

JESUS OFFERS SALVATION TO THE JEWS

JOHN 7:37-52

I would like to tell you a story about an atheist who was driven from a very early age to become a success in life. In fact, I believe I could even say that he not only wanted to be successful, but he also wanted to be more successful than anyone else. He felt that if he could not become the best at everything he did people would have no respect for him. As a young man he was blessed with natural athletic ability, which helped him to achieve a certain popularity in both high school and college. This was very satisfying to him in many ways because it made him feel like people truly respected him and valued his abilities. But inside he felt very much alone and worried constantly about keeping up his image so that he would not lose the popularity and respect he had attained. He felt that if people knew what he was really like, they probably would not want anything to do with him. He was very much like an actor on a stage wearing a mask of confidence. But when he was alone with himself he felt very uncomfortable about the emptiness he felt inside. He searched and searched to find whatever it was that could fill that emptiness and satisfy these inner longings, but he could not find it.

After he graduated from college and entered the work force, he thought the answer would come if he became very successful in business, which would lead to wealth so that he could have whatever he wanted and truly be happy. He plunged into the corporate world and made rapid advancements. Although he had still not found what he was looking for after this initial success, he was convinced that more success and more money would eventually get him to where he wanted to be. It never happened. In fact the more money he made and the more responsibility he was given as he became ever more successful, the more miserable he became.

He had no interest in God. In fact he thought Christians were little more than weaklings who needed the crutch of religion in order to exist. He felt they had no backbone and he actually found them to be rather pathetic. If anyone ever brought up the subject of God, he was the first one to tell them that God was a fantasy made up by people that did not have the strength or courage to take care of themselves. In fact on one occasion he made the statement: *"If there's a God, why isn't He man enough to come down here right now and show Himself to me?"*

Then came the day when he made his move to really grab hold of the gold ring, a business venture that would set him up financially for life. He was confident in his ability

to pull it off and charged full steam ahead. Things went very well initially, but then there was a turning point. A few miscalculations and the whole structure came tumbling down around him. He lost everything: house, cars, summer home, boat, a number of other material possessions, and of course all of his savings. He was devastated and broke. He began isolating himself from the people in his life and became increasingly depressed.

Why do I tell you this story? Because I believe to one degree or another it represents the story of most people who reject the truth of God as presented in the Bible, or refuse even to ever open a Bible. As children we grow up in an environment that is primarily influenced by parents or guardians who create a foundation for our values. Some of us are given a solid foundation in which we are nurtured by parents who know and serve Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. That foundation provides the strength on which to build a similar life in which we may find peace, joy, and contentment even in times of trial. They also have the assurance that eventually they will be with Christ in Heaven for eternity. Such people are emotionally and spiritually mature and capable of contributing in a positive way to their community.

Then we have those who are raised by parents or guardians who do not have a relationship with Christ. Their early years may have been spent in a home where they were taught that god can be whoever their value system defines him to be, and that all religions are basically the same. They may have been taught that the Bible is a book just like any other book written by people.

Some of you may have been raised in homes where there was constant arguing. Perhaps one parent was even physically abusive toward the other parent or even toward you as a child. There may have been sexual abuse of some kind in the home. Possibly there was verbal abuse, such as swearing at you or telling you that you are no good or will not amount to anything. Such children grow up with a very bad self-image as well as various emotional disorders, some of which are severe.

As children enter school, some are in wholesome environments and develop good, satisfying relationships with fellow students and close friends. These are usually the same children who come from emotionally secure homes. Those that come from emotionally disturbed homes have a tendency to connect with friends who have similar backgrounds. Some are looking to just have fun and seek to find it in television, movies, and video games. As they get older they may get involved in much more destructive behaviors, which they have been led to believe, by the example of their parents, friends, and the general culture, to be fun. Such things as drugs, alcohol, sex, and so many other life-destroying lifestyles.

I believe that is the way our culture functions today and I do not believe it was much different back at the time Jesus attended the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem as told in this chapter of John which we are studying.

People throughout history who may have come from such dysfunctional homes and dysfunctional relationships have in some way experienced hurt. Hurt is a very difficult

emotion to deal with. Even a little bit of hurt in our lives can affect how we relate to other people and how we relate to God. More severe hurt often results in anger or rage, seriously limiting one's ability to establish and maintain healthy relationships and find any satisfaction with their lives. Such people will quite often not be able to trust others and that inability to trust can carry over into how they feel about a God who could allow such things to happen to them.

