

John 7vs1-52

Mixed Response

© St Helen's Church

Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, published by Harper Collins Publishers. © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers.

Used by Permission. All rights reserved.

Mixed response

John 7 vs 1-52

Before we explore this chapter, let's briefly consider what is going on in the background...

'The Feast of Booths' - also known as 'The Feast of Tabernacles'...

The Feast of Booths - a point at which everyone came to Jerusalem and lived in tents, to re-enact the 40 wilderness years after the exodus rescue from Egypt. We can read about it in the Old Testament book of Leviticus:

Read Leviticus 23 vs 42-43: You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All native Israelites shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that I made the people of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God."

This feast is one of the three major holidays - times when historically the Jewish populace traveled to the Temple in Jerusalem.

Now let's read the opening verses of John ch 7:

Read 7 vs 1-13: After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill him. ² Now the Jews' Feast of Booths was at hand. ³ So his brothers said to him, "Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you are doing. ⁴ For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world." ⁵ For not even his brothers believed in him. ⁶ Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. ⁷ The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil. ⁸ You go up to the feast. I am not going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come." ⁹ After saying this, he remained in Galilee.

¹⁰ But after his brothers had gone up to the feast, then he also went up, not publicly but in private. ¹¹ The Jews were looking for him at the feast, and saying, "Where is he?" ¹² And there was much muttering about him among the people. While some said, "He is a good man", others said, "No, he is leading the people astray." ¹³ Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of him.

The setting of ch 7 is of a new Feast, but the scene is a direct continuation from ch 6:

- The Jews hate Jesus...
- ...even his own brothers won't believe him
- Jesus' timing and agenda remain resolute and unchanged
 - this is demonstrated in his refusal to appear as a circus animal at the whim of his disciples...

This study falls into 4 parts:

- Confused responses
- Tables turned
- Life offered
- Division

1. *Confused responses*

1A) There is widespread confusion as to who Jesus is. We're going to begin with a whistle-stop tour of the whole chapter as to the different responses to Jesus.

What are the different responses to Jesus in this chapter... and which group would we be in..?

1) Hatred

v 1 - *After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill him.*

Who was seeking to do this..? THE JEWS!!

2) Intrigue

v 11 - *The Jews were looking for him at the feast, and saying, "Where is he?"*

3) "He is a good man" ... vs ... "He is leading the people astray!"

vs 12-13 - *And there was much muttering about him among the people. While some said, "He is a good man," others said, "No, he is leading the people astray." Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of him.*

4) "He's demon possessed! You will be killed!"

v 20 - *The crowd answered, "You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill you?"*

5) "Do the authorities know he IS the Christ!?"

v 26 - *"And here he is, speaking openly, and they say nothing to him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Christ?"*

6) Many people believed in him – because of the signs he did...

vs 30-31 - *So they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come. Yet many of the people believed in him. They said, "When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done?"*

7) The Chief Priests and Pharisees want to arrest him

v 32 - The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to arrest him.

8) Confusion – “...We might have missed something – and the Greeks will gain from it!”

v 35 - The Jews said to one another, “Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him? Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks?”

9) The people think he really is God’s promised Prophet

v 40 - When they heard these words, some of the people said, “This really is the Prophet.”

10) There is division over how to handle him

vs 43-44 - So there was a division among the people over him. Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.

11) The officers recognise something unique about him

vs 45-46 - The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, “Why did you not bring him?”⁴⁶ The officers answered, “No one ever spoke like this man!”

12) The chief priests and Pharisees: “He deceives people! And these people are ignorant anyway, they don’t know the law like we do!”

vs 47-49 - The Pharisees answered them, “Have you also been deceived?⁴⁸ Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him?⁴⁹ But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed.”

13) Nicodemus: “Don’t you think we should at least give him a hearing?”

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

1B) Jesus tackles these confused responses...

How does Jesus address the question of his identity?

Read vs 14-24: About the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and began teaching.¹⁵ The Jews therefore marvelled, saying, “How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?”¹⁶ So Jesus answered them, “My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me.¹⁷ If anyone’s will is to do God’s will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority.

