Two Opinions about Jesus

(John 7:24-53)
11-10-2024

Introduction: (v.24)

As you evaluate the evidence of Scripture, who do you say that Jesus is?
What is your Opinion toward Jesus Christ?

I. Those who misjudged Jesus based their judgment on <u>limited facts</u> (v.25-30)

II. Those who rightly judged Jesus admitted that the evidence of <u>Christ's miracles</u> speaks for itself (v.31)

III. Those who misjudged Jesus would forever be <u>separated from Him</u> (v.32-36)

IV. Those who rightly judged Jesus and believed on Him would experience the <u>life-giving waters of the Holy Spirit</u> (v.37-39)

V. Those who rightly judged Jesus recognized that His Words were the <u>Words of the Messiah</u> (v.40-46)

VI. Those who misjudged Jesus based their judgment on the <u>opinions of others</u> (v.47-49)

VII. Those who rightly judged Jesus recognized that He deserved <u>a fair hearing</u> before anyone made up their mind about Him (v.50-51)

Conclusion: v.52-53

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To be prejudiced is to pre-judge a person without knowing any facts about his/her own personal character.

Prejudice is judging a book by its cover without seeing the contents of its pages.

What is prejudice?

Prejudice is the sin of pre-judging a person based on a superficial, non-moral, exterior, surface evaluation. Prejudice evaluates externals over internals and often esteems the temporal over the eternal.

Biblical examples of people who made erroneous pre-judgments:

--Abraham toward Abimelech (Gen. 20:11)
--Joshua toward the Gibeonites (Josh. 9)
--Satan toward Job (Job 1:11, 2:5)
--Israel toward Saul (I Sam. 10:23-24)
--Goliath toward David (I Sam. 17:42-44)
--Pharisees toward John (for not eating & drinking) and Jesus (for eating & drinking)

Prejudice is "thinking negatively of others without sufficient justification. Prejudice is the process of stereotyping, by which certain characteristics, either positive or negative, are ascribed to all members of a group." (Gordon Allport, The Nature of Prejudice (1954), cited by Breckenridge, "What Color is Your God?" p. 61)

Jesus described the heart of prejudice very succinctly when He said: *"Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment"* (John 7:24). The word *"appearance"* is derived from the word *opsis* (akin to "optic," the eye), which refers to that which you see, outward appearance, the outward aspect of a person, his face (Jn. 11:44) or countenance.

To the legalistic Pharisees, who were making a judgment of Him for healing a man on the Sabbath, Christ said, in effect, "Stop judging based on outward, face value, external criteria, and make decisions about Me based on the truth and righteousness of my actions.

The Bible does not teach that we should not judge; indeed, we must have discernment and make discriminatory judgments (I Thes. 5:21; Rev. 2:2; I Cor. 5:5-11; Rom. 16:17; John 7:24).

However, we are never to judge with a nasty, unmerciful, harsh, censorious, critical, and condemning attitude (Mt. 7:1), nor are we to prematurely discriminate against a particular person or situation without having all the facts about that person or situation.

No discerning man of God should make inalterable pre-evaluations about anything without seeking the truth and concrete evidence about a man or matter.

". . . the honor of kings is to search out a matter" (Prov. 25:2).

The noble Bereans did not just take Paul's word for it; they *"searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so"* (Acts 17:11).

God's Word is clear about the folly of making judgments about any matter before obtaining the specific facts (cp. Prov. 18:13).

Why is prejudice so wicked?

>It often extols race over righteousness
>It often esteems color over character
>It often respects popularity over principle
>It often glorifies culture over conduct
>It often values wealth over worth
>It often evaluates externals not internals
>It often elevates nationalistic pride over Christ-like humility

Many misjudge a person because they come to conclusions prematurely or based on an insufficient or incorrect criteria.

