

CHAPTER 8

The Rejection of Christ

"He is despised and _____ of (by) men" (Isaiah 53:3).

"And He began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be _____ of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed" (Mark 8:31).

"The stone which the builders _____ is become the Head of the corner" (Mark 12:10; compare Psalm 118:22).

The Rejection of the Saviour

Suppose the pollution level in the air we breathe and in the water we drink were suddenly to become ten times what it is today. Furthermore, suppose that as a result of these increased rates of pollution, death became inevitable for every person. For some with poor health and low resistance, death would take place in a matter of a few days. For other stronger individuals, death might not strike for two or three weeks. But the result of this pollution for everyone would be death. At the end of one month's duration, there would not be one survivor!

Suppose also that this was a completely hopeless situation. Humanly speaking, there was no way to correct this pollution problem. All of the world's scientists totally failed to come up with any solution, and time was quickly running out. There was no hope, no help, no remedy--mankind was doomed!

But then, many millions of light years away, a benevolent creature on another planet saw our plight and had compassion upon these perishing earthlings. Quickly he entered his spaceship and zoomed to planet earth, and with his advanced technology he offered a substance called "pure-suprafission" which, when applied to the atmosphere or to the water, produced a mild nuclear reaction which brought immediate purification!

How do you suppose our visitor from outer space would be greeted by us earthlings? Wouldn't we rejoice at his coming? Wouldn't we cheer his arrival? Wouldn't he be given the greatest welcome possible? Wouldn't he be received with open arms and grateful hearts and joy-filled eyes?

Did you know that such a situation has actually happened? Earthlings were facing a terrible pollution problem--an inner pollution problem known as the pollution of the heart (Jer. 17:9; Mark 7:21-23). As a result of this terrible pollution, death became inevitable, because the

pollution of sin when it is finished brings forth _____ (James 1:15; compare Rom. 1:32; 6:23). Moreover, the situation was absolutely hopeless (Eph. 2:12; 1 Thess. 4:13). There was nothing man could do to make his heart clean.

But then, from out of the heavens came a Visitor--a Saviour who had a remedy for man's pollution problem (John 3:13-17). How was He **welcomed** and **received** by those He came to save? The Bible says, "And this is the condemnation, that _____ is come into the world, and men loved _____ rather than _____, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). How tragic! Men chose to continue on in their pollution! They decided to continue walking on the road that leads to destruction (Matt. 7:13). What did they do with the Visitor from outer space? READ MATTHEW 27:31.

The Rejection Of The Creator

In the Gospel of John (chapter 1) we learn some amazing facts about the Lord Jesus Christ (please match):

_____	"In the beginning was the Word" (1:1a).	(A) Jesus Christ is the Light of the World.
_____	"The Word was God" (1:1b).	(B) Jesus Christ is no one less than GOD.
_____	"All things were made by Him" (1:3). "The world was made by Him" (1:10).	(C) Jesus Christ is the Eternal One.
_____	"That was the true Light" (1:9).	(D) Jesus Christ became a man.
_____	"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (1:14).	(E) Jesus Christ is the Creator and Maker of all things!

But perhaps the most amazing fact in this first chapter of John is that when the **eternal Creator-God** came to earth, the Jewish people **failed to recognize Him** (1:10) and **they received Him not** (1:11). *Note:* There were exceptions to this. There were some humble hearts who were looking for the coming of the Messiah and were eagerly looking for Him, such as Simeon and Anna in Luke 2:25-26 and 2:36-38).

Though He made the world, the world did not know its Maker (John 1:10)! The creatures did not recognize their Creator! They did not know that the Carpenter was the Creator (Mark 6:3). The Person who built things out of wood was the same Person who created all things out of nothing (Col. 1:16; compare Heb. 3:3-4).

