

The Despised and Rejected Christ

Isaiah 53:3

I. Introduction: 1,2

1. Many scriptural phrase could be used to describe the Christ: 3
 - A. "The reigning Christ" (1 Tim. 6:15: *"the blessed and only Potentate, King of kings and Lord of lords"*)
 - B. "The suffering Christ" (Acts 17:3: *"..the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead"*; Heb. 2:10: *the captain of our salvation made perfect through sufferings*)
 - C. "The risen Christ" (Acts 2:32; Rom. 1:4: *"declared to be the Son of God with power...by the resurrection of the dead"*)
 - D. "The teaching Christ" (Matt. 23:8: *the ultimate Rabbi or teacher*)
2. 4 In this sermon we want to deal with a description of Christ that shows the utter disregard most men have for the Son of God.
3. No chapter deals with our subject more fully than does Isaiah 53.
 - A. The entire chapter is devoted to the prophecy of Christ's treatment by men.
 - B. It was spoken some 700+ years before it happened, yet, it is correct in its every minute detail.
4. ** More specifically, the description of Christ we want to focus on from Isaiah 53 is found in verse 3, *"He is despised and rejected by men."*
5. Illustration:

Picture in your mind a man who comes to live and work in your community. This man does nothing but good. He teaches truth, he never lies, he uplifts people's hearts, he never cheats, he never steals, he never commits adultery. He is kind to all regardless of whether they are rich or poor, whether they are socially prominent or one of society's outcasts. He always maintains the right attitude toward all and never shows one shred of partiality. He heals those that are sick of the most terrible diseases and afflictions; and even raises some from the dead. Then one day, he is seized and given a mock trial in the middle of the night void of any justice. Then he is beaten half to death and executed in the cruelest manner possible. What a travesty of what is right and just!!
6. But, that is exactly what happened to Jesus! Jn. 1:11: *"He came unto his own, and his own received him not."*
 - A. Did you get that? He was *"despised and rejected"* by His *"own,"* not His enemies!
 - B. If ever there was one deserving of the finest treatment man could bestow, He would be the one!
7. Christ is being *"despised and rejected"* today in the very same way He was *"despised and rejected"* by His *"own."*
 - A. He is not being physically put to death as the Jews did to Him.
 - B. But, in many other ways men show a total disregard for Him and in doing so *"despise and reject"* Him even now.
8. 5 There are many ways in which Christ may be *"despised and rejected by men."*
 - A. For example, the Jews rejected Jesus' teaching when they rejected Stephen (Acts 7, esp. vss. 51-52: *"You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. 52 Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers,"*).
 - B. Would people of our day reject Christ's teaching? Surely not!
 - (1) Over the years I've associate with a lot of "good" people; friendly, outgoing people; people that would never harm you; people that would give you the proverbial "shirt off their back."

- (2) For the most part these people are not infidels! In fact, most claim to be Christians (albeit members of denominations). Some are even members of the Lord's church we read about in the New Testament.
- C. If queried, "Do you follow the Christ?" They would all answer with a resounding, "YES!"
 - (1) But, by their actions, attitudes, and teachings; Christ is "*despised and rejected*" by them!
 - (2) Let's consider seven ways people despise and reject Christ today.

II. Discussion:

Christ is "*despised and rejected by men*" when men say:

I. 6 There's Nothing in a Name

- A. ** Again, this is done, not by hardened criminals, but by people who claim to be Christ's "own."
- B. People in denominational churches claim to be worshipping God and extolling Christ, yet they do not honor His holy name!
 - (1) They call themselves after the names of men (e.g., Lutheran, Wesleyan), or by their form of church government (e.g., Congregational, Episcopal, Presbyterian), or by their doctrinal emphasis (e.g., Baptist, Methodist).
 - (2) ** It seems most "Christians" will accept any name other than the name of Christ!
- C. When this is brought to their attention, they very often say, "Well, one name is just as good as another." (Often said in a very condescending manner!)
 - (1) After all, "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet."
 - (2) Well, that just isn't so! You wouldn't call a rose "skunk-weed"!
 - (a) **Phil. 2:9-11**
 - (b) **Rev. 19:16:** "*And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.*" To be a king is one thing; but to be a "*King of kings*" is quite another. One is above the other! Ditto for "*LORD OF LORDS.*"
 - (c) Therefore to say "There's nothing in a name" is against all logical reasoning! There must be something in a name!
 - (d) In regards to "*the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth*" Peter said, "*This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' I 2 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*" (Acts 4:11-12) How could any logical thinking Christian read that passage and say there is nothing in a name?
 - (d) When people say there is nothing in a name, they are simply *despising* and *rejecting* Christ, because Peter said there was something in His name and only in His name!
- D. ** There's a beautiful passage in the OT which foresees and describes the coming of Christ in language that portrays his beauty and holiness. To those of us who worship and serve Him, these words are precious and meaningful (**Isa. 9:6:** *For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*).
 - (1) But now, for those who say there is nothing in a name, let's re-read it, and just substitute some other phrases (after all, it doesn't matter!): "For unto us a *monster* is born, unto us a *bald-faced liar* is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called *Horrible, Destroyer, Mighty Devil, Prince of War.*" After all, "There's nothing in a name!"

