



# Revealing the Messiah

John 7:8-53

Notes: The primary reference used in developing this Bible Study was the *Life Application Commentary*. The Scripture references in this Bible study are taken from the New International Version unless otherwise indicated.

## 7:8-10 – What did Jesus do after His brothers went to the feast?

Jesus also went to the feast but he went secretly without His extended entourage.

## Jesus offered the greatest gift ever, so why did he act secretly?

The Jewish religious leaders had already made up their mind about Jesus and would refuse His offer of salvation no matter what He did or said. So the more public He was, the more trouble it would mean for His ministry and His followers. Jesus was not excluding the crowds so much as He sought to seclude Himself with those who were ready to respond to Him in belief. While the proclamation of the gospel may be effective in public, progress in discipleship is better accomplished in smaller groups or even better, one-on-one.

## 7:11-12 – What happened at the feast?

Jesus remained behind the scenes until mid-way through the feast, see John 7:14. There was a lot of talk about Jesus by the crowds Jesus but no clear consensus about Him emerged. The Jewish religious leaders were on the look-out for Jesus because they wanted to put a stop to His ministry which was so successful in gaining converts from their own followers.

## 7:13 – Why weren't there any bold proclamations about Jesus?

The people at the feast feared the Jewish religious leaders. Note that Israel at the time was essentially a theocracy at the local level. The people feared excommunication from the synagogue which was the center of Jewish social life. The Jewish theocracy at the time of Christ did not have religious freedom very much like Islamic society today.

## The benefits of living in a society with religious freedom are clear but what hidden danger do such societies have?

The freedoms we have can lull us into complacency. Since we have religious freedom, some of us never getting around to exercising it. We begin to believe that religious freedom

has little value and they start eroding due to our lack of diligence to maintain them.

## What should we do if we have religious freedom?

We should be grateful for our religious freedom and make the most of it while we can. As Jesus said...

John 9:4 - "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. (NKJV)

## Why don't we speak up for Christ more in our society which has religious freedom?

We fear being rejected by people or fear their embarrassing us because it is not considered polite to "impose" your beliefs on others.

## What can we do to improve our taking advantage of opportunities to speak up for Jesus?

We should pray for courage and expect the Holy Spirit to help us. We can season our speech with "faith flags" which make it clear where we stand with regard to Jesus, the Bible, or other spiritual matters. This tests the waters to know if the other person is open to a deeper discussion. We should remember the promises that Jesus made to us...

Matthew 10:32 - Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven.

## 7:14 – When and how did Jesus go public at the feast?

Jesus went public at the mid-point of the feast. He went public by teaching at the temple courts, a central place of high visibility.

## 7:15 – How did people respond to the teaching of Jesus?

The Jewish religious leaders were amazed by His understanding of the Scriptures and mystified about how He could know such things without having been trained in one of their teaching institutions. The teaching of Jesus coupled with His lack of human credentials should have been evidence that He was out of the ordinary and should be someone to whom they should listen.

It is interesting to note that the Jewish religious leaders expressed similar surprise at the teaching of Peter and John in Acts 4:13.

## 7:16 – Where did Jesus come by His teaching?

What Jesus taught was not something he figured out on His own or was taught to Him by a human source, it was direct

from God. Jesus could certainly claim this because He was God. The teaching was not his own because the Son of God is but one Person of the Triune Godhead.

### **7:17 – How can anyone know if what Jesus taught was from God?**

If a person truly wants to do the will of God, God will help them to know the truth. God will provide the sincere seeker with independent corroboration that will be beyond coincidence.

### **7:18 – What other argument did Jesus offer to reinforce that His teaching was from God?**

Jesus was not teaching to bring honor to Himself, He was bringing honor to God.

### **What characterizes glory-seeking teachers?**

The glory-hogs insist on using their titles and credentials. They make a big deal about their position in the program or breaches in protocol. They take credit for the successes rather than giving it to God. And they generally take more than the allotted time to speak.

2 Corinthians 10:17-17 - Let him who boasts boast in the Lord. For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.

False teachers will also contradict the Bible and fail to help us better understand what Jesus has done for us.

