

## **“What Do YOU Think About the Christ?”**

### **Intro:**

1. Ever met a celebrity or other person of importance? We will not have the opportunity to meet Jesus *in person* in this life.
2. We must reach our conclusions about Him based solely upon eyewitness accounts.

### **1. Reactions of His Contemporaries**

- A. Nathanael, a stranger (Jn 1:46-49) - Son of God; King of Israel. Nazareth, His hometown (Lk 4:16-30) - Murderous wrath.
- B. Various reactions:
  1. Some worshiped; others asked Him to leave them - Lk 8:37.
  2. Some thought He was good, others a deceiver - Jn 7:12.
  3. Others criticized His education, His hometown, His popularity. They tried to entrap Him with difficult questions; they attributed His miracles to the Devil.
- C. Jesus left ***no neutral ground***. We will either believe in Him unto salvation or disbelieve unto our peril. *“If you do not believe that I am He ...”* (Jn 8:24).

### **2. Why Jesus Is Rejected By Many, Accepted By Some**

- A. He challenges their **desires**. Jesus does not leave us free to follow our own desires and live to satisfy ourselves.
  1. Jesus reaches into our hearts and challenges our innermost desires - Mt 5:21-22, 27-28. These desires determine behavior - Mt 15:18-20.
  2. Some, however, recognize that unbridled desires and undisciplined lives lead to disaster and look to the strength and encouragement of Jesus to take control of their lives. In so doing they find happiness, substance and true self-esteem.
- B. He challenges their **wills**. He does this by claiming to have the full authority of heaven and thus the right to command - Mt 28:18-20.
  1. The standard of acceptance before God is *obedience* to Christ - Heb 5:9. *“Why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do the things which I say?”* (Lk 6:46).

2. Many people are too stubborn, hard-headed and self-willed to take orders from *anyone* - even God Himself. Those who resist authority will suffer the disfavor of authority (teacher, law, parents, boss, etc.).
  3. Some, however, acknowledge the divine nature of Jesus and His right to order our lives as He sees fit. **But more importantly**, they understand that His law and will *is always for our good*.
- C. He challenges their **priorities**. Jesus forces us to think about each aspect of life, each word we speak, each day we live, each obligation placed upon us, each person we meet - **and** where we are headed eternally.
1. He instructs us to “seek first the kingdom” - Mt 6:33; “lay up treasures in heaven” - Mt 6:20; make peace with enemies - Mt 5:23-24; honor our mates - Mt 5:31-32.
  2. These things directly challenge “conventional wisdom” and Western values.
  3. Our society is suffering from misplaced priorities. Sex more important than marriage; recreation more important than responsibility; power more important than service.

### 3. The Greatest Danger of All

- A. Perhaps the greatest and most subtle danger comes from those who wish to use Jesus for their own purposes. Some wanted a bread-supplier, others wanted a rallying point for insurrection, still others simply wanted to be amused by a miracle.
- B. Today, some “use” Jesus for humanitarian purposes only; some stress His love at the expense of justice and punishment; others use Him as a pretext for entertainment.
- C. The danger is that these people never critically analyze their relationship with Him and see their errors.

**Conclusion:** “What Do **YOU** think about the Christ?” (Mt 22:42). True belief in God must result in full acceptance of Jesus - Jn 8:42; 1 Jn 5:1.