

## Christ: Countering the Culture of Prejudice

S.R. Acts 17:26 - 32

3 - 2023

### Introduction

#### A. July 4<sup>th</sup> 1776

1. The second paragraph in the Declaration of Independence states, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.”
2. The founders’ recognition of who was included in the “all Men” statement may have been less than complete.
3. The Scriptures declare how all human beings are viewed by their Creator.
  - a. Acts 17: 26 “From one man (blood, KJV) he made every nation (ethnos) of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. 27 God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.” (NIV)

#### B. Jesus the Christ, more than any other person throughout time, has taught us how to view our fellow human beings.

1. The gospel of the kingdom has instructed us more accurately than any other document in history how we are to respond to **all in the human race**.
2. It is a journey for nations and individuals to learn and imitate the teaching and practice of Jesus in our interaction with people.

#### C. Let us survey the interaction of Jesus with various **ethnic groups**

### I. Jesus and the Jewish People

#### A. For the past 1400 years prior to Jesus the Jews enjoyed a special national connection, with specific laws, priests, religious rites, and a tabernacle/temple that set them apart as God’s own chosen possession (cf. Romans 3:1,2; 9:1 – 5).

1. God accomplished this as a means to an end. Not the end itself.

2. The Jewish nation enjoyed special privileges but failed to appreciate from whom they came to whom they were to be extended.
- B. God recognizes people as individuals. National or ethnic identity does not define the person.
1. Matthew 3:7 – 10 “7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 "Therefore bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance; 9 and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'; for I say to you, that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. 10 "And the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”
  2. Judgment is based upon individual obedience to God, not on a physical connection to Abraham.
- C. (Luke 4:16 ff.) Jesus in his hometown “22 All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they asked. 23 Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself! Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.'" 24 "I tell you the truth," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his hometown. 28 All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. 29 They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him down the cliff.”
1. Even in the period of the Jewish nation God often showed special kindness to those of other ethnicities.
  2. To a widow of Phoenicia and a leprous commander among the Syrians.
- D. Jesus experienced the prejudice of Jewish leaders based upon:
1. Questions surrounding his birth
    - a. (John 8:41) We are not born of “fornication”
  2. The place of his childhood residence

- a. “And Nathanael said<sup>^</sup> to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip said<sup>^</sup> to him, "Come and see." (cf. John 1:46)
  - b. No prophets from Galilee - (John 7)
3. The lack of a “good education.”
- a. John 7:15 The Jews were amazed and asked, "How did this man get such learning without having studied?"
  - b. John 7:41 – 52 “Others were saying, "This is the Christ." Still others were saying, "Surely the Christ is not going to come from Galilee, is He? 42 "Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" 43 So there arose a division in the multitude because of Him. 44 And some of them wanted to seize Him, but no one laid hands on Him. 45 The officers therefore came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them, "Why did you not bring Him?" 46 The officers answered, "Never did a man speak the way this man speaks." 47 The Pharisees therefore answered them, "You have not also been led astray, have you? 48 **"No one of the rulers or Pharisees has believed in Him, has he?** 49 "But this multitude which does not know the Law is accursed." 50 Nicodemus said<sup>^</sup> to them (he who came to Him before, being one of them), 51 "Our Law does not judge a man, unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?" 52 They answered and said to him, "You are not also from Galilee, are you? Search, and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee."
4. The low view of his occupation
- a. Mark 6:2 – 3 “When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed. "Where did this man get these things?" they asked. "What's this wisdom that has been given him, that he even does miracles! 3 Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him.”
5. Jesus came to the Jews first (John 1:11) “They did not receive him.”
- E. Jesus treated these people with respect and proper decorum

1. As a 12 year old (Lk 2:46) “46 After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. 47 Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers.”
    - a. People tend to despise youth
    - b. (1 Timothy 4:12) “Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.”
  2. And as an adult (Mt. 23:1 – 3)
    - a. “Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples:
    - b. 2 "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.
    - c. 3 So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach.”
- F. Jesus countered the culture of hate with a culture of love.
1. Love your enemies (Matthew 5:43 – 46)
  2. 43 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”

## II. Jesus and the Gentiles

- A. Centurion who seeks healing for his servant (Luke 7:6 – 10)
1. Luke 7:6 “Now Jesus started on His way with them; and when He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself further, for I am not worthy for You to come under my roof;
  2. 7 for this reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed.
  3. 8 "For I, too, am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes; and to another, 'Come!' and he comes; and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it."
  4. 9 Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled at him, and turned and said to the multitude that was following Him, "I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith."

