

DIVISION VIII

The Responses to the Revelation of Jesus, 7:1–53

Chapter 7

VIII. The Responses to the Revelation of Jesus, 7:1–53

A. The Response of Jesus' Brothers: Mockery & Unbelief, 7:1–9

1. The setting: Jesus was forced to withdraw & to minister in Galilee

a. The reason: The religionists sought His life

After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.

b. The Feast of Tabernacles was at hand

2 Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand.

2. The brothers' response: Mockery & unbelief

a. Their mockery: Show your works (miracles)

3 His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest.

4 For *there* is no man *that* doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, show thyself to the world.

b. Their unbelief

5 For neither did his brethren believe in him.

3. The reply of Jesus

a. It is not time (the day) for His acclaim but for man's acclaim

6 Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready.

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| b. | It is time for the world's works to be proclaimed evil | 7 The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. |
| c. | It is not time for His full revelation, that is, the revelation of His death | 8 Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come.

9 When he had said these words unto them, he abode <i>still</i> in Galilee. |

A. The Response of Jesus' Brothers: Mockery and Unbelief, 7:1-9

(7:1-53) **DIVISION OVERVIEW: Jesus Christ, Response to:** Chapter 7 is a brief pause in the revelation of who Jesus is. Chapter 7 shows the reactions of various groups to the revelations and claims of Jesus.

(7:1-9) **Introduction:** the first reaction or response to Jesus came from his half-brothers. The incident teaches us how to answer mockery, ridicule, sarcasm, and unbelief. We answer such reactions by proclaiming the same three facts that Jesus proclaimed (point 3, vv.6-9).

1. The setting: Jesus was forced to withdraw and to minister in Galilee (vv.1-2).
2. The brother's response: mockery and unbelief (vv.3-5).
3. The reply of Jesus (vv.6-9).
 - a. It is not time (the day) for His acclaim but for man's acclaim.
 - b. It is time for the world's works to be proclaimed evil.
 - c. It is not time for His full revelation, that is, the revelation of His death.

1 (7:1-2) Ministry—Ministering—Jesus Christ, Opposition: Jesus was forced to withdraw and minister in Galilee. The reason was tragic: the religionists throughout Judaea and Jerusalem had reacted so violently against Him that they sought to kill Him. The word "sought" is continuous action. They kept on seeking to kill Him.

Just how long Jesus was away from Judaea and Jerusalem is not known. Ideas range from six months to one and a half years. On His last journey into Jerusalem, He was seen attending the Passover (Jn. 6:4). In this chapter, Chapter 7, He is seen attending the Feast of Tabernacles (v.10).

Thought 1. Note two instructive lessons.

- (1) Jesus withdrew from conflict and danger so that He might continue to minister.
- (2) Galilee was not as prominent as Judaea. In fact, it was an obscure place, considered both insignificant and unimportant. But note: God chose for His Son to minister there. This should speak

to the hearts of believers. A believer should not feel embarrassed or less important to be placed in an obscure ministry by the Lord.

Note another fact: when Jesus was forced to withdraw, He did not withdraw from ministry. He did not become idle, sitting still and doing nothing. He ministered wherever He was. Ministering to people and meeting their needs and teaching and preaching the gospel were His life. To live was to minister.

2 (7:3–5) Jesus Christ, Family of: the brothers' response was mockery and unbelief. Note several things.

Jesus had four half-brothers whose names were James, Joses, Simon, and Judas. He also had some half-sisters who were not named (Mt. 13:55–56). Their attitude toward Jesus was one of extreme concern and embarrassment. His claim to be *the Son of God* embarrassed them immensely and led them to think He was *beside Himself*, that is, mad or insane. On one occasion the rumor of madness caused so much pressure from neighbors and friends that they actually traveled a great distance to find Him and bring Him home (see note—Mk. 3:31–32 for more discussion. This is an important note in grasping the background of the brothers' attitude of mockery toward Jesus.)

Jesus, of course, did not heed the urgings of His family to cease making such phenomenal claims. He had to proclaim the truth: He was the Son of God, the very Bread of Life, the only One who could fill and satisfy men, giving them abundant and eternal life.

The embarrassment felt by the family was bound to be a heavy load, making the family extremely self-conscious and stirring some sense of responsibility for Jesus' abnormal behavior. The brothers compensated for their embarrassment by mocking Jesus. Note their mockery: they challenged Him to go up to Jerusalem to the Feast and do His marvelous miracles there. They suggested that He was failing to help and to strengthen the disciples He left there when He withdrew and that if He really wanted to be acclaimed the Messiah, the Son of God, He had to prove Himself in the center of the nation, Jerusalem itself.

The brothers, of course, knew the rumors about the leaders seeking to kill Jesus. It was not likely they really wanted Jesus to go and jeopardize His life, nor did they think He would. The whole scene was one of mockery (vv.3–4) and unbelief (v.5). They were tolerating Him through sarcasm, through a half-amused teasing. They entertained themselves by goading Him on and by treating Him with an amused disrespect; and, unfortunately, their disrespect and teasing were open for all to see. Note three points.

a. There was the hurt and ache of Jesus over the family. His heart was bound to be cut to the core by the family's mockery, embarrassment, and unbelief. He was deeply hurt by their rejection.

b. *Jesus' suffering upon earth* included the rejection of His earthly family. He is thereby able to succor everyone, no matter his trial, even the person who stands alone in the world, having been rejected by his own family.

c. The response of Jesus' family, in particular His brothers, was embarrassment, mockery, and unbelief. The unbelief of the brothers was a persistent, continuing attitude (the Greek imperfect tense). To some degree this is understandable in light of ...

- Jesus' phenomenal claims
- Jesus' rejection by His hometown, Nazareth, which the family witnessed. He was probably rejected twice by His former neighbors and city, once with so much hostility that they tried to kill Him (Lu. 4:16–30; Mk. 6:1–6; see Mt. 13:53–58)
- Jesus' rejection by His neighbors and the leaders of the nation, both religious and civil. The neighbors thought Him insane, and the leaders thought Him demon-possessed (Mk. 3:20–21; 3:22–30; 3:31–35. see Mt. 12:46–50; Lu. 8:19–21)

Thought 1. Jesus Christ bore every imaginable suffering for men, even the rejection of His own family. It is through His suffering—the very fact that He has borne all our sufferings—that He is able to succor us through any and all trials.

