

John 7:40-52

⁴⁰ When they heard these words, some of the people said, "This really is the Prophet." ⁴¹ Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Is the Christ to come from Galilee?"

40, 41 In the first century, many believed that the Prophet like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15), and the Messiah or Christ, would be two different people. The Qumran community even believed in three special people to come, the Prophet, a priest in the order of Aaron, and a kingly Messiah. They were all correct in foreseeing these characters would come. They just did not foresee that it was all fulfilled in one person. Jesus is the Prophet like Moses. He is our great High Priest but after the order of Melchizedek, not Aaron (Hebrews 5:6). Jesus is also the King of kings descended from David (Revelation 19:16). He holds the office of prophet, priest, and king.

They responded that Jesus was "that prophet" because having our thirst quenched by Him was foreshadowed by Moses in the wilderness. They came to Moses and he struck the rock and water gushed out to quench the thirst of the nation (Exodus 17:6). Again, we see the fulfillment of that shadow in the substance of Jesus, the living water for thirsty souls.

⁴² Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?"

42 Like the rabbi that Herod asked about the birthplace of Messiah (Matthew 2:4-5), the crowd knew that Micah predicted He would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). I have wondered why Jesus did not just tell them that He was indeed born there. They assumed that since He was from Nazareth, He must have been born there.

⁴³ So there was a division among the people over him. ⁴⁴ Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.

43, 44 Jesus always divides (Acts 14:4). Some of you are experiencing that. He predicted it would be that way (Matthew 10:34-36). Some will take Him at His word. Some will accuse Him of blasphemy. Some will think He was just a great teacher. He still brings division today. He has divided our society today. On the other hand, you have secularists and so called spiritual people who refuse to believe there are absolutes and instead believe that truth is in the eye of the beholder. They consider Judeo-Christian ethics to be repressive. On the other you have those who believe in Jesus as *the* way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). As we have seen, His claims were so radical that they force people to decide.

⁴⁵ The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why did you not bring him?" ⁴⁶ The officers answered, "No one ever spoke like this man!"

45, 46 The temple guards were priests who were trained in the Scriptures but also trained to fight to protect the temple property. The teaching of Jesus struck a chord with them. They were unwilling or afraid to arrest a man who spoke as Jesus did.

47 The Pharisees answered them, "Have you also been deceived? 48 Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him? 49 But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed."

47-49a The Pharisees were the ones who studied the Law in all its detail. They were convinced that the Sadducee priests were deceived because they did not know the Law like they did.

49b The Pharisees are using an Old Testament term (2 Kings 11:18), the people of the land (translated "mob" in NIV). It meant the common people of Israel. Over time, the meaning changed to the mixture of people like the Samaritans who lived on the land of Israel. Later still, it meant the ignorant masses who did not study Scripture. This is how they applied it. Yet, it seems that the people understood the Law better than the Pharisees.

50 Nicodemus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them, 51 "Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?"

50, 51 The Pharisees are rebuking the people for not knowing the Law, and one of their own asks why they are not basing a decision about Him based on a hearing of what He has to say for Himself according to the Law? John is pointing out the irony of the situation. Hearing a person out before judging them was a universally accepted right. Even the Romans would not try Paul without hearing his defense. It is ironic that the Pharisees are rebuking the crowd as ignorant while they ignore this most basic right.

52 They replied, "Are you from Galilee too? Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee."

52 First, they insult him with the suggestion that he likes Jesus because he is also from Galilee. The Judean leaders held some animosity toward the Galileans. The Galileans were very studious, but they were also hotheaded. They were usually the ones who started the uprisings that ended in the leadership in Judea in getting into trouble. Prophets did come from the Galilean region. Jonah (2 Kings 14:25), Nahum (Nahum 1:1), and possibly Elijah (1 Kings 17:1) had come from that area. Again, the answer was ironic, since they are claiming the people who accept Jesus are the ignorant ones. They were trying to insult Nicodemus and shut him up, because they did not want to go in the obvious direction of truth.

We get the same mindless rhetoric today from secular elites. "The stupid Christians do not understand that morals are relative, and that we are the product of blind chance, and Jesus was a good teacher but not God." That kind of illogical diatribe is what is pushing our country ever further from the blessings of God. Our nation is hanging in the balances. Minds are made up, and they do not want to be confused by the facts. Only God can stir hearts and bring us to repentance and revival.

Questions:

How is Jesus like Moses?

What three roles does Jesus fulfill?

Why does New Age accept every religious idea except the Biblical Jesus?

Why wouldn't the temple guards arrest Jesus?

Why didn't the Pharisees want to hear Jesus defend Himself?