The contrast between the healing ministries of our day is contrasted with the healing miracles that authenticated Jesus as the Messiah come to mind. Jesus often tried to keep private the healing miracles that He performed. Healers of our day only perform for a crowd that is often easily manipulated by being in an emotional frenzy. The types of healings Jesus performed did not take place in circumstances where there were strong emotions and they were complete healings that were obvious to all. The healings of today's charlatans are questionable and can not stand the scrutiny of medical science. Jesus attributed His miracles to the Father (John 14:10) while today's miracle workers do deeds orchestrated to make them appear to be special anointed holy men of God.

### **7:19 – How is it that none of the Jews kept the Law of Moses?**

First of all, no one can perfectly keep the Law of Moses. The Jewish religious leaders were certainly missing the spirit of God's Law by thinking that a person may earn God's favor for salvation by observing it. God gave us His Law to convince us that we need His mercy if we are to be saved. To provide the Jewish religious leaders with an example of how they were not observing God's Law, Jesus pointed out that they were conspiring to kill Him.

### **7:20 – What did the people say in response to Jesus accusing them of not keeping the Law?**

The Jewish religious leaders responded with what was effectively a denial of their plotting to kill Him and with an accusation of their own, that Jesus had to be demon possessed. This was an effective tactic of the religious leaders to admit the spirituality of Jesus but define it as evil. They did this on other occasions where they attributed His miracles to the works of the devil...

Matthew 12:24 - Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons." (NKJV)

### **7:21 – What one miracle was Jesus referring to?**

This was probably the healing of a paralyzed man described in John 5:1-15. This healing was performed on the Sabbath which was the major point of contention with the religious leaders which used their interpretation of the Law to argue that this meant Jesus couldn't be acting for God. These religious leaders had missed the point of the Sabbath...

Mark 2:27 - The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. (NKJV)

### **7:22-23 – Why did Jesus bring up the practice of circumcising children on the Sabbath?**

Jesus was invoking an authority and principle that God had introduced prior to Moses, this practice was given to Abraham in Genesis 17:10. Jesus demonstrated from their own practices that they would overrule a law when two ceremonial laws came into conflict. However, the Jewish leaders were so caught-up in their interpretation about Sabbath-keeping that they missed the true purpose behind the actions of Jesus.

### **7:24 – Why did Jesus admonish the religious leaders to make a right judgment?**

Their superficial but tenacious adherence to the traditions of men was causing them to miss the Messiah who was prophesied in their Scriptures.

### **Does John 7:24 conflict with Matthew 7:1 which says we are not to judge others?**

We are not to judge the motivation of others because this is not something we can know about a person, only God and the person themselves know this. We can however judge the fruit of the actions that people take. Judging what people do is not the same thing as judging the people themselves. This is why only God should judge people because only He can know the true motivations behind what they do. We should judge sin... love the sinner and hate the sin.

### **How may we make right judgments?**

Making right judgments require us to have moral and biblical discernment in order to make wise decisions. The more we learn to see things from God's perspective, the better we'll be at making right judgments.

### **7:25 – Who knew about the plan to kill Jesus?**

Some of the people who were subject to the religious leaders in Jerusalem had become aware that they were plotting to kill Jesus.

### **7:26 – What did the people think was going on since Jesus was so bold in public?**

The people subject to the religious leaders in Jerusalem who were privy of their desire to kill Jesus began to think that the religious authorities had changed their mind about Him. If Jesus was being so public despite the common knowledge of the plot against Him then maybe He really was the Messiah.

### **7:27 – What rationalization did the people have for dismissing Jesus as the Messiah?**

The people all knew that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee which did not fit with their expectation that the origin of the Messiah would be a mystery. This perception probably came from extra-biblical sources such as 1 Enoch 48:6 and Ezra 13:1 which people studied personally despite there not being recognized as having the authority of God. This perception of the Messiah was in direct conflict with Scriptures which clearly gave details about from where the Messiah would come (example: born in Bethlehem, Micah 5:2).

### **7:28-29 – What is Jesus declaring in these verses?**

He is declaring his divine origin and divine commission. It is important to know, not from *where* Jesus came, but from *whom* he came. To recognize this origin requires revelation. But the people did not know Jesus because they did not know the one who sent him.

### **7:30 – Why was the attempt to seize Jesus unsuccessful?**

His hour had not yet come.

### **7:31 – What convinced many in the crowd to put their faith in Jesus?**

The miracles Jesus performed were the credentials of the Messiah.

### **It is popular today to be neutral about who Christ said he was. Why is being undecided a dangerous position?**

Those who remain undecided must understand that they remain, by that choice, in opposition to Christ.