Though He came to His own people to provide salvation (Matt. 1:21), He was not welcomed or warmly received by the people of Israel (John 1:11). A few humble people rejoiced at His coming such as Elizabeth, Simeon, Anna, some Bethlehem shepherds, a small band of disciples, Zacchaeus; but the majority of the nation was unmoved and uncaring. His most enthusiastic

reception was when He was welcomed into the city of Jerusalem by the cheering Jewish throngs (Matt. 21:8-11). Less than a week later the crowd changed their chant (Matt. 27:22) and the Christ was consigned to a Roman cross.

Though the **majority** rejected Him, a **minority** (a "few"--Matthew 7:14) received and welcomed Christ the Creator. What promise does God give to every individual who receives Him (John 1:12)? _____

If Christ had made His appearance today, instead of 2000 years ago, would we have treated Him or received Him any differently?

If a person welcomes and receives the Lord Jesus into his life and if the One who is "despised and rejected of men" lives in him, how can he expect to be treated by the world (John 15:18-21; 1 John 3:13)?

The Rejection Of The King

If the King or President of another nation were to come and visit our country, he would (under normal circumstances) be given royal treatment. Our government would care for him in every way. He would be provided with the finest sleeping quarters. He would be served the most delectable food. He would be presented with the best entertainment. In short, he would be treated like a King!

When the **King of the Universe** came to visit earth, how was He treated? What kind of treatment did He receive? At His death He was treated as a common criminal. How was He treated at His birth?

If you were to receive news that the President (or some other famous person) had just arrived in a nearby town only five miles away, would you go to see him? In Matthew chapter 2 we learn of a group of wise men (Magi) who had journeyed many, many miles, seeking the One who was born _____ of the _____ (Matt. 2:2). They stopped at Jerusalem and asked where the King could be found. The Jews opened their scrolls and very quickly they recited the correct answer from the Bible (see verses 4-6 and compare Micah 5:2). With this information and with a supernatural star to guide them, the wise men traveled five or six short miles to the nearby town of Bethlehem where they found and worshipped the young King.

Did the Jews flock to Bethlehem to see and worship their King? Did the chief priests and scribes make the effort to go such a short distance to see such a great Person? How long do you suppose it would take you to travel five or six miles, even if you had to walk?

These Jews possessed the right answer, but the right answer did not possess them! Their action could be likened to a man struggling for survival in a desert. His map tells him that an oasis is located only a few miles to the southwest. He even gives these directions to another desperate traveler who passes by. But for himself, he chooses to remain where he is and die of thirst. Does that sound foolish? The fools did not go to Bethlehem, only the wise men!

More than 30 years later, the attitude of the Jewish leaders toward their **King** had changed--a change for the worse! What kind of royal treatment did the chief priests and scribes give to their **King** (Matt. 20:18-19)? _____ What kind of love and

respect did they show for their **King** (John 19:15)?

Suppose the wise men were to return to Jerusalem at the time of our Lord's crucifixion. Suppose that as they entered the city of Jerusalem they once again asked the question, "Where is He that is King of the Jews?" (compare Matt. 2:2). To their surprise they would see Him **crowned** (Matt. 27:29) and **crucified** on a tree (Matt. 27:31; 1 Pet. 2:24). This time, no star would needed to point Him out, because above His head a sign was written which said,
 " _____ " (Matt 27:37).

Those who seek to worship the **King** today must find Him there! They must humbly fall down at the foot of the cross and worship the Saviour! But the majority still reject the crucified One:

**"Years I spent in vanity and pride,
 Caring not my Lord was crucified;
 Knowing not it was for me He died**

On Calvary!"

–William R. Newell

The Rejection of the Prophet

Though most of the Jewish people rejected Christ, would He not be well received by the people from His own hometown of Nazareth? A presidential candidate is usually able to at least carry his own state! How popular was Christ when He proclaimed God's Word to the hometown crowd? Did they gladly receive His message? How did they respond and react to His ministry among them?

