

Would We Have Believed Them?

TEXT: Matt. 23:29-31

INTRODUCTION:

- A. HAD WE LIVED IN THEIR DAY, HOW WOULD WE HAVE RECEIVED JOHN THE BAPTIST, PETER OR PAUL?
- B. MOST OF US WOULD SAY, "OF COURSE, FOR WE RECEIVE THEM NOW!"
 - 1. But maybe that is because what they taught has become socially acceptable.
 - 2. More often than not, their teaching is presented in a non-offensive manner
 - 3. But how was the truth originally presented? By what manner of men?
- C. IF WE HAD BEEN THERE, WOULD WE HAVE RECEIVED THEM?

I. THE HARSH HERMIT, JOHN THE BAPTIST?

- A. PREACHED IN THE WILDERNESS, FORCING PEOPLE TO COME OUT TO HEAR HIM(**Matt. 3:1-2**).
- B. DRESSED HIMSELF CRUDELY AND ATE BUGS(**Matt. 3:4**).
- C. COURAGEOUS AND SOMETIMES HARSH (**Matt. 11:7-8; 3:5-7**).
- D. I DOUBT WE WOULD...
 - 1. IF we balk at having to travel some distance to study God's Word!
 - a. As is sometimes the case today (e.g., going twice on Sundays, etc.)
 - b. But consider what Jesus taught in **Matt. 12:42**.
 - 2. IF we tend to judge people by the clothes they wear!
 - a. It is easy to be affected by the "Dress For Success" philosophy
 - b. But we need to remember God's perspective(**1 Sam. 16:7; Jas. 2:1-4**).
 - 3. IF we get upset or offended when a preacher points out our faults!
 - a. Some would have preachers never preach "negative" sermons.
 - b. Jesus knew some occasions call for strong measures(**Matt. 23:13-15**).

II. THE IGNORANT HYPOCRITE?

- A. PETER'S LACK OF EDUCATION AND REFINEMENT SHOWED(**Acts 4:13**).
- B. HE DENIED JESUS THREE TIMES(**Matt. 26:69-75**).
- C. HIS OPEN HYPOCRISY SPLIT THE BROTHERHOOD(**Gal. 2:11-13**).
- D. IT IS UNLIKELY...
 - 1. IF we demand a formal education of our preacher!
 - a. In some churches, a preacher is required to have a degree.
 - b. The wrong kind of learning can be a dangerous thing(**1 Cor. 1:18-29**).
 - 2. IF we aren't willing to forgive who fail us when they truly repent(**Matt. 3:8**).
 - a. The responsibility of the teacher is heavy(**James 3:1; 1 Tim. 4:16**).
 - b. What Jesus taught Peter about forgiveness(**Matt. 18:21-22**).

III. THE DULL TURNCOAT?

- A. PAUL HAD BEEN A BLASPHEMER, A PERSECUTOR(**1 Tim. 1:13**).
- B. HE WAS NOT A FLUENT SPEAKER(**1 Cor. 2:3-4**).
- C. HIS PHYSICAL APPEARANCE WAS WEAK(**2 Cor. 10:10**).
- D. WE WOULD NOT HAVE KINDLY RECEIVED PAUL...
 - 1. IF we hold a person's pre-Christian life against them!
 - a. Some don't believe in the power of the gospel to transform lives.
 - b. But consider what it did for the people of Corinth(**1 Cor. 6:9-11**).
 - 2. IF we don't care to hear preachers whose sermon presentation lacks "polish"!

- a. Many people will not go to hear preachers who may be young, inexperienced, or who are not eloquent.
 - b. Yet "smooth words and flattering speech" can oftentimes be used to deceive(**Rom. 16:17-18**).
3. IF we tend to judge people by their physical appearance (size, weight, etc.)!
- a. So people first judged Abraham Lincoln.
 - b. We need to remember God's perspective on things(**1 Sam. 16:7**).

CONCLUSION:

- A. HOW WE RECEIVE TEACHERS TODAY IS AN INDICATION OF HOW WE WOULD HAVE RECEIVED SUCH AS JOHN, PETER, PAUL, AND EVEN JESUS(**Matt. 13:54-58**).
- B. WE MUST LOOK BEYOND THE MESSENGER TO THE MESSAGE (**1 Cor. 2:4-5; 3:3-9**).
- C. THE GOSPEL IS THE POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION(**Rom. 1:16-17**).