(2) The very thought of such language applied to Christ is repulsive. Why? Because there is something in a name!

E. 7 John the Baptist thought there was something in a name (Jn. 3:28-29). Reason with me:

- (1) ** Jesus Christ is the bridegroom, and the church He built is His bride (Rom. 7:1-4; Eph. 5:32; Rev. 21:9: the church is “*the bride, the Lamb’s wife*”).
- (2) ** If you are married and have a beautiful bride would you want her to wear your name or would you pick the first person you saw on the street and give her their name? After all, there’s nothing in a name.
- (3) No! Your bride wears your name because in doing so your bride gives honor to you.
- (4) ** Paul discusses our relationship with Christ in Rom. 7:1-4: Due to His atoning death we are dead to the Law of Moses and can be married to another, Christ. Whose name should we then wear? Acts 11:26; Rom. 16:16

F. ** Even some NT Christians are despising and rejecting Christ in this way (e.g., no longer want to identify themselves by the name “church of Christ”; **Matt 10:32-33**: “*Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. 33 But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.*”)

Christ is “*despised and rejected by men*” when men...

2. 8 Reject His Authority

A. Jesus rightly claims, “*All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.*” (Matt. 28:18)

B. ** Conceptually most agree, but in practice nearly all deny this fact because when it comes to religious matters the vast majority of people do whatever pleases them:

Jer. 10:23: “*O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.*”

Prov. 14:12: “*There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.*”

Despite the obvious ramifications of these inspired facts, people (even ‘religious’ people) disregard Christ’s authority by substituting human authority for divine authority.

D. Illustrations:

- (1) Roadmap: would you even think of following a map that couldn’t guarantee you a safe passage to your destination?
- (2) Blueprint: would you even think of spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to build a new house without following a suitable blueprint?
- (3) ** Why then do men follow a plan of salvation (devised by other men) that is *guaranteed not* to lead them to heaven?

Jn. 14:6: “*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*”

Jn. 8:24: “*Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.*”

Psa. 127:1: “*Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it.*”

E. ** Why don’t men submit to the Lord’s authority? Col. 3:17 Is it because they do not understand the concept of authority? NO! Matt. 8:5-9

- (1) When we believe in the Lord to the extent we have implicit faith in His commands, His word; then we will submit willingly to His authority...no questions, no arguments, no controversy.

- (2) We'll search the scriptures with the attitude of the Bereans (Acts 17:11; Lk. 8:15); we'll exemplify the attitude of such heroes of faith as Samuel (1 Sam. 3:10: "Speak, for Your servant hears.").
- (3) Regardless of how kind and nice folks are; regardless of how 'religiously faithful' they may be to their denominational churches and creeds; regardless of how much they may supposedly do "in the name of the Lord": **IF** they reject any of Christ's commands, any of His patterns (Heb. 8:5), and of His ordinances or precepts; then Christ is "despised and rejected by" them!

Christ is "despised and rejected by men" when men...

