



The Book of John

Chapter 7, Part 2

December 10, 2017

John 7:25-27 – ²⁵ *Some of the people of Jerusalem therefore said, “Is not this the man whom they seek to kill?”* ²⁶ *And here he is, speaking openly, and they say nothing to him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Christ?* ²⁷ *But we know where this man comes from, and when the Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from.”*

Here we find the people of Jerusalem trying to figure out just exactly who Jesus is. They are intrigued by the fact that the religious leaders want to kill Jesus yet they won't respond to him when Jesus speaks. They are thinking that if the religious leaders can't refute what Jesus is saying then the leaders must think his statements are true.

But, then they ponder about what they themselves *think* know regarding the coming Messiah. As we learned in the previous lesson, the people were much more familiar with the Scriptures than we are today. Not only did they study them as children but because so few copies of the Scriptures existed, many of them had committed much if not all of the Scriptures to memory. So, they recall a verse or verses they've learned, possibly one of the following verses:

Daniel 7:13 – *“I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.*

Malachi 3:1 – *“Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.*

Micah 5:2 – *But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.*

Whichever verse or verses it is about which they're thinking, they believe them to indicate that no one will know from where the Messiah comes; that he will mysteriously appear. Their imagination built up expectations that were not real.

In reality, the Messiah was to be God wrapped in flesh and raised up as a normal man. That way, he would be a high priest who could understand us. And, his sudden appearance does not refer to him appearing out of thin air. We find that his appearance would be unexpected and surprising. And of course, they're completely disregarding the reference to the Messiah being from Bethlehem or that there would be one before him who would prepare the way (John the Baptist). Then again, part of that is to be expected because it apparently wasn't common knowledge that Jesus was born in Bethlehem and not Nazareth where he grew up. And, they might not have associated John the Baptist with Jesus.

John 7:28-29 – ²⁸ *So Jesus proclaimed, as he taught in the temple, “You know me, and you know where I come from. But I have not come of my own accord. He who sent me is true, and him you do not know. ²⁹ I know him, for I come from him, and he sent me.”*

The word translated here as “proclaimed” is *krazo* which is an expression John uses for significant proclamation, even revelation. Jesus acknowledges that they know that physically, he is a Nazarene. They think that means

they completely understand him and his motivations. But, Jesus is trying to point out that they even though they might know about him personally, they do not know the One (God) who sent him. And, it is God who is directing his will and actions.

Stating that they don't know God is a very strong statement. It says in Proverbs 15:1 that "A soft answer turneth away wrath". However, Jesus wasn't interested in turning away their wrath and especially not at the expense of hiding the truth. Sometimes the truth is difficult to hear. At the same time, he was also helping to pave the way for his future sacrifice in his looming crucifixion by riling up the religious leaders.

John 7:30 – ³⁰ *So they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come.*

Here we have that phrase again, "his hour had not yet come." Of course, the people would want to arrest him after a blatant insult like that, even if it was an inconvenient truth. But no one could lay a hand on him. Since it wasn't his time yet, no one could touch him. Nothing happens until and unless God allows it. We're not told exactly what happened to prevent Jesus from being apprehended. I really wish we knew. Did they attempt to grab him but found they were unable to approach him or did they perhaps become confused and not realize who he was as he passed them by? Or, did he merely disappear from their presence?

John 7:31-32 – ³¹ *Yet many of the people believed in him. They said, "When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done?"* ³² *The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to arrest him.*

Although some couldn't or wouldn't, many of the people could see the truth. This did not go over well with the religious leaders. So, they sent the temple police to *attempt* to arrest Jesus. Their motivation came from their jealousy after hearing that many people believed in Jesus because of the wondrous works he was performing. But, rather than examining the evidence to see if he truly was the Messiah, they were determined to eliminate him. This revealed their true ambition was not to seek the truth and serve God but rather to protect and serve their own interests. I guess things never change because we still have a great number of people like that today.

John 7:33-36 – ³³ *Jesus then said, "I will be with you a little longer, and then I am going to him who sent me. ³⁴ You will seek me and you will not find me. Where I am you cannot come."* ³⁵ *The Jews said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him? Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks?"* ³⁶ *What does he mean by saying, 'You will seek me and you will not find me,' and, 'Where I am you cannot come'?"*

Jesus next speaks about his future. He knows what is coming and that he will soon be returning to the Father in Heaven. He also knows it will be confusing to the religious leaders and they won't be able to understand what he's talking about. Since that was the case, were his comments instead meant for those of us reading his words two millennia later? Was this a statement for those generations that would read his words years and centuries later, those who would truly be seeking the truth?

