

Jesus and Pharisees

Notes for 28 May

Jim Cunningham

Background

Subject	Matt	Mark	Luke	John
Jesus and the Pharisees				8:12-59

Who Are You?

John 8:12-59. There is a huge amount in these passages, so I am going to select just a few points for discussion.

We will spend a few moments attempting to discover how the Pharisees arose and what they believed. Throughout this study I want us to challenge the historic prejudice that we have against the Pharisees.

We need to spend a few moments examining the Pharisees' concept of the 'messiah'. It was a major reason for their antagonism towards Christ.

1. Verses 12-20

"I am the Light of the World..."

Discuss the meaning of this and the Pharisees' response.

2. Verses 21-30

"Who are you"?

It appears the Pharisees were confused, antagonistic, curious, closed-minded, threatened and uncertain. It is said that some of these verses are among the most difficult in the scriptures. Could we answer this question today to a group of secularists?

3. Verses 31-36

"If you remain in my word, you are truly my disciples: and you will know the truth: and the truth will make you free".

Describe the conditions for discipleship. Has the 'truth' made you free?

4. Verses 37-45

This is a debate about the identity of, and belonging to the Father. He accused those Pharisees present that they belonged to their father, the devil. Why did Christ resort to what appears fairly extreme language? Pharisees were undoubtedly legalists. Would you suggest legalists in your church were of their father the devil? There must have been something else going on!

5. Verses 46-55

The Pharisees had great difficulty charging Him with being a sinner. However they attempted portraying Him as being delusional. Two thousand years ago, would you have been able to understand what Jesus was talking about?

6. Verses 56-59

"Before Abraham was I am".

This was a 'gotcha' moment. Why did the exchange turn from dialogue to violence.

A quote...

No scientific theory touches on the mysteries that the religious tradition addresses. A man asking why his days are short and full of suffering is not disposed to turn to algebraic quantum field theory for the answer. The answers that prominent scientific figures have offered are remarkable in their shallowness.

David Berlinski, ['The Devil's Delusion'](#).