“For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted [trials], he is able to succour them that are tempted” (He. 2:18; see He. 4:15–16).

3 (7:6–9) Man, Acclaim—Jesus Christ, Response to: Jesus' reply to mockery, ridicule, sarcasm, and unbelief was threefold.

a. It was not time (the day) for His acclaim, not time for the world to accept and acknowledge His claims and works, not yet.

- 1) The day of the Lord's acclaim had not yet come. It was not time for the day ...
 - when many would proclaim Him the Savior, the King of kings and Lord of lords
 - when many would bow, acknowledging that His claim to be the Messiah, the Son of God, was true

The day was coming. There was a time appointed by God, a destined time. (See note, *My Hour—Jn. 2:3–5.*) But it was not yet.

Note that Jesus had turned the mockery into a teaching situation. He used the very point of the mockery against His claims and works and made the claim again. There would be a time, a day, when He would be acclaimed, but not then.

“And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit” (Jn. 12:23–24).

“Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.... And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die” (Jn. 12:27, 32–33).

“Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end” (Jn. 13:1).

- 2) The time for man's acclaim is now. Jesus said to his brothers, “Your time—man's time, the world's time—is now.” It was and still is man's day, the day ...

- for acceptance and acclaim
- for reception and recognition
- for honoring and receiving honor

It should be noted that some interpret “time” to mean “the opportune time.” In this interpretation Jesus was simply saying it was not the best time for Him to attend the feast. His brothers could go anytime, but He could not. This interpretation is based on the word *time* (*kairos*, which stresses opportune time). It differs from the word usually used for Jesus’ *hour* (*hora*, Jn. 2:4). However, *kairos* is a frequently used word in the New Testament, and its meaning cannot be held to opportune time. Three things support the interpretation that *kairos* means “Jesus’ hour” in this passage.

⇒ The contrast Jesus makes between His time and His brothers’ time.

⇒ The context of verses 7–8.

⇒ The emphasis given to Jesus’ answer. If the reply means only that He was waiting for the opportune time to go to Jerusalem, then the reply seems trivial, almost meaningless; so does the contrast between His time and His brothers’ time and the points of verses 7–8.

b. It is time for the world’s works to be proclaimed evil. Christ said “It is time for the world’s reaction against me, not time for its acceptance.” It is time for Christ ...

- to point out the sin of the world, not to receive its acclaim
- to point out the false religion of the world, not to proclaim its hypocritical goodness
- to point out the depravity of the world, not to camouflage the truth
- to point out the corruption within the world, not to paint a rosy picture
- to point out the need of the world, not to praise it
- to point out the destiny of the world, not to hide its fate

Because of this, the fact that He proclaimed the truth, the world hated Him and would not acknowledge and acclaim Him. It was time for the world’s reaction against Him, not time for its acceptance.

It is time for man’s acceptance, time for the men of the world to accept each other. His brothers were part of the world, and the world does not hate its own. The world does not reject and hate, but receives those ...

- who love it
- who serve it
- who participate in it
- who approve of its behavior
- who go along with it

Therefore, the world receives those who look at Christ and mock, ridicule, criticize, reject, and treat Him sarcastically. The world does not hate, but welcomes, opposition to Jesus Christ.

Thought 1. This is the time and the day when the works of the world must be proclaimed evil. The truth must be preached and proclaimed by the ministers of God. The world cannot be saved unless the evil of the world is acknowledged and corrected. It is the task of God's people to proclaim the truth; however, it must be proclaimed as Jesus proclaimed it: in love, appealing to the desperate needs of man.

“If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin” (Jn. 15:22).

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Ro. 3:23; see Is. 53:6; 64:6).

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Ro. 6:23).

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 Jn. 1:8).

“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Ge. 6:5).

“As righteousness tendeth to life; so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death” (Pr. 11:19).

“Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?” (Pr. 20:9).

c. It is not time for Jesus' full revelation. Note the words “full come” or “fully come” (peplerotai). His predestined *hour to die* for the world was not to be, not yet. It was to come, but in God's time. And when it came, His claims and works would be validated and proven beyond question. Many would proclaim Him to be both Lord and Savior, the Bread of Life who alone can fill and satisfy the desperate and starving needs of men.

Thought 1. The believer's answer to mockery, ridicule, sarcasm, and unbelief is the same as the answer proclaimed by Jesus.

(1) This is not the day for His acclaim, but for man's acclaim.

(2) It is time for the world's works to be proclaimed evil.

(3) It is not time for His full revelation, that is, for the climax of human history, the day when He shall return in glory and majesty, dominion and power.

“For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God” (Ro. 14:11).

“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Ph. 2:9–11).

“Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest” (Re. 15:4).

“All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord’s: and he is the governor among the nations” (Ps. 22:27–28).

“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear” (Is. 45:22–23; see Is. 66:23).

B. The Response of the Jews: Seeking Yet Questioning, 7:10–19

- 1. The setting: Jesus went to the Feast** 10 But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.
- a. After His brothers had already gone
 - b. Quietly, in secret

- 2. The response of the Jews: Sought & questioned & whispered about Jesus** 11 Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he?

- 12 And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people.
- a. A good man

- b. A deceiver

- c. A man not important enough to defend 13 Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.

- d. A man unaccredited—so capable yet uneducated 14 Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.

- 1) Jesus went to the temple & taught 15 And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?
- 2) People questioned Jesus’ credentials

3. The reply of Jesus: My teaching is God's teaching—it comes from Him who sent Me

16 Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

a. Proven by the subjective test (the inward or moral test): A person knows the truth by doing it

17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I speak of myself.

b. Proven by the objective test (the outward or observation test): Does a person speak for his own glory or for God's glory?

18 He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

c. Proven by the personal test: Are you keeping the law? Obeying God's commandments?

19 Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?

B. The Response of the Jews: Seeking Yet Questioning, 7:10–19

(7:10–19) **Introduction:** the second reaction or response to Jesus came from the Jewish crowds, including both religionists and pilgrims. This passage gives the answer to four false beliefs about Jesus, the belief that He was ...

