

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 9-11-11 AM NOTES
"IS JESUS FOR REAL?"
JOHN 7:1-24
#27 in Series, "Verse-by-Verse Through John"

Jesus Claimed:

- To have come down from heaven (John 6:38)
- To have been sent into the world by the Father (John 6:57)
- To be the Savior of the world (John 3:17)
- To be the source of eternal life (John 6:54)
- To be the only way to God the Father (John 14:6)
- To be one with the Father (John 10:30)
- To be the one to whom the Old Testament pointed (John 5:46)
- To be without sin (John 8:46)
- To have all authority in heaven and on earth (John 17:2)
- To be the bread of life and the only source of satisfying spiritual hunger (John 6:35)
- To be the light of the world (John 8:12)
- To be the resurrection and the life (John 11:25)
- To be the Son of God (John 11:4)
- To be God (John 1:1)

John 1:10-11 (NKJV) "10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him."

John 6:66 (NKJV) "From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more."

I. His Brothers Said "No" (vv. 1-13)

A. The Reality (v. 1)

John 5:18 (NKJV) "Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God."

B. The Unbelief (vv. 2-5)

Matthew 13:55b (ESV) "And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?"

C. The Response (vv. 6-9)

John 1:29b (NKJV) "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

Romans 12:2a (NKJV) "And do not be conformed to this world..."

D. The Right Time (vv. 10-13)

If I had waited on God's timing, I would not have _____ and would not have suffered the consequences.

II. His Challenge to Doubters (vv. 14-17)

Hosea 6:3a (KJV) "Then shall we know, *if* we follow on to know the LORD."

III. His Seeking of God's Glory (v. 18)

John 12:27-28 (NKJV) ²⁷ 'Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify Your name.' Then a voice came from heaven, *saying*, 'I have both glorified *it* and will glorify *it* again.'"

IV. His Reasoning (vv. 19-23)

V. His Command (v. 24)

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 9-11-11 AM
“IS JESUS FOR REAL?”
JOHN 7:1-24
#27 in Series, “Verse by Verse through John”

The Lord Jesus Christ made some startling claims about Himself. No one can be neutral about these claims. Let me share just a few of these claims that John reveals. I will give only one reference even though there are numerous references to most of these claims. He claimed:

- To have come down from heaven (John 6:38)
- To Have been sent into the world by the Father (John 6:57)
- To be the Savior of the world (John 3:17)
- To be the source of eternal life (John 6:54)
- To be the only way to God the Father (John 14:6)
- To be one with the Father (John 10:30)
- To be the one to whom the Old Testament pointed (John 5:46)
- To be without sin (John 8:46)
- To have all authority in heaven and on earth (John 17:2)
- To be the bread of life and the only source of satisfying spiritual hunger (John 6:35)
- To be the light of the world (John 8:12)
- To be the resurrection and the life (John 11:25)
- To be the Son of God (John 11:4)
- To be God (John 1:1)

These claims (plus many others) resulted in a division of the people in the first century and in people today. As I have said over and over, you do not have the option of saying nice things about Jesus and denying that He was who He said He was. Either He is who He said He is and deserves our worship and submission and trust, or He was a liar at worst or a mentally unstable man at best. A liar or a mentally unstable man making ridiculous claims about Himself is not worthy of having nice, sweet, and kind things said about His teachings and example. When Jesus was here in the flesh, most people chose not to believe Him. **John 1:10-11 (NKJV)** “¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. ¹¹ He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.” After presenting Himself as the bread of life that must be eaten, we read in **John 6:66 (NKJV)** “From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.”

In today’s text, Jesus responds to those who do not believe and to those who doubt that He really is who He says He is. Let me ask you the question: “Is Jesus for Real?”

