



# Believe

JOHN

MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

## Examining the text & our hearts:

### I. Jesus Judged Superficially by his Opponents (7:14-15)

A. Jesus taught in the Temple (v. 14)

B. The Jewish religious elite openly demean & challenge Jesus (7:15; 6:42)

- *“The implication here is...that Jesus...was **not the disciple of a particular rabbi** and had no... formal or advanced instruction under a recognized rabbi.” (NET)*
- *“The Jewish authorities...question (Jesus’) status as a teacher...To them **Jesus was an uneducated nobody** who holds **no formal... office** and has **no formal (accredited) training**...The question’s...intent (is) demeaning and challenging.” (Edward Klink, *John*, p. 366)*
- *“‘He has never had formal instruction’ – Ironically when the Jewish leaders came face-to-face with the Word become flesh—the pre-existent Logos, creator of the universe and divine Wisdom personified—they **treated him as an untaught, unlearned person, without the formal qualifications to be a teacher.**” (NET)*

### II. Judging Rightly (Jn. 7:24)

A. Stop judging according to outward appearances

- *“Jesus’ opponents have been judging **by mere appearances**. They should **stop judging by superficial criteria, and make a right judgment**. This appeal has many formal Old Testament parallels (e.g. Dt. 16:18–19; Is. 11:3–4; Zc. 7:9), all of them dealing with the administration of public justice. Jesus’ appeal is more personal...**They have misconstrued his character by a***

**fundamentally flawed set of deductions from the Old Testament...an approach that turns out to be superficial..**" (D. A. Carson, Pillar Commentary: John, p. 246)

- "According to John, **the people Jesus meets are typically unable to grasp the higher truths of which he speaks. They are from below and he is from above (8:23). They judge by what their senses perceive and seem incapable of understanding the truth he reveals (7:24).**" (Craig R. Koester, *The Word of Life: A Theology of John's Gospel*, p. 12)
- "Judgment by what is visible, by the appearance of things, is what largely governs the attitude of the people vis-a?-vis Jesus. For **'the Jews' [religious leaders] this meant that Jesus could only be regarded as a teacher who set himself up as an authority...If they had delved deeper, they would...pass 'a righteous judgment.'**" (Herman Ridderbos, *A Theological Commentary: John*, p. 201)

#### B. Judge according to righteous judgment

- "**Jesus' call for right judgment touches at the heart of the faith decision for [John]...** Judgment based on appearances risks **reducing Jesus to fit who or what we think he should be** rather than allowing...[who he really is], to work its way on our systems and structures of perception." (Gail O'Day, *NIBC: John*, p. 531)
- "In the broader context of John, when one sees a sign simply as a miracle, one judges by appearance, and **when one sees the sign revealing the presence and identity of God, one judges with right judgment (Jn. 2:11; 4:48; 6:26; 9:3; 11:4)**" (Gail O'Day, *NIBC: John*, p. 531)

### III. Misunderstanding Jesus' Identity (Jn. 7:25-32, 40-42)

#### A. The various misunderstandings

1. The people of Jerusalem: Messiah's **origin must not be known (7:25-27)**

– "**What is...surprising [to the Jerusalemites] is the silence of the authorities. Why do they not arrest Jesus forthwith? A possible explanation suggests itself: perhaps the authorities themselves have weighed the evidence, perhaps even know of fresh evidence, concluding, at least in private, that Jesus really is the Messiah.**" (D. A. Carson, *Pillar Commentary: John*, p. 247)

a) "We know where this man is from"

– "The Jerusalemites hold the view...that the **Messiah would be born of flesh and blood yet would be wholly unknown until he appeared to effect Israel's redemption (Matt. 24:26-27; Mk. 13:21-22; Lk. 17:23-24).** With such expectations, there could be none of this 'perhaps he is, perhaps he isn't' speculation. As far as they were concerned, **they know where Jesus came from: he sprang from Nazareth, and his family home was now in Capernaum, and he had been engaged in an itinerant ministry for some time.**" (D. A. Carson, *Pillar Commentary: John*, p. 247)

b) "Messiah's origin is mysterious"

– "What qualifies Jesus to be the Messiah? This is the focus of public debates about his origin [in John 7]. **Some of the bystanders insist that the Messiah must be of unknown origin (7:27).** This expectation is not found in the Old Testament but is reflected in Jewish tradition (1 Enoch 48:6). **The idea seems to discredit Jesus.** Since everyone knows he is

from Galilee, he is clearly not qualified to be the Messiah.” (Craig R. Koester, *The Word of Life: A Theology of John’s Gospel*, p. 93)

– “It is repeatedly clear that **Jesus’ public actions in no way fulfilled the messianic expectations** current among the people (vv 27, 35; 41-42), although others considered him trustworthy on account of his many miracles (v. 31).” (Herman Ridderbos, *A Theological Commentary: John*, p. 202)

c) The people missed Jesus’ real origin (7:28)

– “In declaring their **knowledge of Jesus’ origin topographically** (7:27), the Judean leaders expose their **ignorance of his missional origin** as being sent from the Father...” (Paul N. Anderson, *John, Jesus & History*, Vol. 2, p. 230)