Read Luke 4:16-30 and answer the following questions:

1. Who was the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy (verses 17-19, 21; compare Isaiah 61:1-2)?
2. Was Jesus really Joseph's son (verse 22)?
3. What did the people want Jesus to do (verse 23; compare Matthew 4:13,23,24; 11:23)?
4. Did Jesus do what they wanted (Matt. 13:54-58)?
5. Why not (Matt. 13:58)?
6. Did Jesus expect to be accepted or to be rejected as a prophet among those with whom He had grown up (verse 24)?
7. Elijah the Prophet ministered to a widow outside of Israel (verse 25-26). Elisha the Prophet ministered to a leper outside of Israel (verse 27). What does this imply about the miraculous ministry of Christ in relationship to the people of Nazareth (compare Matt. 13:58)?

8. Did our Lord's words please these Jews (verse 28)?
9. What did they seek to do to Christ (verse 29)?
10. How did Christ escape (verse 30)?

The people of Nazareth wanted to **see** God's works (signs, miracles, etc.) but they did not want to **hear** God's words spoken by God's Prophet (compare the modern Charismatic movement). They rejected the Son of God as seen by their rejection of the Word of God.

Am I a Christ-rejecter? Have I received or rejected the Son of God? Have I received or have I rejected the Word of God? The Bible teaches that the way I treat the Word of God is really the way I treat the Son of God. What I think of the Bible determines what I think of Christ. Consider the following verses:

"Ye seek to _____ Me (they totally rejected Him), because My _____ hath _____ place in _____" (John 8:37).

"And if I say _____, why do ye not _____ Me? He that is of God (the person who receives the Son of God) _____ God's _____: ye (those who reject the Son of God) therefore _____ them _____" (John 8:46-47).

According to John 12:47-48, the person who **rejects Christ** is the person who _____ Compare also Matthew 10:14 (the evidence of their **rejection** of Christ's messengers was shown by their **refusal** to _____ their _____).

Are you a Christ-rejecter? What is your attitude and response towards God's Word?

Do you get bored in church?
 Do you keep looking at your watch to see when the sermon will be over?
 Do you read your Bible on your own?
 Do you enjoy sharing God's Word with others?
 If your parents did not go to church, would you?
 Do you memorize verses of Scripture?
 Do you consider the Bible to be God's **love letter** to you?
 God is very much concerned with how we receive His Word (Acts 2:41; 8:14; 17:11; 11:1; 1 Thess. 2:13).

WARNING:

"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you **an evil heart of unbelief** (rejecting the words of God—Heb. 2:1; 3:15--and thus rejecting the Son of God), in departing from the living God (**Hebrews 3:12**).

The Rejection of the Messiah

The rejection of Christ the Messiah by the Jewish religious leaders is most clearly seen than in Matthew chapters 11-12. Read these two chapters and then answer the following questions:

1. What verse indicates that the Jews rejected the forerunner of the Messiah?

2. What privileges and advantages did the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum have that the wicked cities of Tyre, Sidon and Sodom did not have?
3. If Christ had come to earth earlier in human history and had performed His earthly ministry in the wicked cities of Tyre and Sodom, what would have happened?
4. In the day of judgment, will it be better if an unsaved person had been a citizen of Sodom or a citizen of Capernaum?
5. In what verse is Christ accused of breaking the Sabbath (because of the action of His disciples)?
6. Did Christ make or break the Sabbath (Matthew 12:8)? What was the significance of Christ's claim in Matthew 12:8? (Remember, every Jew knew Who instituted the Sabbath—see Genesis 2:1-3.)
7. Is it lawful to do good (Matthew 12:12)? The answer to such a question is so obvious that it would be like asking, "Is it sinful to do evil?" What was the reaction of the Jews (Matthew 12:14)?
8. What did the miracle of casting out the demon demonstrate (Matthew 12:22-23)?
9. Could this miracle be denied (compare Acts 4:14,16)?
10. What was the great sin of these Jewish religious leaders (Matthew 12:24; Mark 3:29-30)?
11. Why was their charge unreasonable (Matthew 12:25-30)?
12. What do the words which come out of our mouths really reveal (Matthew 12:34-35)?
13. What did the Pharisees want to see (Matthew 12:38)? What did they do with the remarkable signs that they already had seen, such as those in Matthew 12:22?
14. What was the one sign that the Lord promised to give to them? Compare John 2:18-21.
15. What privileges and advantages did these Jews have which the people of Nineveh did not have (Matthew 12:41)?
16. What privileges and advantages did these Jews have which we do not have today?
17. Are there any privileges and advantages that we have today which these Jews did not have?

