

John Ch7v1-52 - Who Is Jesus?

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[0 : 00] So if you turn in your Bibles again to John's Gospel, John's Gospel chapter 7, and Mary is going to read for us this morning.

So if you have your read Bibles, it's on page 1071, 1071. John chapter 7.

After this, Jesus went around in Galilee. He did not want to go about in Judea because the Jewish leaders there were looking for a way to kill him.

But when the Jewish festival of tabernacles was near, Jesus' brothers said to him, leave Galilee and go to Judea so that your disciples there may see the works you do.

No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world. For even his own brothers didn't believe in him.

[1 : 27] Therefore, Jesus told them, my time is not yet here. For you, any time will do. The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that its works are evil.

You go to the festival. I'm not going up to this festival because my time has not yet fully come. After he had said this, he stayed in Galilee.

However, after his brothers had left for the festival, he went also, not publicly, but in secret. Now, at the festival, the Jewish leaders were watching for Jesus and asking, where is he?

Among the crowds, there was widespread whispering about him. Some said, he's a good man.

Others replied, no, he deceives the people. But no one would say anything publicly about him for fear of the leaders.

Not until halfway through the festival did Jesus go up to the temple courts and begin to teach. The Jews there were amazed and asked, how did this man get such learning without having been taught?

[2 : 38] Jesus answered, my teaching is not my own. It comes from the one who sent me. Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.

Whoever speaks on their own does so to gain personal glory. But he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is a man of truth.

There is nothing false about him. Skip down now, please, to verse 25. At that point, some of the people of Jerusalem began to ask, isn't this the man they're trying to kill?

Here he is, speaking publicly, and they're not saying a word to him. Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Messiah? But we know where this man is from.

When the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from. Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, Yes, you know me, and you know where I'm from.

[3 : 50] I am not here on my own authority, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, but I know him, because I am from him, and he sent me.

At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand in him, because his hour had not yet come. Still, many in the crowd believed in him, they said.

When the Messiah comes, will he perform more signs than this man? Skip down again, please, to verse 37. On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink.

Whoever believes in me, as scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them. By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive.

Up to that time the Spirit had not yet been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified. On hearing his words, some of the people said, surely this is the prophet.

[5 : 02] Others said, he is the Messiah. Still others asked, how can the Messiah come from Galilee? Does not scripture say that the Messiah will come from David's descendants, and from

Bethlehem, the town where David lived?

Thus the people were divided because of Jesus. Some wanted to seize him, but no one laid a hand in him. Finally, the temple guards went back to the chief priests and the Pharisees, who asked them, why didn't you bring him in?

No one ever spoke the way this man does, the guards replied. You mean he has deceived you also? The Pharisees retorted. Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him?

No, but this mob that knows nothing of the law, there is a curse on them. Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their own number, asked, does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing?

They replied, are you from Galilee too? Look into it and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee. Thanks so much, Mary.

[6 : 28] Good morning, everybody. Good morning. That was a long passage for Mary to read. Thank you very much. Read very well. Let's pray before we get stuck into it.

Holy Spirit, we pray that you would help us today to see the glory of Jesus, to see him for who he really is, and to correct any misunderstandings that we have.

In Jesus' name and for his glory. Amen. Amen. So we're at the point in John's Gospel where Jesus is revealing himself throughout the country of Judea, both in his signs and in his teaching.

And everybody is talking about Jesus. The scene here is set during the Festival of Tabernacles, when Jews from everywhere crammed into Jerusalem.

And the city is divided over this one massive question. Who is Jesus? You probably noticed as we were reading through, this chapter is chaotic.

[7 : 49] John is trying to capture the unrelenting debate surrounding the most controversial figure in Judea at this time. All the while, the hostile religious leaders, they're trying to arrest and kill Jesus.

They make three attempts to do so in this one chapter. Yet into all this chaos, Jesus, the eternal Son of God, speaks.

The maker of everyone and everything stands up in the middle of the madness and confusion. And he tells us exactly who he is.

But before we hear Jesus, let's take a walk among the crowds in Jerusalem. Let's listen in to what they're saying about Jesus.

First of all, verse 3. Jesus' brothers say that he's a showman. People ought to quit touring around the backwater villages of Galilee and hit the big stage in Jerusalem.