- only a *good man*
 - a deceiver
 - a man not important enough to defend
 - a man unaccredited
1. The setting: Jesus went to the Feast (v.10).
 2. The response of the Jews: Sought and questioned and whispered about Jesus (vv.11–15).
 3. The reply of Jesus: My teaching is God's teaching—it comes from Him who sent Me (vv.16–19).
 - a. Proven by the subjective test (the inward or moral test): a person knows the truth by doing it.
 - b. Proven by the objective test (the outward or observation test): Does a person speak for his own glory or for God's glory?
 - c. Proven by the personal test: Are you keeping the law? Obeying God's commandments?

1 (7:10) Jesus Christ, Faithfulness to Jewish Feast: Jesus finally went up to Jerusalem to attend the Feast, but He did not go up with His brothers. They had left sometime before, probably in a large caravan. The caravans of the day were huge expeditions (see Lu. 2:43–44); therefore, He went quietly, almost in secret, so as not to attract too much attention. He was going to step forward to teach publicly, but He needed to be inconspicuous until that moment came (v.14). If He had traveled to Jerusalem publicly, the people might have escorted Him into the city, proclaiming Him King and causing His arrest before His “hour” (Jn. 7:6). The Triumphal Entry would have taken place too soon.

2 (7:11–15) Jesus Christ, Response to: the Jews’ response was that of seeking Him and of questioning and murmuring about Him. The term “Jews” in this instance probably refers to all Jews, religionists and pilgrims. Everyone wanted to find Him: the Jewish authorities wanted to entrap and discredit Him before the people, for they wished to have Him arrested and sentenced to death. The common people wanted to find Him so they could hear His teaching and see His miracles for themselves.

The Jewish crowds are to be commended for having sought Christ, for He is to be sought. Every man should seek Christ until He is found.

⇒ But the motives of the religionists were evil. They were not seeking Jesus to worship and learn of Him, but to harm Him. They wanted to discredit Him, lest they lose the loyalty of the people and their own security and position.

⇒ But the motives of the common people were corrupt. They were not seeking Jesus as Savior and Lord, the One to whom they owed their allegiance. They were seeking Him out of curiosity, to see Him perform spectacular miracles (see Deeper Study # 1—Jn. 2:23).

The response of the Jewish crowds was that of murmuring and questioning. It was not a discontented murmuring, but that of whispering and buzzing about, excitedly so. People were quietly asking and discussing their opinions about Him in soft voices and off to the side, in the corners and away from strangers, lest they arouse the suspicion that they were followers of Jesus and endanger their own lives.

a. Some thought He was a good man: a man to be supported, listened to, and heeded. By *good* they meant at least the following: a man who was ...

- loving and caring
- giving and unselfish
- true and honest
- just and moral
- believing and worshipful

But note the inadequacy and weakness of this belief. It sees Jesus only as a man, a good man, yes; but still only as a man. It does not believe Jesus is the *Son of Man*. (See note—Jn. 1:51.)

b. Some thought Jesus was the exact opposite: a deceiver, a man who was deliberately deceiving and leading the people away from the true religion. By *deceiving* they meant that He was ...

- misleading, deluding, beguiling, actually leading the people away from God
- boasting of Himself, His own ideas and position
- reveling in the admiration, adulation, and flattery of the people
- trying to be novel and creative, to be recognized as a man of new ideas
- trying to attract attention and secure a following

In reality, they said He was ...

- not of God, but of Beelzebub (the devil) (Mt. 12:24; Mk. 3:22; Lu. 11:15)
- a drunkard and a glutton (Mt. 11:19; Lu. 7:34)
- an associate of sinners (Mt. 9:11; Mk. 2:16; Lu. 5:30; 15:2)
- a criminal and a law-breaker (Mt. 12:1–8; 12:10; 15:1–20; 16:1–12)

Now note: if all this were true, if Jesus were a deceiver, then He was the most evil and deceptive man the world has ever seen.

c. Some thought Jesus was a man not significant enough to defend. Even those who felt Jesus was a good man cowered in fear rather than speak up for Jesus. They feared the religious authorities. They felt Jesus was not worth the bother, the cost, the risk of jeopardizing their own safety.

d. Some thought Jesus was a man unaccredited and without proper credentials. About the middle of the Feast, Jesus ended His seclusion and hiding. He went into the temple and began teaching. The people were astonished; they marveled at His knowledge of the “letters.” “Letters” would mean both the Bible of the Old Testament and the commentaries or Scribal Law expounding the Scriptures. He had never been a student of their school or of a Rabbi, yet He knew the Scriptures well. Their question was asked in contempt: “How does this man know so much? Who is He claiming to be? What right does He have to teach? He has never learned or studied in our schools, under our teachers. He is a *mere carpenter*, uneducated, and unlearned. What right does He have to set Himself up as a great teacher, a person to be heard? He is not accredited nor ordained by our schools and leaders.”

Thought 1. How often people are rejected, despite their call and gifts, simply because they are not accredited by the right schools or leaders or do not have the *proper* education.

3 (7:16–19) Jesus Christ, Claims—Knowledge, of God: Jesus’ reply was threefold. He answered all four charges, the charges that He was ...

- only a good man
- a deceiver
- a man not significant enough to defend

- a man unaccredited

Jesus made the phenomenal claim: “My doctrine [teaching] is not mine, but God’s.” Note ...

- He did not claim to be the Source of His message
- He claimed to be “sent” by God, to be the Representative, the Ambassador of God. He claimed to have been in the most intimate relationship with God: in His presence, communion, and fellowship. (See note—Jn. 3:34)

“For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me” (Jn. 6:38).

“But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me” (Jn. 7:29).

“Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me” (Jn. 8:42).

“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (Jn. 9:4).

“Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?” (Jn. 10:36).

“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (Jn. 17:21).

- He claimed that His message and teaching were God’s. He was only the Messenger of God

“Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things” (Jn. 8:28).

“For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me” (Jn. 17:8).

“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son” (2 Jn. 9).

Jesus said a person can actually test His claim. There are three tests that prove His claim.

a. There is the subjective test, the inward or moral test. How can a person know if Jesus’ claim is true? He can know by doing God’s will. If a person will do what God says, that person *will know* the truth. Jesus was saying ...

- that God’s teaching, God’s Word, is not for storing up head knowledge, but for experiencing real life
- that the person who really knows God is not the person who has some thoughts about God, but the person who does and lives as God wills, the person who is holy even as God is holy

- that the only person who can know God is the person who thinks and lives as God lives. A person who does not live as God lives does not *know* God; he only knows *about* God
- that the only way to know God is to “*believe* that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him” (He. 11:6)

In summary, there is a way to know if Jesus’ claim is true. A person can know by ...