5. 10 And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.”

B. Syro – phonecian (Mark 7:26 – 31)

1. Mark 7: 26 “Now the woman was a Gentile (Greek – Hellenist), of the Syrophoenician **race**.(Gk. Genos – born, country, kindred) And she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter.
2. 27 And He was saying to her, "Let the children be satisfied first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and **throw it to the dogs.**"
3. 28 But she answered and said<sup>^</sup> to Him, "Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table feed on the children's crumbs."
4. 29 And He said to her, "Because of this answer go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter."
5. 30 And going back to her home, she found the child lying on the bed, the demon having departed.
6. 31 And again He went out from the region of Tyre, and came through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, within the region of Decapolis.”

C. **Greeks** seeking Jesus (John 12:20 – 21)

1. 12:20 “Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the Feast. 21 They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus."

D. Jesus, a “light to the Gentiles” (Acts 13:47)

1. Acts 13:47 “For this is what the Lord has commanded us: "I have made you a **light for the Gentiles**, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth."
2. Acts 2:39 – 40 **as many** as the Lord shall call.

### III. **Jesus and the Samaritans**

A. Disciples’ view of Samaritans

1. Background (2 Kings 17)
2. Jesus and the Samaritan woman (John 4:9, 27)
3. Call down fire

- a. Luke 9:51 And it came about, when the days were approaching for His ascension, that He resolutely set His face to go to Jerusalem;
- b. 52 and He sent messengers on ahead of Him. And they went, and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make arrangements for Him.
- c. 53 And they did not receive Him, because He was journeying with His face toward Jerusalem.
- d. 54 And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?"
- e. 55 But He turned and rebuked them, <and said, "You do not know what kind of spirit you are of;
- f. 56 for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."> And they went on to another village."

B. Ten leprous men healed (Luke 17:12 - 18)

1. And as He entered a certain village, ten leprous men who stood at a distance met Him;
2. 13 and they raised their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"
3. 14 And when He saw them, He said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And it came about that as they were going, they were cleansed.
4. 15 Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice,
5. 16 and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him. **And he was a Samaritan.**
6. 17 And Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine-- where are they?"
7. 18 "Was no one found who turned back to give glory to God, **except this foreigner?"**

C. Good Samaritan (Luke 10:33) Trying to define "Who is my neighbor?"

1. Are we merely "experts in the Law" or servants to all our fellowmen?

2. Do we actively engage and counter the culture or do we merely view the abuses on YouTube?

#### **IV. Jesus Taught People: All Ethnic groups: Men and Women.**

A. John 4 “had to go through Samaria.”

1. Jesus went to the Samaritans and so did Philip (Acts 8:12)
2. Jesus came for all and Phillip taught an Ethiopian about Jesus (Acts 8)

B. Jesus hated sin but loved sinners.

1. Jesus did not expose the Samaritan woman’s sin because she was a Samaritan. But because she was a sinner.

C. Look up – what do you see? (John 4:35)

#### **V. Observations:**

A. Jesus Christ, more than any other person throughout time, has taught us how to view people.

1. The gospel of the kingdom has instructed us more accurately than any other document in history how we are to respond to all in the human race.
2. It is a journey for nations and individuals to learn and imitate the teaching and practice of Jesus in our interaction with people.

B. The more we imbibe the principles of post – modernism and the general theory of evolution the more rapid the deterioration of the social fabric.

1. Our courts are extolling the vice of “every man does what is right in his own eyes.”
2. That mentality destroys social order.
3. The only real solution is a return to the standards and practices of Jesus.

#### **VI. The Gospel is for All**

A. Galatians 3:26 – 28 “You **are all** sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is **neither Jew nor Greek**, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are **all one** in Christ Jesus.”

B. All lives matter to Jesus.