

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #145

Stage VI. Jesus' Later Judean Ministry B. Jesus' Ministry at the Feast of Tabernacles

1. Jesus' First Teaching at Tabernacles: "Rivers of Living Water"

ii. Various Responses to Jesus John 7.20-27

20 "You are demon-possessed," the crowd answered Jesus. "Who is trying to kill you?"

21 Jesus said to them, *"I did one miracle, and you all continue to be amazed. 22 Yet, because Moses gave you circumcision as a firm command (though actually it did not come from Moses, but from the patriarchs), you circumcise a boy on the Sabbath as a regular practice. 23 Now since a boy can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses may not be broken, why are you angry with me for healing a man's whole body on the Sabbath?"*

24 *"Stop judging by mere appearances, but instead judge correctly."*

25 At that point some of the people of Jerusalem began to ask, "Isn't this the man they are trying to kill?"

26 Here he is, speaking publicly, and they are not saying a word to him. Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Messiah? 27 But we know where this man is from; when the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from."

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	The Temple Courts in Jerusalem
Timeline	September (Month 31)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage VI: Jesus' Later Judean Ministry
	B. Jesus' Ministry at the Feast of Tabernacles
	I. Jesus' First Teaching at Tabernacles: "Rivers of Living Water"
Title	ii Various Responses to Jesus

COMMENT:

John Chapter 7 contains many different reactions of the people toward Jesus as he spoke. John's snapshots of the various groups began in yesterday's reading, with the comment that there was *"widespread grumbling about him."* 7.12.

On one hand, some people saw Jesus as a good man (7.12). On the other extreme were those who believed he was possessed by the Devil (7.20) This was the first time in his ministry that the common people accused Jesus of demon possession--in Galilee this charge had come only from the leaders. In between the two extremes were those who saw him as a charlatan-- a man who used deceit to influence people (7.12-13), and those who were confused about his identity and did not know what to think (7.25-27).

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In the midst of all these reactions to him, Jesus commanded everyone in the crowd: "***I command you to stop judging by mere appearances, but judge correctly instead.***" 7.24

Most people did not look seriously at the claims of Jesus. He had already promised that his claims could be tested by anybody who was willing to put his words to the test of actual experience, by obeying them (7.16-17). Anyone who was not willing to try to do what he said was in no position to judge the truthfulness of his claims. They were relying on mere appearances and superficial analysis, not serious consideration.

Determining how we will respond to the claims of Jesus is the most important decision of our lives. Eternity hangs in the balance, as well as the quality of our entire life on earth. Our purpose for living, as well as the influence and impact of our lives on others likewise depend on this choice. Jesus commands all people to honestly and dead-seriously give consideration to who he is.

APPLICATION:

The command of Jesus to "*stop judging him by mere appearances*" is a dire warning to everyone who does not believe in him. There are as many different reactions to Jesus as there are people. However, the vast majority of those reactions are not the result of sober, honest reflection upon the historical person and works of Jesus as recorded in Scripture.

Christians have a serious responsibility to fully communicate the truth about Jesus in a way that lovingly confronts non-believers with the information they need to move beyond "mere appearances" in their judgement of him. Evangelism is serious work indeed.

How can you follow Jesus' example of sharing the good news with those who do not believe in him? How will you do that today?