- believing and seeking to know God, believing that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him
- living and doing God’s will, by being holy even as He is holy (1 Pe. 1:15–16)

“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him” (Jn. 14:21).

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Ro. 12:2).

“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Pe. 1:15–16).

b. There is the objective test, the outward or observation test. Does Christ speak for His own glory or for God’s glory? A person can look at Christ and observe and see the truth.

⇒ A man who is *sent by another person* and ends up speaking for himself is not a true representative. He is seeking his own glory.

⇒ A man who is *sent by another person* and speaks the message of that person *is* true, for he is doing what he should do: representing the person who sent him.

Note three very significant things.

1) Jesus did not seek to glorify Himself, but God. Jesus sought to stir men to glorify God in their lives. Such an effort is the constant subject of Jesus’ preaching and teaching. He claimed to be empty of personal ambition and glory.

“And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (Jn. 14:13).

“I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do” (Jn. 17:4).

2) Jesus was not just claiming to tell the truth; He was claiming to be *the truth*.

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (Jn. 14:6).

“To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice” (Jn. 18:37).

3) Jesus claimed that there was no unrighteousness in Him.

“Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?” (Jn. 8:46).

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Co. 5:21).

“For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (He. 4:15).

“For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens” (He. 7:26).

“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (He. 9:14).

“But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pe. 1:19).

“Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth” (1 Pe. 2:22).

c. There is the personal test. A person can use the law to tell if Christ is true. A man can measure himself by the law and clearly see that he does not keep it. He breaks the law; therefore, he stands in need of God’s forgiveness. This was exactly what Christ was preaching and teaching. He cried out that God loved the world and had sent His Son to save the world.

Note what Jesus said: “You are the recipients of the law. God has been very gracious to you in giving the law. But being a recipient is not enough—you must keep the law. However, you do not keep the law. You go about opposing and standing against me, not surrendering to God’s Son. You oppose me, even seek to kill me, God’s Son.”

“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (Ga. 3:10).

“And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them” (Ga. 3:12).

“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God” (Ro. 10:3).

C. The Response of the People: A Charge of Insanity, Yet Still Questioning, 7:20–31

1. The pilgrims’ response

a. Their response: Jesus was possessed by a demon, that is, insane

20 The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee?

b. Jesus' reply: He had done only good 21 Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel.

1) Circumcision is doing good: Meets a religious & a ceremonial need of man 22 Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man.

2) Healing is doing good even if it takes place on the Sabbath: Meets a personal & a bodily need of man 23 If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day?

3) A principle: Do not judge superficially, but think & consider 24 Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

2. The local residents' response 25 Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he, whom they seek to kill?

a. Their question: Is this not He?

b. Their reasoning: Could He be the Messiah? 26 But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?

c. Their conclusion: Unbelief—they knew His earthly origin 27 Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.

3. Jesus' reply: A pivotal claim 28 Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not.

a. He is a man

b. He also came from God

c. He knows God: Is from God—God sent Him

29 But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me.

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| <p>4. The local people's reaction</p> <p>a. Some did not believe & rejected Jesus</p> <p>b. Some believed</p> | <p>30 Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.</p> <p>31 And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this <i>man</i> hath done?</p> |
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C. The Response of the People: A Charge of Insanity, Yet Still Questioning, 7:20–31

(7:20–31) **Introduction:** the third reaction or response to Jesus came from all the people—the pilgrims and the local residents of Jerusalem. The charges against Jesus ranged all the way from being demon-possessed to being a mere man. Jesus' answer to all charges against Him was incisive.

1. The pilgrims' response (vv.20–24).
2. The local residents' response (vv.25–27).
3. Jesus' reply: A pivotal claim (vv.28–29).
4. The local people's reaction (vv.30–31).

1 (7:20–24) Jesus Christ, Response to: the pilgrims' response was a charge that Jesus was demon-possessed and insane.

a. The charge was made primarily by the pilgrims, not by the local residents of Jerusalem. The local residents are covered in the next passage (vv.25–31). The pilgrims were the people who did not know Jesus very well. They had come from all over the world; therefore, they did not know as much about Jesus, which made it easier to charge Him with being demon-possessed and mad or insane. He was opposing ...

- the religious establishment
- the religious leaders
- the religion that had proven itself for generations
- the religion that contributed so much to society and the nation
- the religion that was founded by the forefathers, the most godly leaders of history

Only an evil man or a man filled with an evil spirit would have opposed such a religion; therefore, Jesus must have been crazed. His mind must have been deranged, running wild with the imagination that people were out to get Him. He must have been controlled by an evil spirit. The

pilgrims thought their religious leaders could do little if any evil. They thought their religious leaders would never ...

- harm anyone
- be so unjust and immoral
- be so undisciplined and out of control
- react against anyone
- be so corruptible
- do such an unholy thing

Thought 1. Some people think religious leaders can do no wrong. However, religion and religious leaders can be wrong just as any establishment or anyone else can be wrong. Everyone can fail and fall, come short and sin, be misled and become corruptible. Christ came ...

- to point out this misconception
- to correct this misconception
- to forgive this misconception
- to pass judgment upon those who would not repent or receive God's forgiveness and be corrected

Thought 2. A man's choice, his decision, must be made for Jesus Christ and not for religion and religious leaders. Christ is the Truth, not religion and its leaders. Religion and religious leaders are to follow Christ just as all other men are to follow Christ. Christ is the Lord and Master, not religion and its leaders.

b. Jesus answered the pilgrims by appealing to the great work He had just done. He had healed the crippled man by the pool of Bethesda. The man had been bedridden for thirty-eight years, and the people had marvelled at the power of Jesus (Jn. 5:1f). But there was a problem. Jesus had healed the man on the Sabbath, which was considered work, and working on the Sabbath was strictly forbidden. It was a serious offense in the minds of the Jews, for it taught the people to break the law. And this the civil and religious leaders could not allow, for it was their religion that had held the nation together (see Deeper Study # 2—Jn. 5:15–16 for more discussion).

The point is this. Jesus said that He was not evil; He was not demon-possessed and mad. Doing good proves whether a man is full of evil or full of good. His work, healing the crippled man, was a good work not an evil work. His healing did as much good as the religious leaders who circumcised on the Sabbath day. Note three points.

