

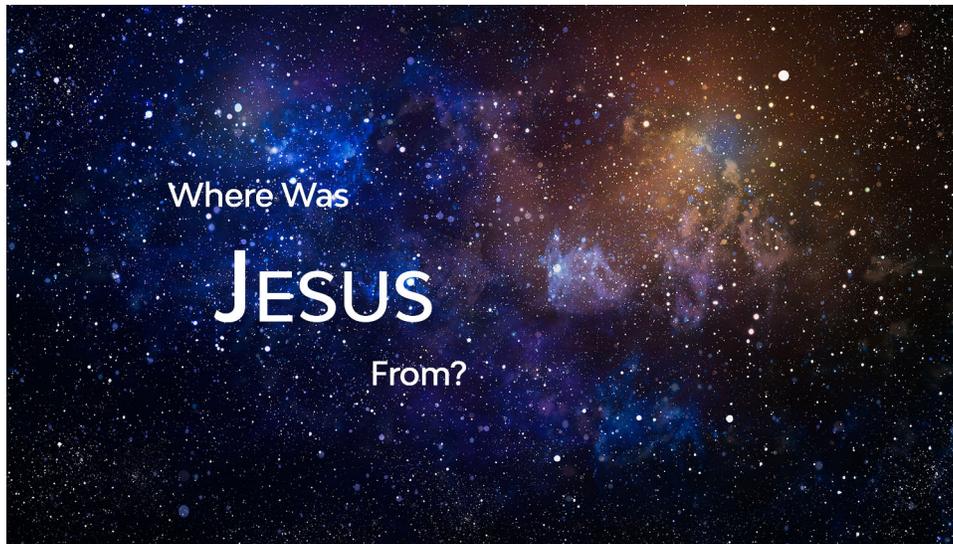
Where Did Jesus Come From?

When God started this church some years ago, we had a family in our church who reached out to people in need, especially to the poor. They stored water bottles and some food in their cars. When they found someone in need, they offered some help. Typically, the individual was on the street. They would offer the person a water bottle or some food as opposed to handing them money. The husband was extremely helpful in the church. When we first started the church, we were meeting on the campus of a Christian school. At first, I was the only person who would arrive early to do the setup for the service. He was the only person who was willing to come early to help me. He was faithful every Sunday morning to assist me and I began to really depend on him. I did not know a whole lot about him at first. As time went by, I began to know more about him. Then one day he announced he was going to be leaving our church. I was really surprised.

So I asked him, "Why are you thinking about leaving the church?" He said, "I want to visit other churches to see what they believe about Jesus." I asked, "What do you believe about Jesus?" He replied, "I do not believe He is God. I have been really surprised to learn that you believe and teach Jesus is God." So he wanted to visit other evangelical churches to discover what they believed about Jesus. His problem was he was confused as to who Jesus was. So he and his family left the church.

JEWES SEEK JESUS AT THE FEAST OF BOOTHS. He is not unique. There always are people who are not really sure who

Jesus is. When Jesus walked the earth, there were men and women who also did not know who He was. They did not know from where He had come. So, I want you to see and experience the reactions of people to Jesus when He walked this earth. In John 7 we encounter many people who were debating the identity of Jesus. Verse two tells us the people had gathered to celebrate the Jewish Feast of Booths. In the Jewish calendar, that would correspond roughly to our September-October time frame. Usually this feast occurs in October. In John 7, the year would be 32 A.D. This would be the last great feast of the year for the Jews. In Jesus' day there would have been many people who had come to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast. The city would have been crowded



with visitors from Judea, Samaria, Galilee, the Middle East, and from the Mediterranean area. For us, the Feast of Booths symbolizes or looked forward to the millennial kingdom. Thus the Feast of Booths

is very important from our perspective as Christians. It is also important from the perspective of Jews, but from a little different viewpoint.

John 7:11 tells us the Jewish leaders of the day were seeking Jesus.

[So the Jews ... John 7:11 \(NASB\)](#)

"The Jews" is a technical term that refers to the Jewish leaders of the time. So the Jewish leaders were seeking Him at the feast and were asking, "Where is He?" They were seeking

Him because they wanted to kill Him. In the first verse of the chapter, we are told that they were looking for Him in order to kill Him. Also in verse 11, we are told that they were asking people to help them find Him. It was for the purpose of killing Him. It does not say that in verse 11, but it does in verse 1. Verse 12 tells us that the people were grumbling.