* Because the Pharisees had a pre-disposition (an animosity) against Christ, it caused them to reject everything He said, even though what He said was indisputably right! Due to their predisposition to their own righteousness and due to their predisposition to their own teachings and traditions, they failed to see the correctness of Christ and His teaching. And since they could not deny the truth, they began to attack His person. This attack is what we find in John 7.

There were those who judged Jesus according to appearance, and there were those who judged Jesus according to righteous judgment (v. 24).

So this whole context shifts back and forth between the reactions of the unbelievers and the reactions of those who believed.

In verses 25-53, we find two opinions about Jesus. Some were coming to believe that He was the Messiah, and others would not; some people were for Him, and others were against Him (cp. Mt. 12:30); some misjudged Him and looked for ways to catch Him, and others evaluated the evidence objectively and honestly and embraced Him as their Messiah.

Some viewed Him as a “good man,” and others viewed Him as a “deceiver.” (Jn. 7:12).

As you evaluate the evidence of Scripture, who do you say that Jesus is?
What is your Opinion toward Jesus Christ?

I. Those who misjudged Jesus based their judgment on limited facts (v.25-30)

v. 26
NASV – "The rulers do not really know that this is the Christ, do they?" – They assume that because no one is doing anything to Jesus that perhaps the authorities might have concluded that He was the Messiah after all.

One characteristic of Christ's public speaking was that He spoke with fearless boldness. "As one having authority and not as the scribes" (Mt. 7:29).

Christ's bold speech could not be thwarted or successfully disputed.

The people had no choice but to be silent and listen when He spoke. Although the religious leaders intended to kill Him, they could not even so much as silent Him, because He is the WORD of God (Jn. 1:1)!

v. 27
"Once again, the people could not see the truth because they were blinded by what they thought were dependable facts" (Wiersbe, p. 3170.

Compare the same error being made in verse 52.

The people knew Jesus to have come from Nazareth, so in their minds, He could not qualify as the Messiah (the **"Christ"**).

They had the idea in their heads that the Messiah would make a mysterious appearance and come out of nowhere.

The residents of Jerusalem were able to defend their conclusion with this logic:

1) Nobody knows where the Christ comes from
2) We know where Jesus of Nazareth came from.
3) Conclusion: Jesus cannot be the Messiah

(Wiersbe, p. 317)

Yet Jesus did not originate in Nazareth; But came from Heaven to Bethlehem.

v. 28
"Ye both know Me" – they knew Him cognitively; they knew Him from His youth, and they knew Him to be from Nazareth. But they did not know Him spiritually and personally.

They, with unbelieving hearts, knew Christ "after the flesh" (2 Cor. 5:16), but did not really know who He was.

'He that sent me is true, whom ye know not" – The reason they did not recognize the Son was because they did not know the Father. "Christ says, in effect, If you knew God, you would recognize Me" (Ryrie note).

v. 29
Jesus implies that He came from Heaven (from the very presence of God). Such a statement would bring a strong reaction (v. 30).

v. 30
They tried their best to seize Him but were unable. Their hands were restrained from grabbing Him. The reason for their failure was that "His hour" (for arrest, trial, and crucifixion) had not yet arrived. Only when God's perfect appointed time arrived could Jesus be taken and crucified.

Note: Just as God had a time (season – *kairos*) for Christ to be glorified (Jn. 7:6), so God had a time (*hora*) for Christ to be crucified (SEE: Jn. 8:20; Jn. 17:1-5).

They could do nothing to Christ until the specific hour (the Passover time0 arrived. In John 8:59, Jesus walks safely right through the middle of a hostile crowd who wanted to stone Him.

Note: In similar manner as no one could harm Christ outside of the Father's will, so the same is true of you, His children.

II. Those who rightly judged Jesus admitted that the evidence of Christ's miracles speaks for itself (v.31)

Is there anyone in human history who did more miracles than Jesus did? No!

Has anyone else ever independently walked on water? Raised the dead? Fed 5,000 men with 5 loaves and 2 fish?

