

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

THE JESUS DILEMMA, Part 3

Half Empty Critics

May 15, 2011



ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. For all Rock Church events, please visit <http://www.therocksandiego.org/eventcalendar/>
2. Let your friends know that they can always live stream the Rock Church Sunday worship experience by visiting <http://www.therocksandiego.org/live/>

MEMORY VERSES

“You have said so,’ Jesus replied. ‘But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.’” (Matt. 26:64 NIV)

“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like the son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.” (Dan. 7:13 NIV)

“The Lord says to my lord: ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.’” (Psalm 110:1 NIV)

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS – THE JESUS DILEMMA (HALF EMPTY CRITICS)

Getting Started

1. Review the 4 points of “Half Empty Critics” as listed in the lesson plan:
 1. **Attempts to discredit Jesus’ miracles acknowledge that He performed them. *Matt. 12:22-24***
Jesus’ critics claimed He had a demon. *Mark 3:22*
Jesus’ response – Live with power.
 2. **The pursuit of false testimony proves that Jesus’ word was truth. *Matt. 26:14-16; Matt. 26:57-68; Matt. 27:1-5***
Jesus’ critics looked for ways to accuse Him. *Mark 3:2*
Jesus’ critics tried to trap Him in His words. *Matt. 22:15-34*
Jesus’ critics paid people to lie. *Matt. 26:14-16; Matt. 27:1-5*
Jesus’ response – Live in truth.

The only reason someone attempts to prevent a truth to prevail is because they are threatened by that truth.

3. **Attempts to stone Jesus for blasphemy prove He claimed to be God. *Matt. 26:65; Dan. 7***

Jesus claimed equality with God. *John 5:16-18*

Jesus claimed to be the 'I AM'. *Exodus 3; John 8:58*

Jesus claimed to be the Anointed One. *Luke 4:16-30*

Jesus forgave sin. *Luke 5:21; Mark 2:6*

Jesus accepts worship. *Matt. 8:1; John 9:38; Matt. 14:33*

Jesus' response – Live in relationship with God.

4. **Plans to sabotage Jesus' resurrection prove they feared an empty tomb. *Matt. 26:62-64***

Jesus' response – Live with eternal hope.

2. What point from the lesson plan stood out to you the most and why?

Digging Deeper

Jesus' main critics (the Pharisees) had no idea as to whom they were dealing with when they accused Jesus, and ultimately killed him. The biggest problem was their lack of understanding as to who the Messiah was going to be, how he was going to come, and what exactly he was going to do. The reason this was a problem was because they knew the Word of God inside and out. They even wore what is called phylacteries; little boxes on their forehead that stored God's word in it, as a symbol that they always have His word in their minds. But their knowledge of God was in fact futile, because they completely missed the point.

Knowledge of the word is important, but understanding the word is even more important. The following questions will focus around the theme of knowing and understanding God's Word.

1. Read Phil. 1:9-11 together as a group. What exactly is Paul praying for in this passage?

2. Describe why the following would be an important part of Paul's prayer:

- Your love may abound more and more in knowledge and discernment.
- That you may approve what is excellent.
- That you may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ.
- Filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ.
- To give glory and praise to God.

3. Practically speaking, how would we live out the above 5 points? What is your response in each area, or a few areas? In which way can you improve and change, and in which ways are you doing well and could come alongside others that are struggling?

4. The first point in his prayer is that, "our love may abound more and more in knowledge and discernment." What exactly does Paul want us to be knowledgeable and discerning about?

Note: In v. 9 "knowledge" is the Greek word *epignosei*, meaning intelligent comprehension. This differs from the other Greek word *aisthánesthai*, meaning simple perception. Also the word "discernment" is the Greek word *aisthesei* which has 3 general meanings: perception, discernment, or intellectual understanding. In context it would be intellectual understanding. Paul is leading to chapter 2 where he explains what Christ did on the cross.