

## Believing the Claims of Christ

### John 7:14-24

John 7:14–24 (NKJV)

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<sup>16</sup> Jesus answered them and said, “My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. <sup>17</sup> If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or *whether I speak on My own authority*. <sup>18</sup> He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him. <sup>19</sup> Did not Moses give you the law, yet none of you keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill Me?”

<sup>20</sup> The people answered and said, “You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You?”

<sup>21</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, “I did one work, and you all marvel. <sup>22</sup> Moses therefore gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. <sup>23</sup> If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath? <sup>24</sup> Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.”

## Introduction

The claims of Jesus were astonishing. They were shocking. They were beyond bold. They were really outrageous claims. The man Jesus was indistinguishable from any other Galilean man. He most likely had a Galilean accent and his deity was completely invisible. What was visible was his humanity. There was no way to see him any different than you would see any other man. But men did not make the claims that he made.

Jesus said that he had come down from heaven, that he had eternally existed, that he had been sent into the world by the Father. He claimed to be the savior of the world and the only savior of the world. He claimed to be the determiner of everyone's eternal destiny. He claimed to be the source of everlasting life, and the only source. He claimed to be the only way to God. He claimed to have the right to be honored and worshipped on an equal basis with the eternal God. He claimed to be one with the Father. He claimed to have the power to give life and even to raise the dead. He claimed to be able to raise himself from the dead. He claimed to be the one of whom the Old Testament Scripture spoke and the one who was the main subject of the Old Testament.

He claimed to be the supreme judge of all men who would one day judge them all at this return in glory. He claimed to be without sin. He claimed to have all authority in heaven and earth. He claimed to be able to forgive sins legitimately, to have both the power and the authority to do that. He claimed to rule over the Sabbath. He claimed to have the right to answer prayer.

He claimed to be greater than the temple, greater than Jonah, greater than Solomon, greater than Jacob, greater than Abraham. He claimed to have been alive before Abraham even was born. He claimed to be the only source of soul sustenance, the only bread that could feed the soul. He claimed to be the light of the world. He claimed to be the resurrection and the life. He claimed to be the anointed one, the Christ, the Messiah, claimed to be the son of God. He claimed that he had the privilege and one day would enter into that privilege of being seated at the right hand of God to reign forever.

This from a man who was physically, by appearance, indistinguishable from any other Galilean man. These claims were just beyond comprehension. The Jewish leaders judged him as a blasphemer. Their decision was, to simply say, this is the most extreme of blasphemy conceivable or inconceivable. He is a blasphemer.

This level of blasphemy, they said, is beyond what any human being would do. Therefore, he must be under the overwhelming influence of the ultimate blasphemer who is Satan himself. He does what he does by the power of Satan. He has a demon. He is likely possessed by Satan himself.

Other people were more charitable than the leaders – a bit more charitable, anyway. They said he was insane. He was insane. They used a word that is also used in Acts Chapter 12 and translated this way. It's translated "You're out of your mind." He's a mad man.

There were others perhaps even more charitable, but they were damningly wrong about Jesus. They would be the disciples who followed him for a while, and then as we saw in Chapter 6, departed and left him. And they left because they didn't like his words. They didn't believe in his words. They couldn't accept his words. They may have judged him as a false teacher.

But whether you say he's merely a false teacher, we can't believe. Or whether you say he's an insane maniac and a madman, or whether he's possessed of Satan and the ultimate blasphemer, you have made a judgment on Jesus Christ that has severe implications forever.

On the other hand, there was John the Baptist, who said, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." There was Andrew, in John Chapter 1, who said, "We found the Christ. We found the

Messiah." There was Philip, who said, "We found him of whom Moses spoke." There was Nicodemus who came to Jesus on behalf of other people and said, "We know that you are a teacher come from God, because no one can do what you do unless God is with him." And there were the Samaritans from the little village of Sychar, who basically concluded this is indeed the Messiah, the Savior of the world. And then there was Peter and the disciples in 6:69 who said, "We have believed and come to know that you are the Holy One of God." It was Peter who said, "You're the Christ, the Son of the living God."