### **7:32 – What convinced the Pharisees that it would be a good time to have Jesus arrested?**

The murmuring of the crowd led them to believe there was enough popular support for an open move against Jesus.

### **7:33-34 – If the Jews of Jesus' day were looking for the Messiah, why couldn't they find him?**

They were filled with unbelief which made it impossible to understand that Jesus had fulfilled the prophecies about the Messiah.

### **7:35-36 – Why did it seem to concern the Jews that Jesus might also teach the Greeks?**

The Jews regarded the Greeks (and all Gentiles) as pagans and infidels, cut off from God, without hope. If Jesus really was the Messiah, then his teaching the Greeks meant God intended to bring them salvation as well.

### **7:37-39 – The Feast of Tabernacles**

This eight day celebration was in remembrance of God protecting the Israelites during their travels through the wilderness after leaving Egypt. On one occasion, God provided life saving water from a rock. See Exodus 17:1-7

### **7:37 - Where did Jesus say to go for a thirst quenching drink of water?**

To him personally.

### **7:38-39 –What is this living water Jesus refers to and what is significant about his promise to provide it?**

The living water is the Holy Spirit. By promising to give the Holy Spirit to all who believed, Jesus was claiming to be the Messiah, for that was something only the Messiah could do.

### **7:40-44 – How did the people react to Jesus' offer of living water?**

- Some said surely this man is the Prophet.
- Others said he is the Christ.
- Others asked how could the Christ come for Galilee?
- Some wanted to seize him.

### **7: 41-42 – Since Jesus was born in Bethlehem, why did the people think he was from Galilee?**

Soon after his birth, Jesus' parents took him to Egypt to protect his life. Later they brought him to Nazareth of Galilee which was the home town of Mary and Joseph, where he grew up. From then on, Jesus was identified as a Galilean.

### **7:42 – Why didn't Jesus try to explain to the people that he was born in Bethlehem?**

It was more important to Jesus to tell people about his divine origin than his earthly beginnings.

### **7:43-44 – What is the core belief concerning Jesus that still divides people today?**

Christ demands that we believe in his divine identity. To pick and choose to believe in his teachings isn't really believing in him as he defined it.

**7:45-49 – Who are the temple guards and who do they work for?**

The temple guards were very likely temple police under the jurisdiction of the Jewish religious rulers, not the Romans. Their job was to arrest anyone causing a disturbance or breaking any of the Jewish ceremonial laws.

The Pharisees were definitely losing ground. The temple guards were impressed by Jesus and Nicodemus was defending him. Their hypocritical motives had been exposed and their prestige was being eroded away in front of the people. Pride interfered with their ability to reason and saving face became all important.

**7:46 – What surprising testimony did the guards give the Pharisees after they had listened to Jesus speaking?**

When the officers heard Jesus, they recognized that they were listening to a man like no other, for, in fact, they were listening to the Son of God.

**7:47-48 – How were the Pharisees able to dismiss the testimony of the guards?**

They rationalized that the guards were deceived. Furthermore, if Jesus really were the Messiah, then at least some rulers and Pharisees would believe in him.

**7:49 – Why does the mob have a curse on themselves?**

They are cursed because of their ignorance and failure to obey the Law of Moses. Deuteronomy 28:15 says “If you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you.

**7:50-53 – What do we know about Nicodemus?**

Nicodemus was a Pharisee. He had apparently become a secret believer in Jesus after the two had met one night and had a discussion about being born again (John 3:1-21). After Jesus’ death, Nicodemus brought spices for his body, (John 19:39).

**7:51 – What law did Nicodemus try to force the Pharisees to admit that they were ignoring?**

An accused person, according to Deuteronomy 1:16, must first be heard before being judged.

**7:52 – What was the Pharisees sarcastic reply?**

Are you from Galilee, too?

**Why did the Pharisees think the Messiah could not be from Galilee?**

According to their way of interpreting Scripture, no prophet and certainly not the Christ was mentioned as coming from Galilee. They were wrong because:

1. The scriptures do speak of the Messiah as a great light for the people of Galilee. (Isaiah 9:1-2)
2. The prophets Jonah and Elijah came from this region.

**7:53 - At the end of the day, would an observer say the Pharisees were winning or losing their battle to convince the world Jesus was not the Messiah?**