Now I suggest to you that the people who were attending this feast in John chapter 7 represented all these various backgrounds. So when Jesus began to teach the people about the love of God and the promise of eternal life through faith in Him, people of various backgrounds would respond to Jesus' teaching in various ways. Some, like our atheist friend, because of their backgrounds would not accept Jesus' teaching because they simply did not want to hear anything that would interfere with their self-serving desires. If they were herdsmen, shepherds, shopkeepers, land barons, religious leaders, or stonecutters, because of their backgrounds and the goals they established early on in life, they may have been focused on those things they wanted and looked for a god who would tolerate what they wanted out of life, not a god who set the standards and expected them to be obeyed.

Others of course, who knew their Old Testament and could easily relate to a loving God, might well accept Jesus' teaching. There would be of course, both then and now, a small number in each background that would respond exactly the opposite for whatever reason. But on the whole what I have described would be fairly typical. And no matter how well Jesus countered all their arguments, if they wanted what they wanted and did not want to change, they would not change their minds no matter what Jesus said or did. Neither wisdom nor miracles will be enough to change the mind of a committed fool, and Jesus will not force any one to believe Him. It has to be a desire that comes from the heart of a person who wants to be changed and wants that change to come as a result of a relationship with Jesus.

Now for all of those who rejected this message at the feast, is their opportunity for salvation gone forever? No, because what Jesus has done here is plant the seed of wisdom in all those who heard Him. As they leave the feast and go on with their lives, situations may arise or other people may come along and water that seed and it may begin to grow.

That is what happened to our atheist. After losing everything and even considering suicide, he got down on his knees one night in complete despair and he called out to God for help. Here was a man who claimed he did not believe in God, but inside of Him there was that awareness that God puts in each of us that He exists. This atheist prayed, "*God, if you're there, I need you, please help me!*" That prayer was the beginning of a new life. You see God is waiting for you to ask Him into your life. He will not begin to change your life and deal with your pain until you ask Him in.

It took a couple of years for our atheist to come to faith in Christ, but His salvation began to take shape the day after his prayer. God took him to a church where he began to learn God's Word from the Bible and establish relationships with solid believers. Soon He was

reading his Bible two to three hours per day. He was getting involved in various service ministries and he began to understand the importance of prayer in his relationship with Christ.

I would ask that you keep these things in mind as we now turn to John chapter seven, verse 37. By the way, if you are wondering what happened to the atheist in our story, he is the one writing these words that you are now reading.

Let's read today's passage from John 7.

John 7:37-52 NAS

³⁷ *Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.*

³⁸ *"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.' "*

³⁹ *But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

⁴⁰ *Some of the people therefore, when they heard these words, were saying, "This certainly is the Prophet."*

⁴¹ *Others were saying, "This is the Christ." Still others were saying, "Surely the Christ is not going to come from Galilee, is He?"*

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

⁴³ *So a division occurred in the crowd because of Him.*

⁴⁴ *Some of them wanted to seize Him, but no one laid hands on Him.*

⁴⁵ *The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them, "Why did you not bring Him?"*

⁴⁶ *The officers answered, "Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks."*

⁴⁷ *The Pharisees then answered them, "You have not also been led astray, have you?"*

⁴⁸ *"No one of the rulers or Pharisees has believed in Him, has he?"*

⁴⁹ *"But this crowd which does not know the Law is accursed."*

⁵⁰ *Nicodemus (he who came to Him before, being one of them) said to them,*

⁵¹ *"Our Law does not judge a man unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?"*

⁵² *They answered him, "You are not also from Galilee, are you? Search, and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee."*

Now let us go back and walk through this Scripture, verse by verse.