[8 : 58] More signs, more wonders, before more people. His brothers are really looking for the fame of association.

Being the brother of the superhero. But is that all Jesus is? Is Jesus just a means to my own ends? In verse 12, some of the crowds say he's a liar.

He's leading people astray. In the same verse, others say he's a good man. Nothing more. On the flip side, verse 20, that same crowd are saying he's demon possessed.

No one but a raving lunatic would claim to be God. While again it swings in verse 31, others believe that he genuinely is the promised savior, the Messiah.

Asking how many more signs does this guy have to do to prove it? But it swings like a pendulum again. I warned you, this chapter is chaotic. Because in verse 41, others say, no, no, he's not the Messiah.

[10 : 09] He's just a great prophet. He speaks God's words, but only that. All the while, the Jewish leaders reject him as irrelevant.

A scourge on society. Judea is a melting pot pot of opinions about who Jesus is. But as you look at that list, you realize that 2,000 years later, Ireland is actually just as divided about Jesus as they were back then.

For some of us, Jesus is just a means to our own ends. He's the ticket to heaven in my back pocket. Now I can basically live whatever way I want.

Others say Jesus is a liar. He's simply lying when he claims to be the only way to heaven. Some in Ireland say, well, Jesus is just a good man.

Admirable in many ways, but don't take seriously his claims of divine ownership over your life.

Others think him to be a raving lunatic. Stephen Fry is the leader of one of these groups.

[11:18] He was deluded, Stephen Fry says, to think that Jesus was God. Some Irish people, though, do believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God.

But more say that he's just a great prophet. Up there with Muhammad and the Buddha to be respected. Still others say he's irrelevant.

And do you know what? The faster we move on from Jesus, the better for Irish society. Who is Jesus? We can't all be right.

Well, one thing is that Jesus is not just whoever we want him to be. In fact, he's earned the right to tell us who he is.

And we need to know who Jesus really is more than anything. That's what Jesus is about to reveal to us.

[12:23] And we're going to hear it from the man himself. Firstly, Jesus is sent from the Father. So Jesus makes this shocking claim to have existed with God the Father before his life on earth.

Now, for each one of us, there's a moment when our life began. I know that might sound completely obvious to you, but it's true, right? Now, when you meet someone for the first time, once you've, you know, established what their name is, established what football team they support, you may start to ask, where did you come from?

And you know what? We are fascinated in our culture to know where people come from. And if you asked me, I'd tell you I'm originally from a farm in Drimalik.

I know no one here has probably even heard of that place, but I'm still proud to be from Drimalik in West Cork. And my parents are called David and Elizabeth. That's where I'm from.

Well, the crowd, they look at Jesus and they say, oh, we know where this guy's from. He's Jesus.

[13:38] His dad is Joseph, the carpenter. He's just from Nazareth. Oh yeah, we know him. Now, he couldn't be the Messiah. But look how Jesus responds to them in verse 28.

Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, yes, you know me and you know where I'm from. I am not here on my own authority, but he who sent me is true.

You do not know him, but I know him because I am from him and he sent me. At this, they tried to seize him.

Why are the people so outraged at what Jesus just said? It's because Jesus is claiming that he lived in eternity past before his earthly life.

He is not originally from Nazareth. He's actually from God, sent by the Father. And the crowd are so enraged by him saying this because he was actually claiming to be equal with God in that statement.

[14:50] Could you flick back in your Bibles to John chapter 1? Just a couple pages back. We're going to look at verse 18.

And this fleshes it out a little bit more for us. John chapter 1 and verse 18. It says this, No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

that's who Jesus is. He is God, the Son, for eternity, sharing closest relationship with the Father.

He has revealed what God is like to us. All things were made through him and for him. He sustains all things by his powerful word. He is.

He is. We don't decide who Jesus is. We don't decide what Jesus is like. He is who he has always been for eternity.

[16:12] So the question is, what should our response be to him? Well, we should give him the highest honor that he is due and glorify him as God, the Son, sent from the Father.

Is Jesus just a good man to you? Or is he the God man? We show our belief by humbly submitting our lives to him as our maker and sustainer and listening to him.