1) The religious leaders criticized Jesus for healing the crippled man on the Sabbath, and it was for this work and other so called law-breaking deeds that they were opposing Him, some even plotting to kill Him. But the pilgrims did not know this, not yet.

2) Jesus wanted all men, even the religionists, to see the truth. He was not a law-breaker, not an evil man. He was not out to destroy men and nations. He was the Son of God who had come to save men and nations and to correct and set religion straight.

3) Jesus appealed to the people to judge rightly, that is, by facts, not by appearance.

⇒ When they circumcised a man on the Sabbath, they were not doing evil, but good. They were meeting a man's religious and ceremonial need. Therefore, they were correct in circumcising on the Sabbath, for God commands circumcision on the eighth day, and sometimes the eighth day after a child's birth was bound to fall on the Sabbath (Le. 12:3).

⇒ When He healed a man on the Sabbath, He was not doing evil, but good. He was meeting a personal and bodily need of a man, a need much more desperate than a religious and ceremonial need.

Jesus told the people to judge not according to appearance, but to look at what He did; and to look realistically, honestly, and objectively. If a person did, he would see that Jesus was not full of evil but full of good and righteousness. He would see that Jesus was the Son of God.

“The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (1 S. 16:7).

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness” (Mt. 23:27).

“But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me” (Jn. 5:36).

“Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me” (Jn. 10:24–25).

“If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him” (Jn. 10:37–38).

“That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee” (De. 16:20).

2 (7:25–27) Jesus Christ, Deity—Origin—Response—God, Ignorance About: the local people's response was that of reasoning and drawing a tragic conclusion.

They questioned among themselves: is this the One who is so opposed and feared? Is He the One whom they seek to kill? They also reasoned: He speaks so openly and boldly, and He is not stopped. Is He indeed the Messiah? But the local residents came to a tragic conclusion: Jesus is not the Messiah. Why? Because they knew His origin. They knew all about His family and rearing; therefore, they concluded that He was a mere man, a carpenter from Nazareth. In their minds there was absolutely nothing unusual about His origin; therefore, He could not possibly be of God. He could not be the promised Messiah.

Thought 1. Some men always have and always will question, reason, and draw the wrong conclusion.

⇒ Some will question: Is this He, the One promised by God, the One so needed by the world?

⇒ Some will reason: this is the very Christ, the Messiah. He is bound to be, for He continues on. He is still proclaimed, forcibly so, despite being so threatened and persecuted with the intention of being wiped out.

⇒ Some will conclude: this could not be the Son of God. It is impossible for a man to be born of God, to literally come from God. A man is a man, just flesh and blood like all other men. His origin has to be that of a man and a woman. Note: unbelief prevails when the mind is set only upon the earth and its physical law. If God is God, He must be allowed to act supernaturally, above natural law. This was the problem with the people in Jesus' day, and it is the problem with so many of every generation.

3 (7:28–29) Jesus Christ, Deity—Claims, of Jesus Christ: Jesus' reply to those who questioned and disbelieved Him is a critical point. His answer centered around His origin. Note that He was gripped with great emotion in answering this point. He *cried out* (ekrazen) and shouted three things.

a. He *is* a man, and men do know where He came from. He was born of Mary and did come from Nazareth, but that is not all. There is much, much more.

b. He has come *from God*. God sent Him. Note exactly what Jesus claimed.

1) "I am not come of myself": His mission and message were not His own. He did not dream it up, plan it or plot it. He was not out for self glory or to build a movement and a following. What He did was not of Himself.

2) "He that sent me is true." A real Person sent Jesus, and note: the Person is not only real, He is true. He is a Person who is the very embodiment of truth. (See Deeper Study # 1—Jn. 1:9; Deeper Study # 2—14:6.) What Jesus was claiming and doing was exactly what He had been sent and commissioned to claim and to do.

3) "You do not know Him." They did not know that Person who is truth. Jesus was saying, of course, that they did not know God. If they knew God, really knew Him, they would recognize and know that Jesus' mission and works were of God. They would know that only God's perfect love and power could speak and do as Jesus did.

"But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me" (Jn. 15:21).

"And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me" (Jn. 16:3).

"For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge" (Je. 4:22).

“Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord” (Je. 8:7).

“And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the Lord” (Je. 9:3).

c. “I know Him [God].” Jesus told how He knew God.

1) He knew God because He was from God (see Deeper Study # 1—Jn. 3:31 for verses of Scripture). He actually came from God’s presence, from being face-to-face with Him.

2) He knew God because He was sent by God (see Deeper Study # 3—Jn. 3:34). While face-to-face with God, God commissioned Him and sent Him forth to *proclaim* and *live* the truth before men. (See Deeper Study # 2—Jn. 14:6.)

“For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me” (Jn. 6:38).

“But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me” (Jn. 7:29).

“I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me” (Jn. 8:42).

“Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?” (Jn. 10:36).

“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (Jn. 17:21).

4 (7:30–31) Jesus Christ, Response to: the reaction of the local residents was twofold.

a. Some still did not believe and some even became sworn enemies. They tried to stop Jesus, but they failed, for God stopped them. He overrode their opposition and plots. Jesus’ “hour” had not yet come, so they were not allowed to stop Him (see note, “*My Hour*”—Jn. 2:3–5).

b. Some believed in Him (see Deeper Study # 2—Jn. 2:24).

“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (Jn. 3:18).

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (Jn. 3:36).

D. The Response of the Rulers & Authorities: A Charge of Being a Rabble-Rouser, 7:32–36

1. The response of the rulers & authorities

32 The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and

a. They considered Him a threat, a rabble-rouser the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him.

b. They sought to arrest Him

2. The reply of Jesus

a. He foretold His destiny: His death, resurrection, & ascension

33 Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and *then* I go unto him that sent me.

b. He foretold man's destiny: Men will seek to find Him—but cannot come where He is
34 Ye shall seek me, and shall not find *me*: and where I am, *thither* ye cannot come.

3. The reaction of the rulers & authorities: They questioned His reply

35 Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?

36 What *manner of saying* is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find *me*: and where I am, *thither* ye cannot come?