Jesus did so many more signs than the ones which are recorded (Jn. 20:30). If all He ever said and did was written down, pen and paper would fail to communicate it all (Jn. 21:25 - And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.)

While Christ's works (Miracles) impressed some people (v. 31), Christ's words impressed these officers (v. 46).

III. Those who misjudged Jesus would forever be separated from Him (v.32-36)

v. 32
For fear that Christ might become too popular, the Jewish religious rulers send officers to seize Him. Of course, they return unsuccessful (v. 45-46).

v. 32
"This time, the rulers sent members of the temple guard to arrest Jesus, but it was Jesus who 'arrested' them" (Wiersbe, p. 317).

v. 33
The Jewish officers who came to arrest Jesus would only have the privilege of seeing Jesus for a short time before He (at God's timing) would return to the Father. At that time and even until this day, they would seek the Messiah but would not find Him, nor would they with their unbelieving hearts be permitted to enter Heaven where Jesus would go.

v. 34
"Within six months, Jesus would go back to the Father in Heaven, and the unsaved Jews would not be able to follow Him. What a contrast between **"Where I am, there ye cannot come"** (Jn. 7:34) and "That where I am, there ye may be also"! (Jn. 14:3)" (Wiersbe, p. 317)

v. 35
How will He successfully hide from us, they thought. Would Jesus go out of the country? Would He go to those of the diaspora (the scattered Jews around the earth) and teach the Gentiles there? Yes, His disciples would do this (Acts 8:4, 11:190, but this was not what Jesus was referring to.

IV. Those who rightly judged Jesus and believed on Him would experience the life-giving waters of the Holy Spirit (v.37-39)

v. 37
On the final day of the Feast of Tabernacles (Jn. 7:2), Jesus stood up to be seen and cried out to be heard and invited the thirsty to come to Him.

"On the seven days of the Feast, a golden flagon was filled with water from the pool of Siloam and was carried in a procession led by the High Priest back to the temple. As the procession approached the watergate on the south side of the inner court three blasts from the *shofar* – a trumpet connected with joyful occasions – were sounded. While the pilgrims watched, the priests processed around the altar with the flagon, the temple choir singing the *Hallel* (Ps. 113 – 118; cf. Mishnah *Sukkah* 4:9). When the choir reached Psalm 118, every male pilgrim shook a *lulab* (willow and myrtle twigs tied with palm) in his right hand while his left raised a piece of citrus fruit (a sign of the ingathered harvest), and all cried 'give thanks to the Lord!' three times. The water was offered to God at the time of the morning sacrifice, along with the daily drink-offering of wine. The wine and the water were poured into their respective bowls, and then pored out before the Lord. Moreover, these ceremonies of the Feast of Tabernacles were related in Jewish thought both to the Lord's provision of water in the desert and to the Lord's pouring out of the Spirit in the last days. Pouring at the Feat of Tabernacles refers symbolically to the Messianic age in which a stream from the sacred rock would flow over the whole earth (cf. J Jeremias, TDNT, 4. 277f.)." (Carson, p. 321-322).

It is interesting that the same One who tabernacled among Israel in the desert and provided water from a rock (Exod. 17:6; 1 Cor. 10:4) is the same One who, on the Feast of Tabernacles, offers water to the thirsty of soul.

"Come unto Me and drink" – Jesus gave the same invitation to the woman at the well in John 4.

Jesus is the remedy for the thirsty soul.

A similar invitation is given in the Old Testament.

Isaiah 55:1
Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Rev. 22:17
And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

Isaiah 41:17
When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.

"If any man thirst" – Are you thirsty? Have you said to Jesus, "I'm thirsty, Lord. . .Fill me with your Spirit"?

David thirsted for God. Psalm 42:1-2
As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. [2] My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?

Blessedness is pronounced upon those thirsty for God's righteousness (Mt. 5:6).

v. 38
'Out of his belly" = out of his innermost being.

