

“What do You Think of Christ?”
John 7:11-13
(Preached at Trinity, October 16, 2019)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. This chapter begins with dialogue between Jesus and His brothers. The brothers of Christ were about to head to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Booths and they were instructing Jesus that He needed to take this opportunity to promote Himself.
John 7:3-4 NAU - "Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing. ⁴ "For no one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be *known* publicly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world."
2. For Jesus' brothers, they could not comprehend why Jesus wasn't using this Feast to boldly announce that He was the Messiah. There would be thousands present. It was an excellent opportunity for Jesus to promote Himself. But it was carnal reason.
3. Jesus' response was firm and resolute:
John 7:6-8 NAU - "So Jesus said to them, "My time is not yet here, but your time is always opportune. ⁷ "The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil. ⁸ "Go up to the feast yourselves; I do not go up to this feast because My time has not yet fully come."
3. So, Jesus remained in Galilee while His brothers departed for Jerusalem – **Verses 9-10**. After a brief season, however, Jesus made the trip to Jerusalem.
 - A. Jesus moved about according to His discretion. Jesus knew the opportune time, the best time, when the time was right. He wasn't controlled by His brothers or anyone else. He was master of His own course.
John 7:8 NAU - "I do not go up to this feast because My time has not yet fully come."
 - B. The text tells us that Jesus made the trip "secretly." We aren't told what that means. There's no need to see some supernatural action here. Most likely, after the feast began the roads leading to Jerusalem emptied of the hordes of travelers and Jesus made His way towards the city. While His brothers would have traveled in a caravan as we saw when Jesus went to the Temple at age 12, Jesus made this trip with a small party. He didn't go to Jerusalem conspicuously
4. In **Verses 11-13** John gives us some editorial of the opinions of the people regarding Jesus. The Feast of Booths is underway. The crowds had gathered, but there was no sign of Jesus. Many were expecting His attendance.
 - A. The religious leaders were looking for Jesus. The grammar tells us they were continuing to look for Him. They sought Him over and over.
 - B. John records their words: "Where is He?"
Our English translations don't relate the tone of the question.
ἐκεῖνος – demonstrative pronoun – literally it reads, "Where is that one?"
It carries an air of contempt. "Where is that fellow, that deceiver?"

5. Jesus was the talk of the town. John says in **Verse 12**:
"There was much grumbling among the crowds concerning Him"
- I. There were divided opinions regarding Jesus.
- A. We saw in **Chapter 6** that some believed Jesus to be the Messiah
John 6:14-15 NAU - "Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world." ¹⁵ So Jesus, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone."
1. They had a false understanding of the nature of the Messiah. They saw Him as an earthly king to deliver them from their oppressors—but they were convinced that Jesus was the one.
 2. Some of this group were also present at the Feast of Booths.
John 7:40-41 NAU - "Some of the people therefore, when they heard these words, were saying, "This certainly is the Prophet." ⁴¹ Others were saying, "This is the Christ." Still others were saying, "Surely the Christ is not going to come from Galilee, is He?"
 3. People today have many beliefs about Jesus. It is essential that we have a right comprehension of who He is. What does it mean that He is Lord and Savior? There are thousands who identify themselves as Christians who do not know who Jesus is.
- B. Some declared Him to be a good man.
1. This doesn't necessarily mean they believed in Him as Savior and Redeemer. The Rich Young Ruler believed this about Christ - "As He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Mark 10:17)
 2. It was a declaration that they looked upon Him positively. They saw Him as worthy of their attention. It was in contrast the religious leaders who were calling Him a false teacher.
They were willing to sit under His teaching.
There is no better place than to sit at the feet of Christ.
 - a. We read of Mary:
Luke 10:38-42 NAU - "Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. ³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up *to Him* and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me." ⁴¹ But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; ⁴² but *only* one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."
 - b. Jesus told the Scribe who rightly answered His questions:
Mark 12:34 - "You are not far from the kingdom of God."

