

## **40 John 7:40-52**

### **Jesus Dispute & Our Apologetic**

#### **REVIEW / INTRODUCTION**

Last week we read about Jesus at the Feast of Booths (aka Feast of Tabernacles). <sup>37</sup> **On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’”**

Jesus was speaking to a crowd of people who were trying to decide whether He was the Messiah. Many were convinced by the words of Jesus. They had saving faith as they heard the words of Jesus. Those with faith would receive the offer of Jesus and come to Him to be filled with the Spirit of God. They would drink the living water offered by Jesus. However, many rejected Jesus because of their bad doctrine or spiritual pride or perhaps love of worldly living. The division over the identity of Jesus continues into today's text.

#### **READING THE TEXT**

**<sup>40</sup> When they heard these words, some of the people said, “This really is the Prophet.” <sup>41</sup> Others said, “This is the Christ.” But some said, “Is the Christ to come from Galilee?<sup>42</sup> Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?” <sup>43</sup> So there was a division among the people over him. <sup>44</sup> Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.**

**<sup>45</sup> The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, “Why did you not bring him?” <sup>46</sup> The officers answered, “No one ever spoke like this man!”<sup>47</sup> The Pharisees answered them, “Have you also been deceived? <sup>48</sup> Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him? <sup>49</sup> But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed.” <sup>50</sup>**

**Nicodemus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them, <sup>51</sup> “Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?” <sup>52</sup> They replied, “Are you from Galilee**

too? Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee.”

## PREACHING THE TEXT

<sup>40</sup> When they **heard these words**, some of the people said, “This really is the Prophet.”<sup>41</sup> Others said, “This is the Christ.” But some said, “Is the Christ to come from Galilee?”

## HEAR THESE WORDS

***“When they heard these words”***, what words did they hear? The words they heard were the teaching of Jesus in the temple at this Festival. The words they heard were Jesus defending His actions of healing a sick person on the Sabbath and telling the man to pick up his mat and walk. The words they heard also included His invitation that all who are thirsty should come and he would give them living water.

There were several responses to the words of Jesus.

## THREE RESPONSES TO JESUS

**1. Belief (2. Honest Skepticism & 3. Pride)**

Some responded with belief that Jesus was sent by God. Of the group who believed Jesus was sent by God, some believed He was a prophet and some believed He was the Messiah.

Even today there are many that claim Jesus was a good man and perhaps a prophet but no more. Many don't know how to figure out the difference between Jesus and others who claimed to be a prophet. Does someone get to be a prophet just because they claim the title? Many people put Jesus on equal footing with Mohammed or Buddha or Joseph Smith or New Age leaders who claim to be a reincarnation of Jesus. The problem with that statement is Jesus claimed to be more than a prophet. In John 8 and in other places Jesus claims the title of the I AM. The I AM title is a title that applies only to the Holy Eternal God.

**John 8:56**

***<sup>56</sup> Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.” <sup>57</sup> “You are not yet fifty years old,” they said to him, “and you***

***have seen Abraham!”<sup>58</sup> “Very truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!”***

If someone calls themselves “I AM” they are claiming to be equal with God and part of the Trinity. So if you equate Jesus with all other prophets consider this, Jesus is The Son of God. One of the duties of the Son of God has been to speak the will of The Trinity into existence. In the beginning the Word (another name for Jesus, God’s Son) said; ***“let there be light.”*** And out of nothing the Son of God created light and everything. Jesus claimed to know Abraham who died perhaps 1200 years before Jesus was born. Before Jesus was born he existed eternally beyond time, space and matter alongside the Father and The Holy Spirit.

Not only did Jesus know Abraham, Jesus, as the Word of God created Abraham. Not only did Jesus create Abraham he created by His word every prophet that has ever existed. So Jesus is light years more than a prophet. Every unique temperament and each strand of DNA was created by The Son of God, Jesus Christ.

Some thought He was a Prophet because it's all they could understand. But others believed that He was the Messiah, The Son of God come in the flesh. That kind of belief is what Jesus rewards with eternal life.

## **2. Honest Objections**

The second group of people in the crowd were those who did not seem to hate Jesus, but they had honest objections. They had enough mental reservations about the identity of Jesus that they would need more information to believe.

