

Subject: Why People Reject Christ

Scripture: John 7:1-36

In John 7 we see how Jesus was rejected and even hated by many people. The opposition was growing and getting stronger. This is evidence that supports what John wrote in the introduction to the Gospel:

John 1:10-11 ¹⁰ *He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. ¹¹ He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*

The world did not recognize Him and it did not receive Him. This has been the response of people through the ages and it is the same still today. We should not be surprised to see that Christ was rejected because God predicted it:

Isaiah 53:3 *He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

THE RECORD OF PEOPLE WHO REJECTED CHRIST

Before we come to the record in John 7, we have the statement in **John 5:18** *Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.* Only five chapters into the Gospel of John and people wanted to kill Him. Only four chapters into the Gospel of Luke we have the record that people wanted to kill Him after preaching His first sermon in His childhood home of Nazareth, **Luke 4:28-29** ²⁸ *And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, ²⁹ And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.*

People hated Him because of His claims, His violation of the Sabbath, and His preaching. In John 7 we see more examples of people who rejected Him:

- The Jews wanted to kill Jesus (vs. 1)
- Jesus' own brothers did not believe in Him (vs. 2-5)
- The world hated Jesus (vs. 7)

John 15:18-21 ¹⁸ *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. ¹⁹ If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. ²⁰ Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. ²¹ But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.*

THE REASONS WHY PEOPLE REJECTED CHRIST

- Some rejected Christ because of their religious pride and tradition (vs. 1, 16-24)

This was the main reason why the Jews hated Christ. He violated their rules and manmade interpretations of the law. They were outraged that He healed people on the Sabbath Day.

The Pharisees were the religious conservatives and they were sticklers for keeping their rules and regulations they built on the Old Testament law. The Sadducees were the religious liberals and they were in elite positions and very willing to compromise to gain political power and advantage with the Roman Empire.

As different as the Pharisees and Sadducees were, they came together and were united in their hatred for Christ. See **John 7:32**. Most of the chief priests were Sadducees. The Jewish leaders had this one thing in common: they wanted to hold on to their power and position and they saw Jesus as a real threat. Jesus told a parable to make this point in **Mark 12:1-12**.

- Some rejected Christ because they misunderstood His motives and methods (vs. 2-6)

His own family didn't believe in Him. They were skeptical of Him. If He was truly the Messiah He ought to be in the public spotlight. Why was He spending so much time in the small town of Galilee instead of Jerusalem, the capital city? They didn't understand that Jesus was on His Father's timetable and divine plan.

- Some rejected Christ because He exposed their sins (vs. 7)

His presence and His preaching convicted them of their sins. **John 3:19-20** ¹⁹ *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.* ²⁰ *For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.* In His preaching Jesus comforted the disturbed and He disturbed the comfortable. That's what all faithful preaching and teaching will do. **John 15:22-25** ²² *If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin.* ²³ *He that hateth me hateth my Father also.* ²⁴ *If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.* ²⁵ *But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.*

- Some rejected Christ because they were confused (vs. 10-12, 14-15)

Some said Jesus was a good man and some said He was a deceiver. They were all wrong. There's still a lot of confusion about who Jesus is. As C. S. Lewis said, we have three choices (a trilemma): Jesus is a liar, a lunatic, or Lord. These are the only choices we have. If He is not God He's not even good because He said, "He that has seen me has seen the Father." The Jewish leaders would not accept Him because He didn't have the right credentials.

- Some rejected Christ because they feared men (vs. 13)

The Jews threatened to excommunicate anyone who confessed Christ as the Son of God and Messiah. In John 9 Jesus healed a man who was born blind. The Jews were upset because Jesus healed him on the Sabbath. They found this man's parents and questioned them, but they would not confess Christ openly, **John 9:20-22** ²⁰ *His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind:* ²¹ *But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.* ²² *These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.*

- Some rejected Christ because they were ignorant of God's plan and relied on their limited human understanding (vs. 32-36)

Jesus looked beyond the rest of His earthly ministry, beyond His crucifixion and resurrection, to the time when He would ascend to the Father in heaven. He knew that God's ultimate plan would not and could not fail. A good many people are just like the Pharisees. They can only see things from their limited point of view and they dismiss the claims of Christ. They think they know so much, but they actually know so little. Many people reject Christ today because they have no idea that after He died, He rose from the dead, and then forty days later ascended to the Father's right hand in Heaven where He sits high above all others. Jesus is enthroned as King of Kings and Lord of Lords and He is just waiting on the Father's command to go and get His church.

APPLYING THIS MESSAGE TO YOUR LIFE

- Every person must either receive or reject Christ. There is no middle ground.

Jesus said: "He that is not with me is against me."

- Have you considered that your relationship with Christ on earth will have consequences in eternity?

The people who think so little of Christ now will have eternity to regret it.

- Are you willing to be closely identified with Christ in a world that rejects Him?