

## What Would Jesus Do About Religious Division?

How would Jesus react to the religious division we see today expressed in denominationalism?

## Introduction

- Division sad reality - many different churches claiming to follow Christ differing in teaching and practice
- Three reactions to religious division
  1. Totally reject Christianity
  2. Reform denominations – join or create one
  3. Combine all churches as long as they believe in Jesus as the Son of God

2

## Introduction

- In spite of division, we teach people to be simply Christians and not join themselves to any humanly devised church
- But, how is this possible?
- Our attitude toward division should be determined by the attitude of Jesus
- We may be surprised Jesus faced religious division among the Jews in His day

3

## The Sadducees

- Adopted compromises popularized from Greek culture
- Rewarded with high priest position in Temple
- Denied existence of angels
- Denied existence of human spirit after death resulting in denial of resurrection

4

## Some Beliefs of The Sadducees

Act 23:6 But perceiving that one group were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, Paul *began* crying out in the Council, "Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; I am on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead!"

Act 23:7 As he said this, there occurred a dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the assembly was divided.

5

## Some Beliefs of The Sadducees

Act 23:8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor an angel, nor a spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.

6

## The Pharisees

- Claimed to strictly keep the Law of Moses without compromise
- Exalted their traditions above the Law causing them to violate it
- Believed in angels, spirits and the resurrection

7

## Some Beliefs of The Pharisees

Act 23:8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor an angel, nor a spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.

Act 26:5 since they have known about me for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion.

8

## The Herodians

- They were supported by puppet Edomite kings installed by the Romans
- They believed in being loyal and paying taxes to Rome

9

## The Zealots

- Believed in violent political rebellion against Rome
- Were concentrated in Galilee

10

## The Essenes

- Not mentioned in Scriptures
- Lived in small monastic groups in wilderness isolating themselves from a corrupt society
- Responsible for Dead Sea Scrolls
- Among them – oldest known copy of Isaiah dated about 100 BC

11

## What Did Jesus Do When He Faced Religious Division?

1. Rejected all religion?
2. Joined one of these Jewish parties?
3. Combined all Jewish parties into a group that accepted all beliefs and practices?

12

## What Did Jesus Do When He Faced Religious Division?

- Jesus did not join any Jewish party but sought to correct their errors – pointing them to follow the Word of God only
- Jesus did not combine these parties into a group where all their errors were accepted

13

## Jesus Was Not A Sadducee

Mar 11:15 Then they \*came to Jerusalem. And He entered the temple and began to drive out those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves;

Mar 11:16 and He would not permit anyone to carry merchandise through the temple.

14

## Jesus Was Not A Sadducee

Mat 22:23 On that day *some* Sadducees (who say there is no resurrection) came to Jesus and questioned Him,

Mat 22:24 asking, "Teacher, Moses said, 'IF A MAN DIES HAVING NO CHILDREN, HIS BROTHER AS NEXT OF KIN SHALL MARRY HIS WIFE, AND RAISE UP CHILDREN FOR HIS BROTHER.'

15

## Jesus Was Not A Sadducee

Mat 22:25 "Now there were seven brothers with us; and the first married and died, and having no children left his wife to his brother; Mat 22:26 so also the second, and the third, down to the seventh.

Mat 22:27 "Last of all, the woman died.

Mat 22:28 "In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had *married* her."

16

## Jesus Was Not A Sadducee

Mat 22:29 But Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures nor the power of God.

Mat 22:30 "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.

Mat 22:31 "But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God:

17

## Jesus Was Not A Sadducee

Mat 22:32 'I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB'? He is not the God of the dead but of the living."

18

## Jesus Was Not A Pharisee

Mar 7:5 The Pharisees and the scribes \*asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands?"

Mar 7:6 And He said to them, "Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.'

19

## Jesus Was Not A Pharisee

Mar 7:7 'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.'  
Mar 7:8 "Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men."

20

## Jesus Was Not A Pharisee

Mar 7:9 He was also saying to them, "You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition.

Mar 7:10 "For Moses said, 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER'; and, 'HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER, IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH';

21

## Jesus Was Not A Pharisee

Mar 7:11 but you say, 'If a man says to *his* father or *his* mother, whatever I have that would help you is Corban (that is to say, given *to God*),'

Mar 7:12 you no longer permit him to do anything for *his* father or *his* mother;

Mar 7:13 *thus* invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that."

22

## Jesus Was Not A Herodian

Luk 13:31 Just at that time some Pharisees approached, saying to Him, "Go away, leave here, for Herod wants to kill You."

Luk 13:32 And He said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third *day* I reach My goal.'

23

## Jesus Was Not A Zealot

Joh 18:36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."

24

## Jesus Was Not A Zealot

Joh 18:37 Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say *correctly* that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

25

## Jesus Was Not An Essene

Luk 7:33 "For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, 'He has a demon!'

Luk 7:34 "The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'

26

## How Did Jesus Respond To Religious Division?

- Jesus served God by submitting to His will without joining any humanly devised party
- Jesus taught others to do the same
- When this is done, there is unity with God and one another

27

## How Did Jesus Respond To Religious Division?

Joh 6:38 "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

Joh 17:8 for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received *them* and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me.

28

## How Did Jesus Respond To Religious Division?

Joh 17:20 "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word;

Joh 17:21 that they may all be one; even as You, Father, *are* in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.

29

## How Did Jesus' Apostles Respond To Religious Division?

- They served God by submitting to His will without joining any humanly devised party
- They taught others how to become and live as Christians by following the apostles' teaching without joining any human party
- When this is done, there is unity with God and one another
- Their teaching did not produce any denomination then or now

30

## How Did Jesus' Apostles Respond To Religious Division?

Act 2:38 Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Act 2:41 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

31

## How Did Jesus' Apostles Respond To Religious Division?

Act 2:42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Act 2:46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart,

32

## How Did Jesus' Apostles Respond To Religious Division?

Act 2:47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

33