

A DIVISION BECAUSE OF HIM

JOHN 7:40-43 • TV154B

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“Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, of a truth this is the Prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? So there was a division among the people because of him. So there was a division among the people because of him.”

I’m speaking today from the **Book of John Chapter 7**. Now here is the Scripture, **John 7: verse 40 through verse 43**.

It says: *“Many of the people, therefore, when they heard his saying, said of a truth; this is that Prophet.”* Now, they were referring to the prophecy of Moses who said, *“God would send a prophet, raise up a prophet from among the people, and him ye shall hear.”*

Moses was talking about the Christ, the Messiah. When our Lord spoke, many of the people said, *“of a truth; this is that Prophet; this is the one of whom Moses spake.”* Others said, *“This is the Christ; (this is the Christ, the Redeemer, the anointed one, the Redeemer of Israel).”*

Some said, *“Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Isn’t it written in the scriptures that he would be the son of David, born in Bethlehem?”* So; now listen, *“there was a division among the people because of him.”*

There was a division among the people; they couldn’t agree. Some believed and some didn’t believe. Some said, *“This is that prophet.”*

Some said, *“This is the Christ.”* Others said, *“is not this carpenter’s son and we know his mother. We know his brothers and sisters; he can’t be the Christ. Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?”* Do you see what I am saying? There was a division.

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Now; no true believer enjoys division; no true believer enjoys conflict, strife, and discord. Paul said in **Romans 12**: *“If it be possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men.”*

We want and covet that blessing, to live peaceably with all men. We do not like strife, division, and conflict, especially in matters of faith.

In **Romans 14:19**, Paul said again; *“Let us, therefore, follow after those things which make for peace and the things wherewith one may edify one another, (not do battle, not raise issues). God has called us to peace, love, and unity.*

We are commanded to turn the other cheek. We are commanded to go the second mile. We are commanded to love our enemies. We are commanded to pray for all men. We are commanded to be kind and gentle, *“forgiving one another even as God, for Christ’s sake, hath forgiven us.”*

However, now I want you to listen; I will be able to answer some questions for you today if you will listen. However, we are warned again, and again, in the Scriptures to expect conflict and division and be prepared, not only for division and conflict and strife, but hatred, out and out hatred and persecution, for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Our Lord said in **Matthew 10:34**: *“Do not think that I am come to send peace on this earth. I came not to send peace but a sword. I have come to set at variance a mother and a daughter, a father and a son, and a man’s enemies shall be those of his own household.”*

Those are the words of our Lord himself. Listen to Him in **John 16:2**; he is warning His disciples so they will not be offended when these things come to pass. He said, *“They will put you out of the synagogues (and the temples and churches).”*

“Yea; the time will come,” and now here is the conflict, not with the world, not with those outside, but those in religious circles. *“Yea, the time will come when whosoever killeth you will think that he does God a favor.”*

There is one important thing to remember: Where division and strife and conflict occur, there is one point, most important and emphatic; I stress it as strongly as I can, one important thing, and we must remember; we are not the issue.

We must not become the issue. We must not act as if we were the issue. We must not act like martyrs and feel sorry for ourselves and seek pity because we are not the issue.

What did the Scripture say that I read a moment ago? *“There was a division (and underline these three words) because of him.”* Christ is the issue; it’s not you. The issue was here before you were born and it will be here when you are dead.

I am not the issue. Men aren’t angry with me, they are angry with God. Men do not hate my words; they hate His words. Christ is the issue. His truth causes the division, not my speaking it.

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Listen to **John 15:21**: Christ said, *“But all these things will they do unto you for my name’s sake because; (it’s a good thing to listen when He says “because,” isn’t it), they know not God who sent me.”*

That’s the issue; I am not the issue and you are not the issue, Christ is. Men do not hate you. You are not worthy of their time; they hate Christ. *“There was a division because of him.”*

Listen to this now, the division and hatred was not so much for what He did; that is not the question. Healing the sick; somebody was always talking about the world hates those who heal; no they don’t, no they don’t; it’s not the issue.

Healing is not the issue, speaking in tongues is not the issue. Doing good works is not the issue. Sending missionaries is not the issue. They didn’t hate Christ for what He did; they hated Christ because of what He said and what He taught.

I can show you that; I can make good on that; now you listen to this. The religionist does not despise Jesus Christ for healing the sick or feeding the hungry or even for raising the dead. They don’t care if He raises the dead.

The world will not receive His words, His proof. That is what brought the anger; that is what brought the hatred; that is what brought down the wrath of the religionist’s upon His head.