John 7:37 NAS:

*37 Now on the **last day**, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.*

In the Old Testament water is associated with ritual cleansing from defilement and with blessing. Isaiah 44:3 speaks of a future outpouring of God's Spirit as pouring "water on the thirsty land." This is surely the image Jesus presents here as He promises to pour out the Holy Spirit as the source of "living water (e.g., running, fresh water; a spring or stream)" for those who believe in Him.¹

In addition the Feast of Tabernacles reproduced a certain ritual on each day of the feast that involved a procession from the temple to the Gihon Spring. A priest would fill a gold pitcher with water while the choir sang Isaiah 12:3:²

*Therefore you will joyously draw water from the springs of salvation.
(NAS)*

Then they returned to the altar and poured out the water. This ritual was intended to be a reminder of the water that God provided from the rock during the time they were wandering in the wilderness.³ We read about this in:

Numbers 20:8-11 NAS:

8 "Take the rod; and you and your brother Aaron assemble the congregation and speak to the rock before their eyes, that it may yield its water. You shall thus bring forth water for them out of the rock and let the congregation and their beasts drink."

9 So Moses took the rod from before the LORD, just as He had commanded him;

10 and Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly before the rock. And he said to them, "Listen now, you rebels; shall we bring forth water for you out of this rock?"

11 Then Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came forth abundantly, and the congregation and their beasts drank.

We also read in Psalm 78:15-16 NAS:

*15 He split the rocks in the wilderness
And gave them abundant drink like the ocean depths.*

*16 He brought forth streams also from the rock
And caused waters to run down like rivers.*

As this ritual was being played out, Jesus cries out in a loud voice to emphasize the importance of what He is saying. His offer, "Come to Me and drink," was an offer of

¹ Richards, Larry: The Bible Reader's Companion. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1991, S. 684

² Walvoord, John F.; Zuck, Roy B.; Dallas Theological Seminary: *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985, S. 2:301.

³ Ibid.

salvation. Do you remember what Jesus said back in John 4:14? ⁴

“Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.” (NAS)

John 7:37 is indeed the focal point of John chapter 7. On the very last day of the feast Jesus raises His voice making a final plea before the crowds head home. He shouts out to them one final appeal to be reconciled to God, to quench the thirst of their parched souls. “*Thirst*” in the Bible is representative of an eagerness to satisfy one’s desires. Thirst can result in a very uncomfortable feeling, but Jesus can remove it. There are many different types of thirst that can haunt us. We can have a thirst for power, money, pleasure, knowledge, and many other things, but Jesus can remove it. Through no effort of our own, Jesus can satisfy all of our desires when we confess our sins and invite Him to be our Savior and guide our lives. Even the sinful thirsts can be removed when we come to Jesus and ask for His care. Remember two of the verses we have already looked at:

Jeremiah 29:13 NAS:

“And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.”

James 4:8 NAS:

“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.”

Draw near to God and He will allow you to drink deeply from the well of His loving healing power. There is nothing that God cannot do; there is no situation that God cannot handle; and there is no way He will ever break His promises. You simply have to trust and pray with faith that God will answer, and He will, in His time. Any sinner, no matter how vile their sins or how numerous, if they seek Christ, He will relieve their thirst and give them a new life.

Jesus’ offer of salvation brings peace to a troubled and guilty conscience, wisdom and peace to a troubled and tormented mind, peace and love to a breaking heart, and the assurance of salvation and eternal life to a worried spirit.

John 7:38 NAS:

38 “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’”

Whenever we see the reference to “**Living water**” in the Bible it refers to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This verse could be paraphrased to say:

⁴ Ibid.

“Anyone who turns to Me, confesses their sin, is truly repentant for their sin, believes that my death paid for their sins, and asks forgiveness based on their faith in Me will be forgiven and given the gift of eternal life in Heaven. As a confirmation of that personal relationship with Me the Holy Spirit will come to live within them and provide them with all the power of God to overcome sin when they call upon Him for help. In addition He will pour out blessings upon them even when they are going through difficult times. Any such believer who possesses the Holy Spirit need not fear anything the world can do to them because My hand of protection will be over them always.”

John 7:39 NAS:

39 But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Although the Holy Spirit had not been given to such believers, His coming was expected very soon, as soon as Jesus death, resurrection, and ascension occurred.

John 7:40-42 NAS:

40 Some of the people therefore, when they heard these words, were saying, "This certainly is the Prophet."

41 Others were saying, "This is the Christ." Still others were saying, "Surely the Christ is not going to come from Galilee, is He?"

