

John 7:10-29

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 11 January 2026

Preacher: Nathan Raynor

[0:00] Amen. Please take your copy of God's Word and join me in John chapter 7. While you're getting there, I'd like to do two things.

First, I want to encourage attentive listening by pointing something out to you. When TJ was praying, he prayed for the elderly in our church.

And then did you hear how he defined elderly? He said, older than us. And I think if you're being a careful listener, you're going to quickly go, what is the median age in this congregation?

So this morning, TJ called me elderly. And I don't know how I feel about that. I'll own it, I suppose. Second thing I want to do is I just want to take a moment.

I don't know how regularly you might do this. I know I don't enough. But take a moment to pause and consider how very privileged we are to gather together as a church on Sunday morning to see and sing and hear, open up God's Word.

[1:11] What a blessing it is. What do you think you might be doing otherwise this morning if it weren't for God's grace in your life? I wouldn't be doing this.

One of the greatest high points of my week, I'd be off flitting away time doing something meaningless instead of gathering with you. It's also such a privilege that I get to open God's Word to you, this abundant Word that we have, and take the time during the week to study it and present it to you on a Sunday morning.

So I'm glad to be here. I'm glad that we can open up God's Word together. I hope you feel the very same. Our text for today is John 7, verses 10-29.

Once again, if this bothers you because the subtitles in your Bible are not following this, this is following the chiastic structure of this text. We won't spend much of any time on that this morning, but I just want you to understand there's a reason that we're preaching 10-29.

I mentioned briefly last week that John continually juxtaposes those who reject Jesus as the Christ and those who receive Jesus as the Christ, and that this thematic element carries all throughout the book, and it is established at the outset of John's writing.

[2:36] He wants us to take it up, and he wants us to see, look, there's two groups of people being presented here, right? Those who reject, those who receive, and it is his hope that we will receive.

At the outset, the theme is established. John 1, verse 9 and following. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.

He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Now then, chapter 7 places us in the middle of a growing crisis in Jesus' ministry. The crowds are confused.

The authorities are hostile. The religious leaders are threatened. The question driving this passage is not whether Jesus is impressive, but whether he has authority, and more specifically, where that authority comes from.

[3 : 53] This text confronts us with a sobering reality. You can be surrounded by truth, impressed by Jesus, and still not know God.

May we all receive Jesus as the Christ as we study together this morning. Let me pray to that very end. Father, help us as we take up your word, as we open it together this morning.

We want to rightly understand it. We want to glean from it what can be gathered. Lord, we humbly recognize that we need your help to do this very thing.

Help us to believe its promises, obey its commands, have affection for its author. Help us to believe that Jesus is in fact the Christ.

And we pray to this end for his glory. Amen. John chapter 7, verses 10 through 21. I'm going to begin reading in verse 1 though, just for some context.

[4 : 52] I think it will help us make some sense of what's going to happen after. John chapter 7, beginning in verse 1. After this, Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill him.

Now the Jews' feast of booths was at hand. So his brothers said to him, Leave here and go to Judea that your disciples also may see the works you are doing. For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly.

If you do these things, show yourself to the world. For not even his brothers believed in him. Jesus said to them, My time has not yet come, but your time is always here.

The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil. You go up to the feast. I am not going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come.

After this, he remained in Galilee. But after his brothers had gone up to the feast, then he also went up, not publicly, but in private. The Jews were looking for him at the feast and saying, Where is he?

[5 : 59] And there was much muttering about him among the people. While some said, He is a good man, others said, No, he is leading the people astray. Yet for fear of the Jews, no one spoke openly of him.

About the middle of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple and began teaching. The Jews therefore marveled, saying, How is it that this man has learning when he has never studied? So Jesus answered them, My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me.

If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority. The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory. But the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood.

Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why do you seek to kill me? The crowd answered, You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill you?

Jesus answered them, I did one work and you all marvel at it. Moses gave you circumcision, not that it is from Moses but from the fathers, and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath.

[7 : 07] If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man's whole body well? Do not judge by appearances but judge with right judgment.

Some of the people of Jerusalem therefore said, Is not this the man whom they seek to kill? And here he is speaking openly and they say nothing to him. Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Christ?

But we know where this man comes from and when the Christ appears no one will know where he comes from. So Jesus proclaimed as he taught in the temple. You know me and you know where I come from but I have not come of my own accord.

