

# Luke 7:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.

## Analysis

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In contrast: 'But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him' (Greek 'ten boulen tou theou ēthetēsan eis heautous me baptisthentes up' autou'). The phrase 'rejected the counsel of God' (ēthetēsan ten boulēn) indicates willful refusal of divine wisdom. God's 'counsel' (boulē) means purpose, plan, decision. By refusing John's baptism, Pharisees rejected God's appointed means of preparation for Messiah. The phrase 'against themselves' (eis heautous) shows self-harm—their rejection hurt themselves, not God. Refusing medicine doesn't harm doctor but patient. Reformed theology recognizes that gospel rejection injures rejecters, not God. Acts 7:51 condemns religious leaders: 'Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.' Human rebellion cannot thwart God's plan but does condemn rebels.

## Historical Context

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Pharisees were Judaism's influential religious party, known for Torah devotion and oral tradition. Lawyers (nomikoi) were scribes expert in Jewish law. Both groups commanded popular respect for learning and piety. Yet their religious knowledge became obstacle rather than aid—they trusted their own righteousness rather than acknowledging need. Jesus later condemned them: 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!' (Matthew 23). Their external righteousness masked internal corruption (Matthew 23:27-28). For early church, Pharisaic opposition to Christianity validated Christian claims—if Judaism's elite rejected Jesus, it

confirmed He challenged human self-righteousness. Modern application includes recognizing that religious knowledge and moral effort can become pride-fostering obstacles to genuine conversion. Reformed theology emphasizes that justification comes through faith alone, not works.

## Related Passages

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**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

## Study Questions

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1. How did Pharisees' religious knowledge and moral effort become obstacles to receiving John's (and Jesus's) message?
2. What does it mean to 'reject God's counsel against yourself,' and how is this ultimately self-destructive?
3. How can contemporary Christians avoid Pharisaic patterns of external religion masking internal hardness?

## Interlinear Text

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καὶ πᾶς ὁ λαὸς ἀκούσας καὶ οἱ τελῶναι  
And all the people that heard And G3588 the publicans  
G2532 G3956 G2992 G191 G2532 G5057

ἐδικαίωσαν τὸν θεόν βαπτισθέντες τὸ βάπτισμα  
justified G3588 God being baptized G907 G3588 with the baptism  
G1344 G2316 G907 G908

Ἰωάννου·  
of John  
G2491

## Additional Cross-References

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**Luke 3:12** (Baptism): Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do?

**Luke 7:35** (Righteousness): But wisdom is justified of all her children.

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