



Four Reasons People Reject Jesus John 12:34-43

Introduction

We are currently making our way through the Gospel of John.

Last week in **John 12:31-33** we discovered Jesus is glorified through Hope.

Now is the judgment of this world. Now the ruler of this world will be cast out. ³²As for me, if I am lifted up from the earth I will draw all people to myself.” ³³He said this to indicate what kind of death he was about to die.
CSB

There is Hope in Jesus because:

Sin Demands Justice v.31a

Judgment makes us aware of sin
Judgment reveals the wages of our sin
Judgment reveals the payment for our sin

Satan Will Be Overthrown v.31b

The phrase “**cast out**” comes from the Greek word “**ekballow**” meaning to throw forcefully in a specified direction.

In this passage Scripture Jesus referred to His death on the cross where He would give His life as a ransom for our life. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead proves His sacrificial death paid the price of sin and crushed the power of satan and defeated the “ruler of the world.”

I Will Draw All People To Myself v.32

The phrase translated “**If I am lifted up**” was a phrase commonly referring to death by crucifixion on a Roman cross.

The phrase translated “**I will draw**” comes from the Greek word “**Elko**” meaning to bring to myself, to point out, to give a sign, to paint a picture, to show or strongly indicate.

Today we are moving on to the next section of John 12.

In **John 12:34-33** we will discover Four Reasons People Reject Jesus.

Scripture

Then the crowd replied to him, “We have heard from the law that the Messiah will remain forever. So how can you say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this Son of Man?”

³⁵ Jesus answered, “The light will be with you only a little longer. Walk while you have the light so that darkness doesn’t overtake you. The one who walks in darkness doesn’t know where he’s going.

³⁶ While you have the light, believe in the light so that you may become children of light.” Jesus said this, then went away and hid from them.

³⁷ Even though he had performed so many signs in their presence, they did not believe in him.

³⁸ This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet, who said: Lord, who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

³⁹ This is why they were unable to believe, because Isaiah also said:

⁴⁰ He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, so that they would not see with their eyes or understand with their hearts, and turn, and I would heal them.

⁴¹ Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke about him.

⁴² Nevertheless, many did believe in him even among the rulers, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, so that they would not be banned from the synagogue.

⁴³ For they loved human praise more than praise from God.” CSB

Quote Of The Day

“ . . . God’s revelation of himself is rejected far more often than it is accepted, is dismissed by far more people than embrace it, and has been either attacked or ignored by every major culture or civilization in which it has given its witness.” — Eugene Peterson

As stated on the Toys for Tots website: "The mission of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program is to collect new, unwrapped toys during October, November, and December each year, and distribute those toys as Christmas gifts to needy children in communities where the campaign is conducted." That being the case, it was surprising when “Toys for Tots” rejected a donation of 4,000 new, unwrapped toys heading into the 2006 Christmas season.

What was the reason for this rejection? The toys in question were battery-operated, talking Jesus dolls. The button-activated, bearded, Talking Jesus doll was dressed in hand-sewn cloth outfits and sandals. The talking Jesus doll recited Scripture verses, such as, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again" and "Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Bill Grein, vice president of the Toys for Tots program, said the charity chose to reject the Jesus dolls for several reasons. First, as a government entity, the Marines "don't profess one religion over another," Grein said. "We can't take a chance on sending a talking Jesus doll to a Jewish family or Muslim family.”

He also added that, "Kids want a gift for the holiday season that is fun.” Thankfully, this particular Christmas story had a happy ending. About a week after his initial decision to reject the toys, Mr. Grein sent the following e-mail to their manufacturer: "Having reconsidered your kind offer of several thousand dolls last week, the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation would like to receive them. We believe that with some effort we will be able to find homes for them all.” Citation: Associated Press, "Toys for Tots Rejects Talking Jesus Doll,” (11-14-06).

There is no doubt Jesus was and is a polarizing figure. As the central figure of Christianity, Jesus is revered by Christians as the Son of God and Savior of the world. Opinions about Jesus His virgin birth, life, ministry, teaching,

death on the cross and resurrection can vary between different religious traditions, cultures, and secular viewpoints. Many people reject Jesus as Messiah believing he was an ordinary, seemingly crazy, unimpressive man with a disruptive and delusional message.

In **John 12:34-43** we discover Four Reasons People Reject Jesus.

Four Reasons People Reject Jesus:

Disbelief
Spiritual Blindness
External Influence
Pride

Four Reasons People Reject Jesus:

1. Disbelief v.37

Even though he had performed so many signs in their presence, **they did not believe in Him.** CSB

Many of the people who lived in the presence of Jesus did not believe He was the Messiah!

