

John 9:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples.

Analysis

Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. The Pharisees' response to the healed blind man's testimony escalates to personal attack. **They reviled him** (έλοιδόρησαν αὐτὸν/eloidorēsan auton)—the verb λοιδορέω (loidoreō) means to abuse verbally, insult, or speak contemptuously. Unable to refute his logic, they resort to verbal assault, a pattern Jesus warned disciples to expect (Matthew 5:11).

The accusation **Thou art his disciple** (σὺ μαθητὴς εἶ ἐκείνου/sy mathētēs ei ekeinou) was meant as insult, yet ironically it was truth. The healed man had become a follower of Jesus through his encounter with divine power and growing revelation. The pronoun **his** (ἐκείνου/ekeinou) is somewhat contemptuous—'that fellow,' refusing even to name Jesus.

The contrast **but we are Moses' disciples** (ἡμεῖς δὲ τοῦ Μωϋσέως ἐσμὲν μαθηταί/hēmeis de tou Mōuseōs esmen mathētai) reveals false dichotomy. They position loyalty to Moses against following Jesus, as if the two were incompatible. Yet true discipleship to Moses would lead to Christ—Jesus Himself said, 'Moses wrote of me' (John 5:46). Their claim exposed their failure: genuine students of Moses would recognize the One Moses prophesied (Deuteronomy 18:15-18).

The emphatic pronoun **we** (ἡμεῖς/hēmeis) drips with pride—'we,' the educated, religious elite, versus 'you,' the ignorant beggar. They claimed Moses as their

teacher but rejected the One greater than Moses who had just given sight to the blind, a messianic sign Isaiah predicted (Isaiah 35:5).

Historical Context

The Pharisees' appeal to Moses as their authority reflects the central role of Mosaic Law in first-century Judaism. After centuries of exile and foreign domination, Jewish identity coalesced around Torah observance under scribal and Pharisaic interpretation. The Pharisees saw themselves as Moses's authentic successors, preserving and interpreting his teaching through oral tradition.

The conflict wasn't truly between Moses and Jesus but between human tradition and divine revelation. The Pharisees had encrusted Moses's Law with extensive oral tradition—the 'tradition of the elders' Jesus repeatedly challenged (Mark 7:1-13). They claimed fidelity to Moses while missing Moses's entire purpose: pointing to Christ.

This confrontation occurred in Jerusalem's temple precincts, probably in the Court of Women or a synagogue area where teaching and debate happened. The healed man, once a beggar dependent on others, now stood alone against the religious supreme court (the Sanhedrin or their representatives), yet his testimony was unshakeable. His progression from calling Jesus 'a man' (v.11) to 'a prophet' (v.17) to worshiping Him as Lord (v.38) contrasts sharply with the Pharisees' devolution from investigation to insult to excommunication.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How can religious people today create false dichotomies between Scripture and Christ, claiming to honor God's Word while rejecting its central message?
2. What does the Pharisees' resort to insult rather than argument reveal about the weakness of positions built on tradition rather than truth?
3. When have you faced verbal abuse or contempt for your testimony about Christ, and how did you respond?

Interlinear Text

ἐλοιδόρησαν οὖν αὐτὸν καὶ εἶπον Σὺ εἰ μαθηταί·

they reviled **Then** **him** **and** **said** **Thou** **art** **disciple**
G3058 G3767 G846 G2532 G2036 G4771 G1488 G3101

ἐκείνους ἡμεῖς δὲ τοῦ Μωσέως ἐσμὲν μαθηταί·

his **we** **but** **G3588** **Moses** **are** **disciple**
G1565 G2249 G1161 G3475 G2070 G3101

Additional Cross-References

Romans 2:17 (Parallel theme): Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God,

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