) providing "the only way to define the glory Isaiah saw" there is in Isaiah 52/53 both a verbal and a substantive means of explaining the "glory" that Isaiah "saw," including the use of the same verb of sight (form of *horao*) found in John 12:41. Indeed, it is here in Isaiah 52/53 that Isaiah 'speaks about him,' not in Isaiah

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6. It is only Isaiah 52/53, referenced directly by John in John 12:38, where we have both Isaiah ‘seeing the Messiah’s glory’ and ‘speaking about him’ in the manner in which John is presenting Jesus in John 12, namely, as one “glorified” by being “lifted up” in death.

Dr. White, however, believes that my “interpretation is completely disconnected from John’s purposes in his Gospel” since, according to White, “What connects the citation of Isaiah 53:1 with Isaiah 6:10 is not a discussion of glory, but a discussion of judgment” and, according to White, that “is the theme that connects the two citations” (James White, “Greg Stafford Attempts to Reply,” aomin.org Blog for April 11, 2007).

However, again, White here merely further misunderstands and/or misrepresents the nature of the “glory” that is in view in John 12:41, which is the very same ‘glorification’ that Jesus himself speaks about earlier in the account narrated by John in John 12:16, 23, and 32-34, texts where we not only have the same verb *doxazo* as used in Isaiah 52:13 (LXX) but where we also (in John 12:32, 34) have the verb *hypsō* (used also in the LXX in Isaiah 52:13), verbs which are *both* in reference to the ‘lifting up’ of the Messiah in death!

And that glory was the glory of Yahweh. There is none other whose glory we can connect with Isaiah’s words.[9] ... [9] Stafford insists that we look only at Isaiah 53 for the referent to John 12:41, but does not deal with the verbal parallels to the Greek LXX. In fact, one will search in vain in Isaiah 53 for [*eidon*] / [*eidon*] being used with glory; and one will not find the phrase [*ten doxan autou*] or anything similar to it. The term glory only appears once in Isaiah 53, and that in a completely separate context.

Actually, there is no less a connection between the *eidon* (= a form of *horao*) of Isaiah 6:1 and the use of *doxa* later in the same text in the LXX and in verse 3. Further, the use of *opsontai* (= a form of *horao*) in Isaiah 52:10 is in direct reference to the “holy arm” of Jehovah, which “arm” is directly referenced in Isaiah 53:1 (which is, again, quoted by John in John 12:38), and then we have the use of *opsontai* (= a form of *horao*) in Isaiah 52:15 and the use of *eidomen* (= a form of *horao*) in Isaiah 53:2, together with the use of *doxa* in Isaiah 52:14, as well as the use of *doxazo* in Isaiah 52:13.

Yet, for obvious reasons Dr. White only admits to the use of *doxa* in the LXX of Isaiah 53:2 in reference to the Messiah’s exterior physical form or “glory” (which was also ‘seen’ by Isaiah) juxtaposed with “beauty” (*kallos*) in the same verse. But what White does not recognize or openly accept is that the “Suffering Servant” is described from at least Isaiah 52:10, and possibly even from Isaiah 52:7 or earlier, and *both* the Messiah’s “glory” (*doxa*) and his ‘glorifying’ (*doxazo*) are ‘seen’ by Isaiah (Isaiah 52:13, 14 [LXX]).

Dr. White has missed the entire and rather obvious point being developed by John in John Chapter 12, relative to Jesus’ glorification and “lifting up” in death, all of which is coupled with the rejection of Jesus by the Jews to whom he spoke and in direct fulfillment of what was ‘seen’ by Isaiah here and then ultimately through his

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‘glorification’ and ‘lifting up’ in death. Instead, White has misrepresented the “glory” seen by Isaiah according to John 12:41 to be the glory of Jehovah when in heaven, though the evidence points clearly to the “glory” of the Messiah on earth that was ‘seen’ by Isaiah through his suffering and his death.

