

COMMUNION SERIES ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

## THE ONE PUBLIC SKEPTICS AND SECRET BELIEVERS MUST DEAL WITH

John 12:37-50

This passage marks the end of Jesus' public ministry. After this, all His words would be for the Twelve with Him, followed by His trial and crucifixion. Fittingly, our passage not only sums up everything Jesus has publicly taught about Himself; it also sums up the kind of responses He got, and until today receives. Which response is yours?

### 1. Beware of a kind of unbelief that hardens itself – till it reaches a point of no return (John 12:37-41)

- In trying to explain the paradox of persistent unbelief despite the messages and miracles of Christ, John quotes two passages from Isaiah (53:1; 6:10).
- It is possible to harden your heart to the place where you *cannot* believe (Romans 1:24-28; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12). Therefore we must believe while there is light. There comes a place where God will strengthen us in our decision, whether *for* Jesus or *against* Jesus. Ultimately, before God, we get what we want, and those who push Jesus away will not have to endure eternity with Him.

### 2. Beware of a kind of belief that refuses to prove itself – till it reaches a point of compromise (John 12:42-43).

"Yet at the same time, many even among the leaders believed in Him. But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved praise from men more than praise from God."

- Except for Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, there were leaders who maintained a distant attachment to Jesus, who believed in him in some sense, of whose faith the Pharisees knew nothing (John 7:48). Sadly, their faith was so weak that they would not take any step that would threaten their position in the synagogue; *they loved praise from men more than praise from God*, and therefore fell under Jesus' searing indictment (John 5:44), repeated here by John. They probably knew nothing of the new birth that could make them children of God (John 3:3, 5; 1:12, 13).

- Is it possible to be a secret follower of Jesus? Only temporarily; either the secrecy will cancel out the belief, or the belief will cancel out the secrecy.

### **3. Be Aware of the One who asks for our belief in Him. Whether you reject Jesus, secretly follow Him, or live unashamed of Him, you're never the same when you encounter Him. (John 12:44-50)**

Here are statements of self-disclosure from Jesus Himself. He is the One we must all reckon with:

#### **a) His Nature:**

- "When a man believes in Me, he also believes in the One who sent Me".
- "When he looks at Me, he sees the One who sent Me".

#### **b) His Purpose:**

- "I have come into the world as a Light, so that no one who believes in Me should stay in darkness".
- "I did not come to judge the world, but to save it" (John 3:17).

#### **c) The Effect of His Nature and Purpose on us:**

- "There is a judge for the one who rejects Me . . . that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day".

Why are people condemned by the words of Jesus when they reject it?

"For . . . the Father who sent Me commanded Me *what* to say and *how* to say it".

- "His command leads to eternal life".

#### **Final Thoughts:**

The reality of Jesus is such, that, He give us no ambiguity about our choices. We either take Him and His words completely by faith; or we reject Him completely. There is no middle ground. Some of those who try to straddle that middle ground and think they can be "secret believers" may find out they never were.

Let's be unashamed followers of Jesus Christ. There really is no other way to live!