18 The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood. 19 Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why do you seek to kill me?" 20 The crowd answered, "You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill you?" 21 Jesus answered them, "I did one work, and you all marvel at it. 22 Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. 23 If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man's whole body well? 24 Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgement."

Jesus forces his opponents to consider the grounds on which they're rejecting him...

- He insists on his divine identity:

v 16: *"My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me."*

In other words, "I am from God!"

- He insists he is true:

v 18: *"The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood."*

...effectively ... "I don't seek my own glory – therefore I don't stand on my authority"

- He turns the spotlight on them:

v 19: *"Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why do you seek to kill me?"*

"...and thus break the law!? YOU ARE NOT FROM GOD!"

- He reminds them that his works support his words:

v 21: *Jesus answered them, "I did one work, and you all marvel at it."*

- He spells out the verdict:

v 23: *If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man's whole body well?"*

"You seek to bring a man into relationship with God on the Sabbath via a surgical operation. In comparison, I did one deed (which you marvelled at) and through it healed the WHOLE man after 38 years of being an invalid!"

"I have HIS authority – in contrast, you break your own law! You HYPOCRITES!"

...and we're going to see that Jesus really hammers it home!

- **"He [GOD] who sent me is true, and him you do not know."**

Summary of Jesus' response: "If you sought to do God's will (rather than protecting your cherished position) you would recognise my WORD is God's WILL!"

To sum up the key question of this first section – “On what grounds would you want to reject or turn down Jesus?”

- Do we recognise who he is?
- If we are going to reject Jesus – on what basis are we doing so?
- If his teaching and words are not from God, then where have they come from?
- Jesus’ teaching is very plain - remember John 5:

John 5 v 23b: **“Whoever does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent him.”**

2. Tables turned

Having begun by forcing his opponents to confront their illogical position now, secondly, Jesus turns the tables on them!

He spells out where he has come from:

Read John 7 vs 25-31: *Some of the people of Jerusalem therefore said, “Is not this the man whom they seek to kill?”²⁶ And here he is, speaking openly, and they say nothing to him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Christ?²⁷ But we know where this man comes from, and when the Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from.”²⁸ So Jesus proclaimed, as he taught in the temple, “You know me, and you know where I come from? But I have not come of my own accord. He who sent me is true, and him you do not know.²⁹ I know him, for I come from him, and he sent me.”³⁰ So they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come.³¹ Yet many of the people believed in him. They said, “When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done?”*

- They can’t recognise him because they do not know God, and cannot come to know him on their own

Then Jesus spells out where he is going:

Read vs 32-36: *The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to arrest him.³³ Jesus then said, “I will be with you a little longer, and then I am going to him who sent me.³⁴ You will seek me and you will not find me. Where I am you cannot come.”³⁵ The Jews said to one another, “Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him? Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks?³⁶ What does he mean by saying, ‘You will seek me and you will not find me’, and, ‘Where I am you cannot come?’”*

- They cannot follow him because they cannot reach God on their own

So – what do we learn?

- My rejection of Jesus tells something about ME – NOT him!

It tells me that I am from this world, and of this world. I cannot know God or reach God on my own.

We now see the leaders become increasingly hostile - they want to arrest Jesus... BUT the inference is that THEY COULDN'T! Why? Because God prevented it!

- v 30: ***...no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come.***

...and yet others are saying: “It’s him – the Messiah!”

v 31: *Yet many of the people believed in him. They said, “When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done?”*

Summary of these 2 sections so far =

- 1) Confused responses - people’s illogical position is exposed
 - On what grounds did they reject Jesus ...and would we want to reject him?
- 2) Tables turned - people’s godless attitude is exposed
 - What does their rejection of him show us about them?

3. Life offered

Jesus now turns from THEIR illogical godless religion to his offer of eternal life from God.

He keeps on doing this throughout the Gospel—exposing our godlessness whilst he keeps extending his GRACE!

Read John 7 vs 37-39: *On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. ³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” ³⁹ Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

The Feast of Booths involved a lot of water... Why? Because in the wilderness God supplied the people with water – on 2 occasions out of solid rock!

So... the Feast had lots of water in order to re-enact the rescue in the parched desert.

v 37: ***“If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.”***

v 28: As we come to Jesus – just like out of the rock: **“Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”**

Remember the previous chapter:

Read John 6 v 35: *Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.”*

So – in the midst of the confusion and hostility, yet another offer of amazing grace!