You might say how can that happen? How could they not recognize the Messiah?

It happened to Elvis— Elvis Presley used to frequent Lil Thompson's Steakhouse in Tennessee. He was good friends with the owner who used to give him free food before he was famous. One night when he was at the height of his fame, the Steakhouse held the ultimate Elvis Presley impersonator contest. A large crowd arrived, including Elvis Presley himself. Elvis decided to take part and sat quietly at the back. Elvis said to Lil the owner with confidence, "I'm going to mash this." Lil was worried the place would go crazy when everyone realized Elvis was in the building. There was no need to worry. The people didn't go crazy, there was no mass hysteria because the people didn't recognize Elvis. Elvis sang one of his famous songs "Love Me Tender" and the response was less than

exciting, there was brief and underwhelming applause and the real Elvis third place in the Elvis Impersonator contest! Citation: Blog, “The True Complete Story of Mark Hanks,” 706UnionAvenue.com (Accessed 1/28/21)

That special evening the people missed the real Elvis Presley even though he was standing and singing right in front of them. . . If people could not recognize the real Elvis it is quite possible for us to miss who Jesus really is.

Many people did not believe Jesus was the Messiah because He was not the Messiah they were looking for.

Isaiah 53:1-3 “Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? ²He grew up before him like a young plant and like a root out of dry ground. **He didn’t have an impressive form or majesty that we should look at him, no appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of suffering who knew what sickness was. He was like someone people turned away from; he was despised, and we didn’t value him.**” CSB

There are several reasons why people do not believe Jesus is the Messiah.

Jesus was too ordinary and familiar—

Mark 6:1-6 “He left there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. ²When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished. ‘Where did this man get these things?’ they said. ‘What is this wisdom that has been given to him, and how are these miracles performed by his hands? ³Isn’t this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And aren’t his sisters here with us?’ So they were offended by him. ⁴Jesus said to them, ‘A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown, among his relatives, and in his household.’ ⁵He was not able to do a miracle there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. ⁶And **he was amazed at their unbelief.** He was going around the villages teaching.” CSB

People who reject Jesus because of unbelief don't really care who Jesus is.

When Americans are asked to check a box indicating their religious affiliation, 28% now check "none." A new study from Pew Research finds that the religiously unaffiliated is now the largest cohort in the U.S. They're more prevalent among American adults than Catholics (23%) or evangelical Protestants (24%). Researchers refer to this group as the "Nones." Back in 2007, Nones made up just 16% of Americans, but Pew's new survey of more than 3,300 U.S. adults shows that number has now risen dramatically. Pew asked respondents what they believe. The research organization found that most Nones believe in God or another higher power, but very few attend any kind of religious service.

They aren't all anti-religious. Most Nones say religion does some harm, but many also think it does some good. Most have more positive views of science than those who are religiously affiliated; however, they reject the idea that science can explain everything.

Pew also asked respondents what they believe. While many people of faith say they rely on scripture, tradition, and the guidance of religious leaders to make moral decisions, Pew found that Nones say they're guided by logic or reason when making moral decisions. And huge numbers say the desire to avoid hurting other people factors prominently in how they think about right and wrong.

Demographically, Nones also stand out from the religiously affiliated:

- Nones are young. 69% are under the age of fifty.
- They're also less racially diverse. 63% of Nones are white.
- The Nones are comprised of three distinct groups – atheists, agnostics, and those who describe themselves as "nothing in particular."

Citation: Jason DeRose, "Religious 'Nones' are now the largest single group in the U.S." NPR All Things Considered (1-24-24)

Ultimately every person who does not receive Jesus has their own reasons for their disbelief.

Job 21:25 describes the mindset of unbelief, "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did whatever seemed right to him." CSB

Life is about Me, life is about Here, life is about Now!— Ultimately, Jesus is not an important factor in the lives of those who do not believe.

Four Reasons People Reject Jesus: Disbelief

Four Reasons People Reject Jesus:

2. Spiritual Blindness vv.39-40

This is why they were unable to believe, because Isaiah also said: ⁴⁰ **He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, so that they would not see with their eyes or understand with their hearts**, and turn, and I would heal them. CSB

There are two phrases we need to pay attention to in these verses:

He has blinded their eyes

The word translated “**blinded**” comes from the Greek word “**tu-ph-lo-o**” meaning to deprive of sight, to cause someone to no longer have the capacity for understanding truth.

