

Fence Sitting

There are times when sitting on the fence might be a viable strategy. Then there are times when it's downright dangerous or simply impossible. You're flying down the freeway at 70mph when you see an exit coming up fast. Do you take it or stay on the main line? You have to decide to go one way or the other. There's no third option, and attempting to split the difference between the two roadways will mean disaster. We're faced with choices every day, some more consequential than others. Ultimately, though, the most important thing we each must decide is this: Who is Jesus? Your eternal future depends on your answer.

During Jesus' earthly ministry, people confronted the same question. Most of the religious leaders rejected Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah (the Christ), and yet they feared angering the crowds that believed in Him. So they attempted to sit the fence, pretending respect for Jesus in public while plotting against Him in secret (Mt. 21:46, 22:15-16). Today, many try a similar balancing act, unable or afraid to fully commit one way or the other. As a compromise, they may allow that Jesus was "a good man" or "a wise teacher." But there's a catch.

[Jesus] asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." "But what about you?" He asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven..." (Mt. 16:13-17)

Here and in other places, Jesus clearly claims divinity. This presents an insurmountable problem to would-be fence sitters, because there's no middle ground where Jesus is merely "good." Either He is indeed the Son of God, as He asserted, or He was an infamous liar. So there's no neutral position we can take, only these two possibilities to decide between. And willful ignorance is no excuse. We are responsible for the evidence God provides in His creation and His Word (Rom. 1:19-20), and the day is surely coming when each of us will have to answer to Him. Who do you say that Jesus is?

For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ...Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. (John 3:16,18)

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