So on one hand, you had people who rejected him. You had on the other people who accepted him. The vast majority of people could be basically placed into group one, following the lead of their religious heads. They went down the path of rejecting Jesus either as a blasphemer, a demon-possessed blasphemer, a mad man, or somebody whose teaching's couldn't be believed or understood.

In fact, it all ended up with even the crowd that may have deferred to him and thought he was a good man and said he was a good man and questioned why Jesus thought they wanted to kill him, ultimately screaming for his death, Mark 15:11 to 15.

He was largely rejected. It was a very small group. Only 120 showed up in the upper room in Judea on the

day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came. That was all of all Judea.

When Jesus was called before the Sanhedrin for his trial, they said to him, "If you are the Messiah, tell us." He had told them again and again and again and again, and they hadn't believed. They asked it again and he said to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe. You will not believe." In John Chapter 8, in verse 48, the Jews answered and said to him, "Do we not say rightly that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?" That was their diagnosis.

And that was pretty much the standard diagnosis of Jesus, to one extreme or another. And we know that from the very opening of the Gospel of John, John 1:10, "He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him."

Chapter 3 repeats it again in verse 11. Jesus says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony." Verse 32, "What He has seen and heard, of that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony." Chapter 5, verse 16, "For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus." He was saying, "My Father is working and now, and I Myself am working. For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the

more to kill Him." So it goes rejection, rejection, rejection.

Chapter 5 and verse 38, "You do not have His word abiding in you," Jesus says, "for you do not believe Him whom He sent." Verse 43, "I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me." That was how it was. His claims were rejected. He was rejected. Again and again we're going to see it, chapter after chapter after chapter, all the way until they scream for his blood at his death about six months after the events recorded here.

## **Review**

## **Lesson**

- I. The Astonishment**
- II. The Answer**
- III. The Accusation**
- IV. The Assessment**

## I. The Astonishment

John 7:14–15 (NKJV)

<sup>14</sup> Now about the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught. <sup>15</sup> And the Jews marveled, saying, “How does this Man know letters, having never studied?”

They acknowledge his learning. It was beyond anybody else. Even the temple police, who regularly would have heard the teaching of rabbis, because that's where rabbis were often teaching. They never heard anybody like this. Never a man spoke like this man.

Rabbis would expound the Scripture and explain Scripture and quote other rabbis to validate their interpretation. But this kind of teaching was beyond anything anybody had ever heard. It was a level of wisdom, a level of knowledge, a level of understanding without equal. The people are dumbfounded. They are



shocked. They are startled by this flawless, adept instruction, the likes of which they have never heard. He doesn't quote rabbis. He doesn't validate his teaching by any human source. He doesn't necessarily connect with the tradition. But there's never been anything like it.

They're overwhelmed by the lucidity of it, the clarity of it, the profundity of it, the truthfulness of it, the ringing reality of it. So how are they gonna discredit him?

They attack him, not his teaching. Verse 15, "How has this man become learned, having never been educated?" This is an ad hominem argument. They didn't want to argue with him. They didn't want to debate him. So they tried to discredit him by calling into question his training, or lack of training.

Another time, when they wanted to discredit him and they didn't want to attack what he said because they couldn't, they said, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" So they attacked his hometown – not a very powerful argument.

But they knew every time they did enter into a discussion or a debate or a confrontation with him, they were just humiliated. So they're grasping at straws. They're shattered by his claims, his astonishing claims. They're shattered by the, no doubt, the Biblical support he gives for those claims, the masterful teaching. They can't cope with it. They can't argue with it. They can't

debate with it. They can't contradict it. They are trapped in their own self-centered, hypocritical system. He will dismantle them, so they just discredit him. They speak in a derisive way.

"How has this man?" Some of the older translations say "this fellow, this nobody." They don't want to use his name. That's an expression, by the way, of derision. Don't let this nobody, who's giving you his own opinion, pass himself off as some truth teller who truly the meaning of Scripture, who truly the Word of God and the will of God. He's just shooting off his uneducated mouth.

This is nothing new. All the way back in Matthew Chapter 13 and verse 54, we see a similar situation. "He came to His hometown and began teaching them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, 'Where did this man get this wisdom?'"