John 7:37-39 – ³⁷ *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.'" ³⁹ Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

A little background is needed here. The following quote from bible.org¹ sums it up well:

The last day is the seventh day of the feast. During the Feast of the Tabernacles, each day they would carry water and there was the Gihon Spring, which flowed into the spring of Salom. A priest would go to

¹ <https://bible.org/seriespage/john-chapter-7>

that pool and fill a golden pitcher of water and then chant Isaiah 12:3, "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation." Then that water would be carried up the hill to the watergate. They'd be followed by crowds and the crowds would have in their right hands tree branches that were reminiscent of the desert booth and in their left hand they would hold citrus branches that were reminiscent of the harvest. They would then shake them and sing psalms, 113 to 118. Those psalms were the Psalms of the Ascent. When the procession arrived at the temple where it would end, the priest would climb the altar steps and he'd pour the water on the altar. The crowd would encircle him and continue to sing. Now on the seventh day, the last day, where we are right now, they wouldn't do this just one time but they'd do it seven times- seven processions like this.

As you can see, water had a very special meaning to the Jews in this Feast. It represented life to them. So, Jesus built on that point. However, explaining the receiving of the Holy Spirit to someone who has not received it really is quite the impossible task. It's a bit like trying to explain the love someone feels for their children. Until you've had children of your own, you can't really grasp it. It is also this indwelling of the Holy Spirit that bolsters our confidence that Jesus' words are true.

John 7:40-43 – ⁴⁰ When they heard these words, some of the people said, "This really is the Prophet." ⁴¹ Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Is the Christ to come from Galilee?" ⁴² Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" ⁴³ So there was a division among the people over him.

Here we see that the arguments we have today are the very same ones that existed when Jesus first walked the earth. There will always be those ready to accept him as well as those that are skeptical. The problem with skeptics is that they often aren't thorough enough in their research. They find enough info that they can use to convince their conscience that they're correct and then they stop checking the facts.

Now, if the skeptics talked about in the verses above had merely checked a bit further, maybe asked Jesus directly about the questions that were on their minds, then they would have found out that Jesus' mother, Mary, was indeed from the lineage of David. They could have also discovered that although he grew up in Nazareth he was actually born in Bethlehem. These are but a few of the multitude of prophecies of the coming Messiah that were fulfilled.

John 7:44-49 – ⁴⁴ Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him. 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!" ⁴⁷ The Pharisees answered them, "Have you also been deceived?" ⁴⁸ Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him? ⁴⁹ But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed."

So, the temple guards sent to arrest Jesus return to the Jewish leadership empty-handed not because they were rendered powerless like we later find happening in John 18:6 but rather because they actually listened to Jesus and were moved by the power and truth in his words. Rather than inquiring about exactly what was said, the leaders instead mocked the guards and revealed their arrogant, smug attitude. What is ironic is that to emphasize their point they said that none of the Jewish leaders believed in Jesus when in reality some of them actually did!

John 7:50-53 – ⁵⁰ Nicodemus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them, ⁵¹ "Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?" ⁵² They replied, "Are you from Galilee too? Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee." ⁵³ They went each to his own house,

Here we have a reappearance of Nicodemus. You will recall that he had met privately with Jesus as we earlier studied in John 2. He will also later help to prepare Jesus' body for burial (in John 19) with 75 pounds of spices that he provided. So, it appears that he did believe in Jesus and was attempting (in vain) to help defend him without tipping his hand. But even though he made a good point, the Jewish leaders did not respond to him

thoughtfully. Instead, they answered him with derision asking if he was also from Galilee. In their arrogance, they mistakenly stated that “no prophet arises from Galilee.” However, this statement was flat out wrong. Unfortunately for Nicodemus, he didn’t have a computer handy to Google the answer to their challenge. Luckily for us, we do!

First of all, there was at least one well-known prophet from Galilee. The prophet Jonah was from Gath Hepher (II Kings 14:25) which was located 2.5 miles NNE of Nazareth. But more important than this fact, they were overlooking Isaiah 9 where it speaks of the coming Messiah:

Isaiah 9:1 – *But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.*

Looking at the map to the right shows the different areas originally given to the 12 tribes of Israel. As you can see the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali are listed just to the left of the (unmarked) Sea of Galilee. This is in the heart of Galilee. The Bible states it would be made glorious as relating to the Messiah. If you read a little further down this chapter you find the following familiar verse.

Isaiah 9:6 – *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

Referring back to what Jesus said earlier in John 5, we find his words right on the mark:

John 5:39-40 – ³⁹*You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me,* ⁴⁰*yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.*

So, if the religious leaders had *truly* desired to search the Scriptures to examine if Christ was who he said he was then they would have found the scores of scriptural references that clearly spoke about him. But, they didn’t. They were more concerned with losing their power and position.

Now, before we look down too harshly on those who rejected Jesus we should examine our own lives. How much time do we spend reading God’s glorious Word and in prayer so that we can truly know, glorify and fellowship with our God who gave up what was most precious to Him that we might be saved?