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

The crowd was obviously favorably impressed with Jesus' teaching. Some of them were saying Christ must be the Prophet the Old Testament predicted. Others were saying, "*He is the Christ, the Savior.*" But many had doubts because they did not have all the facts. They thought that Jesus came from Galilee because He grew up in the town of Nazareth. Since we have just celebrated Christmas and have sung the carol, "*O Little Town of Bethlehem,*" don't you just feel like saying to these people, "*But He did come from Bethlehem! Check your facts. Dig deeper*"? The truth is that Jesus was born in Bethlehem as the prophecies had predicted (Micah 5:2). Jesus' credentials satisfied all the prophecies of His coming which were foretold in the Old Testament. [The insert in your bulletin gives you a list so that you can check them out for yourself.] Here is a list of them if you would like to validate that claim:

1. As the Son of God. Psalm 2:7.
 - a. Fulfilled. Luke 1:32,35.
2. As the seed of the woman. Genesis 3:15.
 - a. Fulfilled. Galatians 4:4.
3. As the seed of Abraham. Genesis 17:7; 22:18.
 - a. Fulfilled. Galatians 3:16.
4. As the seed of Isaac. Genesis 21:12.
 - a. Fulfilled. Hebrews 11:17-19.
5. As the seed of David. Psalm 132:11; Jeremiah 23:5.
 - a. Fulfilled. Acts 13:23; Romans 1:3.

6. His coming at a set time. Genesis 49:10; Daniel 9:24,25.
 - a. Fulfilled. Luke 2:1.
7. His being born a virgin. Isaiah 7:14.
 - a. Fulfilled. Matthew 1:22,23; Luke 2:7.
8. His being called Immanuel. Isaiah 7:14.
 - a. Fulfilled. Matthew 1:22,23.
9. His being born in Bethlehem of Judea. Micah 5:2.
 - a. Fulfilled. Matthew 2:1; Luke 2:4-6.
10. Great persons coming to adore him. Psalm 72:10.
 - a. Fulfilled. Matthew 2:1-11.
11. The slaying of the children of Bethlehem. Jeremiah 31:15.
 - a. Fulfilled. Matthew 2:16-18.
12. His being called out of Egypt. Hosea 11:1.
 - a. Fulfilled. Matthew 2:15.
13. His being preceded by John the Baptist. Isaiah 40:3; Malachi 3:1.
 - a. Fulfilled. Mt 3:1,3; Lu 1:17.
14. His being anointed with the Spirit. Psalm 45:7; Isaiah 11:2; 61:1.
 - a. Fulfilled. Matthew 3:16; John 3:34; Acts 10:38.
15. His being a Prophet like to Moses. Deuteronomy 18:15-18.
 - a. Fulfilled. Acts 3:20-22.
16. His being a Priest after the order of Melchizedek. Psalm 110:4.
 - a. Fulfilled. Hebrews 5:5,6.
17. His entering on his public ministry. Isaiah 61:1,2.
 - a. Fulfilled. Luke 4:16-21,43.
18. His ministry commencing in Galilee. Isaiah 9:1,2.
 - a. Fulfilled. Matthew 4:12-16,23.
19. His entering publicly into Jerusalem. Zechariah 9:9.
 - a. Fulfilled. Matthew 21:1-5.
20. His coming into the temple. Haggai 2:7,9; Malachi 3:1.
 - a. Fulfilled. Matthew 21:12; Luke 2:27-32; John 2:13-16.
21. His poverty. Isaiah 53:2.
 - a. Fulfilled. Matthew 6:3; Luke 9:58.
22. His meekness and want of ostentatious. Isaiah 42:2.
 - a. Fulfilled. Matthew 12:15,16,19.
23. His tenderness and compassion. Isaiah 40:11; 42:3.
 - a. Fulfilled. Matthew 12:15,20; Hebrews 4:15.
24. His being without guile. Isaiah 53:9.
 - a. Fulfilled. 1 Peter 2:22.
25. His zeal. Psalm 69:9.
 - a. Fulfilled. John 2:17.
26. His preaching by parables. Psalm 78:2.
 - a. Fulfilled. Matthew 13:34,35.
27. His working miracles. Isaiah 35:5,6.
 - a. Fulfilled. Matthew 11:4-6; John 11:47.
28. His bearing reproach. Psalms 22:6; 69:7,9,20.
 - a. Fulfilled. Romans 15:3.

