

# The Controversial Jesus

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John 7:1

There have been many controversial figures throughout history: Mohammed; Henry VIII; Martin Luther; Darwin; Karl Marx; Adolph Hitler; Richard Nixon, Bill Clinton; and Barak Obama, to name a few.

But, there has never been a more controversial person than the Lord Jesus Christ. Controversy surrounded every aspect of His life: Controversial in His birth... teachings... miracles... death... resurrection.

- More books written about Him than any other person.
- He is the favorite subject of artists and song writers.
- No person has been quoted more often than Jesus.
- There has never been another person in history who has been hated by more people or loved by more people. More blood has been shed over His doctrine than the teachings of any other man.
- Saying His name will either incite or inflame a conversation—or shut it down. No name has been profaned more than the name Jesus.
- Even our calendars are dated by His birth.

➡ Hear what some have said about Jesus (both skeptics and believers):

- H.G. Wells— I am an historian, I am not a believer, but I must confess as a historian that this penniless preacher from Nazareth is irrevocably the very center of history. Jesus Christ is easily the most dominant figure in all history.
- Historian Kenneth Scott Latourette— As the centuries pass, the evidence is accumulating that, measured by His effect on history, Jesus is the most influential life ever lived on this planet.
- J. Sidlow Baxter— Fundamentally, our Lord's message was Himself. He did not come merely to preach a Gospel; He Himself is that Gospel. He did not come merely to give bread; He said, "*I am the bread.*" He did not come merely to shed light; He said, "*I am the light.*" He did not come merely to show the door; He said, "*I am the door.*" He did not come merely to point the way; He said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life.*"
- Albert Einstein—As a child I received instruction both in the Bible and in the Talmud. I am a Jew, but I am enthralled by the luminous figure of the Nazarene... No one can read the Gospels without feeling the

actual presence of Jesus. His personality pulsates in every word. No myth is filled with such life.

- C.S. Lewis—A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God; or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God.

When we come to John 7 we are entering the final months in the life of Christ's earthly ministry. Things are gradually coming to a head.

John 7 is all about the controversy surrounding the identity of Jesus. Most of the chapter occurs in connection with the feast of Tabernacles (vs. 2, 10, 14, 37). It lasted 7 days (Lev. 23:34-44; Dt. 16:13-16; 2 Chron. 8:13). This took place about 7 months before the crucifixion.

➡ Questions asked concerning Christ in John 7:

- v. 15—*How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?*
- vs. 19-20—*Why go ye about to kill me?...Who goest about to kill thee?*
- v. 25—*Is not this he, whom they seek to kill?*
- v. 26—*Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?*
- vs. 35-36—*Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? Will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?*
- v. 41—*Shall Christ come out of Galilee? (cf. v. 42).*
- v. 45—*Why have ye not brought him?*
- v. 48—*Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?*

## I. **The DISBELIEF of His brethren** (vs. 1-9).

A. The worldly **ADVICE** of Jesus' brethren (vs. 3-5).

➡ They thought Jesus needed a "Madison Avenue" approach to gain popularity and make a name for Himself. It's as if Jesus' brothers challenged Him, "Go put on a show for the people in Jerusalem. Show them what you can do." Typical of counsel from unbelievers.

B. The wise **ANSWER** of Jesus to His brethren (vs. 6-8).

1. They did not understand—God’s ways are not our ways. It was not time for Christ to die. He was operating according to God’s schedule, not man’s.
2. How we need to heed God’s will, even when it is opposed to the advice of our family.
3. If Jesus is in your family, there will be controversy.

## II. **The DIVISION amongst the people** (vs. 10-18, 40-43).

➤ There is a definite division among the people concerning who Jesus is (vs 31, 43 cf. 9:16; 10:19). When it comes to Jesus Christ, there will always be a division (Luke 12:51; Mt. 25:31-32).