“Come to me and I will give you the living water you have been looking for... as your ancestors did in the desert...”

- Do we want to maintain the status quo of our lives– or is Jesus confronting us?

“Come to me and I will satisfy your thirst for eternity.”

4. Division

Finally, the chapter comes to a conclusion with the inevitable result: DIVISION!

Read John 7 vs 40-52: *When they heard these words, some of the people said, “This really is the Prophet.”⁴¹ Others said, “This is the Christ.” But some said, “Is the Christ to come from Galilee?⁴² Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?”⁴³ So there was a division among the people over him.⁴⁴ Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.*

⁴⁵ *The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, “Why did you not bring him?”⁴⁶ The officers answered, “No one ever spoke like this man!”⁴⁷ The Pharisees answered them, “Have you also been deceived?⁴⁸ Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him?⁴⁹ But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed.”⁵⁰ Nicodemus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them,⁵¹ “Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?”⁵² They replied, “Are you from Galilee too? Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee.”*

v 43: *So there was a division among the people over him.*

This is replicated today, isn't it?

Jesus has shown who he is – and why people reject him. We are left with EITHER:

- 1) A desire to preserve the status quo – in ignorance or not - we choose to ignore him, and thus declare our own guilt.
- 2) “I will believe in God on my own terms, thank you very much...” - REJECTION

OR ...

We stand apart from the crowd... we act on what we've been shown must be true, and stand with Jesus...

Inevitably, this seems to have repercussions for Nicodemus:

Read v 52: *They replied, "Are you from Galilee too? Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee."*

But even the hostility of the Jews to Nicodemus is wrong. They have failed to "**search and see**" where Jesus comes from...

John 7 vs 1-52

¹ After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill him. ² Now the Jews' Feast of Booths was at hand. ³ So his brothers said to him, "Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you are doing." ⁴ For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world." ⁵ For not even his brothers believed in him. ⁶ Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. ⁷ The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil. ⁸ You go up to the feast. I am not going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come." ⁹ After saying this, he remained in Galilee.

¹⁰ But after his brothers had gone up to the feast, then he also went up, not publicly but in private. ¹¹ The Jews were looking for him at the feast, and saying, "Where is he?" ¹² And there was much muttering about him among the people. While some said, "He is a good man", others said, "No, he is leading the people astray." ¹³ Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of him.

¹⁴ About the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and began teaching. ¹⁵ The Jews therefore marvelled, saying, "How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?" ¹⁶ So Jesus answered them, "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me. ¹⁷ If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority. ¹⁸ The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood. ¹⁹ Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why do you seek to kill me?" ²⁰ The crowd answered, "You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill you?" ²¹ Jesus answered them, "I did one work, and you all marvel at it. ²² Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. ²³ If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man's whole body well? ²⁴ Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgement."

²⁵ Some of the people of Jerusalem therefore said, "Is not this the man whom they seek to kill? ²⁶ And here he is, speaking openly, and they say nothing to him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Christ? ²⁷ But we know where this man comes from, and when the Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from." ²⁸ So Jesus proclaimed, as he taught in the temple, "You know me, and you know where I come from? But I have not come of my own accord. He who sent me is true, and him you do not know. ²⁹ I know him, for I come from him, and he sent me." ³⁰ So they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come. ³¹ Yet many of the people believed in him. They said, "When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done?"

³² The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to arrest him. ³³ Jesus then said, "I will be with you a little longer, and then I am going to him who sent me. ³⁴ You will seek me and you will not find me. Where I am you cannot come." ³⁵ The Jews said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him? Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the

Greeks and teach the Greeks? ³⁶ What does he mean by saying, 'You will seek me and you will not find me', and, 'Where I am you cannot come'?"

³⁷ On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. ³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" ³⁹ Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

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

⁴⁵ The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why did you not bring him?" ⁴⁶ The officers answered, "No one ever spoke like this man!" ⁴⁷ The Pharisees answered them, "Have you also been deceived?" ⁴⁸ Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him? ⁴⁹ But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed." ⁵⁰ Nicodemus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them, ⁵¹ "Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?" ⁵² They replied, "Are you from Galilee too? Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee."