

# Assessing Jesus at the Festival

(A Study of the Gospel of John; Message #27)

John 7:40-52

## A. John has been underscoring the growing hostility against Jesus

1. In John 7:1-13, we focused on Jesus' motives and methods
2. In John 7:14-24, we focused on Jesus' words and works
3. In 7:25-36, we focused on where Jesus is from and where he is going - his whence and whither
4. In John 7:40-52, we will focus on his calling and credentials

## B. John gives us an overview of people's assessment of Jesus

### THE SIMPLE (7:40-41, 42-44)

#### A. First, note there are four different opinions about Jesus here

1. Some say he is a prophet, some the Messiah, some a Galilean, some a criminal who should be arrested
2. Jesus causes division
3. Truth by its very nature is divisive. Truth is uncompromising

*"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the father except by me."*  
(John 14:6)

#### B. Second, note people often make major decisions with inadequate data (7:41b-42)

1. Note the syllogism: *"Messiah must come from Bethlehem. Jesus comes from Nazareth. Jesus can't be Messiah"*
2. But the data is wrong. Jesus of Nazareth was born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:1)

#### C. Third, don't miss that some are convinced he is a prophet; others, the Messiah

### THE SOLDIERS (7:45-46)

#### A. The officers come back to the Sanhedrin. Their reaction was bewilderment

*"When Messiah comes, will he do more works than this man did?"* (7:31)

*"We found his teaching incredible!"* (7:46)

#### B. *"What!"* they said, *"Don't tell us you have been tricked too?"*

1. Opponents of the Christian faith argue those who believe have been conned
2. Opponents marshal the most imposing disbelievers to prove their point
3. Opponents think they present a formidable front

#### C. Then a leading teacher (3:10) and one of the Serious himself (3:1) speaks up

### THE SERIOUS (The Pharisees) (7:47-48)

#### A. The Sanhedrin has already (previously) made up their mind

#### B. The first step in discovering any truth is to investigate

1. Authorities matter. But authorities have been wrong
2. A process of inquiry, investigation and even interrogation - along with personal observation - is critical to discerning the Truth
3. Nicodemus gives an elementary lesson in truth seeking: **Provide a fair hearing**

*"The Bereans were more noble than the Thessalonians because they listened [to Paul] with all openness of mind, and then they searched the Scriptures daily to see if the things Paul said were really true."* (Acts 17:11)

### THE SYMPATHETIC (Nicodemus) (7:50-52)

#### A. Nicodemus is one of my favorite Pharisees

1. In John 3 he comes at night to talk with Jesus so he can listen directly
2. In John 7, he raises his hand: *"Maybe we ought to check this guy out more"*
3. In John 19, he assists Joseph in preparing Jesus for burial

#### B. Nicodemus sticks his neck out

*"Hear the disputes between your people and judge fairly..."*  
(Deuteronomy 1:16; cf. Exodus 23:1f)

1. They insult him, *"You must from Galilee too?"* (they argue *ad hominem*)
2. They tell him to study his Bible (i.e., our interpretation is correct!)

#### C. John makes Nicodemus' point: you need to listen to this man...

#### D. John calls on us to speak up for Jesus

*"Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. Whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven"* (Matthew 10:32-33)

### THE SADNESS (7:53)

#### A. They have encountered Jesus...and *"they each went to their own home"*

#### B. Even sadder is the fact that this happens daily, repeatedly, and personally

1. In a moment, we'll *"each be going to our own home."* Has anything changed?
2. Proclaiming Jesus may bring a cross on earth, but it'll bring a crown in heaven