

Title: Why is Christ Despised and Rejected?

Text: Isaiah 53: 3

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Isaiah 53: 3: He is despised and rejected of men;

NOT WAS BUT IS

- Isaiah could say in his day in the present tense—he is despised and rejected of men.
- Christ could say in his day in the present tense—he is despised and rejected of men.
- We can say in our day in the present tense—he is despised and rejected of men.

WHY? WHY IS JESUS OF NAZARETH DESPISED AND REJECTED OF MEN?

Proposition: Christ is despised and rejected of men because of the gospel he preached.

Isaiah begins with the question, **“Who hath believed our report? And to whom has the Arm of the Lord been revealed?”**

Our Report is the Gospel We Believe and Declare—the gospel we receive when Christ is revealed in our hearts by grace. Our report is of God’s Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 1: 1:...the gospel of God, 2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) 3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 4 And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:...

Christ was despised and rejected because the word he preached was foolishness to men, but to us who are saved the preaching of the cross is the Power of God.

1 Corinthians 1: 18: For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the POWER of God.

Who believes our report? Those in whom Christ is revealed—the righteousness of God is revealed—then Christ becomes the Arm of the LORD in our hearts—the Power of God and the Wisdom of God.

So what was Christ’s gospel? What is it that makes men despise the truth? What is it that makes sinners reject Christ today like they have in the past? What did Jesus Christ say about himself?

I. JESUS DECLARED HIMSELF TO BE SOVEREIGN GOD IN HUMAN FLESH

John 10: 24: Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. 25: Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me.

Christ declared he is God the Son Who Saves by Electing Grace

John 10: 26: But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.

The reason you do not believe me is because my Father did not choose you—**ye believe not, because ye are not my sheep, as I said unto you.** These were children of Abraham. They were outwardly moral men—Pharisees of Pharisees. These were religious leaders. Yet, Christ told them plainly, ye believe not, because ye are not my sheep, as I said unto you.

God Who Calls Effectually

Christ declared he is God the Son who is able to effectually make his sheep hear his voice, who gives them eternal life and loses none.

John 10: 27: My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29: My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. 30: I and my Father are one.

Men despise and reject Christ because he is God who saves whom he will. Men despise and reject Christ because he calls his own effectually and they follow him. Men despise and reject Christ because he alone gives eternal life. Men despise and reject Christ because he is God—one with God the Father.

John 10: 31: Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. 32: Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? 33: The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.

Sinners are no different in our day than they were in Isaiah's day or when our Lord walked this earth. Men make up many excuses to justify excuses themselves from hearing and following the Lord Jesus Christ where his gospel is preached. But men today despise and reject our gospel because it declares Christ is God. Yet, Christ is not frustrated or surprised that these men do not believe on him. He said, "Ye believe not because ye are not my sheep."

II. CHRIST DECLARED HE WAS SENT OF GOD TO WORK THE WORKS OF GOD.

Luke 4: 16: And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. 17: And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 18: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor;

The Spirit of the Lord was upon Christ. The LORD God anointed Christ to preach the gospel. Christ came to preach the gospel to the poor—spiritually poor—not just to preach the gospel but to work grace in the heart. We preach what he did. But he preached what he himself came to do and does! What is that?

Luke 4: 18: he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, 19: To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

The Lord Jesus Christ heals the broken hearted. He makes spiritually blind sinners to see. Christ has power to break down the prison doors and set his captive children free. He sets at liberty them that are bruised: by satisfying justice through his blood atonement, by bringing us under his hand of grace and truth. Our all-powerful Prophet, Priest and King proclaims in the heart the acceptable year of the LORD—that is, the day he himself made satisfaction to God for those given him of the Father.

Luke 4: 20: And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21: And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of: all the Law and the Prophets. Righteousness is by his obedience not yours and mine. Christ fulfilled the law—magnified it and made it honorable. Only those who rest in him by faith have any regard at all for the law because it is only established by Christ through faith in him.

How Do Men Hear?

Sinners hear the gospel like they heard him.

Luke 4: 22 And all bare him witness,--

They agreed that this scripture was about the Messiah but they did not believe him when he said, He is the Christ! They agreed this scripture declared that God's anointed would come do this work, but they did not believe on Christ, that he alone finished the work!

Luke 4: 22:...[they] wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

They admired the manner in which he preached. It was amazing to them how the carpenter's son could preach that way having never been taught like the scribes and Pharisees. But they had no wonder and amazement in HIM--at God our Savior who he preached.

Men don't mind hear a good sermon. Men love to discuss and debate and give out their opinions. Men love to engage in any number of religious activities. Most look for a place to worship like they look for a new car—is it shiny enough? Does it have a lot of bells and whistles? How will I look in it? What will my friends think of me in it? Most religion is a game people play when they have a little time left over out of what they consider to be their life, their livelihood, that incredibly busy and important life of lust!