In **John 8:37**, He said; *“My word hath no place in you.”* In **Matthew 7:28**, the people were astonished at his doctrine. They weren’t astonished in His deeds but in His doctrine; that is what offended them.

Do you know the reason most preacher’s messages are not offensive today? They are not saying anything. They are doing good things, good works, humanitarian efforts and so-forth, but they are not saying anything (they are even being ignored).

In **Luke 4:28**, *“When they heard these words they were filled with wrath,”* when they heard His words. That is what made them angry. **John 6:60** says, *“When they heard this they said, that’s a hard saying, who can hear it?”*

Thousands of them had been following; he fed 5,000 men, not counting the women and children. They followed Him all the way across the sea and He said, *“I know why you are following me; you ate of the loaves and you were filled.”*

He began to preach and they all left, every one of them. When they heard this they said, *“This is a hard saying.”* From that time in **John 6:66**, *“From that time many of his disciples walked no more with him.”* It was what He said that offended them.

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Am I sufficiently emphasizing this point? I am making my best effort. **John 10:19:** listen; *“There was a division among the people for these sayings and many of them said, (when he finished preaching), he has a devil; and is mad, why hear ye him.”*

They weren't calling him a devil when He was healing the sick or feeding the hungry but when He began to preach, they said, *“he has a devil; he is mad (He is insane).”*

Let's look carefully this morning at what Christ said. I want to know what it is that brought down the anger and wrath of these people upon Him to such an extent. What is it that brought forth the anger of this religious multitude?

Perhaps it is the same today. Perhaps if I said what He said I would get the same treatment because He said, *“If they hear not me, they won't hear you.”* He said, *“You go into all the world and preach my gospel.”*

Men haven't changed. God's Word hasn't changed. So, if I say what Christ said, then it may be that I will get the same treatment. He said, *“Marvel not my brethren, if the world hate you, they hated me before they ever hated you.”*

“If the world loves you, woe unto you if all men speak well of you;” Paul said, *“To please men you are not the servant of Christ.”*

Our Lord said, *“Whosoever shall be ashamed of me; (now listen to this), whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, in this sinful and adulteress generation, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father and the holy angels.”*

Let's look in His Word and find out; what did He say? Now, do you understand what I have said thus far? I believe you do; it's not what He did; they didn't get angry with Him for healing, or for raising the dead, or for feeding the multitude; they were astonished at His sayings.

There was a division because of these sayings. When they heard these things, *“they walked no more with him.”* When they heard these things they said, *“This is a hard saying.”* When they heard these words, they said; *“he has a devil.”*

Ok, **John 10:31;** listen to this: *“Then the Jews took up stones to stone him.”* Now brethren, when you get ready to stone a man; can you imagine this, and these were religious men; these were men who held offices in religious circles.

They reached down; they got so angry and so beside themselves and so filled with wrath that they actually reached down on the ground and picked up huge stones and were going to stone Jesus Christ. They were going to stone Him, dash his brains out on the pavement with stones.

What in the world had He said? The lines evidently were drawn pretty straight. The hatred had reached a fever pitch. What had He said? What brought forth this wrath? Well, let's go back and see.

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In **John 10**, back in **verse 23 or 24**, they said to Him; they baited Him; *“If you be the Christ, tell us plainly.”* He said, *“I told you, and didn’t believe me. You didn’t believe me because you are not of my sheep. My sheep hear my voice and they follow me and I give them eternal life and they shall never perish.”*

“My Father which gave them me is greater than all. No man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. You see; I and my Father are one.”

Then, read that next verse, **verse 31**, *“Then they took up stones to stone him.”* What did He say? He said, *“I and my Father are one.”*

Now, they took up stones to stone Him and Christ turned to them and said, *“many good works have I done among you. For which of these do you stone me? I want to know for which of the good works that I have done unto you do you stone me?”*

They held their stones in their hands and they said: *“We are not stoning you for good works; that is not why we are stoning you. Don’t accuse us of being against good works; we are for morality, we are for religion, we are for all of these good things.”*

But, *“I will tell you why we are stoning you, it’s because you are a man and you claim to be God, and a man cannot be God.”* That is what He said; *“I and my Father are one.”*

The world didn’t believe then and it doesn’t believe now; the world never will believe that Jesus of Nazareth is God almighty. A Son of God, yes, a messenger of God, yes, a good man, yes, a moral, reformer, yes, a Messiah of a sort, yes, but not God.

“God can’t be a man” that is what they say. *“God in human flesh;”* we don’t believe that, we don’t believe it. That is what the Word of God says. Now, let me show you!