29. His being rejected by his brethren. Psalm 69:8; Isaiah 63:3.
 - a. Fulfilled. John 1:11; 7:3.
30. His being a stone of stumbling to the Jews. Isaiah 8:14.
 - a. Fulfilled. Romans 9:32; 1 Peter 2:8.
31. His being hated by the Jews. Psalm 69:4; Isaiah 49:7.
 - a. Fulfilled. John 15:24, 25.
32. His being rejected by the Jewish rulers. Psalm 118:22.
 - a. Fulfilled. Matthew 21:42; John 7:48.
33. That the Jews and Gentiles should combine against Him. Psalm 2:1,2.
 - a. Fulfilled. Luke 23:12; Acts 4:27.
34. His being betrayed by a friend. Psalms 41:9; 55:12-14.
 - a. Fulfilled. John 13:18,21.
35. His disciples forsaking him. Zechariah 13:7.
 - a. Fulfilled. Matthew 26:31,56.
36. His being sold for thirty pieces of silver. Zechariah 11:12.
 - a. Fulfilled. Matthew 26:15.
37. His price being given for the potter's field. Zechariah 11:13.
 - a. Fulfilled. Matthew 27:7.
38. The intensity of his sufferings. Psalm 22:14,15.
 - a. Fulfilled. Luke 22:42, 44.
39. His sufferings being for others. Isaiah 53:4-6,12; Daniel 9:26.
 - a. Fulfilled. Matthew 20:28.
40. His patience and silence under suffering. Isaiah 53:7.
 - a. Fulfilled. Matthew 26:63; 27:12-14.
41. His being smitten on the cheek. Micah 5:1.
 - a. Fulfilled. Matthew 27:30.
42. His visage being marred. Isaiah 52:14; 53:3.
 - a. Fulfilled. John 19:5.
43. His being spit on and scourged. Isaiah 50:6.
 - a. Fulfilled. Matthew 14:65; John 19:1.
44. His hands and feet being nailed to the cross. Psalm 22:16.
 - a. Fulfilled. John 19:18; 20:25.
45. His being forsaken by God. Psalm 22:1.
 - a. Fulfilled. Matthew 27:46.
46. His being mocked. Psalm 22:7,8.
 - a. Fulfilled. Matthew 27:39-44.
47. Gall and vinegar being given him to drink. Psalm 69:21.
 - a. Fulfilled. Matthew 27:34.
48. His garments being parted, and lots cast for his vesture. Psalm 22:18.
 - a. Fulfilled. Matthew 27:35.
49. His being numbered with the transgressors. Isaiah 53:12.
 - a. Fulfilled. Matthew 15:28.
50. His intercession for His murderers. Isaiah 53:12.
 - a. Fulfilled. Luke 23:34.
51. His Death. Isaiah 53:12.
 - a. Fulfilled. Matthew 27:50.

52. That a bone of him should not be broken. Exodus 12:46; Psalm 34:20.
 - a. Fulfilled. John 19:33, 36.
53. His being pierced. Zechariah 12:10.
 - a. Fulfilled. John 19:34, 37.
54. His being buried with the rich. Isaiah 53:9.
 - a. Fulfilled. Matthew 27:57-60.
55. His flesh not seeing corruption. Psalm 16:10.
 - a. Fulfilled. Acts 2:31.
56. His resurrection. Psalm 16:10; Isaiah 26:19.
 - a. Fulfilled. Luke 24:6, 31, 34.
57. His ascension. Psalm 68:18.
 - a. Fulfilled. Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9.
58. His sitting on the right hand of God. Psalm 110:1.
 - a. Fulfilled. Hebrews 1:3.
59. His exercising the priestly office in heaven. Zechariah 6:13.
 - a. Fulfilled. Romans 8:34.
60. His being the chief cornerstone of the Church. Isaiah 28:16.
 - a. Fulfilled. 1 Peter 2:6,7.
61. His being King in Zion. Psalm 2:6.
 - a. Fulfilled. Luke 1:32; John 18:33-37.
62. The conversion of the Gentiles to him. Isaiah 11:10; 42:1.
 - a. Fulfilled. Matthew 1:17, 21; John 10:16; Acts 10:45, 47.
63. His righteous government. Psalm 45:6, 7.
 - a. Fulfilled. John 5:30; Revelation 19:11.
64. His universal dominion. Psalm 72:8; Daniel 7:14.
 - a. Fulfilled. Philippians 2:9,11.
65. The perpetuity of his kingdom. Isaiah 9:7; Daniel 7:14.
 - a. Fulfilled. Luke 1:32, 33.⁵

John 7:43-44 NAS:

43 So a division occurred in the crowd because of Him.

44 Some of them wanted to seize Him, but no one laid hands on Him.

You may remember that we covered this phenomenon a little earlier. Whenever crowds or officials or political leaders or the Jewish religious leaders tried to arrest or seize Jesus, they simply could not do it because God protected Him and would continue to protect Him until just the right time that He had established for Jesus to be crucified.