I. Jesus’ Brothers Said “No” (V1-13)

The events of chapter seven take place about six months after the events of chapter six. When we look to the other gospels, we see that He spent this time primarily teaching His disciples and preparing them for the time when He returned to the father. It is interesting that Jesus only spent 2 days with the huge crowds in John six and then six months with the Twelve. He told them of His coming death, resurrection, and ascension. Even though they didn’t get it, they understood after it happened. During this six months, He revealed Himself to Peter, James, and John in a special way on the Mount of Transfiguration where they saw a preview of the glory He would possess and display after His ascension. Jesus poured His life into the disciples and didn’t give a large portion of His time to the crowds. That pattern was more pronounced the closer He got to the cross. A lesson for us is that the church’s task is not to gather large crowds, but to make disciples. That is not to say that numbers are not relevant. If the church is making disciple making disciples the church will not just add; it will begin to multiply! Our focus must constantly remain on making disciples. Here is a good summary quote: “The measure of any church’s success is not the size of its congregation, but the depth of its discipleship” [John MacArthur, “Commentary on John 1-11”, Page 279].

Chapter seven of John centers on Jesus and the Feast of Tabernacles. This is one of the three feasts that all Jewish men were to attend. This great feast occurred in early October. It was originally 7 days but later another day was added that is called in this chapter, “that great day of the feast”. During this feast, the Jews built booths out of tree limbs and boughs that were woven for a makeshift roof. Families lived under these temporary shelters as a reminder of the 40 years their ancestors had spent in the wilderness after being delivered from slavery in Egypt.

A. The Reality (V1)

This awareness of the Jewish leaders wanting to kill Jesus was not paranoid speculation. **John 5:18 (NKJV)** “Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.” Jesus was not afraid to go to Jerusalem, but He was careful about wanting to do it in God’s time. Even though He knew the truth of the Father’s sovereignty, He did not tempt God by placing Himself in danger and risk being arrested before His time. The reality is that the Jewish Leaders desired to kill Jesus.

B. The Unbelief (V2-5)

We know who these brothers were. They were in reality His half brothers who were the biological children of Mary and Joseph. The Roman Catholic doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary has no Biblical basis. We are given their names in **Matthew 13:55b (ESV)** “And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas [Jude]?” While they did not believe in Him yet, they would believe. His brother James became a leader in the early church and wrote the book of James in the New Testament. Judas or Jude wrote the short book of Jude that is just before Revelation in the New Testament. His brothers did not believe that He was God in the flesh, but they did believe in His miracles. His brothers, motivated by pride and the potential of fame (brothers of the one who delivered Israel from the Romans), came to Him much as political advisors would come to a potential presidential candidate. Their advice sounds familiar in this day of political strategies given out by advisors. First, they said, “You need to go to Jerusalem. Galilee is too small; it’s Hicksville. You need to go to Jerusalem where the important people are. That’s where you can get the exposure.” Secondly, they were trying to help Jesus recoup His losses from the very harmful to His image comments about eating His flesh and drinking His blood in John six. They had some image work to do. Perhaps in Judea, He could reconnect with some who had followed Him before He went to Galilee. Third, they told Him that His game plan was never going to work. In verse four, they said, “You’ve got to have exposure. You’ve got to get out among the people and shake some hands and let the people see you” (V4). Finally, they advised Him to continue with the miracles. **John 7:4b (NKJV)** “If You do these things [miracles], show Yourself to the world.” They were saying, “Don’t waste this power You have to do miracles. Perform them at the Feast of Tabernacles and you will be seen by hundreds of thousands.”

Verse five makes it clear that even though they believed that He did miracles, they did not believe that He was the Son of God who gives eternal life. Believing Him for eternal life means that we see and believe in His person – this One who would take our sins and give Himself as a ransom for many. To use the words of verse 24, they judged according to “appearance” and not “with righteous judgment”. They were driven by pride and self-centeredness and saw in Him only a way to get more glory for themselves from the world as they became a part of His entourage.

C. The Response (V6-9)

Jesus operated on a divine timetable. He knew that the time for His presenting Himself to Israel as their Messiah was at the Feast of Passover, not the Feast of Tabernacles. The Feast of Passover wasn’t for another six months. He knew that the Father’s timetable called for Him to be the one sufficient sacrifice for sin that would come at just the time the Passover lambs would be being sacrificed during Feast of Passover. He knew those Passover lambs and their shed blood was a picture of Him. Just as the slaying of the lamb and the application of the blood to the doorpost meant deliverance from immediate judgment for those under the blood, even so those who would trust in Him and His sacrifice (His shed blood) would be delivered from eternal judgment. That is why John the Baptist said about Him in **John 1:29b (NKJV)** “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

What did Jesus mean in verse 7? The world would not hate them because they were of the world. In John 15:19 Jesus said that the world loves its own. Jesus however was not of the world and so the world hated Him. Jesus confronted those of the world as to their error, their self-centeredness, their seeking their own glory. The world accepts only those who conform to it. We are commanded in **Romans 12:2a (NKJV)** “And do not be conformed to this world...” Jesus tells His brothers to go on without Him in verse 8. He did not tell them that He was not going to the Feast of the Passover. He simply was saying that He wasn’t going with them.