***Jehovah’s Witnesses Defended, Second Edition (hereafter JWD2):*** As I have already presented the arguments informing Dr. White’s understanding of this issue, even re-presenting his entire section from his own complete quotation of his book on this subject as presented by White on his Blog, I will not here reproduce the entire section “***Understanding the argument***” from JWD2. Nor will I here present the section on this discussion from JWD2 titled, “***NWT’s cross-references to Isaiah 6,***” since the NWT’s use of Isaiah 6:1 for the reference in John 12:41 can be explained by my simply quoting, as I did in JWD2, the Watchtower Society’s own understanding of John 12:41 in relation to Isaiah 6 and Isaiah 53:

What “things” did Isaiah say “because he saw his glory”? Well, John quotes Isaiah here twice, first quoting Isaiah 53:1 concerning the ‘arm of Jehovah’ and then quoting Isaiah 6:10 concerning the temple vision. At Isaiah 53:1 the ‘arm of Jehovah’ is Christ Jesus. At Isaiah 6:10 the speaker at the temple is Jehovah, but he includes his Son with him when he says: “Who will go for us?” that is, for me and my Son. Thus we see that the prehuman Jesus was associated with Jehovah in his glory at the temple, and hence John could rightly say Isaiah here saw his glory and spoke about him, “the arm of Jehovah.” Certainly Jesus the Greater Isaiah had not sent himself, but Jehovah at the temple did so, for John here applies Isaiah 6:10 to Jesus as the Sent One toward whom this prophecy was first fulfilled, after Jesus had ridden into Jerusalem and offered himself as King and had cleansed the temple. ... Especially since his resurrection, Jesus is the reflection of Jehovah’s glory.—Heb. 1:2, 3; 2 Cor. 4:6 [“Commissioning of Witnesses in the Time of the End,” *The Watchtower*, April 1, 1951, page 219].

The above represents what I presented as a possible understanding of seeing Jesus’ glory in association with Jehovah as a part of Isaiah’s vision in Isaiah 6 in my JWD2 book (see below), and in my [5] above. What this means is that even if we were to accept Isaiah 6 as the ‘primary reference’ to the “glory” seen by Isaiah according to John 12:41, Jesus’ nature is one in which he is a “copy of God’s being” which involves being the ‘reflection of his glory’ (Hebrews 1:3). This, then, would make any connection between John 12:41 and Isaiah 6:1 easy to explain without having to resort the later, post-biblical doctrine of the Trinity. Instead, we simply interpret the Bible with the Bible, that is, according to the Bible’s articulation of Jesus’ relationship with God.

Christians do not need a post-biblical articulation of “God” as a Trinity or as tri-substantial unity of “persons” with each existing as a non-individual being but sharing equally one nature as a Trinitarian Godhead in order to explain how someone could see the “glory” of Jesus in a vision of Jehovah where Jah’s glory fills his heavenly temple, a temple where he in one sense lives with his heavenly S-sons.—Compare Genesis 1:26; Job 38:7; John 17:5.

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However, as noted previously, the context of John 12, the narrative built up by John through his use of the verbs *doxazo*, *hypso'o*, and *pistueo*, all of which are used in Isaiah 52/53 concerning the Messiah, together with John's use of *doxa* ("glory") after quoting Isaiah 53:1 which speaks of the "arm of Jehovah." Indeed, just prior to Isaiah 53:1 this "arm" was 'seen' by Isaiah as "glorified" (*doxazo*) and "lifted up" (*hypso'o*). Further, this one's "glory" is referenced expressly and substantively in Isaiah 52:14 (LXX) in a context with several uses of the verb *horao* (which verb is used also in John 12:41). All of this and the rest of the evidence provided above points to a much different, better-supported conclusion than that reached by Trinitarians such as Dr. White, as I wrote in my JWD2 back in 2000:

### **Isaiah 6:1 and John 12:41**

#### **The Glory of Jehovah or Jesus?**

...

*The context of John 12:41.* In John 12:37 it is said that although Jesus "performed many signs before them [that is, the crowds that stood about], they were not putting faith in him." Then in verse 38 John refers to their response (or lack thereof) as fulfillment of Isaiah 53:1. In verses 39 and 40 we are told *why* Isaiah 53:1 was fulfilled in them: "He has blinded their eyes and he has made their hearts hard, that they should not see with their eyes and get the thought with their hearts and turn around and I should heal them." This is a reference to Isaiah 6:10. Finally, in verse 41 John tells us, "Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory, and he spoke about him."

Isaiah spoke about Jesus, the Messiah, in Isaiah 53, when he foresaw *the future glory* of the one who would "come up like a twig" and "like a root out of waterless land." (verse 2) Isaiah also saw the glory of "the arm of Jehovah" in that he would "bring a righteous standing to many people," "and for the transgressors he [would] interpose." (verses 1, 11-12) Thus, John 12:41 refers primarily to Isaiah's Messianic references in chapter 53, whereas John 12:39-40 explains why the crowds surrounding Jesus "were not able to believe."