There was much grumbling among the crowds concerning Him; some were saying, “He is a good man”; others were saying, “No, on the contrary, He leads the people astray.” John 7:12 (NASB)

The people had different viewpoints. Some said He was good; some people said He was not very good and led the people astray. That sounds like people today who say the same kinds of things about Jesus. He was a good man; that is one view. The other view is that He was just a myth; He was not really real. It is not much different today. That debate has endured ever since throughout history. Verse 14 tells us that Jesus finally arrived at the feast:

But when it was now the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and began to teach. John 7:14 (NASB)

So they were looking for Jesus. Jesus came to the temple and began to teach. Now you would think the Jewish leaders would have had exactly what they wanted. Jesus was there. They could have arrested Him, but they did not. From verse 15 to verse 24, a discussion occurred between Jesus and the Jewish leaders.

RELIGIOUS LEADERS SEEK TO KILL JESUS. Now verse 25 is the beginning of our study. Verse 25 says,

So some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, “Is this not the man whom they are seeking to kill?” John 7:25 (NASB)

When it says “some of the people of Jerusalem,” it is important to notice that this does not refer to the visitors. These are the people who live in Jerusalem. They had been hearing much about Christ and had been seeing Him. So some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, “Is this not the man

they are trying to kill?” And the answer is yes. That is exactly who He is. Jesus is the one that they were trying to kill.

Verse 26 says,

Look, He is speaking publicly, and they are saying nothing to Him. The rulers do not really know that this is the Christ, do they? John 7:26 (NASB)

When they say that He is speaking publicly, the Greek word for “publicly” actually means “boldly.” So Jesus was being bold. Then they made really interesting comments. They said, “The rulers do not really know that this is the Christ, do they?” The Bible scholar, D. A. Carson, suggests that maybe they had new information that made them hesitate. He says this verse is the only verse in the Gospels that gives us the hint that the religious leaders might have actually had some information that was convincing that Jesus was the Messiah.¹ So the folks were saying, “The rulers really are not sure, are they?” Maybe they were questioning their earlier decision as to whether or not He really was the Christ. So that is the issue. I believe the Jewish leaders were debating at this point, but in large part they already knew what they wanted to do. They were spiritually blind. They did not care whether he was the Messiah or not. They wanted Him dead. The gospels indicate they were jealous of Jesus. They were fearful of Jesus, and so they wanted to get rid of Him. He was potentially going to cost them their positions of leadership. He was more popular than they were. He was a threat.

In verse 27 the people in Jerusalem were still speaking.

However, we know where this man is from; but whenever the Christ may come, no one knows where He is from.” John 7:27 (NASB)

Now this is a very fascinating statement. They said, “We know that this man probably is not the Christ.” They were saying, “We know that He is not the Christ, because when the Christ shows up”—that is, when the Messiah shows up—“no one will know where He is from.” Where did they

1. D. A. Carson. The Gospel According to John. Eerdmans Publishing. 1991. p. 317.

get that idea? If we read the Old Testament, we cannot find such a teaching. We know that the religious leaders believed the Messiah was to be a man. The religious leaders believed He would be a descendant of King David. They believed that He would be born in Bethlehem, become a king, and eventually rule the entire world. The religious leaders thought His arrival would be a surprise.

Now what did they think just happened? Jesus had just arrived. They did not have any indication before He arrived that He would in fact be the Christ, the Messiah. If we look at the Jewish Targum or the Babylonian Talmud, we find that is exactly what the Jewish leaders did believe about Christ. So the people gullibly believed what their leaders told them, and said, “We know where this man is from. But whenever the Christ comes, no one is going to know where He is from.”

Now what Jesus did next must have been a real shock. We are told that Jesus ...

Then Jesus cried out in the temple, teaching and saying, “You both know Me and know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know.” Luke 7:28 (NASB)

Jesus said, “You know where I am from.” He referred to the fact that they knew He was from Nazareth in Galilee. They knew His family. Mark 6:3 tells us that the people knew about his family, His mother, His father, His brothers, and they also knew He had sisters. Mark 6:3 says,

“Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?” And they took offense at Him. Mark 6:3 (NASB)

So we are told right up front they knew His father was a carpenter. They knew the name of his mother was Mary. They knew that He had some brothers and sisters. Now today it is interesting that the Roman Catholic church teaches that Mary did not have any other children. But that is not what this verse says. It is also interesting that the Roman Catholics often say that the terms brothers and sisters are

just generic terms for believers in Christ. But the verse mentions His father, His mother, His brothers and sisters. That sounds like a family to me as opposed to just generic terms for believers. In fact, the gospel of Matthew also teaches that they knew the identity of His mother and father. Jesus even calls them His family. So Jesus had a family. The message is very simple: the townspeople knew He had a family. They knew that His family lived in Nazareth, and they knew that Nazareth was in the region called Galilee, which was north of Judea. They knew where Jesus was from—they thought. Then Jesus said in verse 28,

You both know Me and know where I am from . . . John 7:28 (NASB)

Then He added something they did not know. He said,

. . . and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. John 7:28 (NASB)

Jesus said, “There is something you do not know. I did not come of my own. I was sent. Someone sent me.” We have to wonder what the people were thinking about Jesus.