D. The Response of the Rulers and Authorities: A Charge of Being a Rabble-Rouser, 7:32–36

(7:32–36) **Introduction:** the fourth reaction or response to Jesus is that of the authorities, both religious and civil. They paint a clear picture of men in every generation who reject and oppose Jesus. What Jesus says is both striking and tragic for all unbelievers.

1. The response of the rulers and authorities (v.32).

2. The reply of Jesus (vv.33–34).

a. He foretold His destiny: His death, resurrection, and ascension.

b. He foretold man's destiny: men will seek to find Him—but cannot come where He is.

3. The reaction of the rulers and authorities: they questioned His reply (vv.35–36).

1 (7:32) Jesus Christ, Response—Religionists: the response of the rulers, both religious and civil. Note several facts.

a. The religionists or the Pharisees took the lead in opposing Jesus (see Deeper Study # 3, *Pharisees—Ac. 23:8*; Deeper Study # 2, *Religionists—Jn. 5:16*. This last note discusses why the

religionists opposed Jesus so vehemently.) They apparently approached the chief priests and persuaded them that Jesus was a threat.

b. The chief priests were primarily leaders among the Sadducees who held most of the high offices of Jewish government under Roman rule (See Deeper Study # 2, *Sadducees*—Ac. 23:8). When Rome became dissatisfied with a chief priest, he was removed and another one was placed in authority. The removal from office was a common occurrence, so there were quite a few chief priests surviving. In the eyes of the people, they were still honored despite being removed. The people blamed Rome for their removal, not the chief priests.

c. In the four gospels, when the Pharisees, chief priests, and Scribes are mentioned as standing together against Jesus, it means that the ruling body of the Jewish nation has taken action. (See Deeper Study # 1, *Sanhedrin*—Mt. 26:59.) In the present situation, the Sanhedrin had apparently met and dispatched the palace or temple police to arrest Jesus. From what follows it seems that they were told to watch for an appropriate moment lest they cause a riot among His supporters.

d. Note what disturbed the religionists so much. It was the murmuring of the people, in particular the fact that so many were “believing on Him” (v.31). He was a threat to their security and position, esteem and authority, profession and livelihood. (see Deeper Study # 2—Jn. 5:15–16 for more discussion.) They wanted nothing to do with Him; they wanted things to be left alone. They wanted to get rid of Him as soon as possible.

Thought 1. A man (leader) often murmurs against and opposes Jesus because Jesus is a threat to his way of life. Because the man is unwilling to change his life, Jesus is a threat to him and his security. Wanting absolutely nothing to do with Jesus, he tries to dispose of Him and His influence the best way he can.

“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mt. 16:26).

“And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares” (Lu. 21:34).

“Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Tit. 2:12).

“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (Js. 4:4).

“But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness” (Ro. 6:17–18).

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 Jn. 2:15–16).

“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Re. 3:17).

“They are inclosed in their own fat: with their mouth they speak proudly” (Ps. 17:10).

“Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy” (Eze. 16:49).

2 (7:33–34) Jesus Christ, Death; Ascension; Exaltation: Jesus’ reply was puzzling and tragic both to the unbeliever of His day and to the unbeliever of today.

a. Jesus foretold His destiny.

1) He foretold His death: “Yet a little while am I with you.”

“Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me; and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you” (Jn. 13:33).

“Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I” (Jn. 14:28).

“But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?” (Jn. 16:5).

“And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are” (Jn. 17:11).

2) He foretold His resurrection and ascension: “Then I go unto Him that sent me” (see Jn. 8:14; 13:3; 14:2–3; 16:5, 10, 17).

“Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go” (Jn. 8:14).

“Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went [was going] to God” (Jn. 13:3).

“I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (Jn. 14:2–3).

“Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more” (Jn. 16:10).

“Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father?” (Jn. 16:17).

What did the death and resurrection have to do with those who opposed Jesus? Why did Jesus predict His destiny in answering those who wanted nothing to do with Him?

⇒ He was saying that those who opposed Him could get rid of Him. They could reject and have nothing to do with Him. They did not have to worry about getting rid of Him; they would be allowed to do that. He would go away.

⇒ He was saying, however, that He would not cease to be; He would not be annihilated and cease to exist. His life would not be extinguished. He would be killed because men would try to stop Him from living as a man on earth. But He would arise and return to His Father who sent Him. He would experience glory and give great hope to all those who have believed and do believe in Him (see note—Mk. 16:19–20).

b. Jesus foretold man's destiny. Jesus predicted a tragic future for those who opposed Him and wanted nothing to do with Him. He said that the day is coming when ...

- they shall seek Him
- but they shall not find Him
- where He is they will not be allowed to come

What Jesus meant is *just what He said*.

1) The man who rejects Christ will face the day when he will seek Christ.

⇒ In this life, God's Spirit does not always strive with man (Ge. 6:3; see Pr. 29:1). When a man is in church or anywhere else and feels pulled to make a decision and puts the decision off for an hour or two (a half day or a day at most), the pull fades and eventually dies completely. God's Spirit does not continue to strive with him. Most of us have experienced such movements and killed the Spirit's striving within us.

“And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man” (Ge. 6:3).

“He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy” (Pr. 29:1).

“Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me” (Ps. 51:11).

⇒ In the next life, at the day of judgment, the unbeliever will seek Christ.

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast our devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?” (Mt. 7:21–22).

“And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us” (Mt. 25:10–11).

2) However, the great tragedy is that the unbeliever will not find Christ. It will be too late (see Mt. 25:31–46). The unbeliever has never known Christ nor what it is to walk in the Lord's kingdom on earth; therefore, he will not know Christ or His kingdom in that day. As Christ and heaven are alien and unknown to the unbeliever today, so will Christ and heaven be alien and unknown to the unbeliever in that day. Unbelievers will not be allowed to come where He is, that is, live in God's presence, not eternally.

Note: “I” and “you” are a climactic contrast. Jesus said “Where *I* am, there *you* cannot come” (v.36). “Where I am” means two things.

⇒ It means the rest and life of Christ, which is love, joy, and peace. (See note, *Rest*—Jn. 4:16–18.)

⇒ It means the state of eternal life (see Deeper Study # 2—Jn. 1:4; Deeper Study # 1—10:10; Deeper Study # 1—17:2–3. See Deeper Study # 3, *Kingdom of God*—Mt. 19:23–24.)

“For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Mt. 5:20).

“When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out” (Lu. 13:25–28).