3. **9** Will Not Hear Christ

- A. Read **Acts 3:22-23** This is as explicit a warning as one could ask for that Christ can be "despised and rejected by men" today when we refuse to listen to His teachings.
- B. Read **Heb. 1:1-3** The theme of the book of Hebrews is the superiority of Christ vs. the Law of Moses. Consider the superior positions held by Christ as enumerated by these three verses: **
 - (1) Superior authority to speak in matters of salvation (v. 2 "has in these last days spoken to us by His Son").
 - (2) Superior heirship (v. 2 "appointed heir of all things").
 - (3) Superior power (v. 2 "through whom also He made the worlds").
 - (4) Superior image (v. 3 "who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person").
 - (5) Superior word (v. 3 "upholding all things by the word of His power").
 - (6) Superior work (v. 3 "He had by Himself purged our sins").
 - (7) Superior position (v. 3 "sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high").
- C. Do you think such a Savior has the right to speak and expect us to hear?
- D. ** Climax of Christ's superiority in the book of Hebrews comes in chapter **12:18-29**
 - (1) Who speaks? Heb. 1:1-2: "God...in these last days [has] spoken to us by His Son..."
 - (2) So Christ is "despised and rejected by men" today because they refuse to hear and obey His commands.
 - (3) Perhaps the saddest words in the Bible are found in John 5:43 ("I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive"). How sad! But, by far, the great majority of those claiming to be religious people, yea even Christians, follow and obey men rather than Christ! **Lk. 6:46:** "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?"

Christ is "despised and rejected by men" when men...

4. **10** Reject His Church

- A. Read **Matt. 16:13-18** Pray tell friend, if Jesus built the church, whose church is it? To ask is to answer!
- B. ** What does the world think about the church Jesus promised to build? There are thousands of denominations:
 - ☛ According to the *World Christian Encyclopedia* (2001) there are 33,830 denominations (there are 242 Roman Catholic denominations!). They estimate there will be 55,000 denominations by 2025.

- ☛ According to the *Center for the Study of Global Christianity (CSGC)* at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, there are approximately 41,000 Christian denominations and organizations in the world.

- C. ** But, how did the inspired writers speak of the church Jesus promised to build?
- (1) When one objectively reads the Bible it doesn't take a Philadelphia lawyer to figure out that Jesus promised to build but ONE church and did just that...He built just ONE church! (*ReligionFacts.com* says, "For the first thousand years of Christian history, there were no 'denominations' within the Christian church as there are today.")
 - (2) Some have a hard time with that concept; one church, but several congregations (1 Cor. 1:2; Rev. 2 & 3).
 - (3) People don't have the same problem when it comes to the Masonic Lodge or Lion's Club. You have the same lodge or club in Bloomington, Martinsville, and Bedford; just different chapters (congregations) in every city. Anyone can understand that!
- D. The Lord said, "*I will build my church, and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it.*" How many churches did He promise to build? "*my*" is singular, *uno* (Spanish), *eins* (German), *jeden* (Polish). That's more than '0' and less than '2.'
- E. Most consider the teaching of one true church as the epitome of arrogance, as a preeminent example of bigotry and bias. But I won't apologize for it, because the Lord and His inspired apostles clearly taught it (Matt. 16:18).
- (1) "*church*" and "*body*" are synonyms (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18).
 - (2) People calling themselves Christians readily accept "*one Spirit*", "*one Lord*" and "*one God and Father*," but will deny there is but "*one body*." (Eph. 4:4-6) Why? The text is easily understood; in fact, the language couldn't be clearer. One body means one church.
- F. ** But people insist on saying, "One church is as good as another." Or, "Join the church of your choice." Or, "Attend the church of your choice."
- (1) Such is diametrically the opposite of what Jesus said, "*I will build my church.*"
 - (2) Those three statements by men are true **IF** you're discussing churches begun by men, I would not argue any of those points when framed in that context.
 - (3) But, if you are saying that one church built by man is as good as the one church built by Christ, my friend, now you have a discussion on your hands!
 - (4) So, Christ is "*despised and rejected by men*" today because men will not accept what Christ said about His church.

Christ is "*despised and rejected by men*" when men...

5. **II** Reject Christ's Gospel.

- A. This shouldn't come as a surprise because it has been happening for a long time (**Gal. 1:6-7**: "*I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, 7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.*").
- B. ** There is only one gospel (Jude 3; Eph. 4:5: "*one faith*"), and it alone is the "*power of God unto salvation*" (Rom. 1:16-17).
- C. ** How do men reject the gospel? Many different ways, here are some:
- (1) Pervert the simple gospel plan of salvation:

- (a) Deny power of God's word to change the heart of man (Lk. 8:11-15; Rom. 10:17; 2 Thess. 2:13-14).
 - (b) Deny the necessity of baptism (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27; 1 Pet. 3:21; Col. 2:12).
- (2) Substitute the means by which God calls men to Himself (Jn. 6:44-45: "...And they shall all be taught by God..."; Rom. 10:17; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; Lk. 8; 1 Pet. 1:23: "having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,"). A church that "draws" people with food is "as weak as the tea, as dead as the chicken and as cold as the ice cream!
- (3) Involve the church in work other than the work God designates in the NT (evangelism, edification, benevolence) also *despises* and *rejects* Christ.