2. Some in the crowd: (Pilgrims) Messiah’s **origin is known** (7:42; 2 Sam. 7:12; Mic. 5:2)

a) Judging by superficial appearance

– “**Others** voice a contrary form of messianic expectation. Instead of insisting that the Messiah’s origin must be unknown, they **argue that his origin should be known...The crowds make erroneous judgments based on surface appearances...In the end,...** Jesus’ opponents...seem incapable of agreeing who the Messiah should be. One group insists that his origin be unknown and the other argues that his origin should be known.” (Craig R. Koester, *The Word of Life: A Theology of John’s Gospel*, p. 93)

– “All the Evangelist has in mind with this reproduction of internal discussions is **to point out the confusion and division among Jesus’ hearers**, despite the impression he obviously made on them. **They could not arrive at a correct insight into Jesus’ identity because they reasoned from within their traditional conceptions**, which...Jesus did not fit.” (Herman Ridderbos, *A Theological Commentary: John*, p. 208)

b) “Doesn’t the Scripture say that the Messiah comes from David’s offspring?”

– “There are some people in the Gospel who recognize that what Jesus says and does fits well with what God has declared in the law and the prophets (1:45; 5:37-9), but others argue the reverse. They insist that **the Scriptures discredit Jesus, since his Galilean origins do not fit the biblical paradigm for a Messiah** (7:41-42).” (Craig R. Koester, *The Word of Life: A Theology of John’s Gospel*, p. 29)

c) “Doesn’t the Scriptures say that the Messiah comes from Bethlehem, where David lived?”

– “[Some]...found difficulty believing that Jesus was the Messiah. They were doubtless Jerusalemites, or at least Judeans, and had been **brought up to believe not only that the Messiah would come from David’s family** (2 Sa. 7:12–16; Ps. 89:3–4; Is. 9:7; 55:3) but that he would **be born in Bethlehem** (Mi. 5:2). As far as they were concerned, **Jesus was a Galilean: he could not possibly qualify**. In this way the third publicly-voiced criterion for messiahship in this chapter is introduced (cf. notes on vv. 27, 31).” (D. A. Carson, *Pillar Commentary: John*, p. 255)

3. Others in the crowd: The Messiah will do lots of signs (7:31)

a) “When the Messiah comes, he won’t perform more signs than this man, will he?”

– *“Many of the people came to faith in him,’ a **faith that bore an immediate relationship to Jesus’ messiahship**. These people ask whether the Christ at his appearance would do more signs than Jesus had done, obviously meaning that **Jesus’ many miracles were reason enough for them to believe in him as the Messiah**...Not only here but throughout the New Testament **Jesus’ miracles play an important role in the conflict over Jesus’ credibility as the divinely sent Messiah** (Jn. 20:31; Mt. 11:2-6; 12:38; Mk. 3:22; 2 Th. 2:9)...Jesus’ miracles were of such a nature that they had to arouse in many people the hope of the time of salvation promised by God and the great reversal that was a part of it.” (Herman Ridderbos, A Theological Commentary: John, pp. 203-4)*

4. The crowd at the Feast of Tabernacles was divided because of Jesus (7:43)

B. It’s a matter of life & death

- *“The result of misperception is not simply misunderstanding or miscommunication...Rather, **misperception of Jesus’ identity is a matter of life & death**...It is...a matter of life & death for those who encounter Jesus, characters in the Gospel, & Gospel readers alike, because **faulty perception of Jesus’ identity removes one from Jesus’ offer of salvation**.” (Gail O’Day, NIBC: John, p. 532)*

#### IV. The offer of Salvation (Jn. 7:37-39)

- *“The point here is clearly **a call to faith**, not an invitation to people who already believe.” (Herman Ridderbos, A Theological Commentary: John, p. 206)*
- *“To speak of the Spirit as non-existent or inactive is to misunderstand the Third person of the Trinity. In a sense, the point is not to describe when the Spirit meets the world, but **when believers are given the grace to meet the Spirit**. And none of this is possible until Jesus was ‘glorified’.” (Edward Klink, John. p. 376)*

A. People’s need must be met from a source outside of themselves

- *“**The Gospel depicts Jews & Samaritans in the same way, as people who thirst**. Because they have the **same need**, Jesus offers them the **same gift: living water**...Underlying the image of thirst is that **people have a need that must be met from a source outside themselves**. People do not have the capacity to meet physical thirst with what they have within themselves. Similarly, their thirst for life with God must be met by an outside source. It must be met by **divine action through the work of Jesus**...” (Craig R. Koester, *The Word of Life: A Theology of John’s Gospel*, p. 63)*

B. Drink & Live – “Anyone”

- *“**Embedded in the controversy dialogues and narratives on 7:1-52 is Jesus’ offer...of living water to everyone who thirsts (7:37-38)**...[W]hen one judges with right judgment and recognizes who Jesus is, Jesus’ gift of life becomes available. Without right judgment, one will not receive new life.” (Gail O’Day, NIBC: John, p. 532)*
- *“On the last day of the festival Jesus says, ‘If anyone thirst, let him come to me,’ promising to give people living water (7:37-9). **People at the festival presumably know their need for rainwater, but Jesus speaks of another kind of thirst**. The need is like that expressed by the Psalmist: ‘My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and behold the face of God?’ (Ps. 42:2; 63:1; 143:6). The **difference is that the psalmist is aware of the need for***

**God, whereas the people in John's Gospel do not express their longing in this way; Jesus is the one who names their thirst.**" (Craig R. Koester, *The Word of Life: A Theology of John's Gospel*, p. 63)