18. In the day of judgment, would you rather be the Queen of Sheba who came face to face with Solomon, or the Pharisees who came face to face with the Lord Jesus Christ?
19. Explain how the principle of judgment found in Luke 12:48 applies to Matthew 11 and 12.
20. Today, what must a person do to die with his sins **unforgiven** and **unpardoned** (John 3:18,36; 8:24; 16:9; Acts 10:43)?

What Have You Done With The Light God Has Given You?

WARNING: " _____ if you will _____ His voice , _____ not your hearts" (HEB 3:15)

The day could come when your heart will be so **hard**, it will be **impossible** to hear! If you keep saying "**NO**" to God you could turn into person like P _____ (Rom. 9:17-18)! When Paul spoke to Felix in Acts 24:24-25, he (Felix) was troubled (in a good way)! After this there were other times when Paul spoke to him (Acts 24:26), but Felix was never troubled again (as far as the record indicates). His heart was fully hardened.

Read John 5:43. The Lord Jesus came in His Father's name, and the Jews did not _____ Him as their Messiah. There is coming a day when a man will come in his own name and the Jews and the entire world will welcome him with open arms (compare Rev. 13:1-9)! But, to receive him (the man of sin or the Antichrist), what must a person reject (2 Thess. 2:10,12)? _____ What will they accept and believe (2 Thess. 2:11)? _____ What will God do to these people who have so hardened their hearts against His truth and His Son (2 Thess. 2:10-12; compare Revelation 13:8; 14:9-11)?

The Rejection of the Bread of Life

When the Lord performed the miracle of "the feeding of the 5000" about how many people were present if you count the women and children (Matt. 14:21)? _____
 (Note: We don't know how many women and children were present, but make an intelligent guess.)

Why did the people think that Christ would make the perfect King (John 6:15)? _____
 _____ Why did they seek Christ (John 6:24,26)? _____ Did they want food for their stomachs or food for their souls? _____

Read John. When Jesus began giving the people food for their souls, what began to happen to these enthusiastic seekers?

Verse 41:

Verse 52:

Verse 60:

