



Different responses to Jesus

John 7 v 25-52 – Leader's version

For an hour study, just do the starred * questions

Check in – ask how they are and how they're feeling about studying the Bible today.

This occurs at the Feast of Tabernacles, a Jewish harvest festival at which Jews lived in shelters made of branches to remember God's faithfulness to Israel when they had lived in tents (tabernacles) in the wilderness (Leviticus 23 v 33-44). John 7 v 14 tells us that Jesus was teaching in the Temple court.

What does the passage say and mean?

Read John 7 v 25-52

Questions 1-3 are **SELF-DIRECTED QUESTIONS**. Let the group work on them in pairs.

1. **SDL** How are people responding to Jesus at this point in His ministry?

Verses 25, 30, 32, 44 – *the authorities are trying to kill Him / the crowd tries to seize Him / the Pharisees send guards to arrest Him.*

Verses 31, 40, 41 – *many in the crowd believe Him / the crowd think He is 'the Prophet' (the one who would announce the Messiah) or the Messiah himself.*

2. **SDL** Why do you think people responded to Jesus in such different ways?

Let the group suggest reasons and then point them to John 7 v 24 for clues.

3. **SDL** List different ways that people might respond to Jesus today.

Repent and believe

Mockery

Doubt

General belief without repentance, trust or commitment

Reject Him privately

Reject Him publicly – debates, writing books etc

Disinterest

Etc.

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What is your response to Jesus?

4. Read John 7 v 25-31 again. What is the big question about Jesus' identity and what are some of the answers the crowd are suggesting?

'Is this man the Messiah?'

The crowd are asking whether the authorities have concluded that yes, Jesus is the Messiah, and that's why He's not been killed (persecution by the authorities was first noted in John 5 v 16). Some believe no-one will know where the Messiah comes from, which counts Jesus out. However, His miracles seem to be enough evidence for others to believe, v31.

5. How does Jesus respond to these questions?

He says that they know where He's from – Galilee, or more specifically, Nazareth, where He grew up. He then says 'I am not here on my own authority, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, but I know him because I am from him and he sent me', v28-29. He's saying that God, the Father, sent Him and He knows God but the people don't. If they did, they wouldn't reject Jesus.

6. Why do you think this statement from Jesus causes the crowd to try to arrest Him?

Maybe they are deeply offended that He has said they don't know God. Maybe they take His words to be heretical.

'...no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come', v30 – God is sovereign and the time for Jesus to be arrested and handed to the authorities had not yet come. This phrase comes up several times in John's gospel e.g. John 2 v 4. Jesus knew His mission and was not going to 'jump-start' it.

7. What do the religious leaders do when they hear what the crowd are saying?

They send temple guards to arrest Him.

Jesus was seen as a threat to the religious establishment: people were starting to believe that He could be the Messiah. We assume the temple guards hear everything Jesus says from v33-44.

8. Read v33-36. What does Jesus say and what do the people think He means?

He said He was going 'to the one who sent me' and they wouldn't be able to find Him. They think He's talking about a trip to see Jews who have moved away from Israel.

9. What did Jesus actually mean?

He's talking about His death, resurrection and ascension.

The last day of the Festival of Tabernacles had the water-drawing festival, the setting for v37-44. Jesus was saying in effect "I am the reality that the water in this ceremony symbolizes - the true life-giver through whom the Holy Spirit is also given." (https://jewishroots.net/library/holiday-articles/water_libation_ceremony.html viewed 15/06/21)

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Who or what do you go to be refreshed when you are 'thirsty' (in need of comfort / support)?

It's not wrong to go to family etc but, as followers of Jesus, we should be going to Him primarily.

Read John 7 v 37-39

10. What did Jesus say and what did He mean?

'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.'

He is the one who can satisfy our spiritual thirst. When we believe in Him, 'living water' (the Holy Spirit) will be in us and will spill over so that other people see the difference in us / the Holy Spirit at work in us.

Jesus said 'rivers of living water' – a continuous supply – will be in His followers: not a cupful or a single dose! It will never run out! The Holy Spirit will always be with us.

11. Can you remember another time in John's gospel when Jesus said He would give living water, 'welling up to eternal life'?

John 4 v 13-14, talking to the Samaritan woman at the well. Jesus was talking about giving her (the Holy Spirit who gives) eternal life. (Now, in John 7, He's talking to Jews)

12. Look up the following passages to find out more about the role of the Holy Spirit.

John 14 v 26 – *He teaches us about God and reminds us of what we have already been taught*

John 16 v 13-14 – *He will guide us into truth. He will reveal Christ to us*

Romans 8 v 14-16 – *He marks us out as children of God*

Romans 8 v 26 – *He prays for us*

1 Corinthians 12 v 7-11 – *He gives gifts (abilities) to believers, to be used 'for the common good', v7.*

Galatians 5 v 22 – *He gives us the 'fruit of the Spirit': the influence of the Holy Spirit on our behaviour*

Ephesians 1 v 13-14 – *He is a seal and a deposit. A seal identifies belonging – the Holy Spirit in us marks us out as belonging to God / being a child of God (Romans 8 v 15). A deposit is a down-payment – the Holy Spirit in us is a down-payment of our relationship with God in the New Creation.*

13. Read John 7 v 40-44. What do the people make of Jesus now?

Some think He's 'the Prophet',

(Deut 18 v 15), others that He is the Messiah, others that He can't be the Messiah because He wasn't born in Bethlehem (they probably think He was born in Nazareth where He grew up). Some of them wanted to arrest Him on the spot.

14. Read John 7 v 45-52. Why do the temple guards go back to the chief priests and Pharisees without arresting Jesus?

They have heard enough to convince them that arresting Him would be wrong. Maybe they were having the same discussion about who Jesus is as the crowd were? (Temple guards were Levites, of the tribe of Levi; a tribe specifically tasked with serving the Lord. They were not mercenaries or soldiers).

15. How do the Pharisees respond to this?

Most of the them are angry, saying the guards should follow the lead of the religious elite who do not believe Jesus is the Messiah. Nicodemus stands up for Jesus (and for justice). The other Pharisees turn against Nicodemus, saying no prophet could come from Galilee (this is prejudiced against a people-group / giving no credit to God for raising up prophets as He wishes to raise them up / ignoring OT prophets like Jonah (2 Kings 14 v 25)!!)

16. Can you identify the types of misunderstanding and misinformation that different people had, affecting their response to Jesus?

John 7 v 42 – partial information – they knew the prophecy, but they didn't know where Jesus was born

John 7 v 48 – their current understanding of their religion was blinding them. They were not open to learning something new, assessing it and changing their understanding of God / response to Him in line with new information.

John 7 v 52 – prejudice, lies and false information. Today this might include conspiracy theory and information gathered from dodgy sources, including online and TV.

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Do any of these types of misunderstanding / misinformation affect the way you respond to Jesus? What do you need to do about that?

Remind the group that the only way to find the truth about Jesus is to read God's Word as revealed in the Bible.

Check out – ask how they found the study and if they are safe to go back to the cell.



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John 7 v25

v30

v32

v44

John 7 v31

v40

v41

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1 Corinthians 12 v 7-11

Galatians 5 v 22

Ephesians 1 v 13-14

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14. Read John 7 v 45-52. Why do the temple guards go back to the chief priests and Pharisees without arresting Jesus?

15. How do the Pharisees respond to this?

16. Can you identify the types of misunderstanding and misinformation that different people had, affecting their response to Jesus?

John 7 v 42

John 7 v 48

John 7 v 52

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