He has hardened their hearts

The word translated “**hardened**” comes from the Greek word “**Pro-po-o**” meaning to cause someone to have difficulty in understanding or comprehending, to harden, to petrify, to become calloused.

Jesus said in **John 12:32** “As for me, if I am lifted up from the earth **I will draw all people to myself.**” CSB

The phrase translated “**I will draw**” comes from the Greek word “**Elko**” meaning to bring to myself, to point out, to give a sign, to paint a picture, to show or strongly indicate.

When people begin to reject God and reject His truth when He drawing individuals to Him, they will ultimately be blinded to the truth, causing them to not see or understand the truth.

Hebrews 3:15 says, “. . . Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.” CSB

Hebrews 4:7 “. . . Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts”.

This phrase is a reminder to not be stubborn to the truth like those who rebelled against God in the past.

Four Reasons People Reject Jesus: Disbelief, Spiritual Blindness

Four Reasons People Reject Jesus:

3. External Influence v.42

Nevertheless, **many did believe in him even among the rulers, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, so that they would not be banned from the synagogue.** CSB

External influence refers to factors outside an individual that influence decisions, behavior and outcomes.

In this text there are two examples of External Influence that cause people to reject Jesus:

Peer Pressure— Influence exerted by a peer group on an individual to persuade them to adopt certain behaviors, attitudes, or values in order to fit in with the group.

Because of Peer Pressure from the Pharisees, many people who believed in Jesus would not confess Him as LORD.

Peer Pressure is a powerful influence!

In 1927, the famous English poet and essayist T.S. Eliot became a Christian was baptized and confirmed. Prior to his conversion, Eliot belonged to London's Bloomsbury Group, a small, informal association of artists and intellectuals who lived and worked in the Bloomsbury area of central London. But when news of Eliot's conversion hit the news, the

Bloomsbury Group responded with shock and disgust. The writer Virginia Woolf, the de facto leader of the Bloomsbury Group, penned the following letter to one of her peers:

I have had a most shameful and distressing interview with dear Tom Eliot, who may be called dead to us all from this day forward. He has become a believer in God and immortality, and he goes to church. I was shocked. A corpse would seem more credible than he is. I mean, there's something obscene in a living person sitting by the fire and believing in God.

Citation: Joseph Loconte, *A Hobbit, A Wardrobe, and a Great War* (Thomas Nelson, 2015), pp. 124-125

Matthew 10:32-33 “. . . everyone who will acknowledge me before others, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. ³³ But whoever denies me before others, I will also deny him before my Father in heaven.”
CSB

Idolatry— Idolatry is the worship of an idol, a physical object, or anything that becomes more important than the worship of God. idolatry is often seen as a major sin or error.

Many of the people believed in Jesus but they would not confess Him because they did not want to be banned from the synagogue.

The synagogue was more sacred than Jesus!

When anything becomes more sacred and more important than worshipping Jesus— that is idolatry.

Religion is a form of righteousness without God in it!

What does idolatry in the church look like?

It looks like “**Big Hank**” the name has been changed but the story is true. “Big Hank” was the self proclaimed protector of the worship center. For whatever reason, he was always looking to prevent people from taking coffee, beverages, water, or snacks into the worship center.

One Sunday morning a new couple visiting our church came through the front door with their children. **Mom's and dad's thank you for getting your children up, ready and bringing them to church.** After dropping their children in the Children's ministry space they made their way to the Worship Center, that is where the mom encountered "Big Hank." The mom had stopped by Starbuck's earlier and had her cup in her hand. Instead of "Big Hank" saying "Good morning, and welcome" he noticed her Starbuck's cup of coffee and in a very rude and authoritative voice said you can't take that coffee in the worship center. He made her go to the water fountain and pour out her **special blend of whatever**, and then throw the cup into the trash. Do you think their family ever came back to our church? Not a chance! In this case "Big Hank" was more concerned about the sacredness of the worship space than someone coming to worship Jesus.

Four Reasons People Reject Jesus: Disbelief, Spiritual Blindness, External Influence:

Four Reasons People Reject Jesus:

4. Pride v.43

For **they loved human praise more than praise from God.**" CSB

People reject Jesus because of Pride!

Pride is the attitude of ME! I want/ need others to recognize, notice, understand and respond to ME! I am special, I am unique— Notice me.

Many of us are saying— that's not me!

Very few of us live OUT LOUD this way but internally, under the mask we want people to acknowledge us, approve and accept us. Under the mask we all struggle with pride.

Pride and the need for approval and acceptance is marked by a False Sense Of Self-Worth.

James 4:6 "God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble." CSB