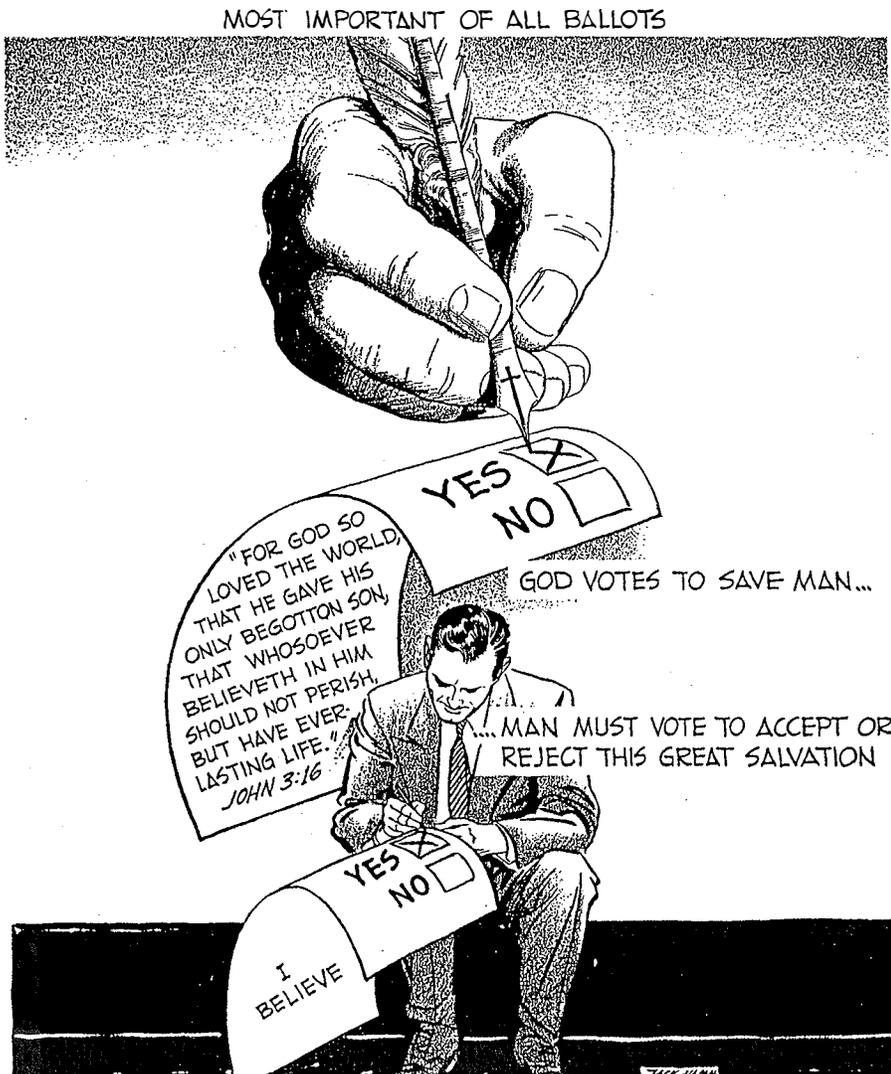
Verse 66:

Though the Lord started with thousands of people, how many did He end up with (6:67)?
_____ Soon He would lose one more (6:70-71)!

What was the one thing that attracted Peter and the other ten disciples (6:68)?

Compare John 8:31. The Lord had many disciples, but few *disciples indeed*. That is, He had few **true disciples!**

"WILL YOU ALSO GO AWAY?" (John 6:67)