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?” (1 Co. 6:9).

“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption” (1 Co. 15:50).

“And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Re. 21:27).

3 (7:35–36) Jesus Christ, Response to: the reaction of the rulers and authorities. Very simply, they were *puzzled*, questioning what Jesus meant.

a. The dispersed (diasporan) refers to the Jews who were scattered all over the world. It seems that the rulers thought Jesus was going to leave Israel and go to some foreign nation, preaching to the Jews there.

b. Those who opposed Jesus were puzzled by His death and resurrection and ascension. It was difficult for them to grasp its meaning and to believe in Him. In fact, it was offensive to them. This was exactly what Jesus had said (see note—Jn. 6:62).

“But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!” (Mt. 6:23).

“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Co. 4:4).

“Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Ep. 4:18).

“But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes” (1 Jn. 2:11).

E. The Great Claim of Jesus & Divided Opinions About Him, 7:37–53

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| <p>1. The setting: The day of the Feast</p> | <p>37 In the last day, that great <i>day</i> of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.</p> |
| <p>2. The claims of Jesus</p> | |
| <p>a. I am the source of life¹</p> | |
| <p>b. I am the source of abundant, overflowing life</p> | <p>38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.</p> |
| <p>c. I am the source of the Holy Spirit²</p> | <p>39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet <i>given</i>; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)</p> |
| <p>3. The people's divided response</p> | <p>40 Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet.</p> |
| <p>a. Many: Jesus is the prophet³</p> | |
| <p>b. Others: Jesus is the Christ</p> | <p>41 Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee?</p> |
| <p>c. Some: Questioned Jesus' birthplace & misinterpreted Scripture^{DS4}</p> | <p>42 Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?</p> <p>43 So there was a division among the people because of him.</p> |
| <p>d. Some: Would seize & do away with Jesus</p> | <p>44 And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him.</p> |

- 4. The rulers' response**
- a. They wished to remove Jesus
- 45 Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him?
- 1) The officers were sent to arrest Him, v. 32
- 2) The officers' response: He is a great teacher
- 46 The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.
- b. They claimed Jesus was a deceiver: Charged the people with being mistaken & accursed
- 47 Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived?
- 48 Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?
- 49 But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.
- c. They rejected Jesus
- 50 Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,)
- 1) Nicodemus spoke up for Him⁵
- 51 Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?
- 2) They rejected Nicodemus' questions, misinterpreting Scripture
- 52 They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.
- d. They went to their own homes: Lived as always
- 53 And every man went unto his own house.

E. The Great Claim of Jesus and Divided Opinions About Him, 7:37–53

(7:37–53) **Introduction:** this is a picture of the great claim of Jesus and the divided opinions about Him. It is a picture that should cause every man to search his own response to Jesus.

1. The setting: The day of the Feast (v.37).
2. The claims of Jesus (vv.37–39).
3. The people's divided response (vv.40–44).

4. The rulers' response (vv.45–53).

1 (7:37) Feast of Tabernacles: the Feast of Tabernacles was the most popular feast among the Jews. For that reason it was simply known as *The Feast* (1 K. 8:20). It was also called *The Feast of Ingathering* (Ex. 23:16) and *The Feast of the Lord* (Le. 23:39). The Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated for seven days. Each Jewish family built a small stucco or tent-like structure in their yard or upon some other property they owned or secured for the occasion. Then they moved out of their home into the structure for the seven-day period. The Feast celebrated two significant events. Historically, it celebrated the day when Israel wandered about in the wilderness as strangers and pilgrims without a homeland. The purpose for moving into the stucco or tent-like structure was to keep before their minds the wilderness wanderings of their forefathers (Le. 23:40–43). Secondly, the Feast was to be a period of thanksgiving for the completion of the harvest season and for the goodness of God in all of life (Ex. 23:16; De. 16:13, 16). The people were to give thanks for all that God had given them: all the fruit of the land that enriched life and made life possible.

The ceremony of the festival was most impressive and gives a dramatic picture of Christ's claims (Jn. 7:37–39). On each of the seven days, the people came to the temple and brought some fruit as an offering and a few palm and willow branches. The branches were used to form a roof over the altar. Then the priest took a golden pitcher and led the people in a processional down to the pool of Siloam where he filled the pitcher with water. During this march the people played the flute and sang the Hallel, which was Psalms 113–118.

It was on the return march that the significant drama took place.

⇒ As the pitcher of water passed through the Water Gate, the people repeated in unison: "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation" (Is. 12:3).

⇒ When the pitcher reached the altar, the water was poured out over the altar as an offering to God. While this was being done, the people waved palm branches and recited the words "Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity" (Ps. 118:25).

The idea of the processional was a dramatic way to thank God for rain, to offer prayer to God for more rain, and for a fruitful season in the coming year. It was a dramatic way for the people to acknowledge their need and dependence upon God for the rains, the water that gave them the fruit of the ground and the bounty of life. The last day of the Feast was dramatic in particular, for the people repeated the processional seven times. Note a significant point: Scripture says the Feast of Tabernacles will be celebrated and fulfilled in the end time when our Lord returns. The Feast will apparently symbolize our joy, liberty, and victory through the wilderness experience of life and the glorious provision of God: the glorious provision of living eternally and worshipping and serving God throughout the universe (Zec. 14:16).

2 (7:37–39) Jesus Christ, Claims: the claims of Jesus. It was on "the last day, that great day of the feast," the day when the people marched in the processional seven times, that Jesus made His phenomenal claim. Some imagine Jesus shouting His claim just as the people finished saying, "Send now prosperity" (Ps. 118:25).

Imagine the scene: Jesus did two unusual things. He "stood" (a teacher always sat in that day), and He *cried out* (ekrazen) shouting loudly. Both actions would startle and shock the people to

attention. Picture thousands of voices praying to God for the living rains in the coming season, reciting: “Send now prosperity,” and then piercing the air comes the thundering cry:

“If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water” (Jn. 7:37–38).

Jesus made three phenomenal claims.

a. Jesus Christ is the source of life: He is the One who can quench the real thirst of man’s being, who can meet the desperate need of man for prosperity, the real fruit and bounty of life.

1) Men do thirst. They thirst for physical water and they thirst for spiritual life (see note—Jn. 4:13–14 for a discussion of this point).