We know that belief is a matter of the heart. After hearing the gospel of faith in Jesus Christ one places saving faith in Him and believes with all of his or her heart. But there are some who want to come to such saving faith but they have honest intellectual objections that need to be addressed. We can be ready to help people with their honest objections. We do not need to be hostile with those who have honest questions. The gospel and the facts of our faith stand up to scrutiny and honest inquiry. This honest inquiry about the fact of the faith falls is called

**Apologetics.** Apologetics is the answering of objections that people have of the faith. So here are a couple of objections that you should be prepared to answer to those who have honest objections.

Question: Isn't the bible man-made with lots of errors?

Question: Aren't there a number of books of the bible that were hidden or removed from the bible? How do we know we have the right books, and the right bible?

Question: In light of the truth that God is good, how could a good God allow people to suffer?

Question: Aren't all faiths basically the same? Don't all roads lead to the same God? Don't we worship the same God?

The objections of this crowd has to do with their understanding of God's word. Here was their objection that showed up in this weeks text.

**<sup>42</sup> Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?"**

The scripture does say that the Christ (The Messiah) would come in the line of David and from Bethlehem. Here is what they did not figure into the mix. We can address this with an illustration we understand.

#### HOMETOWNS NOW AND THEN

I was born in Superior Wisconsin. When I was 4 years old my family moved to Milwaukee Wisconsin where we lived for the next 10 years of my life. Then after my parents divorced I moved with my mother to Duluth which has been my hometown ever since.

Depending on the conversation I could say; “I am from Milwaukee.” Or “I am from Duluth.” Or “I am from Superior.” And all three of those statements would be true depending on the way the question was asked.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem. So he was from Bethlehem. Then Joseph and Mary fled to the South. Later the family moved to Galilee to resettle near other relatives. People are using black and white thinking assuming the Messiah had to be born in Bethlehem and live there all the days of His life. But this is the type of confusion that



occurs among those who don't get enough information to understand the texture and nuances of God's word. The result of their confusion is stated in verse 43.

**<sup>43</sup> So there was a division among the people over him.**

So far the division is among those who believed and those who had honest objections and needed clarity. But there was a third reaction.

### **3. Pride and Jealousy (leading to Hatred & rejection)**

This third reaction was found among those who had too much to lose if they believed in Jesus. Some of them were tweaked when Jesus corrected them about their rules which were not found in the bible. Others were ticked off when Jesus dared to correct their teaching. Still others were jealous because of the huge crowds Jesus drew. He healed people and cast demons out of people and walked on the water and spoke with authority. How can you compete with that? He has huge crowds. So their response was to be jealous of Him and seek to turn people against Him. Of those who reacted with jealousy;...

**44 Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.**

**BUT NO ONE LAID HANDS ON HIM**

The Pharisees had their mind made up. So from Pharisee headquarters they sent temple police to arrest Jesus. These are the same temple police who would later seize Jesus in the garden. These are the same who would arrest the Apostles for speaking in the name of Jesus. But for now these officers could not lay a hand on Jesus.

**45 The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, “Why did you not bring him?”**

**46 The officers answered, “No one ever spoke like this man!”**

**NO ONE SPOKE LIKE THIS**

First of all, no one ever could speak like this because there is only one Messiah and Savior of the world. There is only one to whom we can go and drink the living water of The Spirit. There is only one Son of God who was sent to reveal the Father. So it is true no one has ever or could

ever speak like Jesus. The officers were not your typical police. They were selected from the same tribe as the Religious Leaders. They were Levites. And they were trained in theology. They may not have had saving faith. But something did not seem right about arresting this man. How could He be so off base if God was giving Him favor with so many people? They came empty handed much to the chagrin of the Religious Leaders.

<sup>47</sup> The Pharisees answered them, “Have you also been deceived?

<sup>48</sup> Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him?

HAVE ANY BELIEVED?

When pride driven people do not get their way they make an enemies list and go to work. So they quickly assess who is on their side and who is with the stupid people who do not know what is good for them. If any of these leaders believed in Jesus he did not dare to speak up for fear of being arrested or killed along with Jesus. Leaders who turn to Jesus will not be tolerated. A stray

leader can stir up great damage. The crowds on the other hand do not have the same kind of power. They could deal with uneducated people turning to Jesus but not leaders. The leaders in the next verse mocked the non-seminary trained people.