And that actually leads us to the second thing that Jesus has to say about himself. He is the man of truth. Now, if you flick back to John chapter 7, in verse 12, some of the crowd claim that Jesus is a liar, right?

He's simply leading people astray. Others, in verse 15, are amazed at his knowledge and teaching. He's got no formal education.

How is he able to teach like this? Well, Jesus addresses both of these groups in verse 16. Read along with me. Verse 16, Jesus answered, my teaching is not my own.

[17:32] It comes from the one who sent me. Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.

Whoever speaks on their own does so to gain personal glory. But he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is a man of truth.

There is nothing false about him. Jesus says, I am that man of truth.

There is no falsehood in me. How do we know? Well, Jesus says his teaching comes from God the Father. That's the first proof.

And here's the second. He seeks his Father's glory not his own. Now think about that for a second. As people it's very difficult for us to have pure motives whenever we seek our own glory.

[18 : 42] Right? Actually what happens is we get selfish. We might say whatever people want to hear so as to get in with the cool crowd. we might not really want what's best for others.

We might just use them to get higher up the ladder. But Jesus says I'm not like that. When Jesus seeks his Father's glory it's another proof that what he says is true.

There are no selfish ulterior motives. He's not a crowd pleaser. He truly seeks his Father's glory and our good.

And he does this by simply telling us what his Father told him even if it ends up costing him his life. So we can trust everything that Jesus says to be true but the problem is that we don't.

Or we like most of what Jesus says that we don't believe us really uncomfortable. Like when he says he's the only way to heaven.

[19 : 55] Where does that leave my friends and family who don't believe in Jesus? Or when he tells us to loosen our grip and our money and finances and to give generously to others.

Well will he really provide for me like he promised? Or when Jesus tells us that he's sovereign and in control over even our deepest suffering and pain.

How could God do that? We struggle to trust Jesus' word. But Jesus says if you want to know who I really am, I am the man of truth.

You can trust everything I say. And believing in me means trusting in me even when you don't understand it right now. So will you believe?

Will you take Jesus as his word? So far we've seen that Jesus is sent from the Father.

[21 : 05] He's God's eternal son. And we've also seen he's the man of truth. we can trust what he says. And now we come to the last one. John has been steadily building the tension through this chapter and now Jesus is about to reveal himself as the giver of the spirit.

But before we read we need to understand the context of this festival of tabernacles. God had commanded the Jews to celebrate this festival to remember how he brought his people out of Egypt over a thousand years beforehand through the wilderness and into the promised land.

Now at one point along that journey the people were in this massive desert and they were thirsty and they cried out to God. And what God did was he told Moses to strike a rock with his staff.

And a river of water flowed miraculously from this rock. The people were saved. So every year at this festival the Jews would remember that moment in their history where God had provided them water.

And what they would do, it's really interesting, right? They would actually draw water from a pool at the bottom of the city and they would carry it in this large procession through the city streets all the way up to the temple.

[22 : 42] And while everyone in the city watched on they would pour out the water on the big altar in front of the temple. That is the context into which Jesus stands up and says what he's just about to say.

Look at this in verse 37. On the last and greatest day of the festival Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink.

Whoever believes in me, as scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.

Jesus reveals himself as the only one who can truly provide us with living water which quenches our spiritual thirst forever.

Let's read on to find out what is this living water. What does Jesus mean? Well, John clarifies.

Verse 39, he says, by this he meant the spirit whom those who believed in him were later to receive.

Up to that time the spirit had not been given since Jesus had not yet been glorified. So the people of Israel were thirsty in the wilderness when God gave them water to drink.

[24 : 09] Jesus now invites everyone who is spiritually thirsty to come to him for drink and that means to believe in him as God, as saviour from our sin and receive not just a once off drink like he

would from the tap out there.

No, Jesus offers us a river of living water flowing from within us forever. It's a spring that will never run out.

And that water, John says, is the Holy Spirit. Spirit. He's the third member of the Trinity. He has existed for eternity in perfect relationship with the Father and the Son.

The Spirit actually initiates our new spiritual life in Christ. He's called the helper or the comforter. He gives us power to live the Christian life.

life. But the thing is that before Jesus came, the Spirit had never dwelt in anyone. Through the Old Testament, the Spirit rests upon people, but never inside.