Luke 4: 23: And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.

They expected him to work some physical miracles for them like he had in Capernaum. Sinners didn't despise him when he healed folks or when he fed folks. Men today don't despise the notion of God giving them physical or temporal blessings. That is what "blessings" are to most folks, just temporal things. But sinners have no interest in the miracle of grace which Christ performed at Calvary. Sinners have no interest in Christ receiving all the glory, all the praise, all the attention in the sermon, all the work being attributed to him and him alone!

Luke 4: 24: And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country.

They thought that they deserved him to do something for them. They thought he was just another man from Nazareth like them. SINNER, IS THAT WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT CHRIST?

Christ Declared I Will Be Gracious to Whom I Will Be Gracious

This is why sinners despised and rejected Christ—he declares I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will have mercy on whom I will have mercy and the rest I pass by.

Luke 4: 25: 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; 26 But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. [a Gentile, not a Jew] 27: And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian. [a Gentile, not a Jew]

Do you hear what Christ is saying? The truth that Christ is God and that he saved by God's own electing grace is offensive to man. The truth that Christ is the fulfillment of the law and the prophets and that Christ alone works the works required of those he saves takes away man's boasting. The truth that sinners deserve nothing from God and that God has mercy on whom he will offends man's pretended dignity. And here is what men do when they are faced with the truth of God. This is what they did to Christ.

Luke 4: 28: And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, 29 And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. 30 But he passing through the midst of them went his way,

IV. JESUS CHRIST DECLARED THE DEPRAVITY OF MEN'S HEARTS

John 8: 39: They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

The Works of Abraham

Men like to boast of their tradition, of their ancestry, of their will, of their goodness, and of their works. Abraham believed God and saw Christ's day. How did he manifest it? What were the works Abraham did? The folks to whom Christ preached were working circles around folks. But what works did Abraham do?

Hebrews 11: 8: By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed...

When Abraham heard the gospel which called him to repentance, Abraham left his daddy's idol gods because he heard and believed the Voice of the Lord and followed God.

Hebrews 11: 8: [by faith] and he went out, not knowing whither he went...

Abraham believed on Christ so he stopped looking to his way, his will, his works, his wisdom and trusted God to provide and lead him.

Hebrews 11; 9: By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as *in* a strange country,...

Abraham stopped live for this world, for his belly, for a momentary pleasure and followed the Lord.

Hebrews 11: 8: [by faith he] dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: 10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.

By faith, Abraham became a stranger to this world, to this world's religion, and to this world's people. He dwelt with those who were heirs with him of the same promise—God's sheep, fellow believers. Abraham did so because he looked for that city Christ his God built. These are the works Abraham is commended for.

Christ Reveals the Hidden Secrets of the Heart

Men despise and reject Christ because as men hear the gospel preached the Lord tells men what is hidden down deep in their own hearts.

John 8: 40: But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. 41: Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. 42: Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. 43: Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. 44: Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. 45 And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.

Men despise Christ and reject his gospel because when the word is preached men hear Christ telling them truth about themselves. Good, moral, self-made men hear Christ declare their true condition. Man in his heart says, “We are not in bondage. We weren’t born in sin; We be not sinners; God is our father; We did this, we did that!” But when the gospel comes forth, Christ says...

Isaiah 28: 17: Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. 18: And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it...19:... it shall be a vexation only to understand the report. 20 For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it.

Men hear Christ say, “You were born in sin. You are the servants of sin. You serve your belly, your religion is vanity and you need mercy. **AND BECAUSE I TELL YOU THE TRUTH, YE BELIEVE ME NOT!**”

Galatians 4: 16: Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?

Friends, it’s time to get honest with God. A man has got to be made a sinner, lost, undone, desperately wicked before he will believe on Christ and forsake his refuge of lies. And sinners are too righteous to admit guilt that is the problem. Sinners play the blame game: blame it on somebody else, blame secondary causes, blame anybody rather than looking in the mirror where the real problem lies. It is the God-hating heart that will not and cannot bow to God that is the problem!

Luke 5: 32: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Oh, if we could just find a true, dead-dog, sinner! That’s the one who’ll find mercy from Christ!

V. JESUS CHRIST DECLARED THAT BEGINNING WITH THE NEW BIRTH HE MAKES HIS VESSELS OF MERCY TO BEHOLD THAT SALVATION IS OF THE LORD BEGINNING TO END!

It’s not because the preacher doesn’t wear the right kind of suit that men go away from the gospel. Nor is it because you don’t want to be a part of hick church—it is because you are too puffed up to know admit you’re the lowest hick of the lot. Men don’t despise and reject the gospel because the church doesn’t offer all they want—IT IS BECAUSE CHRIST IS NOT ALL THEY WANT!

John 6: 66: From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. 67: Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? 68: Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom

shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. 69: And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

Who hath believed our report? To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? To those who can say with David...**he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire,...**

Amen!