**<sup>49</sup> But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed.”**

### CROWD DOES NOT KNOW THE LAW ACCURSED

There was a true and deep arrogance that infiltrated the schools of learning. Those who did not learn in a formal theology school were called *people of the land*. Those who knew the scriptures but did not learn the commentaries were *people of the land*. And those who knew the scriptures and who had mastered the commentaries (Mishna) but had not learned in their official school were called *people of the land*. Under this judgment Jesus would be considered a *person of the land*.

### OUR PEOPLE OF THE LAND

In many churches they make a great distinction between laity and seminary trained professionals. Some

denominations claim that the priests have the spiritual gifts and those untrained have the primary duty of watching the ministers serve.

God has given each believer a spiritual gift and a call to ministry. If any person in the fellowship is not using his or her spiritual gifts the ministry of the church begins walking with a limp. We do not place more value on the ministry of paid professionals. Look at who Jesus is meeting with. He is speaking to the people that others discounted or that did not feel like they measured up to those with flowing robes and King James speak.

The leaders sent police to arrest Jesus and they could not follow through with the task because the people of the land were falling for this Jesus. The crowds were conflicted and Jesus was very persuasive. You could almost hear the bruised pride of these leaders speaking; *“I will get this Jesus, this false prophet, this person of the land...if it is the last thing I do I will get Him!” Don’t people know that we are the experts and they need to follow us!*

<sup>50</sup> Nicodemus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them, <sup>51</sup> **“Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?”**

Nicodemus does not seem to be a pride driven person. He sees things objectively and reacts to the pride driven statements of his fellow religious leaders. He wants to make sure they use an honest procedure to deal with Jesus.

It is tempting to jump on the bandwagon when a group tries to turn someone into the black sheep of a group or family. It takes great integrity to challenge people to stop and judge things not according to a popularity contest or peer pressure but according to judgments given in God's word.

The leaders challenged by Nicodemus responded the way pride filled people typically respond; with pride, sarcasm and exaggeration.

<sup>52</sup> They replied, **“Are you from Galilee too? Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee.”**

DA Carson Quote:

...the colleagues of Nicodemus were too worked up and too hostile to listen to mere reason. Where argument fails, they reply with contempt: Are you from Galilee, too?– i.e. the only explanation for your strange outburst in defence of a Galilean, Nicodemus, is that you must have sprung from such inferior stock yourself! “Look into it” probably means ‘Search [sc. the Scriptures]’. The notion that no prophet comes from Galilee is not independently attested in Jewish sources. Indeed, Rabbi Eliezer (c. AD 90) said that there was no tribe of Israel that failed to produce a prophet (B. Sukkah 27b). It is just barely possible that the Jewish authorities say this out of sheer frustration at their inability to curtail the activities and teaching of Jesus, this despised teacher from Galilee. In more sober moments they would have gladly recognized that the prophets Jonah and Nahum sprang from Galilee, and probably others as well.

Carson, D. A.. The Gospel according to John (The Pillar New Testament Commentary (PNTC)) (p. 332). Eerdmans Publishing Co - A. Kindle Edition.

## **SUMMARY**

So let's sum up what we have seen today. We have seen three responses to Jesus. Those who believe, those who have honest objections and might believe with a bit of help, and those who are too prideful and engaged in self worship to believe.

We saw that some will respond easily to the message of the gospel, while others rely on believers like us to have an answer ready to go so we can explain the hope that we have in Jesus Christ. And we also see that Jesus does not spend a lot of time with those who are arrogant and unteachable. He spends time with those who believe and those who want to believe but who might need us to invest some time with them.

We also saw the tactics of those who want to control things but do not have God's favor or Spirit. They penalize those who think independently and objectively.



## **TAKING IT HOME**

1. Have you taken the time to look up the answers to objections some may have about faith in Christ. (if you need materials give me a holler)
2. Did you realize that Jesus builds His kingdom with humble ordinary people like us? Since that is the case, what role has Jesus called you to play in building His church and advancing His kingdom?
3. What step is God calling you to take in walking in that role he has called you to embrace?
4. Who do you say Jesus is; (A prophet....a good teacher....or The Son of God come in the flesh?)