



Calvary of Albuquerque

To BELieve or Not to BELieve... - John 10:22-42

From the Series, Believe:879

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MESSAGE SUMMARY

"In all unbelief there are two things: a good opinion of one's self and a bad opinion about God."—Horatius Bonar. It's true, isn't it? Humanism is man-centered and rejects God's existence or His relevance. But Jesus appealed to two things: the plain evidence of His supernatural works and the testimony of those who witnessed them. Jesus here asserts His deity, and the reaction is predictable—some believed while others did not believe. Which camp do you fall into?

OUTLINE

- I. The Sinister Nature of Unbelief (vv. 22-39)
 - A. It Protects its True Nature
 - B. It Rejects the Narrowness of Christ
 - C. It Neglects the Testimony of Scripture
- II. The Simple Nature of Belief (vv. 40-42)
 - A. It Evaluates Objective Evidence
 - B. It Appreciates Subjective Testimony



Consider This:

1. What does Jesus use to support His claims? Why do you think this was not enough for the Pharisees? Is it enough for you?
2. What truth did Jesus plainly state in verse 30? Why would His audience react so violently to this statement? What do most of your friends say about Jesus?
3. Why was there such a different attitude toward Jesus when He went across the Jordan?

DETAILED NOTES

The Gospel of John could be marked with the warning label: "Unbelief is hazardous to your eternal health." To believe or not to believe is the central, vital question. Belief transports a person to ever-increasing realms of joy and glory; unbelief destroys all of that.

This passage closes off the public ministry of Jesus Christ. After this chapter ends, there will be no more public speeches or public miracles, but Jesus spends His time before he leaves nurturing His disciples and preparing them. It is a fitting close to chapter 10; it sums up the book to this point. The theme is unbelief versus belief.

There are two groups in this passage: the group at the Temple in Jerusalem, who come to Jesus but don't believe. They disregard Jesus' miracles and the testimony about Him; and the group in the wilderness where Jesus began His ministry, who believe Him and regard His miracles and the personal testimony. It is a contrast between unbelief and belief. Unbelief is mentioned eighteen times, belief only three times. It is a ratio of reality: the majority of people do not believe.

There is a two-month gap between vv. 21-22. The setting in v. 21 is the Feast of Tabernacles in the fall. Now the setting is the Feast of Dedication in the winter. John mentions this because it is winter meteorologically and it is winter spiritually. The people have an icy, hardened attitude toward Christ. The Feast of Tabernacles is known to us as Hanukkah. It is a non-biblical feast established between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Antiochus Epiphanes (I-the great one) sought to impose Greek language and culture on the world. He tried to force Israel to abandon Jewish beliefs and culture, but they resisted. In 170 BC he conquered Jerusalem, slaughtered a pig on the Altar of Sacrifice and spread its juices throughout the temple. He set up an idol to Zeus and demanded the people worship it, and he put an end to circumcision and the festivals. After three years, the Jewish priests under Mattathias, (the Maccabees), threw out the Syrians, regained their independence, and reestablished the correct worship in the temple. The legend is that the flagon of oil that held one-day worth of oil for the menorah lasted for eight days. This was the last great deliverance for the Jews; it was the kind of messiah they were looking for: a political messiah who would overthrow their enemies.

- I. The Sinister Nature of Unbelief (vv. 22-39)

- A. It Protects its True Nature (disguises itself as something else)
 - 1. They call their condition doubt
 - a. They want to hear His claims (Son of God, God in human flesh, Messiah) again so they can kill him (they pick up stones, and try to seize him.)
 - b. Doubt is looking for answers
 - i. everyone struggles with doubts about spiritual faith
 - ii. *"Find out how seriously a believer takes his doubts and you have the index of how seriously he takes his faith"* -Os Guinness
 - iii. Doubt is not the opposite of faith
 - iv. Doubt presupposes faith
 - v. Doubt works its way through difficulties and finds a faith that is reasonable and satisfying
 - 2. Jesus calls it unbelief
 - a. Unbelief doesn't care about the answers
 - b. Unbelief decides against faith
 - c. Keeps away at all costs what would produce faith
 - d. "There are none so blind as those who will not see." -Matthew Henry
 - B. It Rejects the Narrowness of Christ
 - 1. They picked up stones to stone Him
 - a. Jesus "For which of the good works" (καλὰ- kala - noble wonderful beautiful)
 - b. Because He made Himself out to be God.
 - i. Bread of life- John 6:35
 - ii. Living Water- John 7:37
 - iii. Light of the World- John 8:12
 - iv. "Before Abraham was I AM" (John 8:58)
 - v. "If you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins" (John 8:24)
 - 2. People don't want to believe Jesus is the only way
 - a. 67% of the world's population do not believe in Christ
 - b. Analogy of God on the mountaintop
 - i. Convenient for unbelievers
 - ii. No founders of religions would accept it (John 14:6)
 - iii. Systems fundamentally disagree with each other
 - iv. Cannot be true
 - c. Analogy of a maze
 - i. Different paths lead in different directions
 - ii. Only one correct path
 - d. Jesus said "Enter through the narrow gate" (Matthew 7:13-14) few find it because the path is too narrow for most
 - C. It Neglects the Testimony of Scripture
 - 1. Jesus answered them with the Word -Psalm 82:6
 - 2. Jesus regards the unity and inerrancy of Scripture
 - 3. How the unbelieving world regards the Bible: a good book, but wouldn't want to live according to it.
- II. The Simple Nature of Belief (vv. 40-42)
- A. It Evaluates Objective Evidence
 - 1. Untainted by bias
 - 2. Jesus performed signs and miracles
 - 3. Not a blind leap in the dark (like Soren Kierkegaard claimed)
 - 4. Based on evidence -Hebrews 11:1
 - a. Uniqueness of the Bible (66 books, over 40 authors, over 1500 years, about controversial subjects, yet all in agreement)
 - b. Fulfilled Prophecy
 - c. Resurrection of Jesus Christ
 - B. It Appreciates Subjective Testimony - Of John the Baptist
 - 1. "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" John 1:29b
 - 2. Called Jesus the Son of God
 - 3. Said Jesus existed before John
 - 4. That they were cousins adds weight to his testimony

Christianity is a universal experience. For two thousand years Jesus Christ has been changing lives. Christianity is narrow. It is a personal relationship with a personal God.

Greek terms: καλὰ- kala - noble, wonderful, beautiful

Figures Referenced: Matthias Maccabeus; Antiochus Epiphanes; Judas Maccabeus; Os Guinness; Matthew Henry; Soren Kierkegaard; Frank Morrison

Cross References: Psalm 82:6; John 1:29; John 6:35; John 7:37; John 8:12; John 8:24; John 8:58; John 14:6; Hebrews 11:1