

LIKE CHILDREN?

Having trouble making up your mind? Maybe you need a buffet? Or perhaps you have too many options, or not enough information. Many of the people who heard and saw Jesus teach and do miracles still had trouble making up their minds about Him. And we are so much like them.

As we explore Luke 7:31-35 we'll see how we are often like confused and changeable children, as God calls us to choose Jesus as Christ, Lord, Savior, and walk in His ways of godly wisdom.

PRIVILEGED PEOPLE - Jesus asks a question, "*to what then shall I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like?*" He had just responded to disciples of John the Baptist, who questioned whether Jesus was the One promised to come as the Christ.

Thousands of people had the historical privilege to see and hear Jesus, as the blind received sight, the lame walked, lepers were cleansed, the deaf heard, the dead were raised and hopeless people had good news preached to them. Yet they couldn't make up their minds about Him?

THIS GENERATION - You read the gospels with hindsight, so what may seem obvious now was still unfolding in the lives of Jesus' contemporaries. He directly spoke to the people as '*this generation*,' a phrase used about 25 times in the gospels to refer to those being addressed.

In Luke 11:50, Jesus was more direct, saying "*the blood of all the prophets, shed from the foundation of the world, will be charged against this generation.*" Not only would they kill John the Baptist the forerunner, but they would also crucify the Christ Himself. This generation was so privileged to know Him, yet would so perversely reject Him and kill Him.

THE JUDGMENT - Jesus called the people an evil generation which seeks for a sign, such that the people of Ninevah would rise up at the final judgment and condemn Jesus' generation, because they repented at Jonah's preaching, and "something greater than Jonah is here."

By the way, it was the issue of judgment which was behind John's questioning whether Jesus was the Christ. The great teachings and miracles were one thing, but where was the judgment the Christ was supposed to bring? Jesus didn't fit the mental image of Messiah that many had. He has inaugurated the kingdom of God, and we still await its completion and final judgment.

LIKE CHILDREN - Jesus said "*this generation is like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, 'we played the flute for you and you did not dance, we sang a dirge and you did not weep.'*" Children can't make up their minds. They go from one thing to another, getting along one minute and at odds the next. They can be overwhelmed by choices.

This is a striking picture of everyday life of the generation to which Jesus came, and a striking comparison to call them children. Children are confused choosers, hot then cold, double-minded, going from dance to dirge and not happy with all or nothing. Perhaps you can relate.

NOT SATISFIED? - Jesus continues, "*for John the Baptist came eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say 'he has a demon.' The Son of Man has come eating and drinking and you say 'look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'*"

"Couplets of children in the mouths of Pharisees and lawyers were directed at ascetic John and joyful Jesus," notes RK Hughes. "There was simply no way to please the religious establishment. Embedded in its self-righteous sufficiency was a deep dislike for heavenly wisdom."

YOUR CHOICE? - John ate locusts and honey, not wine. Jesus turned water into wine and ate with sinners. Like Goldilocks "too hot, too cold" neither John nor Jesus were just right. "Religious leaders demonized John for asceticism and insistence on repentance as evidence of a deranged mind," notes Hughes, "while they scandalized Jesus as a glutton, drunkard, and friend of sinners (a scathing rejection like the unruly son of Deuteronomy 21:18-21)."

This childish simile refers to Luke 7:28-29, in which the people who were baptized by John and received Jesus as the Christ are contrasted with the Pharisees and lawyers who "*rejected the purpose of God*" for themselves, refusing repentance and baptizing and Christ.

The rejectors decided to stay with the old covenant as children of wrath. The receivers would be born again as they believed in the Christ and became children of the kingdom, saved from sin and death as they receive Him who came to fulfill God's new covenant. Which are you? ☐