D. The Right Time (V10-13)

The primary means of travel was in caravans and doubtlessly the Jewish authorities would be looking for Him as the crowds arrived. Jesus waited and came later to the feast when He would not be detected by the Jewish authorities until His great public invitation that we will look at in another week or two.

Let me share some things about God’s timing. Just as Jesus walked through His earthly life with an awareness of the fact that the Father had a divine timetable, even so, we need to walk with that realization. Some of the greatest problems in my ministry have had to do with not operating on God’s timetable as Jesus did. You can even do a right thing at a wrong time and the consequences will be severe. Jesus’ concern was not only to do the will of the Father, but to do it on the Father’s timetable. If Abraham had waited on God’s timetable for the birth of an heir, there would have been no affair with Sarah’s servant Hagar (that affair was at Sarah’s urging, but that doesn’t release Abraham from his responsibility). Had there been no affair with Hagar, there would have been no Ishmael. Ishmael’s descendents are the ones involved with constant conflict with the Jews even today. You fill in the blank: “If I had waited on God, I would not have _____ and would have not received the consequences.” Learn from our Lord and Savior that God’s timing is perfect. There is an old spiritual entitled “He’s an On Time God.” The first verse and chorus says:

You can ask the children of Israel, trapped at the red sea, by that mean old Pharaoh, and his army. They had water all around them, and Pharaoh on their track. From out of nowhere, God stepped in and cut a highway, just like that, now let me tell you he's an...

Chorus:

On time God..... Yes he is

Job said He may not come when you want him

But He'll be there right on time

I'll tell ya he's an on time God, yes he is.

Is Jesus for real? The brothers of Jesus said “no”; they did not believe in Him.

II. His Challenge to Doubters (V14-17)

Jesus did come to the Feast of Tabernacles, but He came when it was half way over and the Jewish leaders had stopped looking for Him. As He taught in the Temple, the Jews marveled because He had a grasp of the Scriptures and taught with authority. The Jewish leaders were not amazed with a Godly amazement. In the words of verse 24, they were judging according to appearance and not with righteous judgment. They were amazed that it sounded scholarly, but He had never been to their rabbinic schools. They were not touched spiritually; their amazement was academic instead of spiritual. Jesus deflects the focus on his teaching and points to God. In verse 16, He tells them that His doctrine (“teaching” in most translations) is straight from the Father which made all of their rabbinic schools unnecessary for Him. They were impressed with Jesus’ methodology. He tells them that it is the truth that is being taught that counts. Style is the shell and truth is the kernel. Beware of being impressed with a preacher, teacher, or singer because of their communication style, their cool, hip ways, their stories, their practical tips and illustrations. That is all the shell. The focus should be on the truth, the kernel, and not the shell. Too many people are shell gazers and admirers and do not eat of the kernel because they are listening to an empty shell.

Verse 17 is one of the most important verses in John. This is the greatest verse in the Bible for doubters. Let’s dig deep into this verse. Jesus’ challenge is simple. If you will come humbly to God’s Word where