He who sent me is true and him you do not know. I know him for I come from him and he sent me. Alright, let's first look a little bit at the context.

Feast and fear verses 10 through 13. Verse 10 says, But after his brothers had gone up to the feast then he also went up not publicly but in private.

[8 : 16] Recall, Jesus did not delay his departure because he was afraid but because he was awaiting the Father's sending. His timing and his manner are all about the divine timeline.

We developed that some last week. Next week, Lord willing, we will spend some extended time discussing the details of the week. This long feast of booze or tabernacles as those details will have bearing on our understanding of the text.

For today, it is enough to know that this was one of Israel's great pilgrimage feasts!. It celebrated God's provision in the wilderness after the Exodus and it anticipated future restoration.

resurrection. Jesus goes up to Jerusalem for the feast but he does so quietly. Not triumphantly, not yet.

That will come. But this time to Jerusalem he goes quietly. Throughout John's gospel, Jesus is never rushed, never reactive, never careless.

[9 : 26] He moves according to the divine timeline. He goes when he is told to go. He's already said in verse 6, my time has not yet come.

Not time for me to go. I trust the Father. I go when the Father tells me to go. The steps of Christ are governed by the sovereign will of God the Father.

Verses 11 through 13 describe the atmosphere. The Jews are looking for him at the feast. Where is he? We know that he's not gone there because they're seeking to kill him.

The beginning of the chapter tells us this. And the people are muttering. Some say he's a good man. Others say no, he's leading the people astray.

But they're not talking openly. They're not being loud about it because they're afraid of what the Jews might say. Notice the distinction between the Jews and the people.

[10 : 29] The Jews here is referring to the religious leaders. We get a number of hints at this throughout John's writing. It becomes very clear there's a different group here being talked about.

The people is everyone else at this festival. Most, to be sure, would have been Jewish in ethnicity. But there would have also been those who converted to Judaism from other nations.

The people are unsure what to do with Jesus and notice yet for fear of the Jews, this distinct group, no one spoke openly of him.

There's a festival and there's fear and fear often silences truth. It did then and it still does now.

So this is the setting for what's going on. The middle of this week-long celebration is when Jesus begins to teach and I have for you three points to structure the rest of our study.

[11 : 34] So number one, Jesus teaches with an inexplicable authority. Verses 14 through 18, Jesus teaches with an inexplicable authority.

Verse 14 tells us about the middle of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple and began teaching. We don't know exactly what he's teaching, but surely that he is the Christ.

Suddenly, publicly, boldly, Jesus does not avoid the temple, he goes and confronts it. We can have no doubt that it was time to do this very thing.

God the Father orchestrates the growing conflict we will witness as this chapter presses on. Again and again and again we'll see Jesus won't say things the Father doesn't tell him to say, he won't do things the Father doesn't tell him to do, and so we have an ordained encounter happening in the middle of this festival.

Verse 15 records the response to his teaching. The Jews therefore marveled saying, how is it that this man has learning when he has never studied?

[12:45] Now I don't think that what we are seeing here is a genuine curiosity about Jesus. Remember, this group is seeking to kill him. They're scratching their heads a bit about why is it that he's able to speak in this way.

The context leads me to believe it is contempt that is disguised as a question. How is it possible that this guy could speak in this way?

They're not denying his grasp of scripture. They're questioning his authority. Jesus has no recognized rabbinical training, no official credentials.

He's been hanging out in the nowhere land. No diploma hanging on his wall, yet he speaks with authority.

Why? Because of who sent him to speak. Jesus answers their question in verse 16. My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me.

[13:53] And the implication is, how is it that this man has learning when he has never studied? Is that God the Father is the one who sent me? This is a staggering claim.

Jesus does not say he developed these ideas or discovered them. He says he was sent. He's serving as a mouthpiece of God the Father. This is the language of divine commission.

Prophets are sent. We'll see later apostles are sent. And here the Son declares that he has been sent by the Father. Jesus loves to make huge claims and we should love it when he does so.

He makes massive claims about himself. Listen to just a few of them that John MacArthur outlines for us in his commentary on these verses.

This is a very well loved commentary. Next Christmas, if any of you are looking for a present for me, I need a new John 1 through 11 commentary. Listen to just a few of these.

[14:59] And this is so helpful. I'm not going to read you all the scripture references. MacArthur does that work for us. It's a really beautifully well done list that he's put here. But just listen to some of the things that Jesus has claimed.

