

5. John 7-9

So who did you say you were?

D.A. Carson, The Gospel According to John, Pillar New Testament Commentary
Tom Wright, John for Everyone

1.1 - 1.18	1.19 - 12.50	13:1 - 20:21	21.1-21.25
Prologue	Book of Signs: Jesus' Ministry	Book of Passion : Cross and Resurrection	Epilogue

1. The Comic Relief – Where is this guy from?

- *Do you suppose the authorities know that he is the Messiah? But how could that be? No one knows where the Messiah will come from, but we know where this man comes from." 7:26-27*
- *When the crowd heard Jesus say this, some of them said, "He must be the Prophet!" Others said, "He is the Messiah!" Others even said, "Can the Messiah come from Galilee? The Scriptures say that the Messiah will come from the family of King David. Doesn't this mean that he will be born in David's hometown of Bethlehem?" 7:40-42*
- *Then they said, "Nicodemus, you must be from Galilee! Read the Scriptures, and you will find that no prophet is to come from Galilee." 7:52*
- *Jesus replied: Even if I do speak for myself, what I say is true! I know where I came from and where I am going. But you don't know where I am from or where I am going. 8:14*
- *The people told Jesus, "We were right to say that you are a Samaritan and that you have a demon in you!" 8:48*
- *We are sure that God spoke to Moses, but we don't even know where Jesus comes from." 9:29*
- There is a comic sub-plot running through chapters 7-9 around the idea that no one will know where a true messiah comes from.
- The technical name for this is the 'Johanine Irony'.
- Contrary to what the people in the text say, John makes the point that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies about his origin by coming from Bethlehem, and being misunderstood about his origins.
- The conclusion is that Jesus must be the Christ

2. The festival of Tabernacles - 7:1-53

- 'The Jews' = Judean Jewish rulers. (Remember that Jesus, his brothers and his disciples were Jews, but they were clearly not included in the group John is referring to)
- Did Jesus lie? Times when brothers just don't get it.
 - 'My time has not come, but your time is always ready' would have been quite an insult to the brothers.

- 'Time'¹ and its 'completion' are common themes in prophetic language.
- Jesus' 'time' would be his crucifixion, so this time must be low key.
- Who taught you to talk like that? God.
 - The Jewish leaders respected their body of tradition and the generations of seeking after God that it represented.
 - Jesus spoke as if he had studied, but clearly had not, so it caused confusion. How could you know all these things without anyone telling you?
- Healing is as redeeming as circumcision
 - Circumcision is allowable on the Sabbath, because it is determined from the date of birth, so may fall on a Sabbath.
 - Jesus equates circumcision and healing as things that make the person 'well'.
- Living water: Jesus vs. the feast
 - Jesus may be using the water imagery from the feast of tabernacles
 - Water is taken from the pool of Siloam and poured out in the temple. This is symbolic of the water from the rock, and is a picture of the Messianic age when the Spirit would be poured out.
- Is this the Christ?
 - As usual in John, the people are left deciding whether Jesus is the Christ.

3. Judge for yourselves - 8:1-11²

- It is very difficult to catch one person in the act of adultery – the Pharisees and Scribes were talking about the sin, but focussed on the woman.
- The Pharisees thought that they had found an evil person to use as an object lesson. Jesus turned them all into the objects.
- The woman was caught and taken to be judged by sinners, but was released from judgement by the sinless one

¹ There are three Greek words that are translated 'time'. In very rough terms they can be thought of as *chronological* time, which you would use to refer to the passing of time, a *particular* time as in 'The first May bank holiday', and a *significant* time as in 'the moment of crucifixion'. These meanings are a combination of their original Greek meaning, and their usage in prophecy etc.

² There is discussion among biblical scholars about where this passage should be located. In some early manuscripts it is found elsewhere in the book or not at all, which has provided much industry and tenure in the academic community. These are important issues, but I have not considered them explicitly here.

4. **My father can back this up - 8:12-59**

- In Chapter 7 the issue was how Jesus could speak without being taught. Here the Pharisees questioned the validity of Jesus' argument because it did not refer to any accepted authorities.
- Pharisees' teaching increased in credibility with increasing reference to previous scholars.
 - This is similar to contemporary academic learning. When a paper is published, the author must site his/her references so that the reader can see where the author's ideas originated. If trusted references are cited, then the paper will have more credibility.
- Jesus' teaching appeared to come with no references and so had no credibility
- Jesus' teaching was to witness to his father. He did not speak on his own or for himself
 - Jesus was not setting forth an argument or a principle; his core message was to reveal God the Father through himself.
 - The message had a reciprocal authentication. Jesus was authenticating who God the Father was, and God the Father was authenticating Jesus.
- Jesus concludes with 'I am' language, which they rightly took as a claim to be God, but were offended, not convinced
 - 'I am' is a reference to God's revelation to Moses in the burning bush. The phrase could be used in normal conversation (eg. 7:34), but Jesus clearly meant it to be understood as God's name.

5. **Failing to see the blindingly obvious - 9:1-41**

- Pharisees reframe a healing as a Sabbath infringement.
 - It's important to spin the news to maintain control of the debate.
- Healing is rest/restoration – c.f. circumcision earlier
 - (How can you call it work when it's so easy?)
- John does not use the man's name, always 'the one who was blind', continually highlighting the point that gets lost – he has been healed.
 - Pharisees want to change the focus to all sorts of things, but John subtly reminds us what has really happened.
- Was this man born in sin? You remain in sin if you don't consider yourself as blind as him.
 - The friendly Pharisees' question exposes the blind/seeing imagery.
 - The self-confident seeing are blind to their sin, but the knowingly blind are able to be healed.