

John's Demons and Jesus' Sinful Friends

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

A. Matthew 11:16-19

B. Background: Jesus addresses the childish (not child-like) behavior of His contemporaries, especially the leaders.

1. Children played games in imitation of adults in which they made their companions sing and dance or weep and grieve, depending on their whim. As it was a game, they would not be content with each performance and quickly choose another activity to mock.
2. Jesus illustrated the reception He and John received from them with the children's games.
3. The pipers and mourners are the Jewish rulers; Jesus and John refused to comply with their wishes.
4. They sneered at John as too strict and at Jesus as too indulgent, and used those opinions to justify rejecting both.
5. To justify themselves in rejecting God's will, they asserted that John's conduct was demoniacal and that of Jesus was worldly and criminal.
6. Both the lives or works of Jesus and John were directed by the wisdom of God, and all those who were truly wise towards God, children of wisdom, approved of these messengers - Luke 7:29-30

C. What lessons can we take away from this encounter?

I. REACTIONS TO THE WORDS OF JOHN

A. Some saw John as a curiosity - Matt. 11:7-8; 1Peter 4:4

B. Some considered John a prophet - Matt. 11:9-11, 14

C. Most rejected John and his word - Matt. 11:18; Luke 7:30; John 5:35

D. "John has a demon!"

1. When the people did not like what John had to say, they attacked his person instead of his message.
2. Argumentum ad hominem - "An argument that attempts to undermine an argument based on an irrelevant fact about the person making the argument, for example by attacking their character or motives. Ad hominem reasoning is normally described as an informal fallacy, but is more precisely an irrelevance" (Wikipedia)
3. "Also called 'poisoning the well,' meaning that if one can undermine the character of the person making the argument, then anything coming from the man and his argument is suspect" (Dr. Bruce Waller).

II. REACTIONS TO THE WORKS OF JESUS

A. His works were rejected - John 10:37-39; Acts 2:22-23

III. WHY THEY REJECTED THE WORKS AND WORDS OF JESUS

A. "A gluttonous man and a wine-bibber"; a charge made inaccurate by their emotionally charged opinions

1. "The Son of man came eating like other men. He was at the wedding feast of Cana (John 2:1-11); at Matthew's feast, (Matt. 9:10), etc. There was nothing distinct about his social habits. Like all the people, He drank the harmless wine of Palestine, either free from, or with a very slight percentage of, alcohol. Modern wines are very different" (PNTC).
 2. It wouldn't matter if Jesus ate as the average person or ate locust and wild honey like John; they would have found something wrong with Him.
 3. You can please some of the people some of the time, but you can't please people determined to be discontent.
- B. "A friend of tax collectors and sinners"
1. An accurate charge that said nothing about His moral character, but spoke volumes about His nature and His purpose in this world
 2. A real friend sacrifices - John 15:12-13; Rom. 5:6-8
 3. A real friend loves always - Prov. 17:17; Jer. 31:3
 4. A real friend is steadfast - Prov. 18:24; Heb. 4:15-16
 5. A real friend accepts the sinner without endorsing the sins
 - a. Psalm 103:12; Luke 19:2-10
 - b. God, Jesus, and humble Christians are able to distinguish between people and the sins they commit; they love and accept the people without accepting their sins; moral bigots do not make this distinction.
 6. A real friend offers correction - Prov. 27:6; Heb. 12:6-11
 7. A real friend forgives - Matt. 26:48-50; 1John 1:7 - 2:2
 8. A real friend is open - John 15:15; 1Peter 2:22

Conclusion:

- A. Jesus is the sinner's Friend
 1. But to whatever extent that is true in your life is up to you.
- B. Mark 2:15-17
 1. The publicans and harlots were sinners, and they knew it; and therefore, they came to Jesus, the Friend of sinners, to be saved.
 2. The scribes and Pharisees were sinners, too, but they did not believe it and rejected friendship with Jesus; and in doing so, they cut themselves off from salvation.