

What Were They Thinking? Part 2

Commentary for July 15, 2023 – Jesus, Messiah And Son Of God – Rejected!

The Bible often shows that visible evidence of supernatural intervention into the affairs of humanity do not always bring righteousness. Let me give you a major example.

The Scribes, Pharisees, And The People Knew Jesus Came From God

People openly acknowledged Jesus was a teacher and a prophet from God, and the Jewish teacher Nicodemus said to Jesus:

“Rabbi, WE KNOW that you are a teacher come from God: [Why?] for no man can do these miracles that you do, except God be with him.”

• **John 3:2**

What did he mean when he said, **“we KNOW”** Jesus was **“a teacher come from God”**? Nicodemus was a scholar, he verified the miracles of Jesus, and as a member of the Sanhedrin that judged Jesus, declared Him guilty of blasphemy, and voted for His execution. Was this an admission they knowingly went against God’s Law? **What were they thinking?**

The People Praised Jesus

During His ministry, Jesus preached the Kingdom of God, the people saw miracles and healings: the blind saw, cripples walked, and the dead were raised. Many Jews believed after Jesus publicly raised His beloved friend Lazarus from the dead: **“Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him”** (John 11:45). Those people spoke among themselves, and convinced others. Many greeted Jesus when He entered Jerusalem on the Sunday before His crucifixion (John 12:9–11).

“And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them [threw them down] in the way.

And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, CRIED, saying, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.’

And when He was come into Jerusalem, ALL THE CITY was moved, saying, ‘Who is this? And the multitude said, ‘This is Jesus THE prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.’”

• **Matthew 21:8–11**

They correctly understood at that moment who Jesus was. Then He went into His Father’s Temple and cleaned out the buyers and sellers. Then He performed miracles in the Temple:

“And the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple; and He healed them.”

And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, ‘Hosanna to THE SON OF DAVID’ [a messianic title]; **they were sore displeased,**

And [the chief priests and scribes] said to Him, ‘Hear you what these say?’

And Jesus said to them, 'Yea; have you NEVER read, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings you have perfected [prepared] praise?"'"

• **Matthew 21:14–16 (Jesus quotes Psalm 8:2)**

Yes, the people, the children, and those He healed, accurately identified, and acclaimed Who He was: a prophet, the Son of David, a messianic identification.

The People Turn, Reject Jesus, And Demand His Crucifixion

Days later, many of the same people shouted for His death. **What were THEY thinking?** Jesus did no harm to anyone — ever. He did the opposite.

God **closed** their eyes to see and **closed** their ears to hear (Matthew 13:13–15; Acts 28:25–27, both from Isaiah 6:9–10). The people turned on Jesus and clamored for Pilate to **"Crucify Him"** (Matthew 20:19, 27:31; Mark 15:13–14, 20; Luke 23:21; John 19:6, 15).¹

Many Jews from distant lands remained in Jerusalem after the Passover until after the feast of Pentecost. Heartfelt repentance and conversions began when Peter spoke to many Jews at Pentecost as they realized they crucified their Messiah. But God raised Jesus from the dead. Peter's message pricked their hearts to accept God's mercy and grace (Acts 2:14–42).

Many returned to their homes outside of Israel and told others about the momentous events they heard and saw in the weeks before, during, and after the Passover of 30 AD. The process for many in Jerusalem during that time was: **[1]** accepting Jesus, **[2]** rejecting Him, then **[3]** recognizing His resurrection from the dead. After His resurrection Jesus spoke with two of His disciples on the road to Emmaus:

"And He [Jesus] said unto them, 'What things?' And they said unto him,

'Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which [Who] was a prophet mighty in deed and word [1] before God and [2] all the people: And how the chief priests and OUR rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done.'"

• **Luke 24:19–21**

God caused them to change their thinking back and forth. Eventually **"many** [tens of] **thousands**" came to believe in Christ's resurrection (Acts 21:20). It did not occur quickly. **After Pentecost**, the Gospel of Christ's life, work, death, and resurrection **was** preached to Jews and Gentiles, to the world, and **"to every creature"** [or "to all creation"] (Mark 16:15). The apostle Paul summarized that Gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:1–11. Many learned about His resurrection, experienced God's mercy, and received God's Holy Spirit. You have also learned those truths.

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¹ Some of His apostles doubted even after His resurrection. (See Dr. Ernest Martin's article, "[Misuse of Scriptural Interpretation](#).") Christ gave them personal instructions for 40 days, in Acts 1:3:

"To whom also He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."