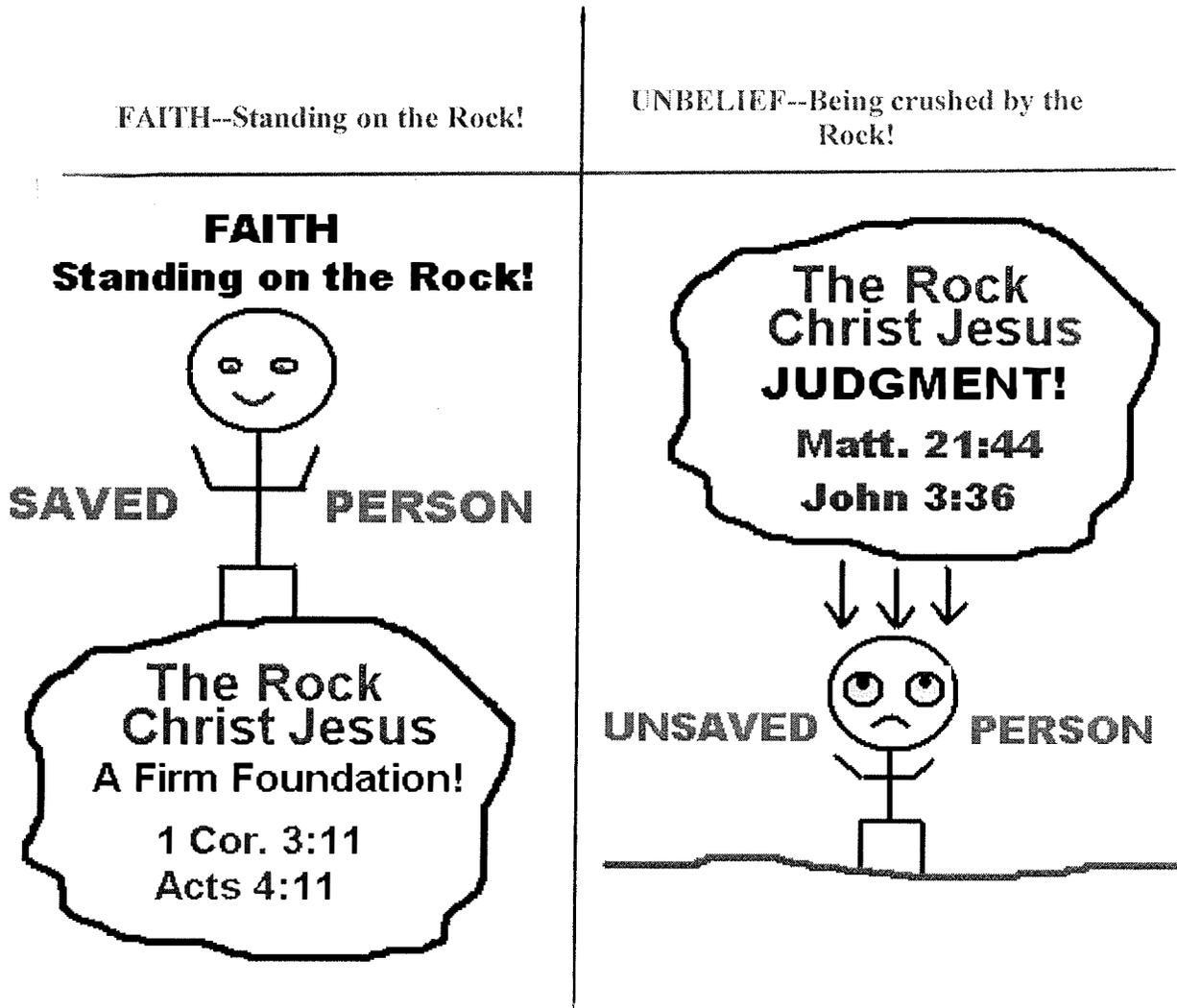


The Rejection of God's Stone

Read Matthew 21:42. In Acts 4:11 Peter told the Jews that the Lord Jesus Christ was the Stone which they rejected ("whom ye crucified"—verse 10). What a marvelous thing God had done! He took that rejected Stone, and by resurrection He made Him the Head of the corner (Acts 4:10-11)! The cornerstone is the most important stone in the whole building! Now the important question is this:

WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH THIS STONE?

Here's Your Choice:



Either you are on the Rock (*faith*) or the Rock is on you (*judgment*)! Where are you in relationship to this Rock? You can trip and fall on this Stone and be broken (*stumblingblock*--see Matthew 21:44; 1 Corinthians 1:23; 1 Peter 2:8; Isaiah 8:14-15); you can let it fall on you and be pulverized by it (Matthew 21:44); or you can plant your feet on its firm foundation and let it support you (1 Peter 2:6)! Don't reject God's Rock! **RELY** and **REST** upon it!

"On Christ the solid Rock I stand!
All other ground is sinking sand!"

-Edward Mote

The Rejection of the Good Shepherd

When the Lord Jesus claimed to be the Good Shepherd (John 10:1-18), how did the Jews respond?