He's claimed to have come down from heaven, to have been sent into the world by the Father, to be the Savior of the world, to be the determiner of people's eternal destinies, to be the source of eternal life, to be the only way to God, to have the right to be honored on equal basis with the Father, to be one with the Father, to have power to raise the dead and even rise from the dead himself, to be the one to whom the Old Testament scriptures pointed, to be the supreme judge who will one day return in glory, to be without sin, to have all authority in heaven and on earth, to have the authority to forgive sins, to have authority over the Sabbath, to have the authority to answer prayer, to have the authority to authorize prayer in his name, to be greater than the temple, Solomon, Jacob, and Abraham, to be the bread of life, the only source of spiritual sustenance, to be the light of the world, to be the resurrection and the life, to be the

Messiah or the Christ, to be the Son of God who would be seated at the right hand of God in glory. Astounding, magnificent, huge claims that he makes about himself.

And if all of these claims are true, he is to be worshipped. Verse 17 is crucial for us to hear.

If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority.

[16:57] Jesus does not say discernment begins, with intelligence or with education. He says it begins with the will. If the heart is submissive, the truth will become clear.

Unbelief is not primarily an intellectual problem, it is a moral problem. It has to do with who we are at our core.

Lord, help us to believe. Jesus goes on in verse 18 to provide a test of true authority.

He says the one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory. Somebody's seeking their own glory, then they're speaking of their own authority.

But the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood. Jesus is not self-promoting, he is father-glorifying.

[17:59] That alone sets him apart from every false teacher. Jesus teaches with an inexplicable authority. Secondly, Jesus exposes the hypocrisy of religious unbelief.

See this in verse 19 through 24. In verse 19, Jesus confronts them directly. Has not Moses given you the law, yet none of you keeps the law?

Why do you seek to kill me? They claim Moses. They claim the law, yet they're plotting murder.

Jesus exposes the contradiction. They boast in possessing the law while rejecting the lawgiver to the point of putting him to death on a cross.

This plot is already in motion as Jesus speaks to them. In verse 20, the crowd then responds, you have a demon who is seeking to kill you.

[19:01] How could you say such a crazy thing? Truth often sounds insane to hardened hearts. These two verses, for those of you who will care, I hope some of you do, comprise the chiastic center of this text.

So if you care to plot it out on your own, this is the center, verses 19 and 20. John's drawing our attention to this growing conflict that's going to result in his crucifixion.

Jesus answers by pointing to his healing on the Sabbath recorded in John chapter 5. That's what he's talking about. That's the work that he did that they marvel at.

Back in John chapter 5, the last time he was in Jerusalem, you may remember that he healed a man at the pool of Siloam. In verse 21 through 23 he explains that circumcision is permitted on the Sabbath because the law itself allows for acts of covenant faithfulness and mercy.

So they would have performed circumcision on the eighth day and if it fell on the Sabbath they did that work and the law allowed for that. Acts of covenant faithfulness and of mercy.

[20:16] So then what did he do? He did an act of mercy. He healed a man on that day and it was for that reason that they were seeking to kill him. His argument is airtight.

If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision so the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man's whole body well? Look at the hypocrisy of your unbelief.

Verse 24 summarizes the issue. Do not judge by appearances but judge with right judgment.

Jesus is not here forbidding discernment. He is commanding it. Superficial judgment looks at credentials and at customs. Right judgment is shaped by truth and grounded in God's word.

They should have had no issue with his healing on the Sabbath. They should have accepted him as the Christ and yet they're so caught up in their keeping of the law that they're neglecting central elements of it.

[21:26] So we see that Jesus exposes the hypocrisy of their religious unbelief. Thirdly, Jesus reveals a divine origin that they just refuse to accept.

Verse 25 to the end of the text. Verses 25 to 27 show the confusion of the Jerusalem crowd. They think they know where Jesus is from and assume that the Christ's origins will be entirely mysterious.

So much misunderstanding about who the Christ would be. They misunderstood both Jesus and the Old Testament's teaching about the Christ.

What he was to be and what he was to do. Verse 28 is filled with so much holy irony.

Jesus proclaimed as he taught in the temple, you know me and you know where I come from, but I have not come of my own accord. He who sent me is true and him you do not know.