"How could he possibly get this teaching when he hasn't been to the rabbinical schools?" If you can't knock the truth, you knock the truth teller. That's exactly what they did. They just openly discredited him.

## **II. The Answer**

John 7:16–18 (NKJV)

*<sup>16</sup> Jesus answered them and said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. <sup>17</sup> If anyone wills to do His will,*

he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.<sup>18</sup> He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.

<sup>16</sup> Jesus answered them and said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.,

He could have defended himself by simply saying, "You're absolutely right. This isn't from the rabbis. This is my truth. I'm God. I'm telling you the truth." But that would have exacerbated the issue even more. So he doesn't say he's self-taught. He doesn't say, "I came across this all by myself. My doctrine is my own. My doctrine comes from me." He doesn't walk into that trap. That would have exacerbated the situation. Instead – you got to love this – verse 16, "Jesus answered them and said, 'My teaching is not Mine.'" Wow. "My teaching is not mine." Not mine. This isn't self knowledge. I didn't make this up. I didn't come to this in isolation. I'm not teaching my own opinion. But his who sent me.

And there he trumps the rabbis. I'm not quoting rabbis. I'm quoting God. I'm quoting God. What a reply. This is not just in defense. This is an indictment of the Jewish leaders and their endless circular quotations of rabbis who

quoted rabbis who quoted rabbis. He says, "You're right. You're right. This teaching is different. This is learned teaching. This is divine knowledge. This is truth. And it doesn't come from the rabbis. It comes from God." By the way, that implies that the rabbis' teaching came from the rabbis.

Every preacher must say that. Every preacher must say, "My teaching is not mine. It comes from heaven." I can say that, as I teach the Word of God.

### **John 5:19**

<sup>19</sup> Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.

### **John 5:24**

<sup>24</sup> "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

### **John 5:30**

<sup>30</sup> I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

### **John 8:26**

<sup>26</sup> I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him."

### **John 12:49**

<sup>49</sup> For I have not spoken on My own *authority*; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. <sup>50</sup> And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.”

### **John 17:8**

<sup>8</sup> For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received *them*, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.

The divine source of his teaching is the first reason to believe the claims of Jesus. And again, this is not just a defense. It is, at the same time, an indictment of those who do not speak for go. How vast is his knowledge? He knows the mind of God. He knows the mind of God – not in a general way, not in a broad way, not in some kind of an impression. He knows the mind of God verbally in words. He speaks the words that God gives him to speak. He knows what go thinks. He knows what God says. He knows what God wills, and he says it over and over again. He knows the will of the Father. "I know the will of my Father. I do the will of my Father. I speak the words of my Father." Complete knowledge of the mind of God.

This is supernatural knowledge.

*17 If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.*

This is his promise that if a person desired to do the will of God, he would know the truth.

Coming to Christ is not motivated by your desire to get what you want. It is motivated by your desire to do for God what he commands,

Your discernment of the truth of the Bible hinges on your obedience to the author of this Book.

In other words, *your ability to understand God's Word is related to your availability to obey God's will.*

***If any man is willing to do His will . . .***

The word “willing,” is from the Greek text, “thelo,” and is a very strong word. It means to “seize with the mind or to be resolved”. So, ultimately, this was a challenge to the Jewish leaders. They believed they “knew the Word of God and the will of God”. Jesus was telling them that they were illiterate.

There must be moral harmony between man's purpose and God's will. “If there be no sympathy there can be no understanding” (Westcott). Atheists of all types have no point of contact for approach to the knowledge of Christ. This fact does not prove the non-existence of God, but simply their own isolation. They are out of tune with the Infinite. For those who love God it is also true that

obedience to God's will brings richer knowledge of God. Agnostic and atheistic critics are disqualified by Jesus as witnesses to his claims.

**A T Roberston Word Pictures**

### **He shall know**

Sympathy with the will of God is a condition of understanding it.

But, we know that Man has no will to come and obey

### **John 6:44–45 (NKJV)**

<sup>44</sup> No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. <sup>45</sup> It is written in the prophets, *'And they shall all be taught by God.'* Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.