JEWES FIND JESUS AT THE FEAST OF BOOTHS. Later on in the next chapter, the Feast of Booths was still in process, and Jesus continued speaking at the feast. The religious leaders actually let Him speak for a long time. John 8:13 says they were Pharisees. When we reach verse 21, Jesus was still talking to them. Then He said this to them,

Then He said again to them, “I go away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come.” John 8:21 (NASB)

Now this is an important statement. Jesus said, “I am going to die, and you cannot come where I am going.” Now what would you do if you were a Pharisee after listening to this, and you believed Jesus was just a man? What would you think? Look at the next verse.

So the Jews were saying, “Surely He will not kill Himself, will

He, since He says, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come?’”

John 8:22 (NASB)

They thought He was going to commit suicide. Then Jesus said,

And He was saying to them, “You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world.” John 8:23 (NASB)

Jesus made two very important statements. He said, “You are of this world, but I am not. And you are here below, and I am from above. I am above, and you are from below, and you are of this world, and I am not of this world.” And the message is really clear. He was from above. He was from heaven. They were not. Now these religious leaders did not understand His comment. It is so obvious at this point that Jesus claimed to be God. One does not need to know more of this gospel to understand that He claimed to be God. But the religious leaders were struggling.

Then Jesus said,

Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins. John 8:24 (NASB)

Now verse 24 is very important. I want you to notice two important truths out of this passage. The first truth is that He says we are going to die in our sins, unless we do something. Do you know what that means? That means you and I sin. That means the religious leaders sinned. The people in Jerusalem sinned. The people in the world sin. We do wrong and are disobedient. We reject God’s will. That is what Jesus was teaching. There are people who think Jesus taught that our real problem is that we do not have a positive self-image. A man in a very large church in California said that Jesus was not telling us that we had a sin problem. He taught that our real problem is that we did not think well enough of ourselves. So what do you think Jesus was saying when He said, “I said to you that you will die in your” what? “Sins!” That means we sin. It does not really matter what some religious

leader, or some secularist tells you, or what some politician tells you. Jesus said that we sin and that we will die in our sins. There is a consequence for our sins, unless we do something about our situation. Romans 3:23 tells us,

... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God ...
Romans 3:23 (NASB)

Romans 6:23 says,

For the wages of sin is death ... Romans 6:23 (NASB)

This is referring to eternal condemnation. That is a very simple statement.

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23 (NASB)

This is extremely important.

JESUS DECLARES THAT HE IS GOD. Jesus told these men that “you are going to die in your sins,” and then He said, “unless you believe.” So here is the thing you must think about: Romans 6:23 tells us that there is a gift called eternal life, and it comes through Jesus Christ. How do we receive the gift? Jesus just gave us the answer in John 8:24. It is by believing that, “I AM.” In the New American Standard the word “He” is in italics. That means “He” was not in the original language. The Greek text actually reads this way, “Unless you believe that I AM.” Does that sound familiar—“I Am”? That was the name God gave to Moses at the burning bush. God told Moses,

I am Who I am. Exodus 3:14 (NASB)

What does that mean? It means that God is eternal and lives forever. God said that He was the I AM and Jesus just said, “I AM.” Jesus makes the declaration that He is Jehovah God. Now if you are not sure read John 8:58.

Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born ...” John 8:58a (NASB)

What does He say?

“... I am.” John 8:58b (NASB)

Jesus said that He is deity. Jesus is very clear. He claimed to be God. Did they understand that? Yes, they did. Read John 5:18,

For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. John 5:18

Why did they want to kill Him? Because Jesus was not only breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own father. He said He was equal with God. What does that mean? Jesus was claiming to be God! That was really clear.