Christ is "*despised and rejected by men*" when men...

6. **12** Reject the New Testament Pattern For Worship.

- A. Jesus promised to guide the apostles into "*all truth*" and said His disciples should be taught "*to observe all things that I have commanded you*" (Matt. 28:20).
- B. Furthermore, Jesus said, "*But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth*" (John 4:23).
- C. Therefore, to deny there is a specific pattern for our worship as set forth in the New Testament is to deny these plain and clear statements made by our Lord.
- D. ** NT pattern of worship:
 - (1) Lord's supper on first day of the week (1 Cor. 11:23-29: v. 26: "*For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.*"; Acts 20:7).
 - (2) Disciples give of their means on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1-2).
 - (3) Teaching/preaching (Rom. 10:14-15; Acts 15:32, 35).
 - (4) Praying to the Lord (1 Tim. 2:1-2, 8).
 - (5) Sing praises (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19).
- E. Thus, Christ is "*despised and rejected by men*" when:
 - (1) Practices foreign to the NT are employed in worship (e.g., instrumental music, counting beads, burning incense, kneeling/praying to images).
 - (2) Man-made religious "holy" days are made into days of worship (e.g., Christmas, Easter, etc.),
 - (3) When we forsake "*the assembling of ourselves together*" (Heb. 10:25).
 - (4) Any failure to "*worship the Father in spirit and truth*" (e.g., daydreaming, failing to sing or give properly) is to *despise* and *reject* Christ.

Christ is "*despised and rejected by men*" when men...

7. **13** Reject the Doctrine of Christ.

- A. Most people think sin only concerns matters of dishonesty and immorality (and some don't even count these things as sin!).
- B. But even the slightest addition/subtraction to Christ's teachings are also wrong, and will condemn one just as certainly as theft, murder, or adultery.
- C. If you mention to some people a thing that is being done by some religious body which is not mentioned in God's word, they usually say, "I cannot see anything wrong with that!" What they mean is, it does not seem to be dishonest or immoral.

D. ** Read **Mk. 7:1-4** Anything immoral about washing cups? Anything dishonest about washing pots?
Not a thing.

(1) Read **Mk. 7:5-9**

(2) Jesus plainly states that when one keeps a tradition not found in the word of God, he rejects the commandments of God.

(3) ** Any act, any rite, any observance, or any ceremony for which we cannot find Bible authority, is a *rejection* of God's law, a repudiation of His will. By engaging in such behavior we are *despising* and *rejecting* Christ!

(4) It is wrong, it is sinful, simply because it is unauthorized:

John 8:31-32: *"If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."*

Nit-picking? Pharasaical? Legalism? NO!

2 Jn. 9-11: *Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. 10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; 11 for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.*

III. Conclusion: 14

1. We normally think of Christ being "*despised and rejected by men*" when he hung on that old rugged cross nearly 2,000 years ago.
2. ** But, Christ is still "*despised and rejected by men*" even today.
 - A. When men say "There's nothing in a name."
 - B. When men reject His "authority."
 - C. When men "Will not hear His word."
 - D. When men reject "His church."
 - E. When men reject "Christ's gospel."
 - F. When men reject the NT pattern of "Worship."
 - G. When men reject the "Doctrine of Christ."
3. ** How about you? "*What think ye of Christ?*" (Matt. 22:42)
 - A. Do you accept Him? Do you accept all that He says? Do you accept all He commands?
 - B. Or, do you despise and reject Him?
4. If you are here this morning and are not a Christian, or if you're a Christian and not "*walking in the light as He is in the light*" then as far as the Lord is concerned you've "*despised and rejected*" Him.
5. Won't you correct that by obeying Him now?

Adapted from a sermon, "The Rejected Christ," by Floyd Thompson in *Book, Chapter & Verse...* (pp. 60-73).