### **John 6:65 (NKJV)**

<sup>65</sup> And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father."

### **John 5:44 (NKJV)**

<sup>44</sup> How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that *comes* from the only God?

### **Jeremiah 13:23 (NKJV)**

<sup>23</sup> Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots?

*Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil.*

### **Romans 8:7-8 (NKJV)**

<sup>7</sup> Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

<sup>8</sup> So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

### **Romans 6:20 (NKJV)**

<sup>20</sup> For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.

Jesus is not stating that men have this ability to do the will of God, He is simply stating the necessity of doing it.

#### **Martin Luther “The Bondage of the Will”**

"... 'if thou art willing' is a verb in the subjunctive mood, which asserts nothing... a conditional statement asserts nothing indicatively." "if thou art willing", "if thou hear", "if thou do" declare, not man's ability, but his duty. pg 157

He says you need to believe, but you can't,  
 He says you need to confess but you can't  
 He says you need to repent but you can't  
 He says you need to come but you can't

#### **Martin Luther “The Bondage of the Will”**

"the commandments are not given inappropriately or pointlessly; but in order that through them the proud, blind



man may learn the plague of his impotence, should he try to do as he is commanded." pg. 160

All of these commands, requirement, prerequisites are necessary but only available through the Sovereign power of the God, HE must grant all for any to come.

### Martin Luther "The Bondage of the Will"

Let all the 'free-will' in the world do all it can with all its strength; it will never give rise to a single instance of ability to avoid being hardened if God does not give the Spirit, or of meriting mercy if it is left to its own strength." p. 202

This is where salvation begins. The Holy Spirit convicts of sin and righteousness is judgment. The sinner is weary of his sin and his fallenness and his wretchedness, of nature of it and the consequence of it; becomes a (true) seeker. And he's not looking for personal fulfillment. He's not looking for personal benefits and blessings. That's what the crowd was looking for that eventually left Jesus in Chapter 6. What he wants is to do the will of God. This is the step in the direction of confessing Jesus as what? As Lord, coming as a slave to a master; coming out from under the master of sin, the dominance of sin, to the mastery of the lordship of Jesus Christ.

So gospel truth is not apprehended by debate. You can have a bunch of unbelievers in a room. You can have an atheist debating with somebody who knew the gospel, and that debate may prove to fall on the side of the people with the gospel, but only if you're gonna believe the Bible. But if you have an unbeliever sitting there, he's not able to discern the difference. You don't win the day by debate. You don't even win the day by rational defense, even though you can rationally defend the Bible, and even though you can debate successfully.

What draws people to the gospel, what draws people to Christ is a desire to do the will of God. God exists. He is sovereign. He is the judge and the executioner. I'm on the wrong side of God. I'm alienated from God. I'm an enemy of God. I need to submit to God. I'm tired of the power that sin expressed in my life, the devastation of sin. I want deliverance. I want freedom. I want a new master.

This is how faith acts. What I saving faith? It is the desire to put your trust in Jesus Christ as to do the will of God. It requires believing.

### **Deuteronomy 4:29 (NKJV)**

<sup>29</sup> But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find *Him* if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.

**Deuteronomy 30:2 (NKJV)**

<sup>2</sup> and you return to the Lord your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul,

**Psalm 119:2**, "Blessed are they that seek Him with the whole heart."

**Hosea 6:3**, "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord."

**Jeremiah 29:13**, "You'll find Me when you seek for Me with your whole heart."

*18 He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.*

False teachers, charlatans, frauds, fakes, hypocrites, phony messiahs are all in it for personal gain. The New Testament's clear: They do it for money. They do it for power. They do it for prominence, ego boost, all that package. False teachers are self-centered fleecers of the sheep.

Jesus even makes it clear, when he talks about false shepherds in John Chapter 10. They seek their own glory.

Listen to **John 5:44**. He says to the Jewish leaders, "How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God?" What was the problem with these Pharisees, these Jewish leaders? They didn't seek the glory of God. They sought glory from one another. To put it another way, they were more interested in the praise of men than the praise of God.

