

Series: John

Title: Division with One Exception

Text: John 7: 40-43

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John 7: 43: So there was a division among the people because of him.

Notice the people's comments concerning the Lord Jesus. These were people who had the old testament scriptures. They knew some facts the scripture declares concerning the Messiah that God would send.

THE PROPHET

John 7: 40: Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet.

Some said the Lord was the Prophet. Indeed, Christ is THE Prophet. Christ said, "My Father is true!" And God the Father promised by his immutable word that God would send his Son who would be the Prophet of his people. These people knew some things that the scripture declared.

Deuteronomy 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. 19 And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require *it* of him.

The Lord declared in John 7 that his doctrine was God the Fathers who sent him. God said, the Prophet will preach my words in my name. This is the fruit whereby we know Christ is the Prophet sent of God.

John 7: 18: He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

Christ is the Prophet who spoke his Father's word giving him all the glory. So do the Lord's preachers. But false prophets are not sent of Christ. Therefore, they do not give all the glory to Christ alone. They give glory to the sinner. False preachers make the gate wider than Christ alone. They put something in the sinner's hands to contribute to salvation. Christ says plainly this is how we know the true from the false. The test is who gets the glory in the word they preach? Christ said to the Pharisees, to false preachers,

Matthew 12: 34: O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. 35: A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

But because THE Prophet speaks effectually through those he sends he said, "I shall give you pastors after mine own heart which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding" (Jer 3:15).

The Lord is the Prophet who makes his word effectual in our hearts. Many titles are given to the Lord as Prophet—speaking of his power to make his word effectual. He is the Counsellor

(Isa 9:9), the Messenger of the Covenant; the Angel of the covenant. (Mal 3:3), the Lamp (2 Sam 22:19), the Morning Star (Rev 22:16), the Light. These titles belong to him as Prophet because he opens the scriptures to us and opens our hearts to receive his word.

As he spoke to the disciples on the road to Emmaus “Then opened he their understanding” (Lu 24:45). He not only opened the Scriptures but opened their understanding. Christ said, ‘I am the Lord thy God, who teacheth thee to profit’ (Isa 48:17). He said,

Luke 4: 18: The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, 19: To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. 20: And he closed the book, and he gave *it* again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21: And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. 22: And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph’s son?

He sent Paul who preached to Lydia, “Whose heart the Lord opened” (Acts 16:14). But the Lord said of all false prophets, “I did not send them. They shall not profit this people at all!” (Jer 23:32) False prophets produce fruit who glory in their will and works. The fruit Christ produces through his true messenger are sinners saved by grace who glory in Christ alone. This is why Paul said, "We do not need letters of commendation from men—ye are our epistle, manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart” (2 Cor 3: 1-5). The fruit which THE Prophet produces through his messenger are sinners made willing by his power to believe on the Lord Jesus alone and give God all the glory! Paul said if you want proof the Spirit speaking through our preaching then examine yourselves whether Christ be in you or you be reprobate. Those Christ gives life through the gospel are the fruit by which we know THE Prophet’s true preachers.

THE CHRIST

John 7: 41: Others said, This is the Christ...31: And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this *man* hath done?

These also knew something of the scriptures. They heard of the miracles he did in healing the impotent, giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf and so on. They heard him speak of rivers of water in the hearts of them that come to him. They knew Isaiah’s prophecy.

Isaiah 35: 5: Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. 6: Then shall the lame *man* leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. 7: And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, *shall be* grass with reeds and rushes.

They were right, Jesus is the Christ, the anointed of God. God the Father chose him in eternity and anointed him the Christ entrusting his elect to Christ to save (Is 42: 1). When Christ was baptized he was anointed with the Holy Spirit (Mt 3:16; John 3: 34). He is Christ to whom God the Father gave power to lay down his life in place of his people under the law then raise it again as a Man.

John 10: 15: As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep....17: Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. 18: No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father. 19: There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings.

OBJECTIONS

John 7: 41:...But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? 42: Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?

These quoted the scriptures they knew

Isaiah 11: 1: And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

Micah 5: 2: But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting.” (Micah 5:2 AV)

Indeed, Christ came of the seed of David and he was born in the town of Bethlehem. Both are according to God’s word. This they could have easily known. But more than these, Christ fulfilled all the law and the prophets. All the law and the prophets bear witness he is their fulfillment.

John 7: 43 So there was a division among the people because of him.

ENMITY

John 7: 44: And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him. 45: Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him? 46 The officers answered, Never man spake like this man. 47: Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived? 48: Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?

Some were ready to vent the enmity of their hearts. The officers said, “Never man spake like this man.” The Pharisee’s answered that if none of us wise rulers or Pharisees believed on him then you should not! They said this common people know not the law. They are cursed. Don’t let these ignorant common folk deceive you. They know not the scriptures. This is a condemned people. This was pride and enmity!

What was the problem in all these folks? They knew something of the scriptures. But none came to Christ believing on him. He said if they had come to him they would know! But they would not!

ONE EXCEPTION

John 7: 50 Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,) 51 Doth our law judge *any* man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth? 52

They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet. 53 And every man went unto his own house.

Nicodemus does not yet identify with Christ but this is an indication something is going on in Nicodemus. Christ said,

John 6: 37: All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out....44: No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

The parenthesis reminds us that Nicodemus had come to Christ. There is the difference. This is why he spoke up for Christ and these others merely argued over scripture. It appears God had begun a work of grace in Nicodemus in spirit and in truth. Christ said if any man is willing to come to me, he shall know the doctrine. Christ the Prophet had preached the doctrine to Nicodemus.

Nicodemus heard Christ preach the necessity of the new birth

John 3: 3: Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4: Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5: Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6: That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7: Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8: The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

He preached to Nicodemus Christ's substitutionary death and salvation by faith in him

John 3: 14: And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16: For God so loved the world, [after this manner: in Christ, by the blood and righteousness of Christ] that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17: For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18: He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 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 reprov'd. 21: But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

Nicodemus did not identify with Christ yet. But he interjected a word to turn them from Christ. And God blessed it—*"And every man went unto his own house."* This indicates Christ had begun a work in him. Later, Nicodemus will beg the body of the Lord to prepare his body for burial.

THE DIFFERENCE

The difference between those who divide with each other over Christ and those who are united by faith in him is the difference God's grace makes.

God's grace chose them and predestinated them to be conformed to the image of Christ. God the Father draws them to Christ. That is why Nicodemus came to Christ. These others did not come to Christ by the Father. The Holy Spirit regenerates those the Father draws and Christ our Prophet, Priest and King makes them to know him in spirit and in truth. These others knew scripture. Nicodemus had met the Savior.

Christ the Prophet makes those who come to him know his person and work. He is the Christ, the Prophet of God, the King of his people. The Lord Jesus laid down his life for the sheep. He redeemed his people from all iniquity. Christ is all our Righteousness. This is why he said those who eat Christ the Bread, believing on him, shall never hunger or thirst. Yet, he also blessed is he that hungers and thirsts after Christ our Righteousness. Is that a contradiction?

If someone promised to feed you the rest of your days then you would never hunger again. You could rest knowing that. But every day you would wake up hunger and thirsty.

God makes his people come to Christ and out of their belly flows river of living water. The Bread of Life makes us never hunger and thirst again. He becomes our Sabbath rest so we have full provision and acceptance with God in him forever!

Yet, at the same time he makes us hunger and thirst for Christ our Righteousness every day. Therefore, every day we come to him and he fills us. He said, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." Come to Christ—partake of the Bread and live! And never stop coming to Christ! He alone is the Bread of life!

Amen!