Later on in His ministry, Jesus makes another comment. In John 10:31 we are told the Jews picked up stones to stone Him. Back in those days there were a number of ways death sentences were carried out. One of the ways, especially if you were accused of blasphemy, was to stone the accused to death—just keep hurling stones at their body until they died as a result of broken bones and bleeding. In verse 32, Jesus answered them and asked,

I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me? John 10:32 (NASB)

Now listen to what they said in verse 33.

The Jews answered Him, “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be . . . John 10:33a (NASB)

What did they say?

... God. John 10:33b (NASB)

In other words, they understood what Jesus was claiming. He claimed to be God early in His ministry. He claimed

to be God throughout His ministry. He even claimed to be God at the end of His ministry. The Jews understood He claimed to be God. They just did not want to believe it. They understood the claim, but they refused to believe. John 8:25

Now back to John 8:25, which states,

So they were saying to Him, “Who are You?” Jesus said to them, “What have I been saying to you from the beginning?” John 8:25 (NASB)

The message is, “I have been telling you all along who I am.” They just were unwilling to accept Him.

JESUS WAS FROM ABOVE. Now that we understand Jesus claimed to be God before and during His ministry, we will return to our study in John 7. Therefore, Jesus has been telling them all along He was God. So when Jesus said, “You know where I am from. I am from Nazareth. I am from Galilee, but you really do not know who I am. You do not really know from where I am.” The message was, “I am from above. I am God.”

Verse 30-31 records what happened next,

So they were seeking to seize Him; and no man laid his hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come. But many of the crowd believed in Him; and they were saying, “When the Christ comes, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He?” John 7:30-31 (NASB)

In other words, the crowd was saying, “Jesus is doing so many signs. He is doing so many miracles. His teachings are so incredible.” Mark 1:27 adds the people were amazed at His teaching.

Now continuing with verse 32:

The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about Him, and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to seize Him. John 7:32 (NASB)

Since the religious leaders did not like the response of the people toward Christ, they tried to arrest Him in order to

kill him.

Let us move now to verse 40 where we are told,

Some of the people therefore, when they heard these words, were saying, “This certainly is the Prophet.” John 7:40 (NASB)

The people were still trying to understand who Jesus was and is. Jesus had been very clear. Yet, the people were still wondering. The religious leaders knew who He is; they knew who He claimed to be. They just did not like the message. But the people were really wondering. They were struggling. Some people asked, “Is He the prophet?” What they were referring to is that Moses prophesied of a future prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15-18).

Then verse 41 says,

Others were saying, “This is the Christ.” John 7:41 (NASB)

The term “Christ” comes from the Greek text. The term “Messiah” is from the Hebrew text. They were interchangeable terms. So they were wondering, is He the prophet? Is He the Christ?

. . . Still others were saying, “Surely the Christ is not going to come from Galilee, is He? . . . John 7:41 (NASB)

So the people are really struggling with the question, “Is He from Galilee?” Yes, He was from the region of Galilee, and had lived in Nazareth, which was a city in Galilee.

JESUS WAS FROM BETHLEHEM. Verse 42 continues with the discussion of the crowd about Jesus.

Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the descendants of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was? John 7:42 (NASB)

They were right. They were saying what the scriptures said. The Christ would come from a descendant of King David, who would be from Bethlehem, the village where David was born. They were right.

The Old Testament has many prophecies about Christ.

There are a hundred plus prophecies about the Messiah, and all of them point to Christ. Now think about it: Some people would say, “One prophecy is enough.” I am amazed how many people get excited about Nostradamus. There are books about Nostradamus’ prophecies; yet there are not very many of them and they are very vague.

In contrast, there are over one hundred prophecies about Jesus. One of those prophecies is Micah 5:2. It is very specific. It says Jesus was to be born in Bethlehem. He would be a descendant of King David. The prophecies are really specific and not at all vague. In Micah 5:2, we read that Christ was to be born in Bethlehem. It says,

*But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
Too little to be among the clans of Judah . . . Micah 5:2
(NASB)*

Do you realize what that prophecy said? It said He would be born in the city of Bethlehem, in a region called Judea. That was south of Galilee, in the city of Nazareth where Jesus was raised—but Jesus was not born in Nazareth.

On Christmas we celebrate the birth of God in human flesh. We call Him Jesus Christ, and He was born in the city called Bethlehem. Luke 2 gives us the fulfillment of the prophecy in Micah 5:2. I should add that the prophecy in Micah 5:2 was made not just two years or fifty years or even one hundred years before Jesus was actually born in Bethlehem—it was given hundreds of years—try 700 years before the birth of Christ. Luke 2:1-4 says,

Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth . . . Luke 2:1-4 (NASB)

Now it is very interesting that we hear about the region called Galilee, and the city called Nazareth. That was from where Joseph and Mary were.