Because many of the people held a favorable opinion of Jesus even though they did not personally commit themselves to His teaching, these members of the Sanhedrin needed to be careful how they handled this situation because the divided feelings of the crowd could have erupted into a riot.

⁵ Torrey, R.A.: *The New Topical Text Book: A Scriptural Text Book for the Use of Ministers, Teachers, and All Christian Workers*. Oak Harbor, WA: 1995, c1897.

John 7:45-48 NAS:

45 *The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them, "Why did you not bring Him?"*

46 *The officers answered, "Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks."*

47 *The Pharisees then answered them, "You have not also been led astray, have you?"*

48 *"No one of the rulers or Pharisees has believed in Him, has he?"*

The chief priests and Pharisees wanted to know why the Temple police had not arrested Jesus. They could only reply that they, like the crowd, were hypnotized by the power and authority in Jesus' demeanor, and could not bring themselves to arrest Him. The Jewish leaders replied, "Have you too believed this man's lies? He has made fools of you. You don't see any of your leaders believing these outrageous claims this impostor is making, do you?" It seems quite likely that if you combine the popularity of Jesus with the people and that fact that He was so impressive that the Temple police would not arrest Him, the members of the Sanhedrin must have felt more than just a twinge of jealousy over Jesus' influence.

John 7:49 NAS:

49 *"But this crowd which does not know the Law is accursed."*

The Pharisees tried to say that Jesus' popularity among the people was the result of their ignorance in recognizing Jesus as a deceiver. The common people, according to the Pharisees, did not know the Law and because they did not know it, they could not obey it, and since they did not obey it, they were under God's curse according to Deuteronomy 28:15 which says: "But it shall come about, if you do not obey the LORD your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you." The reality here of course is that these religious leaders are the ones who would come under God's wrath for rejecting the Savior that He sent them.

John 7:50-53 NAS:

50 *Nicodemus (he who came to Him before, being one of them) said* to them,*

51 *"Our Law does not judge a man unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?"*

52 *They answered him, "You are not also from Galilee, are you? Search, and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee."*

53 *[Everyone went to his home.*

Remember Nicodemus? We met him back in chapter three. He was a Pharisee who came to Jesus by night to talk with Him in secret. Nicodemus had accepted Jesus' message as true. So here we see Nicodemus speaking up on Jesus' behalf to the other Pharisees. He was saying that Jesus should be given an opportunity to be heard by the Sanhedrin, which

of course was the highest governing board among the Jews. The Mosaic Law (Deuteronomy 1:16-17) and Rabbinic law stipulated that a person accused of a crime should get a fair hearing. Nicodemus calls them on a basic matter of legal procedure accepted by Moses and all Jewish interpreters.⁶

Nicodemus was a fair-minded man who did not want the Sanhedrin to make a false or hasty judgment. He had personally spoken with Jesus and knew He was from God.⁷ They answered Him sarcastically by suggesting that only another fool from Galilee could suggest that this Jesus from Galilee was the real thing. They told him to go and do some research of their historic documents so that He would see clearly that the Messiah would not come from Galilee. Perhaps they themselves should have gone and done some research. If they had, they would have discovered that Jesus was not born in Galilee but in Bethlehem in Judea.

So once again we see that those who hold positions of authority as well as many of the common people reject Jesus because they do not want anyone interfering with their misguided feelings of what is best for them and because they don't have all the facts. They want their own way because that is the way they think they will be somebody, and they are willing to sacrifice eternity in Heaven for a few short years of having their own way here on earth. It is tragic but that is what can happen to people who reject God to follow what they consider to be right for them. I hope no one here will make that same mistake.

⁶ Keener, Craig S.; InterVarsity Press: *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*. Downers Grove, Ill. : InterVarsity Press, 1993, S. Jn 7:50.

⁷ Walvoord, John F.; Zuck, Roy B.; Dallas Theological Seminary: *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985, S. 2:302.