The Scripture says that Jesus Christ is none other than God himself down here on the earth in human flesh. That is what the Bible says. It says in **Isaiah 7:14**: *“Behold, the Lord himself shall give you a sign; a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son and thou shall call his name Immanuel, (which is interpreted by Matthew), God with us.”* That is what it says.

Isaiah 9:6 says; *“Unto us a child is born, (a little baby boy, a child, a Son of man, a Seed of woman); unto us a son is given, (not born, a Son who already existed, is given) and his name, (the name of that child and that son, in one), shall be called: Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”*

That is what the Bible says about Jesus Christ. It says in **John 1**: *“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God and all things were made by him. Without him was not anything made that was made and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us: And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”*

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The angel said, *“Mary; you are going to have a son.”* She said, *“I can’t; I don’t know a man.”* The angel said *“you are going to have a son and that holy thing, (and there is no description for it; it is a holy thing), which is born of you shall be called the Son of God.”*

The angel said to the shepherds, *“Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is none other than Christ the Lord.”*

In **1 Timothy 3:16** it says; *“Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in human flesh.”* Jesus Christ said He is God. They took up stones to stone him.

“You can be Jesus Christ; you can be anything you want to but you can’t be God. You can be a good fellow and you can be a great teacher. You can be a healer and you can be a moral reformer. You can do whatever you want to but you are not going to be God. We won’t put up with that.”

The Father said He’s God. The Father said when He was baptized; *“This is my Son in whom I am well pleased.”* The Father said in **Hebrews 1: verse 8**, *“Unto the Son thy throne O God is forever.”*

Paul said that He is God when He left the elders at Ephesus. He said, *“Feed the church of God which he purchased with his own blood;”* whose blood, God’s blood? God has no blood; He does when he is in human flesh. The angels said that He is God.

The matter is so serious, my friend; here’s how serious it is; if Jesus Christ is not God almighty manifested in human flesh, incarnate; he’s the biggest liar that ever walked on this earth.

Preacher; “doesn’t that scare you to say things like that?” No sir, no sir, not at all! If He’s not God He is an imposter; He is a liar. He is an evil man because He said; *“I and my Father are one.”*

Do you see? That is what made them angry then and that is what makes men angry now. If He is not God we are idolaters and everybody who prays to Him and in His name, everybody who worships in the name of Jesus Christ is an idolater.

You might as well worship a golden calf if He is not God because God said, *“Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not bow down before them. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.”* If He’s not God the Redeemer, *“we are yet in our sins.”*

It is serious! These men knew it was serious and that is the reason they got so angry. Jesus Christ is God almighty, very God of very God, the Son of man and the Son of God, God in human flesh.” That’s the way we are saved. As God, He satisfied and as man He suffered.

Secondly: **Luke Chapter 4: 28 through 30**, now listen to this: *“And all that were in the synagogue when they heard these things they were filled with wrath.”*

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They were in the synagogue; they were in church on the Sabbath morning. This was a gang of worshippers which turned into a lynch mob; that is what it turned into. *“When they heard these things they were filled with wrath and they rose up and thrust Jesus Christ out of their city; (we don’t even want you in our city).”*

They led him to a cliff on which the city was built that *“they might cast him down head long.”* They wanted to murder the Lord Jesus Christ. They were angry at Him.

What did the Master say that brought forth from these Sabbath morning worshippers, these people who had assembled in the temple to worship God and read the Scriptures? What did Christ say that brought forth such terrible wrath from these good, moral, religionists?

Well, they were gathered that Sabbath morning to hear Him speak. He had come back to Nazareth where He was brought up. *“As his custom was, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath Day.”* He rose up to speak; He read the Scriptures in **Isaiah 61**: He said; *“This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.”*

Let’s look at these people. They met together to go through their rituals. They met together to go through their ceremonies. They met together to go through their traditions of religion. They were Jews and they were Israelites.

They had the law; they had the Word of God. They had the prophets, they had the heritage, they had the traditions and they had all of the ceremonies and they had all of these things.

Because they had them, they felt that they had a claim on God. They felt that God owed them His blessing. They were religious. Their mothers and fathers were religious. They had built that temple and those synagogues.

They had kept the Sabbath Day. They had given their tithes. They had obeyed the laws that they liked and they had gone through the motions of religion and they were Jews; they were Israelites. It was like we are Presbyterians, Baptists, Catholics, or something else; we are religious people.

So, when our Lord stood up to preach, He told them that salvation is not in heritage; it’s not in where mom and daddy worship. Salvation is not in ceremony, in sacrifice. Salvation is not in keeping Holy Days and paying tithes.

Salvation is not in rituals and tradition. Salvation is by the grace of God. It is a gift of a sovereign God who gives His mercy *“to whom he will.”* Who a man is and what a man has and what a man does has no influence upon God’s mercy whatsoever.