His truth is revealed, and be willing to obey and submit to it if it is true, then you will know that it is true. He is saying that the right willing leads to the right knowing. When your willing is right, then your knowing will be in sync with the truth. To put it another way, our ability to understand God's Word is directly related to our determination to do God's will. If your heart is unsubmitive to Him and cold toward Him, His Word will seem dry and irrelevant. When your longing and desire is to obey and follow God, you will know that the Bible is the Word of God and you will love to study it, hear it, and know it. The word "willing" means to seize with the mind or to be resolved. Josh McDowell has spent most of his adult life in an apologetics ministry (defending the truth) that has focused on college students. He shares that one of the most common questions he gets is "Can you prove to me that Jesus Christ really was who He said He was?" Before He gives the evidences of the truth of the Scriptures about the person of Christ, he asks the questioner a question: "If I could prove to you beyond a shadow of doubt that Jesus Christ was who He said He was, would you give your life to Him (please be very honest)?" Josh says that the vast majority of the questioners will say "No, I wouldn't submit and give my life to Him". To try to convince a person of truth who is not willing to obey the truth is an exercise in futility. That is why I am convinced that most of the people who profess to be atheists or agnostics have moral problems with God, not intellectual problems. **Hosea 6:3a (KJV)** "Then shall we know, *if* we follow on to know the LORD".

Let's make it personal. Are you desiring to know God's will? Are you committed to do God's will once you know it? If the answer is "no", then that is why the Bible is a closed book to you and your heart is so cold to Him.

Is Jesus for real? His brothers said "no", but if you are willing to do His will, you will see that He is for real. There is some other evidence that He is for real.

III. His Seeking of God's Glory (V18)

Here is the greatest test as to whether someone is for real. There are at least two marks of one who is not proclaiming or is not open to the truth. First, he speaks from himself and second, he seeks his own glory. False teachers inevitably do these two things. People who refuse the truth inevitably seek their own way and their own glory. False teachers twist the Scriptures to make them appeal to people's flesh. They justify self centered living. They will then turn their teaching into ways to make themselves rich. They don't feed the flock; they fleece the flock. The mark of those seeking and teaching truth is God exaltation, not self exaltation. God exaltation comes at the expense of self humiliation. We see this truth in Jesus as He went to the cross. **John 12:27-28 (NKJV)** ²⁷ "Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify Your name.' Then a voice came from heaven, *saying*, 'I have both glorified *it* and will glorify *it* again.'" Jesus suffered the humiliation of death on the cross that the Father might be glorified. Contrast that to one well known false TV preacher who used to (and may still) come on the stage after the audience had been whipped into an emotional high. As he entered, the song was played, "How Great Thou Art". It was a little confusing as to who the "Thou" was that was great! A false teacher speaks from himself and seeks his own glory. A "false hearer" lives as his own supreme authority and lives for his own glory. Jesus and those who teach His truth speak the Word of God and seek only God's glory. They will deflect and refuse any attempt to glorify themselves. Those who know the truth are those who submit to the authority of God and desire only His glory.

Jesus is for real and that is evidenced by His desire to glorify the Father.

IV. His Reasoning (V19-23)

In this passage, Jesus turns the table on the religious leaders and puts them on the defensive. The root of the desire on the part of the religious leaders to kill Jesus goes back to chapter five when He healed a paralyzed man on the Sabbath. They were basing their plans to kill him on the fact that He broke God's law of working on the Sabbath. We looked in depth when we were in John 5:2-9 as to why Jesus did not break the laws of the Sabbath. These people sought exaltation through law keeping and especially all the traditions of man that had grown up around the simple law as it was given by Moses. They hated Jesus

because He tore down the system by which they sought to earn acceptance from God. Instead of using the law of God to exalt God, they had turned it into a means of exalting themselves.

Here is Jesus' reasoning with these Jews who sought to kill Him. He said, "I made a man well on the Sabbath and you want to kill Me. But in obedience to the Law of Moses your leaders circumcise boys on the Sabbath" [Boys were to be circumcised on the eighth day and if that fell on the Sabbath, it was acceptable to perform this rite]. Jesus' argument was this, "If you perform this rite on the Sabbath, why are you upset and desire to kill Me because I made a man whole on the Sabbath?" His reasoning was so good that they seemed to have no answer.

V. His Command (V24)

He is saying that we are not to make our judgments from a superficial look at things, from blindly accepting someone else's judgments. Jesus was exhorting them to look beyond the false accusations of the leaders who were steeped in legalism and make their judgments of Him based on the two factors of verse 18 – He spoke the Word's of God's Word and sought only the glory of God and not self glorification as did the legalistic Jewish leaders.

CONCLUSION

Is Jesus for real? You can't remain neutral here. If He is, then you must worship him, obey Him and glorify Him. (3442)