



The Gospel of John: *Know Jesus and Live*

Part 23
John 7:40-52

Introduction

- Last week we closed with Jesus making a pretty spectacular promise. He promised that...
 - ❖ **John 7:38**
- How did the people respond to this? What did they think about Jesus's claims?

The Jewish people were divided

1. Some thought he was "The Prophet."

❖ **John 7:40**

- The question of course is, what does this mean and why did they come to that conclusion? **The** Prophet is much more than just **A** prophet. **The** Prophet is spoken of in Deuteronomy 18...
 - ❖ Deuteronomy 18:15—*"The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen—"*
 - ❖ Deuteronomy 18:18—*I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him*
- So what makes **The** Prophet special? All Old Testament prophets came from within the Jewish community. All Old Testament prophets spoke the words of God. All Old Testament Prophets were to be heeded. The thing that makes **The** Prophet special or unique is that he will be like Moses. Just as Moses delivered his people from the power that enslaved them (Pharaoh), Jesus would deliver his people from the power that enslaved them (Sin). Just as God provided life saving water through Moses striking the rock in Exodus 17, John 7:38-39 shows us that God provides life saving living water (Holy Spirit) through Jesus. This last part about Jesus providing living water is what lead these people to correctly conclude that he is indeed **The** Prophet that Moses spoke of in Deuteronomy 18.

2. Some thought he was the Christ.

❖ **John 7:41a**

- My guess is that this group of people weren't necessarily disagreeing with the group that though he was **The** Prophet, rather, they were simply stating that he is even more. They were basically saying, "He is indeed **The** Prophet, but he is so much more! He is the very messiah that we have been waiting for! The one sent from God to deliver his people forever!"

3. Some doubted

❖ **John 7:41b-43**

- Ironic isn't it? These people say they can't believe in Jesus because he isn't from the line of David and from the city of Bethlehem, yet Jesus absolutely is from the line of David and was indeed born in Bethlehem according to both Matthew's and Luke's gospels.
- The nagging question here is, why didn't Jesus simply tell them this!?! The answer is quite simple. Jesus wanted them to draw their attention to something far greater than his earthly genealogy. It is far more



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important that they know that Jesus is from our Father in heaven than it is to know that he was born in Bethlehem. This simple yet profound truth is the very heart of John's gospel...

❖ John 20:31—*but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, **the Son of God**, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

4. Some wanted him locked up

❖ **John 7:44**

- Some did much more than doubt, they wanted him locked up! They thought, this guy is “leading people astray (7:12).” Nevertheless, no one could get their hands on him. It wasn't Jesus's time to be arrested and so God prevented it from happening. In the next few verses, we will see exactly how he did this.

The Pharisees turned on their police force and their people

❖ **John 7:45-49**

- A few things to see here...
 1. How did God sovereignly keep Jesus from being arrested? By causing the officers to be arrested by the power of Jesus's words.
 2. The Pharisees belittle their officers.
 3. The Pharisees damn their own people.

The Pharisees were divided

❖ **John 7:50-52**

- two things to see here...
 1. Nicodemus rebukes his fellow Pharisees
 2. The Pharisees mock Nicodemus and make foolishly false claims.
 - In saying, “Are you from Galilee too?” The Pharisees are basically saying, “You must have some foolish hometown bias because no thinking person can possibly want to defend Jesus!”
 - In attempting to make Nicodemus feel foolish for wanting to give Jesus a fair hearing, they are the ones who end up looking foolish. They argue that no prophet comes from Galilee, yet, Jonah was from the city of Gath-Hepher in Galilee (2 Kings 14:25) and Nahum was from the city of Elkosh also in Galilee (Nahum 1:1)¹.

Implications and Applications

1. You cannot be neutral about Jesus

- At this point in the text, no one is calling Jesus “A good man (7:12)” anymore. His claims about himself prevent them from maintaining such a neutral posture. Jesus has claimed to come from God (7:28-29) and he has claimed that anyone who believes in him will have rivers of living water gushing out of his heart

¹ Easton Dictionary of the Bible



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(7:38-39). Thus, just as C.S. Lewis points out in his book, *Mere Christianity*, there are really only three possible conclusions that a person can come to...

- (1) Jesus is a liar
- (2) Jesus is a lunatic
- (3) Jesus is indeed the Lord and Christ

2. We should expect to experience division because of Jesus

- The division that the Jewish people were experiencing is one that we too will experience.
 - ❖ Matthew 10:34—*“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. 36 And a person's enemies will be those of his own household.”*

3. People often come to Jesus gradually or slowly

- We see this in the life of Nicodemus. In John 3, he comes to Jesus in the night and Jesus preached to him saying...
 - ❖ **John 3:14-18**
- At the end of their time together, there is no indication that Nicodemus became a believer. Here in John 7, Nicodemus is willing to give Jesus a fair hearing, but doesn't yet seem totally convinced. It isn't until after the death of Jesus that we get compelling evidence that Nicodemus had come to believe in Jesus...
 - ❖ **John 19:39-42**
- This ought to be a great encouragement to us in our evangelism. We can remind ourselves that not everyone who believes, believes the very moment they hear the gospel. Faith in Christ can happen gradually and slowly as it did in the life of Nicodemus.
- This also ought to instruct us. As we preach the gospel, we can feel pressure to get a response now. While we surely ought to provide the opportunity for someone to respond to the gospel, we must not pressure people to respond right then and there. God may perhaps be bringing them to faith in Jesus slowly as he did Nicodemus.