### A. Division over His **CHARACTER** (vs. 11-12).

1. If He is a good man, he is not a deceiver. If He is a deceiver, He is not a good man.
2. No one had the courage to stand up for Christ (v.13). This is our problem today. *“The fear of man bringeth a snare.”*

### B. Division over His **CREDENTIALS** (vs. 14-18).

1. When the Jewish leaders heard Jesus teach, they wondered where He learned this doctrine. His doctrine came from God.
2. The real issue is not credentials—It is a matter of compliance. A willing heart to do God’s will is the key to spiritual understanding (v.17). Assurance is directly linked to application. You’ll never know the truth if your are not willing to obey it.

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Dr. G. Campbell Morgan: "When men are wholly, completely consecrated to the will of God and want to do that above everything else, then they find out that Christ's teaching is divine, that it is the teaching of God."

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### C. Division over His **CITIZENSHIP** (vs. 40-43).

## III. **The DEBATE with the Jews** (vs. 19-24).

- A. Their **HATRED** (v. 19—*“Why go ye about to kill me?”*). Because they hated His guts (v. 7).

1. It only took “*one work*” for His enemies to find reason to accuse Him (v. 21)—Jesus healing a man on the Sabbath day (John 5:1-16).
  2. This “*one work*” was about a year ago, and they still haven’t got over it. They have been “gunning” for Jesus ever since.
- B. Their **HYPOCRISY**— The Jews preached observing the Law, but did not keep it themselves. It didn’t matter to them that the Law said, “*Thou shalt not kill.*”
1. They accused Jesus of breaking the Law making a man whole on the Sabbath. Therefore they sought to kill Him.
  2. The Jews performed circumcisions on the Sabbath. They laid aside the “fourth commandment” to observe part of the ceremonial law of circumcision. By doing this they were showing that a work of righteousness might be done on the Sabbath. Yet, they condemned Jesus for following the same principle by healing on the Sabbath. This was hypocrisy.
- C. Their **HASTE** (v. 24)— They were quick to judge Christ’s healing, but they missed the point—Any work of righteousness is allowable on the Sabbath. When you rush to judgment, your judgment will be flawed only seeing how things appear (1 Sam. 16:7).

#### **IV. The DECISION by some** (vs. 25-31).

- A. The **CONCLUSION** of some (vs. 25-27).
- B. The **CRY** of the Lord (vs. 28-30).
- C. The **CONVINCING** of many (v. 31).

#### **V. The DISSENSION of the rulers** (vs. 32-53).

- A. Their **PROPOSAL** to arrest Christ (vs. 32). Unable to argue with Jesus, the Jewish leaders resorted to violence against Him.
- B. Their **PROBLEM** in apprehending Christ (vs. 33-46).
  1. Christ would soon depart the earth and go to the Father in heaven. They would seek Him, but not find Him (cf. 8:21-24).

2. Instead of arresting Jesus, the officers were arrested by Christ's words (v. 46 cf. v. 26). "This Jesus is more than a man! No mere man speaks as He does!"
- C. Their **PREJUDICE** against Christ (vs. 47-52).
1. vs. 47-48—Prejudice says, "Have you been duped? Nobody with any sense would believe on Christ! Anyone who doesn't know the law like us are cursed."
    - ➔ The truth is, knowing the law will never get anyone out from under the curse of the law. Only knowing Jesus can free a person from the curse of the law!
  2. Nicodemus, who was one of the rulers, addressed their prejudice when he confronted them with THE LAW— "*Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?*" They condemned Jesus without a hearing.
    - ➔ They only ridiculed Nicodemus and exposed their prejudice against anyone from an area they did not approve (Galilee). [They also exposed their ignorance because the prophet Jonah also came from Galilee (2 Kings 14:25).]

**SUMMATION** (vs. 16-17): There is no excuse to be confused about who Christ is. Verse 17 silences anyone who claims to be an "honest skeptic."

vs. 53–8:1 — "*And every man went unto his own house... Jesus went unto the mount of Olives*" In the end, there will always be division concerning Christ—Some will believe and follow Christ to "higher ground." Others will depart and go "*unto his own house.*" There is no middle ground with Jesus. Jesus said, "*He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad*" (Mt. 12:30).

Unfortunately, Christians often pay their respects to Christ on Sunday then go to their "*own house*" and the rest of the week "*seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's*" (Phil. 2:21). They pursue our own interests, live their own lives, without setting foot on "higher ground" with Christ.