And by the way, that really hit hard at those Jewish leaders – notorious seekers of their own glory, calling attention to themselves when they prayed, when they gave, when they went around the city with certain kind of clothes, with certain kind of postures, and certain kind of demonstrations, parading their wretched hypocrisy. And Jesus was so utterly unlike that. He who knew no sin was so humble that he became sin for us.

### III. The Accusation

John 7:19–23 (NKJV)

*19 Did not Moses give you the law, yet none of you keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill Me?"*

*20 The people answered and said, "You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You?"*

*21 Jesus answered and said to them, "I did one work, and you all marvel. 22 Moses therefore gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. 23 If a*

*man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath?*

*19 Did not Moses give you the law, yet none of you keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill Me?"*

None of you carries out the Law. None of you. None of you. No one keeps God's Law. That's the clear declaration of man's sinfulness. No one carries out the Law. There's none righteous – no, not one – Romans 3. Galatians 3, if you break one law, you've broken the whole Law and you're cursed. The proud legalists were lawbreakers. The Law of Moses was never intended to save. It was intended to condemn. It was intended to drive sinners to an overwhelming fear of divine judgment that would cause them to repent, cry out for mercy and grace from God. And now, to put their trust in the only savior, Jesus Christ.

Or they would have been justifying themselves. They would have been saying, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, what do you mean none of us carries out the Law?" So he gets specific. "Why do you seek to kill me? Why do you seek to kill me?" Their outrageous treatment of Jesus, seeking to murder him, was an overt violation of the Ten Commandments. Exodus 20:13, thou shalt not what?

Murder. Kill. They were in fact blasphemous, murderous unworthy disciples of Moses, unworthy descendants of Abraham, whose father was actually the devil, John 8:44.

*<sup>20</sup> The people answered and said, "You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You?"*

So he indicts them. The crowd that really aren't all aware – there are pilgrims from all over everywhere for the Feast – they're not aware of this murderous intent. So they say, "You have a demon who seeks to kill you." But Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart of man is deceitful above all things, are desperately wicked. They don't know their own hearts." Six months later when they all show up again for the next feast, which is Passover, according to Mark 15:11-15, they're all screaming for his blood. They all became murderers because they were the children of Satan, who's a murderer from the beginning.

*<sup>21</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, "I did one work, and you all marvel. <sup>22</sup> Moses therefore gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. <sup>23</sup> If a*

*man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath?*

So Jesus says you have circumcision, right? It's all the way back to Abraham. It's reiterated in Moses.

However, on the Sabbath, you circumcise a man. Why do they do it on the Sabbath? Because it had to be done on the eighth day. And so when the eighth day happened to be a Sabbath, they did it on the eighth day. So in a sense, they violated their tradition about work on the Sabbath, because they had a prescription that they needed to follow. So if necessary, the Sabbath could be set aside for something more important, something better, another level of obedience.

I did one miracle and the murder plot is hatched. One miracle and you want to kill me. One miracle that was done on the Sabbath, which was a greater expression of goodness and divine mercy and divine power than any prescription for behavior on that Sabbath, and you want to kill me for that when you yourselves violate your own ordinance because you think circumcision is more important.

Powerful rebuke. Circumcision takes precedence over the restriction of Sabbath rest. And so does doing

good, showing mercy, kindness. Stop looking at hypocrisy of these leaders. Look at the power that I've displayed. Look at the grace. Look at the goodness, miraculous works. Look at his life and his powerful works. John says these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ.

## IV. The Assessment

John 7:24 (NKJV)

<sup>24</sup> Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.”

Jesus says

Make the right verdict concerning the claims I've made. They had spent their whole life judging on appearance. It's what hypocrites do. That's what they sell. That's what they produce. That's the nature of hypocrisy. Stop, Jesus said, doing that. Judge righteously.

This is a command to continually judge

Many have wrongfully interpreted Matt 7



**Matthew 7:1–5 (NKJV)**

**7** “Judge not, that you be not judged. <sup>2</sup> For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. <sup>3</sup> And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? <sup>4</sup> Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye’; and look, a plank *is* in your own eye? <sup>5</sup> Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.