



**SERIES: September 2022 – February 2023 Believe**

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**Saturday, November 19, 2022**

**Scripture: John 7:40-44**

**TITLE: Division over the Messiah**

Welcome to Win the Day. I'm Nate, your coach, filling in for Pastor Nat and today we will look at division over the Messiah.

We are continuing in the Gospel of John 7:40-44, which reads:

When they heard these words, some of the people said, "This really is the Prophet." Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Is the Christ to come from Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" So there was a division among the people over him. Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.

It was the last day of the Feast of Booths and Jesus had just cried out to everyone who could hear Him to come to Him for salvation. The decision was now before them.

The crowds had been debating if Jesus was the Messiah or not, because of His miracles and teachings. Some had believed Him, some were on the fence, and some others despised Him and sought to arrest Him.

These are the responses of the people we see here. They were divided over who He was.

First, there were those who followed Jesus, but were confused. They saw His miracles and marveled at His teaching, but they misjudged Him to be only a prophet. While it's true Jesus is the Great Prophet that Moses said would come, He was more than that.

There was also John the Baptist, named for baptizing people with water as a preparation for the Lord. He was the voice in the wilderness who made a way for our God. When John saw Jesus, he declared, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

He was a man who truly understood who Jesus was. But these people don't quite get it. They like Jesus, but they don't believe in Him. As Matthew Henry put it, "A good opinion of Christ is far short of a lively faith in Christ."

Then there are those who truly believed that Jesus was the Messiah. We know they were true believers because of the division surrounding Jesus. These people boldly stood their ground. They held to their faith as one looking to the reward, a conviction of things not yet seen. If they

did not truly believe, they easily would have been persuaded by the crowds around them. But they stuck with Jesus, unbothered by the scorn and debate over where He came from.

Then there were those who despised Jesus. They mocked both Jesus and those who believed He was the Messiah. They *thought* they knew who Jesus was and where He was from, but they did not know. They used their knowledge of where the Messiah would come from to misjudge who Jesus was, ignoring all the miracles and teachings, becoming conveniently comfortable in their rejection of Him. Their despicable desires were to arrest and kill Jesus because they did not believe Him.

But He was the Messiah. Jesus clearly made divine claims about Himself.

He claimed to be from God the Father, and the Father sent Him. He claimed to know the Father, and His teaching came from the Father. He claimed that He and the Father are one. He said He and His Father are working now. Later, He asserted His eternal divinity when He said that even Abraham rejoiced to see Jesus' day and that before Abraham even existed, Jesus was there. There was no doubt about the claim Jesus made, even the crowds knew what Jesus was saying.

These very claims are what caused the Pharisees to despise Jesus for blasphemy. So they were seeking a way to arrest and kill Jesus for it. But no one laid a hand on Him then, because it was not time for Him to give up His life. That time would arrive a short, six months later, at Passover. By then, even the favorable crowds turned on Him. Jesus was willingly arrested, beaten, mocked, and killed for our iniquities.

Today, people are just as divided over the identity of Jesus as the crowds that followed Him in His day. In those crowds, we saw three groups of people; the true believers, the confused, and the despicable. Notice how two-thirds of the groups were people who did not believe! Don't fall into one of those two groups!

Jesus is a figure who is so prominent that people at the time, and forever after, are faced to make a decision about Him. That decision is either to receive Him, or reject Him.