[22:33] Yes, they know his earthly background. Word had gotten around about who this Jesus is, this one claiming to be the Christ, but they do not know his heavenly origin.

They know Nazareth, they do not know that he has come from the Father and therefore do not know the Father.

Verse 29 brings the matter to its very sharpest of points. Jesus says, I know him for I come from him and he sent me.

This is one of the clearest assertions of Jesus' divine origin in the gospel of John. Jesus does not merely know about God, he knows him eternally and perfectly.

And then comes the devastating indictment at the end of verse 28. Him you do not know. may that not be said of us, him you do not know.

[23:43] These are scripture experts and devout followers of the law. They are gathered for a commanded feast. They have come together in obedience to God's word.

Jesus says plainly that they do not know God. That should sober every one of us. Every one of us should think them?

How did they miss that Jesus is the Christ? Jesus says in John chapter 5 verse 39 and 40 it says this to these Jewish leaders you search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life and it is they that bear witness about me yet you refuse!

to come to me that you may have life. search the scriptures don't stop doing that search the scriptures but do so that you may find Jesus go to him and have life in him.

Jesus reveals his divine origin that they just do not accept. So let's think about a bit of application.

[24:58] First let me say that we ought to be careful to beware of respectable unbelief. Many admire Jesus' teaching while rejecting his authority.

That is not faith as the author put it it is rebellion with manners. We have spoken before of C.S.

Lewis' trilemma. He argues rightly that you must either think Jesus a liar or a lunatic or worship him as Lord.

He says it's not appropriate to just think of him as a good teacher because of the types of claims he made about himself. He either knows it's not true and just lies or he's a crazy person he actually thinks it's true or it is in fact true.

And if so which is what I put forward to you then we should worship him as Lord. Lewis wasn't the only person to reason in this way and included at the back of your bulletin a quote from G.K.

[26 : 08] Chesterton! This first couple sentences are about not being able to make a crazy person see the light.

The delusion of divinity is what he calls it. So that's what these first sentences are about. He says this impossibility of letting in daylight on a delusion does sometimes cover and conceal a delusion of divinity.

It can be found not among prophets and sages and founders of religions but only among a low set of lunatics. See what he's saying? Really crazy people think they're God.

That's what he's saying. But this is exactly where the argument becomes intensely interesting because the argument proves too much for nobody supposes that Jesus of Nazareth was that sort of person.

No modern critic in his five wits thinks that the preacher of the Sermon on the Mount was a horrible half-witted imbecile that might be scrawling stars on the walls of a cell.

[27 : 13] No atheist or blasphemer believes that the author of the parable of the prodigal son was a monster with historical criticism.

He must be put higher in the scale of human beings than that. He can't just be a lunatic. Look at the things that he put on pages for us.

Yet by all analogy we have really to put him there or else in the highest place of all. Lord recognize him as such.

I hope that we will all recognize the soundness of this argument. More than that I hope that we will all arrive at the proper conclusion of this argument and bow the knee to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Beware of respectable unbelief. It is still unbelief. It is rebellion with manners. Take some time and examine your will not merely your intellect.

[28 : 29] You can know something is true and yet refuse to do it. Are you being shaped by God's word in a way that the impulse of your heart and your will you want to do the things that God would have you do.

It starts with belief. It ends with continued belief. obedience to his way to the very end. Ask honestly whether you are willing to do whatever it is that God reveals to you that you should do.

Finally, rest in the Christ who was sent. It's already a new year. We are off and running and there are a thousand tasks!

out before us so many things that we are determined to do. Most of them probably are good things that we should be set about doing.

I think already perhaps some of you are tired. Can you believe it? We're already worn out. The holidays have us tired.

[29 : 38] Perhaps in your spirit you're tired. Thinking somehow that your success or failure this year already has put you in some right or wrong standing with God.

Rest in the completed work of the Christ who was sent. Sent on your behalf if you have believed in him. Jesus did not come on his own initiative.

came on the father's mission to save sinners like you and me to make us new in him to clothe us in his righteousness to not only justify us but to adopt us to call us his and that was done because he did it.

He accomplished that work and we can rest in that. He still speaks Jesus does with divine authority today.

We can believe that his promises for us are sure. In conclusion John 7 presses this unavoidable question upon us where did Jesus come from who is he if he came only from Nazareth he can be dismissed if he came from heaven he must be worshipped Jesus says in John 17 verse 3 this is eternal life that they know you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent let's pray as