It is a free gift which He will give to whom He will. No man has a claim on God or a corner on God. It’s mercy that God does anything for anybody. He gave these illustrations:

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He said unto them, these Israelites, recorded in **Luke 4**. *“But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; but unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.”* There were many widows in Israel in the days of the prophet. God didn’t feed any of them. He fed a Gentile woman who claimed nothing and He passed by every one of these Israelites who laid claim to all things.

He said again; *“And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.”* He went outside of the tribes of Israel and healed a Gentile, named Naaman.

“When they heard these things they were filled with wrath.” God owes us. Look what we have done for God. Wait a minute, Lord; *“I have preached in your name and cast out devils and done many wonderful works. Lord I thank you that I am not like other men. I tithe and fast twice a week and pay tithes of all that I have and give alms to the poor. I am not an adulterers; I’m not an extortioner. I’m not unjust. I’m not even like this publican; (I am an Israelite. I’m a Baptist; I’m a Catholic).”*

“God will show mercy to whom he will.” No man has a corner on God. Mercy is sovereignly bestowed; grace is sovereignly given. God doesn’t owe you anything. I take that back; He does, He does owe you something and He does owe me something!

“The wages of sin is death.” I have earned them and I deserve them. If I am not saved by the grace of God I am going to get them, too, *“the wages of sin death (eternal death).”* They were angry; they wouldn’t take that.

You see, sovereign mercy offends man’s pride; he won’t have it. God’s going to be obligated; he’s going to make God a valet and a servant, but God doesn’t owe you anything or me either.

All right; listen to **John 8:59**; here is another incident: *“Then took they up stones to stone him,”* again. Here’s that same wrath, that same hatred, so intense, that they wanted to kill the Lord Jesus again.

What brought out this anger? Do you know what brought it out? You ought to read the **8th chapter of John**. Our Lord wasn’t too tender in the **8th chapter of John** to these Pharisees.

Our Lord was always tender to the Publicans and harlots. He was always very severe with religious, self-righteous Pharisees. You check up on that and see if I’m not telling you the truth.

Here He is talking to a bunch of religious Pharisees that claimed they had a corner on God and He told them that they were sinners, sinners. He told them that they were in bondage to sin. They said, *“We’ve never been in bondage to anybody.”*

He said, *“You are in bondage to the law; you are in bondage to sin. You are of your father the devil. The works of the devil are what you do.”* That is what He said. It’s harsh but it is true.

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They said, *"We be not in bondage."* He said, *"If the Son shall make you free you shall be free indeed."* He told them that they were under the influence and the power of the devil and did not know God.

He said, *"You neither know me or my Father. I'm preaching the truth and you won't have it. Let another come in his own name and him you will receive because you are not of God."*

In other words, the Lord told them that they were sinners, double-dyed-sinners, under the power of Satan and under bondage to sin and the law and they needed mercy and deliverance and they wouldn't take it. *"They took up stones to stone him."*

But, I will tell you today, my friend, if you call people sinners they get offended; they are not sinners. One man told me one time, "Well; I'm not a bad sinner. I may be a sinner but I'm not bad." There's no other kind.

Do you mean there are good sinners? Sin is sin; sin is a transgression of God's law; *"To offend in one point is to be guilty of the whole law."*

All right, last of all: Finally they crucified Him. Finally they nailed Him to a cross. Finally they did what they had wanted to do all these years. He was delivered into their hands *"by the determinate council and foreknowledge of God."*

These wicked men with wicked hands crucified the Lord of glory. Why? Well, let me show you!

He said, *"My kingdom is not of this world."* In other words, in what character was He accused? They said, *"He said he is a king and we have no king but Caesar. We will not have this man reign over us."*

In what character was he mocked of the soldiers? Now, you think a moment. These soldiers took Him into the soldier's hall and they mocked Him and ridiculed Him, in what character? They mocked Him as king; they put a crown of thorns on His head.

They put a purple robe on His shoulders and a reed as a scepter in His hand. They bowed down in front of Him and mocked Him and said, *"Hail, king of the Jews."*

In what character was he paraded before Pilate? He was brought before Pilate and here was Pilate's question: *"Are you a king?"* The Master said, *"Thou sayest."*

In what character was He crucified? What was written above His cross in Latin, Hebrew, and Greek? *"This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."* My friends; He is the Saviour and He is the King. He's the Redeemer, He's the King of kings and Lord of lords!

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“We will not have this man reign over us.” He will not be your Saviour if He is not your King. We will and must bow down and own Him as our King, *“Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that he is Lord (the King) to the glory of God the Father!”*