

John 7:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people.

Analysis

And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people. The phrase 'much murmuring' (*gongusmos polus*) indicates widespread, agitated discussion. 'Among the people' (*en tois ochlois*) refers to festival crowds, not authorities. 'Concerning him' (*peri autou*) shows Jesus dominated conversation. The people were divided—some said 'He is a good man' (*agathos estin*), a significant but inadequate assessment. Jesus isn't merely good; He's the Son of God. Others said 'he deceiveth the people' (*plana ton ochlon*), accusing Him of deception or leading people astray. This was the authorities' view (verse 47). The divided response proves Jesus forces decision—He cannot be dismissed as irrelevant. Reformed theology emphasizes that Christ divides humanity: some believe unto salvation, others reject unto judgment. Lukewarmness or neutrality is impossible. Jesus Himself said, 'He that is not with me is against me' (Matthew 12:30).

Historical Context

The term 'deceiver' was serious accusation in Jewish context—Deuteronomy 13:1-11 prescribed death for false prophets who led Israel astray. Calling Jesus a deceiver positioned Him as covenant-breaker deserving execution. The divided opinion reflects the 'murmuring' in verse 12 and foreshadows the schism in verse 43. John's Gospel repeatedly shows division over Jesus (7:43, 9:16, 10:19). First-century Judaism was already sectarian—Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Zealots

disagreed on many issues—but Jesus's claims created new divisions cutting across existing party lines. Some from each group believed; others rejected. For John's late first-century audience, this prepared them for ongoing division the gospel creates. Church history confirms this pattern—the gospel divides families, communities, nations based on response to Christ.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. Why does Jesus create such sharp division rather than general consensus?
2. Is the assessment 'good man' adequate for Jesus—why or why not?
3. How should Christians respond when the gospel creates division in relationships or communities?

Interlinear Text

καὶ γογγυσμὸς πολὺς περὶ αὐτοῦ ἦν ἐν τοῖς
And murmuring much concerning him there was among G3588
G2532 G1112 G4183 G4012 G846 G2258 G1722

οὐχλον οἱ μὲν ἔλεγον ὅτι Ἀγαθός ἐστιν ἄλλοι
the people for some said a good man He is G243
G3588 G3303 G3004 G3754 G18 G2076 G243
G3793 G3756 G235 G4105 G3588 G3793

δὲ ἔλεγον οὐ ἀλλὰ πλανᾷ τὸν οὐχλον
others said Nay but he deceiveth the people
G1161 G3004 G3756 G235 G4105 G3588 G3793

Additional Cross-References

John 9:16 (Parallel theme): Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

John 7:47 (Parallel theme): Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived?

John 7:32 (Parallel theme): The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him.

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