

**A. John 7:40-53 – Reactions among the religious leaders**

1. John 7:40-43 – The Jewish people had differing opinions regarding Jesus' **identity**.
  - a. John 7:40 – *Some of the people therefore, when they heard these words, were saying, "This certainly is the Prophet."* Some of the Jews speculated Jesus was the **prophet** predicted by Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15.
    - 1) As Messiah, Jesus had three distinct ministries or **titles**. He was prophet (Deut. 18:15), priest (Ps. 110:4) and king (Is. 9:7, Jer. 23:5). So, the crowd was correct. Jesus was indeed the promised Prophet. Luke 1:32-33; Acts 3:22-26, 7:37
    - 2) The Jews thought the prophet Moses predicted and the promised Messiah were two separate people. The fact that they debated this issue shows Jesus indeed **fit** both descriptions of the prophet and the messiah.
  - b. John 7:41a – *Others were saying, "This is the Christ."* Some of the others in the crowd speculated that Jesus was the Christ, or **Messiah**. These people were also right.
  - c. John 7:41b – *Still others were saying, "Surely the Christ is not going to come from Galilee, is He?"* But there was a third group that said Jesus could not be either since He was from Galilee. They had the false notion that no prophet could come from **Galilee**.
    - 1) These people failed to realize that the prophet **Jonah** (although probably not highly esteemed) was from Gath Hepher, a mere five miles north of Nazareth in Galilee. Joshua 19:13, 2 Kings 14:25
    - 2) The fact is, Jesus was not actually from Galilee, but from Bethlehem via Egypt. Most of His very earliest years were spent in exile in Egypt, the very place from which their greatest prophet, **Moses**, had arisen.
  - d. John 7:42 – *"Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the descendants of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?"* Again, these people were not very observant. They were **not** examining the facts.
    - 1) Fixed on the idea that Jesus' hometown was considered to be Nazareth, they were unaware that He was actually **born** in Bethlehem, the city of David.
    - 2) A quick trip to the temple to examine the **archives** would have revealed Jesus was a double descendent of King David. Never in scripture was this fact legally challenged or disproved. Soon after Christ death, the archives were destroyed by Rome (70 AD) therefore no one can genetically prove royal ascendancy like King Jesus can.
    - 3) By adoption Jesus was Joseph's son, and therefore in the royal lineage of King David through Solomon (Matt. 1:6). By blood He was Mary's son, and therefore in the royal blood line of King David through David's son Nathan (Luke 3:31). Jesus was eminently **qualified** to be the Messiah.
  - e. John 7:43 – *So a division occurred in the crowd because of Him.* Not surprisingly, their ignorance caused a huge debate and several divisions among the people. This, of course, resulted in fertile soil for Jesus to clarify their misunderstanding. In the end, this discussion should have led them to **search** the scriptures.
2. John 7:44-46 – As John noted previously (John 7:32), a plan was afoot to arrest Jesus, but the temple officers who were charged with the task refused to arrest Him because they recognized something **special** about His teaching.
  - a. John 7:44 – *Some of them wanted to seize Him, but no one laid hands on Him.* The officers had gone with full intentions of arresting Jesus, but with the oversized crowds of the festival, they were likely obliged to stand in the back and listen. As they listened to Jesus **teaching**, something happened: They lost their courage to act.
  - b. John 7:45 – *The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them, "Why did you not bring Him?"* Instead of blaming the crowds or giving some other excuse, the officers responded **candidly**.
  - c. John 7:46 – *The officers answered, "Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks."* This was an honest answer and serves as an unbiased commentary from people of that day as to the true impact of Jesus' teaching. This was not John's narrative or fanciful speculation. This unscripted **testimony** came directly from the heart of these policemen.
3. John 7:47 – *The Pharisees then answered them, "You have not also been led astray, have you?"* These religious leaders were quick to pass a negative judgment on these men who involuntarily praised Jesus. Yes, they had been **impacted**, but they were simply stating the facts. Jesus had spoken in such a way that the crowds were overwhelmed. Matthew 7:28
4. John 7:48 – *"No one of the rulers or Pharisees has believed in Him, has he?"* The unspoken assumption behind this statement was that no **educated** ruler or Pharisee would ever dare to believe in this Galilean named

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Jesus. You can always expect this is type of mockery from religion. When religion cannot defeat truth, the masses get accused of ignorance.

5. John 7:49 – “*But this crowd which does not know the Law is accursed.*” According to the religious leaders, only the ignorant and untaught would listen to Jesus’ message. Their **harsh** summary was: “If you believe Jesus of Nazareth to be the messiah, you do not know the Bible and are duly cursed.” There was no room for even considering Jesus’ teachings.
6. John 7:50-51 – Realizing the religious leaders had already passed judgment on Jesus, Nicodemus spoke up, asserting that according to the Law they were required to give Jesus a **fair** trial. Exodus 23:1; Deuteronomy 1:16-17, 19:15-21
  - a. John 7:50 – *Nicodemus (he who came to Him before, being one of them) said to them ...* Since Nicodemus was a Pharisee who had considered Jesus’ teachings, He tactfully spoke up. Like the temple policemen, he had listened to Jesus and **knew** by personal experience Jesus’ teachings were astounding.
  - b. John 7:51 – “*Our Law does not judge a man unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?*” According to Jewish law a person was “**innocent** until proven guilty.”
    - 1) This is the basis of true judgment. You first **listen** to the facts and then you pass judgment.
    - 2) These leaders of Israel were the ones who were ignorant of the Law and under its curse. They were the perfect definition of the word **hypocrite**.
7. John 7:52-53 – The religious leaders refused to admit that Nicodemus was right in asking for a fair trial. Instead, they ridiculed him, an all too common **tactic** of religious people. Matthew 23:34-35
  - a. John 7:52 – *They answered him, “You are not also from Galilee, are you? Search, and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee.”* Again, these religious leaders were woefully mistaken. **Jonah** was from Galilee, just north of Nazareth. 2 Kings 14:25
  - b. John 7:53 – *Everyone went to his home.* The religious leaders conveniently **forgot** about Jonah, but Jesus had not forgotten. In Matthew 12:38-41 when the Pharisees requested a sign, Jesus cleverly gave them the sign of Jonah. He said that like Jonah was in the belly of the fish, He would be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.
    - 1) They would one day know that He was truly a prophet. They would also be able to know from His amazing **sign** of dying, being buried and the rising again on the third day that He was who He claimed to be.
    - 2) They denied that a prophet could come from Galilee, but both Jesus and Jonah came from there. These two had something totally amazing in common that proved their **validity** and demanded careful consideration of Jesus’ claims.