[25 : 30] So, for instance, Moses or David would have had a special anointing of the Spirit on them to do special things for God, but he actually never indwelt anyone.

Yes. John tells us here in verse 39 that once Jesus has returned to heaven, now anyone who believes in Jesus will receive the Holy Spirit.

God himself would take up residence in everyone who would believe in him. This is totally new and astonishingly great and was foretold hundreds of years beforehand.

Isaiah prophesied that God would pour out his Spirit on all people, not just a couple of their leaders, on all of God's people and read what God had said through the prophet Ezekiel of that time to come.

It's on the board. He said this, I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

[26 : 47] Now Jesus stands up at the climax of the festival as the water is being carried up the streets of Jerusalem. He cries out that He is the giver of the true living water, the Holy Spirit.

The temple is there looming above Him as He says these words and He declares that this building here, that's no longer going to be the place where God dwells. Not in the building anymore, no, in His people.

God will dwell in all those who believe in Jesus through His Holy Spirit. Jesus is the giver of the Spirit and He calls to you and to I today to come and drink of the Spirit to satisfy our thirst forever.

You will know His power and presence like a river flowing from within you. forever. So two

questions. Number one, have you received the gift of the Holy Spirit from Jesus Christ?

Everywhere else you turn to will never satisfy your thirsty soul. Second question, if you have already received Him, are you drinking deeply from that river of life?

[28 : 16] His help, comfort, and power are yours moment by moment if you would keep drinking of Him.

To finish, we have heard plenty of opinions about who Jesus is today. And we've listened to Jesus tell us exactly who He is.

And the question is now, how will the people of Jerusalem respond to Him? Well, in the last part of John's recount of the festival, we hear three different responses to Jesus.

In verse 45, we have the temple guards who were ordered to arrest Jesus, but they arrive back empty-handed. And when the Pharisees ask, why didn't you bring Him in, like we asked you to do, they reply in verse 46, no one ever spoke the way this man does.

Wow. They are amazed by Jesus. But don't be like the guards. That's as far as it goes for them.

[29 : 36] They're just amazed by Him. But they show no signs of true belief. We need to really watch out here, because many people confuse admiration of Jesus with true belief in Jesus.

They are not the same thing. You cannot admire Jesus from a distance and presume that you're safe with Him. No.

He calls to receive Him as Lord, as Savior. You cannot sit on the fence with Jesus.

Either you believe or you don't. Secondly, don't be like the Pharisees. They just reject Jesus outright.

they want rid of Him as soon as possible. They are sure they don't need Jesus to live a fulfilled life or to get to heaven. And after everything that you have seen of Jesus' life, His death, His resurrection, don't be like the Pharisees who refused to accept the evidence.

[31 : 00] They didn't want Jesus. But there is a third response. Because in verse 51, Nicodemus stands up for Jesus.

He risks his status as a leader in the Jewish parliament to defend Jesus before the whole court.

And he later, a couple chapters later in John, he actually appears at the cross where Jesus died, taking down Jesus' body and preparing it for burial.

I think we can surmise that Nicodemus really did believe Jesus was who he said he was.

Nicodemus took Jesus at his word and believed.

No sitting on the fence, no pushing him away. he believed Jesus was the only saviour from sin.

[32 : 07] So what's your response to Jesus? Everyone has a different opinion about who Jesus is. But what do you say?

Will you take him at his word? No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No.

No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No.

No. No. No. No. No. No.

No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. Will you believe that he is the giver of the Spirit?

And drink deeply from that river of living water every day. Let's finish with Jesus' own words.

[33 : 16] Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.

Let's take a moment now to pray. I'm going to leave a couple of moments for you to make your own response to Jesus in your heart. Let's take a moment now to pray.

Your power knows no bounds. You created this whole universe and sustain it by the power of your word. You are God the Son eternal.

And yet you came down to wear our skin. You bore the burden of our sin on the cross and died for us there.

You rose again, defeating our death. We thank you that you gave us the very best you could give. God's Holy Spirit living in us.

[35 : 09] What a wonder. What a mystery. What an awesome privilege to be the dwelling place of God.

Let us not tire of the glory of this. Let us drink deeply from the fountain of living water each day. For your glory and our good.

Amen.