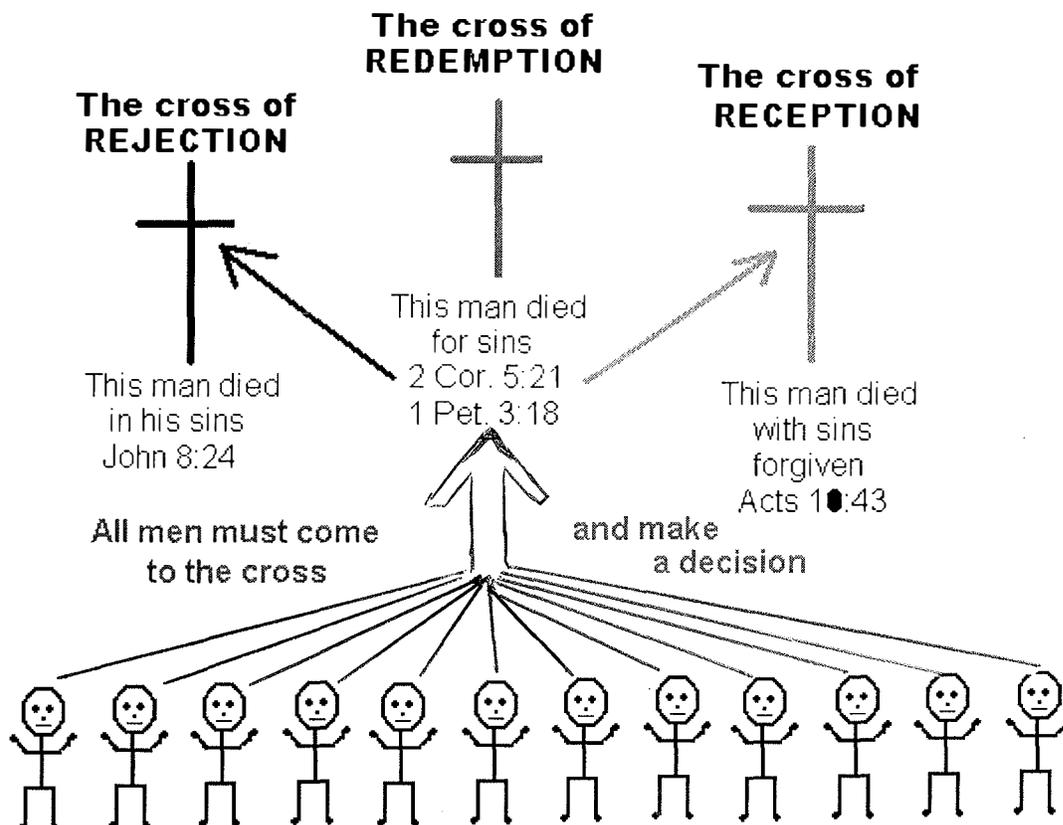
"A DIVISION" (John 10:19)	
The MAJORITY ("many") said <hr/> (see John 10:20)	The MINORITY ("others") said <hr/> (see John 10:21)

What did the Good Shepherd promise to do for His sheep (John 10:11,15,17,18)?

The Shepherd, whom most of the Jews **rejected**, became the Sheep that was slaughtered (Isaiah 53:7; 1 Peter 1:19; John 1:29).

Read John 12:32 where the Lord Jesus Christ speaks of His death on the cross. When He is lifted up on Calvary's cross, He will _____ unto Himself! Certainly this does not mean that all men will be saved (He only saves those who believe—compare 1 Timothy 4:10). What then does it mean?