Next, we are told they went south of Galilee.

. . . to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David . . . Luke 2:4 (NASB)

That tells us that Jesus was a descendant of David. Both Joseph and Mary were descendants of David. So Jesus was a descendant of David. The crowd was right in John chapters 7-8. They knew He would be born in Bethlehem, and would be a descendant of King David. Then verse 5 says,

. . . in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. Luke 2:5 (NASB)

It is important to notice Mary was “engaged.” They were not married yet. It speaks of the virgin birth and Isaiah 7:14 prophesied,

While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Luke 2:6 (NASB)

That is the Christmas story. That is why we are here today. That is what we are celebrating - the birth of God in human flesh. He was *not* born in the Taj Mahal, or born in a mansion. He was born in a manger, a feeding trough for animals.

THE DECISION ABOUT JESUS CHRIST. Now remember back in John 7 the people wondered, “Is he not to be a descendant of David, and from Bethlehem, a village where David was born?” They were correct. That is the essence of the Christmas story, God was born in human flesh in Bethlehem in Judea.

Verse 43:

So a division occurred in the crowd because of Him. Some of them wanted to seize Him, but no one laid hands on Him. John 7:43 (NASB)

Division! The crowds were divided. Who was Jesus? Some believed, and some wanted to turn Him over to be killed. Therefore, watch verse 45.

The officers . . . John 7:45 (NASB)

Who were these officers? The answer is given back in verse 32 where we are told the Pharisees sent officers to seize Him. So between verse 32 and verse 45, the officers have been out among the crowds, listening to Jesus. Now watch what happened.

The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them, “Why did you not bring Him?” The officers answered, “Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks.” The Pharisees then answered them, “You have not also been led astray, have you? No one of the rulers or Pharisees has believed in Him, has he?” John 7:45-48 (NASB)

In other words, popular opinion was accepted for the identity of Jesus! None of the religious leaders believed in Him. Therefore, how could the people believe in Him?

The religious leaders had rejected Christ. We find in the gospels that the religious leaders were envious of Jesus. They were fearful. Jesus’ popularity was rising. He was a threat. So they rejected Him. People were divided: some believed, some did not believe. What an interesting picture!

If you were to look early in the Gospel of John, you would find there are five men in chapter 1 who believed in Jesus Christ. They were James, John, Peter, Phillip, and Nathaniel. They became Jesus’ disciples. In John 4 there was a woman at the well. She was a lonely woman. She had been with many men or husbands. She had learned that having husbands does not make one happy, or end one’s loneliness. Then she learned Jesus is the Christ when Jesus told her He was the Messiah.

In John 11 a woman named Martha worried a lot. She eventually told Jesus that she believed He was the Messiah. But one of the most fascinating statements in all of the Gospel of John is found in John 20:28. This is a man named Thomas. He is called Doubting Thomas because he just did not believe what he was told about Jesus. Someone told him that Jesus had come back from the grave, had returned to life, but Thomas did not believe it. So he is called Doubting Thomas. In verse 28, after he meets Jesus, and Jesus gives

him proof that He really is alive, Thomas responds with:

“My Lord and my God!” John 20:28 (NASB)

Now that is an important statement. “My Lord” means “my master.” “My God” means He is God. Do you understand who Jesus was and is? Jesus was not just some nice, cuddly little baby who was born on Christmas who provides us with fond memories as the years pass, who spoke wonderful things. Jesus was God Almighty in human flesh, who died for our sins, as Romans chapter 6:23 says,

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23 (NASB)

The message is that Jesus came to forgive us of our sins. That is why He became a man, why He took on human flesh. Eventually, Jesus died on a cross. We know that God, who

is eternal, cannot die. So the only way He could die on the cross was to take on a human body. Then He was able to die for the forgiveness of our sins.

Remember that I started the message by talking about a man who had helped me set up the church on Sunday mornings? He was surprised that I taught that Jesus was God. Well about a year later, he wrote me an e-mail and he told me that he and his wife had finally come to the realization that Jesus was God, and that he was a sinner, and that he needed his sins forgiven, and he just wanted me to know that he now fully believed that Jesus was God and that he was now a real Christian. That is the miracle of Christmas! That was the best present that I received that year. He finally understood who Jesus truly was. He was God who had come in human flesh. That is what Christmas is all about. It is about the greatest Christmas present ever offered—God coming in human flesh to die on a cross, to save you and me from an eternal hell.