2) Jesus Christ claims to be the source, that is, the Water that can quench man’s thirst and give the fruit and bounty man so desperately needs in his life. He claims that He can do what water does (see Deeper Study # 1—Jn. 7:37).

⇒ He can cleanse and purify.

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Ep. 1:7; see 1 Jn. 1:9).

⇒ He can refresh.

“[He] is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing” (Is. 28:12).

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (Ac. 3:19).

⇒ He can revitalize and energize.

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mt. 11:28).

b. Jesus Christ is the source of abundant life. Rivers of *living water* can flow out from a person. An abundance of life can be experienced (see Deeper Study # 1—Jn. 1:4; Deeper Study # 1—10:10).

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Mt. 5:6).

“But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (Jn. 4:14).

“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat” (Re. 7:16).

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Re. 22:17).

“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (Jn. 10:10).

1) The death of Jesus Christ (His having been smitten for the sins of the world) is the source of the living water. Out of His death (because He died) He was able to arise, and by arising He was able to conquer sin and death and to bring forth eternal life in all of its abundance. Note: the Word of God to Moses was a picture of the living water that was to come from Christ after He was smitten.

“Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink” (Ex. 17:6; see Nu. 20:11).

2) Living water comes only through “believing on Christ.” (See Deeper Study # 2—Jn. 2:24.)

“And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst” (Jn. 6:35).

c. Jesus Christ is the source of the Holy Spirit. Rivers of living water refer to the Holy Spirit. This is a crucial verse, for it is the only place “living waters” is defined. When Jesus spoke of giving “living water,” He meant He would give the Holy Spirit to a person. The presence of the Holy Spirit, of course, meant the experience of abundant and eternal life.

Note: it is only the person who believes in Christ who receives the Holy Spirit. Belief in Him is essential. Christ is the Giver of the Spirit. (See note—Jn. 4:13–14 for more discussion.)

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Ga. 5:22–23).

“For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth” (Ep. 5:9).

Deeper Study # 1

(7:37) **Jesus Christ—Living Water:** water does at least three things. It cleanses or purifies; it refreshes; and it revitalizes or energizes.

Deeper Study # 2

(7:39) **Holy Spirit:** what does the statement mean, “the Holy Spirit was not yet given”? It does not mean the Spirit was not active in the Old Testament. He was very active (Ge. 1:2; 6:3; Jb. 26:13; 33:4; Ps. 51:11; 139:7; Eze. 3:24, 27; Hag. 2:5). It seems to mean that the Holy Spirit was not *fully present* until after the death and glorification of Christ. He was not present ...

- in all His fullness
- in the lives of believers all the time
- in equipping believers with permanent spiritual gifts

These three things certainly happened after the glorification of Christ.

- ⇒ He entered the world in all His fulness at Pentecost. (See Deeper Study # 1—Ac. 2:1–4 for more discussion.)
- ⇒ He entered the lives of believers at conversion, and their bodies became “the temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Co. 6:19).
- ⇒ He equips believers with spiritual gifts that are permanent (1 Co. 12:7f).

3 (7:40–44) Jesus Christ, Response to; Opinions of: the people’s response was very divided.

- a. Some said He was the Prophet (see Deeper Study # 2—Jn. 1:20).
- b. Some said He was the Christ (see Deeper Study # 2—Jn. 1:20).
- c. Some questioned if He could be the Messiah. They knew that He was from Galilee, and they knew the true Messiah was to come out of Bethlehem, the city of David. Therefore, they saw no possible way He could be the Messiah.

Thought 1. Note what happened immediately upon the heels of the Lord’s dramatic claim. People began to argue over Him, arguing if He were the real Messiah. What men need is to accept the fact: He is the Messiah, the Christ. There is too much evidence to deny it, too much evidence ...

- within the human soul that senses the truth of God
- within the lives of so many who bear clear testimony to His love and forgiveness, presence and assurance

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness” (Jn. 3:11).

“Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me” (Jn. 10:24–25).

“But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him” (Jn. 12:37).

Thought 2. Many do question the *Lord’s origin* and continue in unbelief because of it. When they look at Jesus, they see a great man, but only a man. They see and believe that He was flesh and blood, but not God incarnate in human flesh. They do not believe Jesus is the Son of God—a great prophet, yes; but the Messiah, the very Son of God, no.

“He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not” (Jn. 1:10–11).

“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1 Jn. 5:11–12).

d. Some would take and do away with Him. They wanted nothing to do with Him. He was a threat to their peace and security and to their desire to live as they wished. (See note, pt.4—Jn. 7:32 for more discussion and thought.)

“And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares” (Lu. 21:34).

“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (Js. 4:4).

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 Jn. 2:15).

Deeper Study # 3

(7:40) **Prophetic Reference:** see De. 18:15.

Deeper Study # 4

(7:42) **Prophetic Reference:** see Mi. 5:2.

4 (7:45–53) Jesus Christ, Response: the rulers’ response was fourfold. Their response should be carefully noted, for it speaks volumes to rulers and leaders of every generation.

a. The leaders wished to be rid of Jesus. They opposed Him and wanted nothing to do with Him (see note, pts.3, 4—Jn. 7:32 for more discussion and thought).

Note the temple police were greatly impressed with the Lord’s teaching. To them He was a great teacher.

b. The leaders claimed that He was a deceiver and that the people were mistaken and cursed because they followed Him. (See note, pt.2—Jn. 7:11–15.)

c. The leaders rejected Him, strongly so. Nicodemus spoke up for Christ, charging the leaders with breaking the law themselves and suggesting that they all hear Christ and observe His works closely (see *Nicodemus*, Jn. 3:1f). The leaders used Scripture as the basis for rejecting Christ. They said that no Scripture pointed to a prophet coming out of Galilee. They were wrong of course, wrong on two counts.

⇒ Jonah came from Galilee.

⇒ God is able to raise up prophets from anywhere He chooses.

d. The leaders went to their own houses and lived just as they had always chosen. God does not force any man to subject himself to His Son. Every man has the freedom to live as He wishes, either for God or for self. The leaders chose to live for self.

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (Jn. 3:36).

“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (Jn. 8:24).

Deeper Study # 5

(7:50) **Nicodemus:** see Jn. 3:1–15.¹

¹ Leadership Ministries Worldwide. (2004). [*The Gospel according to John*](#) (pp. 154–170). Leadership Ministries Worldwide.