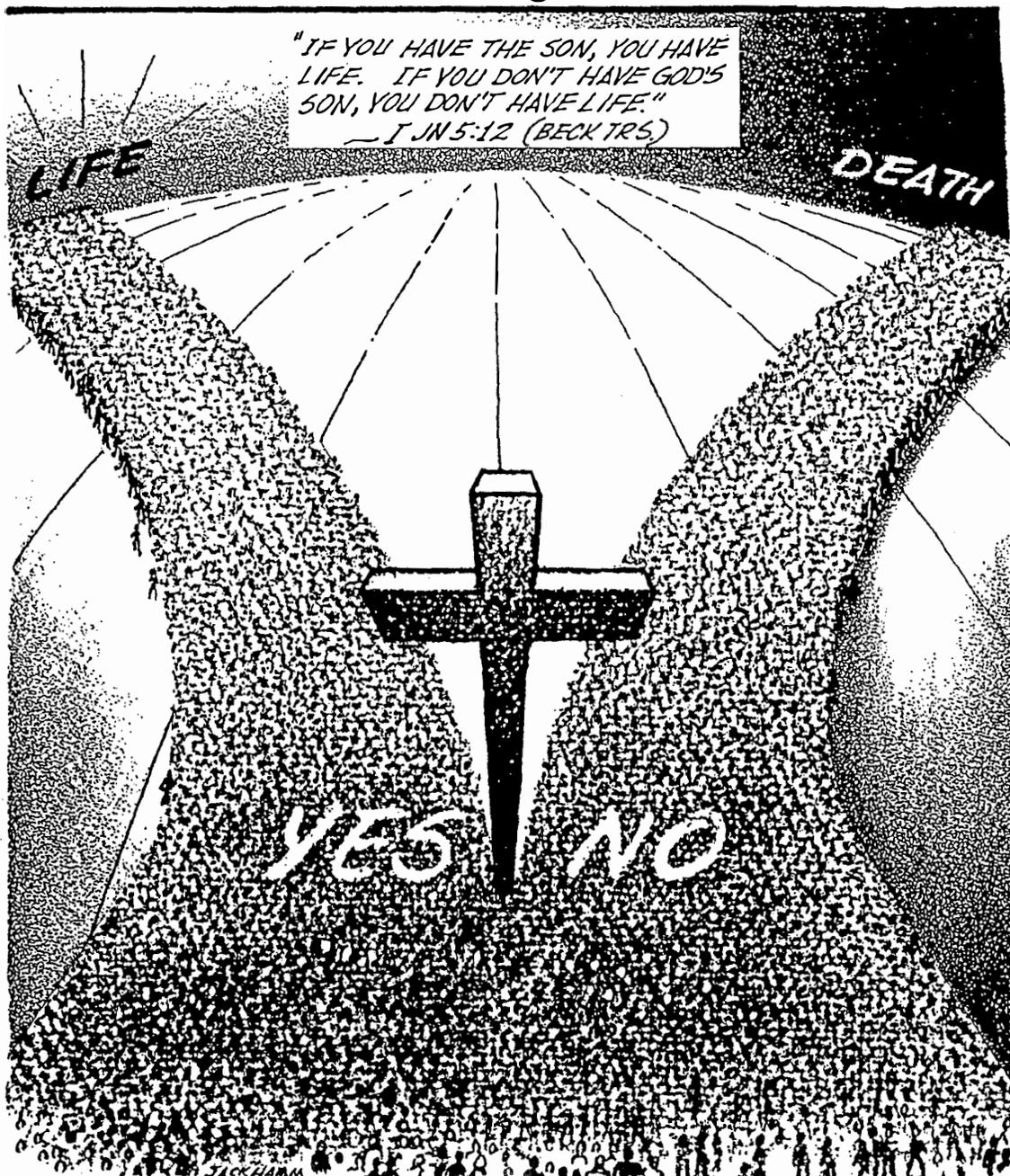
When the Lord Jesus died, there were two other crosses on which hung two guilty men—one on His right hand, and the other on His left (Mark 15:27). The Lord Jesus draws all men to that center cross where they must choose to accept or reject the Crucified One. There are only two choices, as symbolized by the other two crosses:



"What Shall I Do With Jesus?"

As you think about and study this question, it would be helpful to carefully read Luke 23:39-43. Also you should realize that there was a time when both of the criminals (thieves) *rejected* the crucified Christ (see Matthew 27:42-44)! But one of them *repented* and changed his mind! He changed from the cursed realm of *rejection* to the blessed realm of *reception*! What about you?

The Dividing Decision



Response to the Pivotal Event of History