The point is this: Those who drink the water that Jesus offers will have a supply in their innermost being which will flow out and water every area of their life and produce fruitfulness.

One Scripture to which Jesus evidently refers and which ties the "Spirit" to the innermost part of one's being (or "belly") is Proverbs 20:27 -
The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.

"Rivers of living water" – (life-giving water) speaks of waters that flow out of one's inner being and impart life and bear fruit.

Waters that flow <u>in</u> (v. 37) are the same waters that flow <u>out</u> (v. 38).

The Spirit flows <u>in</u> and brings salvation and flows <u>out</u> and bears fruit.

What flows out of your life? Is what flows out of your life the sewage of sin or the living waters of the Spirit?

v. 39
The Spirit is promised to be **"poured out"** on the thirsty.

Isaiah 44:3
For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:

Isaiah 58:11
And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

Joel 2:28
And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

"Just as water satisfies thirsty and produces fruitfulness, so the Spirit of God satisfies the inner person and enables us to bear fruit" (Wiersbe, p. 318).

The Holy Spirit was "with" the disciples but was not yet "in" the disciples (Jn. 14:17) as He would be on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). From that day onward the precious Holy Spirit would baptize and indwell all who believe on Christ as Savior.

V. Those who rightly judged Jesus recognized that His Words were the words of the Messiah (v.40-46)

v. 40

"The prophet" – is the one Moses wrote about in Deut. 18:15

The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;

And in Deut. 18:18

I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

v. 41

While some believe and others doubt, so it is today – some acknowledge Jesus as Messiah and others don't investigate the matter and see that He did not originate in Galilee.

v. 42

Jesus fulfilled both Scriptures:

--He came from David's lineage and fulfilled 2 Sam. 7:12 (cp. Mt. 1:6, 20; Lk. 2:4; Rom. 1:3)

--He came from Bethlehem and fulfilled Micah 5:2 (cp. Mt. 2:6; Lk. 2:4).

v. 43

Even today Christ is divided over.

Those who don't believe are antagonistic to those who do. As Jesus said in Matthew 10:34-36 -

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. [35] For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. [36] And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.

v. 44

Some of the unbelievers wished (wanted) to grab Him and arrest Him, but could not, because His "Hour had not yet come" (v. 30).

v. 45

They return empty-handed.

VI. Those who misjudged Jesus based their judgment on the opinions of others (v.47-49)

v. 48
"So some of the people have believed on Jesus! So what? These common people know nothing about the Law anyway! Have any important people—like ourselves—believed on Him? Of course not!" (Wiersbe, p. 318).

They ask the question as if a "yes' answer would give credence to Jesus. We should not judge someone based solely on the evaluation of others. Just because the rulers of the Pharisees did not believe on Christ (with the exception of silent Nicodemus) did not mean that He was not true.

v. 49
What a proud and know-it-all statement the Pharisees make!

In actuality, the fact that the Pharisees knew the Law placed the curse on themselves.

VII. Those who rightly judged Jesus recognized that He deserved a fair hearing before anyone made up their mind about Him (v.50-51)

v. 51
The Mosaic Law forbade the condemnation of an innocent man (Exod. 23:1; Deut. 17:6).

They judged Jesus without evaluating the facts. They wouldn't hear Him, they wouldn't investigate what He was doing, but yet they were quick to pass condemning judgment on Him.

"You can hear the sarcasm and disdain in the reply of the rulers: 'Are you a lowly and despised Galilean too?' They refused to admit that Nicodemus was right in asking for a fair trial, but the only way they could answer him was by means of ridicule. This is an ancient debate trick: when you cannot answer the argument, attack the speaker." (Wiersbe, p 318).

Conclusion: v.52-53

Perhaps we could feel sorry for this misguided opponents of Jesus Christ. But people today commit the same blunder and permit their prejudices and superficial evaluations to blind them to the truth. Don't let it happen to you! (Wiersbe, p. 319).