*The "glory" of the Messiah.* Again, it seems reasonably clear that the things Isaiah said about Jesus are found in Isaiah 53, as cited in John 12:38. Verses 39-40 are an explanation of *why* the crowds were not able to believe. If verse 41 has any reference at all to Isaiah 6 it does not necessarily involve an identification of Jesus as Jehovah. Rather, the context of Isaiah 6 does seem to have some Messianic significance. In verses 6-7 there could be some prophetic significance in the atonement of Isaiah's sins, perhaps foreshadowing the redemptive act the future Messiah would perform to remove the sins of many (compare Isa 53:11).

Also, there is the reference to the one Jehovah would send as a messenger to his people, which could also be a foreshadowing of the role that Jesus would eventually have, in the outworking of Jehovah's purpose. Some later theologians held that Jesus was actually one of the seraphs in the vision. **[Footnote 124.]** In Isaiah 6:8 Jehovah says, "Who will go for us [*lanu*, 'for us']." This indicates that someone other than Jehovah was present in this vision, and that someone may very well have been the Lord Jesus Christ, in his pre-human glory as the "Word" (Joh 1:1; compare Joh 17:5).

Our quote from *The Watchtower* on the connection between Isaiah 6 and John 12 suggested that Isaiah may have seen the glory of the preexistent Logos. This view would be in line with the Targum of Isaiah. Knowing as he did that no

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man (including Isaiah) has ever seen God (Joh 1:18), John may have been following the tradition behind the Targum translation of Isaiah 6:1, which reads, "the glory of the Lord," and in verse 5 "the glory of the shekinah of the Lord."**[Footnote 125.]** Still, it seems clear that John is directly referring to those things Isaiah "spoke" in chapter 53 of the book bearing his name. Here Isaiah 'saw his [the Messiah's] day,' even as Abraham is reported to have done (Joh 8:56), and "spoke about him."

Indeed, since the immediate context of John 12:41 is very much dependent on Isaiah 53, and what is there prophesied about Jesus, the reference to seeing Jesus' "glory" may be in direct reference to Isaiah 53[sic 52]:13, where Jehovah says that His servant, the Messiah, would be "glorified" [*doxasthesetai*]. Jesus himself refers to the glorification that Isaiah saw in John 12:23, and it is not unlikely that John picks up on this same point a few verses later, in 12:41. Isaiah was not confused at all about the identity of the Messiah, and what position he occupied in relation to the Most High. (Isa 11:1-3) Neither was John confused about their relationship (Joh 1:18).

**[Footnote 124.]** Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John (i-xii)* (AB 29; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1966), 487.

**[Footnote 125.]** Brown, *John (i-xii)*, 486-487. Wilbert F. Howard, *The Gospel According to St. John* (IB 8; New York: Abingdon, 1952), 673, states: "The evangelist declared 'No one has ever seen God' (1:18). He was probably well aware of the rendering in the Targ. of Isa. 6:1, 'I saw the glory of the Lord.'" Franklin Young, "A Study of the Relation of Isaiah to the Fourth Gospel," *ZNW* 46 (1955), 215, points out that "the words [of John 12:41] have been interpreted as referring to a vision of the Logos identified with Jesus, the pre-existent Messiah."

I have nothing to add to the above, beyond what I have stated previously in response to Dr. White in this Part Two Blog response to this point. Therefore, now I will move to the final section of this Part Two of my response to Dr. White's Blog series.

### The 2003 Tampa, Florida Debate

As most reading this response to Dr. White know, White presented on his Blog a video clip of his cross-examination of me during our 2003 debate regarding the alleged connection between John 12:41 and Isaiah 6:1 and my arguments relative to John 12:41 and Isaiah 52/53. White also presented a clip from our debate regarding issues relating to Philippians 2:6-9. The Philippians 2:6-9 issues will be discussed elsewhere. Here follows a complete transcription of the section of my 2003 debate with Dr. White where White cross-examined me regarding John 12:41 and Isaiah 6/52/53. I will again number in bold brackets those portions of the debate on which I will comment after the transcription, starting with **[16]**, which is the number at which I left off in my earlier numbering in this Part Two response (underlining has been added to parts of the transcription):

**White:** Mr. Stafford I believe that it is your position that John 12:41 does not identify Jesus as Yahweh because you believe John to be referring to Isaiah 53 of the "Suffering

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Servant” rather than Isaiah’s vision of Yahweh upon his throne. Is that a correct summary of your position as found on page 176 of your book and I think in your last statement.

**Stafford:** It is correct that I believe that the statement in John 12:41 with respect to the “glory” that Isaiah saw is not a reference to John...Isaiah 6 but a reference to Isaiah 53. Correct.

**White:** Okay. If that is the case could you explain why it is that [16] the Septuagint at Isaiah 6:1 uses all the key terms found in Isaiah [sic (John)] 12:41 including [17] *eidon* and *doxa*, which means “glory,” and says “the house was filled with his glory,” all terms not found in Isaiah 53, why then assert that John is referring to anything other than Isaiah 6?

**Stafford:** Because it’s not true that [18] those terms are not found in Isaiah 53. As I mentioned Isaiah 53[sic (52)]:13 in the Septuagint does use a verbal form of *doxa* in reference to the glorification of the Messiah, so that’s one point, that the words are in fact used in Isaiah 53 [sic (52)]:13 of the Septuagint which John not only uses sporadically but heavily in John 12, and specifically ... um, in terms ... was there another part to your question?

**White:** Yes I, specifically, I was asking why, in light of the fact that [19] the Septuagint in Isaiah ...uh, ... Chapter 6 verse 1 says that, “I saw the Lord” and it specifically says “I saw his glory.” in the exact same ... uh, term ..., and it is a substantive not a verb there, in the Septuagint. Uh...Why, why would you believe that he’s quoting from something else when [20] it’s very clear that he’s quoting from the Septuagint there?

**Stafford:** Because he goes on to say that he saw his glory and “spoke about him.” [21] Where did Isaiah ‘speak about him’ in Isaiah 6?

**White:** I can’t answer your question during my cross-examination.

**Stafford:** Oh, well, that would be my question. That would be a basis for defining...

**White:** I’d be happy...If you’d like to ask me that question during your section I’d be happy to do that.

**Stafford:** So my point would be then that the term for “glory” is used in Isaiah 53 and Isaiah 6. But that in Isaiah 53 that is where Isaiah “speaks about him” relative to the “glory” that is ‘seen.’

### END OF TRANSCRIPTION

Here are my comments corresponding to the bold, bracketed numbers in the above transcription:

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[16] Before I comment on the underlined words corresponding to this number, note what (and how) White wrote in his “A Test for Your Listening Skills -- Part II” (aomin.org Blog for April 11, 2007):

Now, Stafford claims that the verbal form of “glorify” appears in the LXX at Isaiah 53:13, and he repeats this assertion in his book (*Jehovah's Witnesses Defended*, 177). However, *there is no Isaiah 53:13 in the LXX*. He is referring to Isaiah 52:13, “Behold, My servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted.”

Setting aside the rather strange fact that Dr. White, though admitting that “glorify” (*doxasthesetai*) is used in the LXX of Isaiah 52:13, translates it not with “glorify” but with “greatly exalted” as if to suggest he does not want to even admit (that is, beyond quoting me) a verbal connection, he is right: I meant Isaiah 52:13, both in my JWD2 and during our 2003 debate.

Of course, as I noted earlier in this response to Dr. White, in his *Forgotten Trinity*, page 216, note 7, Dr. White meant Isaiah 6, not “John 6,” and in the transcription of our debate above White claims that the Septuagint at Isaiah 6:1 “uses all the key terms found in Isaiah 12:41.” That’s not true: *There is no Isaiah 12:41 in the LXX or in the Hebrew text!* White meant John 12:41, of course. So we can each here accept a measure of referential correction, as does at times occur when citing and discussing multiple texts according to more than one ancient language used in preserving the subject texts. However, White is also wrong in saying what he says with respect to this reference.

For example, the “key terms” “spoke about him” in John 12:41 do not appear anywhere in Isaiah 6:1 or in Isaiah Chapter 6, period. Yet, Dr. White conveniently ignores these “key terms” and focuses solely on the separate uses of *horao* and *doxa* in the LXX of Isaiah 6:1 which, though they occur in a context where one could reasonably argue that the “glory” which ‘fills the house’ in this vision is ‘seen’ by Isaiah, they are *not* connected in the same expression “saw his glory” found in John 12:41 (but see White’s complete misrepresentation on this very point under [19] and [20], below).

[17] Dr. White here claims that *eidon* (a form of *horao*) and *doxa*, terms found in John 12:41 and in Isaiah 6:1 LXX (though not connected in the same expression) are “all terms not found in Isaiah 53.” White is wrong, for not only is *horao* used in Isaiah 52:10 in direct reference to the “holy arm” of Jehovah (which arm is directly referenced in Isaiah 53:1, and which is then quoted by John in John 12:38), and not only is *horao* used in Isaiah 52:15, but *horao* is also used in Isaiah 53:2.

Further, not only is *doxa* used in Isaiah 52:14 in direct reference to the Messiah, and not only is a verbal form of *doxazo* used in Isaiah 52:13, but the substantive *doxa* is in fact used in Isaiah 53:2 and in reference to the Messiah’s exterior physical form or “glory,” juxtaposed with “beauty” (*kallos*) in the same verse, as noted earlier (see page 13). Dr. White has misrepresented the facts relative to the use of these terms in Isaiah 53 and White also chose to completely ignore their occurrence in Isaiah 52, which is a part of the same discussion concerning the Messiah taking place throughout Isaiah 53.

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[18] Here I noted that the “glorification” of the Messiah is in “Isaiah 53:13,” but what I meant was Isaiah 52:13, as I also noted on this page in the second full, non-quoted paragraph from the top. This usage and depiction of the Messiah being “glorified” represents an instance where the ‘glory of him’ is seen in his being “glorified,” which is seamlessly connected with what John said Isaiah ‘saw’ when he “spoke about him,” namely, Jesus, the “Suffering Servant” of Isaiah 52/53 whom the Jews rejected and who was “lifted up” in death.

Further, as I have explained already there is also the explicit mention of the Messiah’s “glory” (*doxa*) in connection with his rejection and/or dishonor among men according to Isaiah 52:14 (LXX), and there are numerous parallels with John 12 and Isaiah 52/53 with respect to the Messiah’s glorification and his death for “our sins” (Isaiah 53:4 [LXX]). Compare, for examples, the use of the verbs *pistueo*, *horao*, *doxazo*, and *hypso’o* in Isaiah 52:10, 13, 14, 15 and Isaiah 53:1 and 2 with the use of the same verbs in John 12:16, 23, 32-34, 36-38.

[19] Here Dr. White crosses the proverbial line even further in his interpretation by not merely using words from an account that, though not explicitly used together, are used in a context that allows for a reasonable interpretation of their usage together, that is, such as claiming Isaiah “saw his glory” through his ‘glorification’ or by arguing that since Isaiah “saw Jehovah” in Isaiah 6:1 and that since later in that verse in the LXX it says, “the house was filled with his glory” he therefore ‘saw his glory.’ No, White goes far beyond this and actually, explicitly claims:

[T]he Septuagint in Isaiah ...uh, ... Chapter 6 verse 1 says that, “I saw the Lord” and it specifically says “I saw his glory” ... [emphasis added].

Nowhere, and I mean *nowhere* in Isaiah 6:1 or anywhere else in Isaiah Chapter 6 does the LXX (Septuagint) text “specifically” say “I saw his glory.” Dr. White misrepresented this fact to his audience and to me in 2003, and in so doing he has explicitly and emphatically misrepresented what the text “specifically says.”

If Dr. White wanted to argue, as I do, that the use of the verb *horao* and the substantive *doxa* (or the verb *doxazo*) in the same context clearly suggests that “glory” is ‘seen,’ that is one thing. But White did not do that, probably because he knows that it would have made his argument no better than mine on this particular point, and so he apparently tried to make the text say something more “specifically” than it actually does say for his own gain before others. That is dishonest, or at the very least extremely poor scholarship.

I am willing to grant that he made a horrific mistake in his choice of words here, but if you watch the video you will see that Dr. White is looking at something from his notes when he says what he said, and so one has to conclude that he either really messed up in his preparation and has yet to correct himself, or that he was trying to score points unfairly during the debate. Either way, Dr. White is wrong and he should admit this terrible error and apologize publicly for his misleading misrepresentation of this text as presented during our 2003 debate. But, unfortunately, there is more for which he should apologize as is clear from what I present now in my [20]:

## Response to Dr. James White

[20] Here Dr. White does it again: White completely misrepresents the text by saying that “it’s very clear” that in John 12:41 John is “quoting from the Septuagint there.” “Quoting from the Septuagint”? This claim is not correct, and it goes far beyond what is, in fact, “very clear.”

Again, White can argue, as can I, that there is a context in Isaiah which uses the terms forming the expression used by John though without using the exact same expression. This, then, for either side to the debate, would not be considered a case where John is “quoting from” the text of either Isaiah 6 or Isaiah 52/53, that is, when John says Isaiah “saw his glory and spoke about him.” Yet, White would have his followers and everyone else believe John is actually, “very clearly,” “quoting from the Septuagint there.” This is not the case. In John 12:41 John may be borrowing language or using terms from Isaiah 6 or from Isaiah 52/53, but John is not “quoting from the Septuagint there.”

[21] White could not answer my question here and he really has not answered it anywhere else since, either. Of course, during the 2003 debate White had an excuse: It was not my turn to ask questions. However, that did not stop White from asking me questions (twice!) when I cross-examined him, and he has since written or spoken in response to my question that I know about.

Again, according to White the place where Isaiah ‘spoke about him [Jesus]’ after ‘seeing his glory’ in Isaiah 6:1 is “in the Temple, surrounded by the angels [in Isaiah 6], for his point is that Jesus is Yahweh!” (see James White, “A Test for Your Listening Skills -- Part II,” aomin.org Blog for April 11, 2007). This is, of course, quite interesting, to say the least, because John (in John 12:41) says, “Isaiah said these things [the immediately preceding “things” which John quotes from Isaiah 6:10 and from Isaiah 53:1], because he saw his glory and he spoke about him.” So the “things” Isaiah spoke about “him” are either what John quoted from Isaiah 6:10 or from Isaiah 53:1, or from both. But neither of these “things” have anything to do with Jesus being “Yahweh” as part of a Trinity; they both have to do with those who do or who do not “put faith” in the “arm of Jehovah” (Isaiah 53:1) and “the reason why they [the crowd] were not able to believe,” namely, because “he [Jah] has blinded their eyes and he has made their hearts hard that they should not see with their eyes and get the thought with their hearts and turn around [that he] should heal them.”—Isaiah 6:10.

There is nothing anywhere in John 12 about Jesus being “Yahweh,” and certainly there is nothing in Isaiah 6:10 or in Isaiah 53:1, or in their quotation and use by John in John 12, that makes Dr. White’s point. White simply embeds Isaiah 6:1 into John 12:37-41 when we only have Isaiah 6:10 and Isaiah 53:1 used by John, the latter of which is where Isaiah ‘speaks about him’ and in the former of which he (Isaiah) ‘speaks about them’ (the Jews). Throughout John 12 John ‘speaks about him’ in the same way that Isaiah did in Isaiah 52/53, namely, by describing or by narrating the description of Jesus’ being “lifted up” and “glorified” through his death and suffering, which “glory” Isaiah “saw” and “spoke about” from Isaiah 52:9 (possibly from 52:7) through to the end of Isaiah Chapter 53, part of which is quoted by John in John 12:38.

## Part Two: “He Saw His Glory, and He Spoke About Him”

The teaching of John 12:41 is simple, straightforward, and otherwise (that is, apart from Trinitarianism) clear: Isaiah saw the “glory” of the Christ’s humanity, suffering, and death for our sins while being dishonored among men, as a man, which teaching John develops throughout John 12 and specifically from verse 16 onward (see John 12:16, 23, 32-34, 37-41), using the same verbs (*doxazo*, *hypso’o*, *pistueo*, and *horao*) and the same substantive (*doxa*) that we find in the LXX of Isaiah 52:10, 13, 14, 15 and Isaiah 53:1 and 2. John observes that, like the “Suffering Servant” of Isaiah 52/53 (specifically 53:1 which he quotes in John 12:38), the crowd did not ‘put faith in him [Jesus]’ (John 12:36, 37 [where, again, in both texts and in verse 38 we find forms of the verb for “believe,” *pistueo*]), which is the same language Isaiah used when speaking of the Messiah: ‘Jehovah, who has believed [LXX: *epistuese* (form of *pistueo*) our report? And to whom has the arm of Jehovah been revealed?’—Isaiah 53:1; John 12:38.

Thus ends the debate over John 12:41 and Isaiah 6, a debate which never should have begun in the first place, at least not according to the Trinitarian interpretation of these texts.