3. They looked favorably upon Jesus, but as noble as it was, it was woefully inadequate.
 - a. They didn't really comprehend Him. They knew about His character, that He was a good man and good teacher, but they didn't know about His person, that He was God. And they didn't understand His work – that He was God's Redeemer.
 - b. John tells us they were not willing to risk all to identify with Him. **John 7:13 NAU** - "Yet no one was speaking openly of Him for fear of the Jews."
 4. Many people look upon Jesus favorably, but they don't truly understand His person or work, and they are not willing to risk anything for Him. They are willing to become religious, but they will not be inconvenienced.
 5. Many believe that having a positive attitude towards Jesus is sufficient unto salvation. They identify with Christianity and call themselves Christians. But it is an empty Christianity, void of love and zeal for Christ.
- C. John records that others looked upon Jesus with disdain. They accused Him of being a deceiver.
- "No, on the contrary, He leads the people astray."
1. They were accusing Jesus of being a false prophet. This is the same word Jesus uses in **Mat 24:24**
"Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many."
 2. This was a serious charge. False prophets were to be executed
Chapter 5 puts it in context:
John 5:18 NAU - "For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him"
 3. They continued to hold this contempt for Christ even after His death.
Matthew 27:62-63 NAU - "Now on the next day, the day after the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered together with Pilate, ⁶³ and said, "Sir, we remember that when He was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I *am to* rise again.'"
 4. This contempt for Christ continues today. Many become very hostile when approached with the Gospel. Jesus exposes their sin and they despise Him. Jesus told His brothers:
John 7:7 NAU - "The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil."
 5. They hate Him because He interferes with their autonomy. For many, He interferes with their religion.
William Barclay wrote: "It is quite clear that, if we prefer our idea of religion to His, He will certainly appear a seducer—and it is one of the hardest things in the world for any man to admit that he is wrong."¹
- D. There is another group that is not mentioned. These were those who were indifferent. For them, Jesus was simply irrelevant. They weren't asking about Him. They were not interested in Him.

¹ Barclay, William, *The Gospel of John, Volume 1*, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956), Page 246.

1. This describes many people today. Jesus is irrelevant. The Gospel of Christ is irrelevant. When we give out tracts some throw them on the ground. It is all irrelevant to them.
It reminds us of the words of Christ to Laodicea:
Revelation 3:15-16 NAU - "I wish that you were cold or hot. ¹⁶ 'So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth."
2. They fail to comprehend that every knee will bow before Him. He will not be ignored.

II. It brings us to ask the most important question – What do you think of Christ?

A. Jesus asked this question of His disciples

Matthew 16:13-17 NAU - "Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" ¹⁴ And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." ¹⁵ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven."

1. This passage reveals that there have always been various opinions of Christ. The phrases, "some said" and "others said" clearly paint the picture. There are endless opinions.
2. But the important question is not what others think, but what do you think "But who do you say that I am?"
3. It isn't enough to just believe Jesus was a good man or an excellent teacher.
Some might even feel that those who were neutral were secure. Many believe that as long as you don't openly reject Christ you will be saved. They think that the multitudes who have never heard the Gospel will be granted pardon.

B. It is important not only that you believe but it is important *what* you believe

1. Most people believe that if they have some vague feelings about Jesus, that if they are sincere, that if they are faithful in their religion, then they are secure in their eternal reward.
2. It was noble that many in the crowd saw Jesus as a good man and considered His teaching true. But what did they believe about Christ and His teachings?
3. Faith without knowledge is religious emptiness – can we have faith in an unknown object?
4. It isn't enough just to believe Jesus was a good man or excellent teacher. We have to understand His person and His work.
 - a. Jesus is the fullness of the Godhead – He is God incarnate.
John 1:14 NAU - "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."

- b. Jesus is the only Savior – the fullness of God’s Covenant promises. He is the Lamb of God. He is the Redeemer. We are saved by His righteous fulfillment of the Law and His atoning sacrifice upon the cross which we receive by faith.

Acts 4:12 NAU - "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

Conclusion:

1. While many were content to enjoy the Feast without any serious thought or contemplation of Christ, the truth is no one can simply dismiss Christ. There will always be a great division between those who bow and worship Christ and those who openly oppose Him.
2. J. C. Ryle wrote: “Christ is, and always has been, the cause of division of opinion, whenever He has come or has been preached. To some He is a savour of life, and to others of death. He draws out the true character of mankind. They either like Him or dislike Him. Strife and conflict of opinion are the certain consequences of the Gospel really coming among men with power.”²
3. Some in the crowd responded in belief.
John 7:31 NAU - "But many of the crowd believed in Him; and they were saying, "When the Christ comes, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He?"
4. What do you think of Christ?

² J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels, John Vol.2* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2007), Pages 11-12.