

CRAZY OF CHRIST JOHN 7:37-8:30

claims?

Crazy Claim or CHRIST Claim? (John 7:37-8:30)

Jesus made many audacious claims that widened the divide between those who believed him and those who belittled him. Today we see the significance of the claims of Jesus that led to the crucifixion of Jesus.

Before getting started, we must deal with a famous story from **John 7:53-8:11**, the story of the woman caught in adultery and brought before Jesus. Most people know the famous line from the lips of Jesus, *"Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her."* (John 8:7 CSB) Unless you are using a King James Version, it is likely that you have seen a note that says this: **"The Earliest Manuscripts Do Not Include John 7:53-8:11"**. Why is that?

This is a **textual variant**, meaning that many copies do NOT contain this story. The first manuscript of John to include this story dates to the fifth century (Codex Bezae - D),¹ but the earlier copies of John DON'T contain this. Of the manuscripts that later *DO* contain the story, it is found in multiple locations of John (7:36, 7:44; 21:25) and even in Luke 21:38. James White (Greek scholar) notes the story moving across multiple manuscripts "is strong evidence of its later origin and the attempt by scribes to find a place where it 'fits.' Such is not the earmark of an original gospel passage."²

It's likely that this story could have actually occurred and been told orally, and then added much later by scribes who hand copied the Gospels. But what seems to be certain is that John nor the other gospel writers recorded this.

3 reasons to Address This Issue:

- 1) **We have many trustworthy translations today.** The many copies we have helps us to SEE when scribes added or deleted any text. The KJV included this story and one other big chunk of text from Mark (16:9-16) because the translators were using about 7 copies (manuscripts) dating from the 12-14th century. Many ancient manuscripts have been discovered since, allowing us to compare and contrast and see when changes were made. This is a good thing! Today we have good contemporary translations that give us a heads up when there is a significant variant (of which there are only a few).
- 2) **Be prepared to face challenges to Biblical reliability.** When people say, *"The Bible has been changed over time,"* you can respond by saying, *"Yes, in a couple of places. Do you know where and what difference it makes?"*
 - ★ None of the variants change these biblical claims: Jesus is God in skin, who lived a perfect life, did incredible miracles, taught unlike any other, died on a cross, rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven. * Don't close your eyes to the truth. Be aware of the significant variants, and confident that we have better translations based on many more and much older manuscripts than ever before!
- 3) **Be aware that this story from John 7:53-8:11 was not written by a Biblical author.** Because of that, we will not teach it as Scriptural. Further, this scribal addition interrupts the flow of the text. So, when we come to John 7:53-8:11, we will skip it and move immediately to John 8:12. * Take note of how the flow of thought continues when we do this.

CATCH THE CONTEXT Jesus had camouflaged Himself during what the Jews called **SUKKOT** the Festival of Shelters (aka Tabernacles), but halfway through the festival began to teach in the temple - the very place where His enemies would quickly see Him. Some people were beginning to believe Jesus was the Messiah (v31) and the religious leaders sent some temple soldiers to arrest Him (v32). But as of yet, that had not happened.

On each day of this festival, priests would participate in a water ceremony, a type of parade beginning at the souther border of the city with the priests and people marching to the Pool of Siloam. A priest would fill a golden pitcher with water as a choir chanted **Isaiah 12:3**: *"With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation."*³ Crowds would follow while singing the Psalms 113-118. Once they reached the TEMPLE, the priest climbed the altar steps and poured the water onto the altar while the crowd circled him and continued singing.⁴ And on the 7th day, this parade took place 7 times!

¹ <https://danielbwallace.com/2013/06/26/where-is-the-story-of-the-woman-caught-in-adultery-really-from/>

² James R. White, *The King James Only Controversy: Can You Trust Modern Translations?* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2009), 328.

³ Gary M. Burge, *John, The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 226-227.

⁴ Ibid.

This was a reminder of: 1) God providing water in the desert exodus 2) asking & trusting God to provide rain for crops, water to drink, & 3) looking forward to God pouring His Spirit to indwell & satisfy His people over the earth.

Sukkot - the Feast of Shelters would conclude on the 8th day, a Sabbath day, where the water ceremony was replaced by a solemn time of reflection and prayer.⁵ John MacArthur writes: "It was against the backdrop of that ceremony that Jesus spoke His stunning words,"⁶

John 7:37-39 (CSB) ³⁷ On the last and most important day of the festival, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone is thirsty, let him **come to me and drink**. ³⁸ The one who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, will have streams of living water flow from deep within him." ³⁹ He said this about the Spirit. Those who believed in Jesus were going to receive the Spirit, for the Spirit had not yet been given because Jesus had not yet been glorified.

Turning this statement around to feel the force of the claim. "**The Scripture has said**, that one who believes in me [Jesus] will have streams of living water flow from deep within him." The Scriptures taught THAT? That's the claim Jesus is making. He has said it before (Jn 5:39) and He says it again; the OT Scriptures point to HIM.

In John 3, we noted the Old Testament use of **WATER** being poured out symbolized **the Spirit of God**. According to Paul, Jesus is the substance of the symbol, the **ROCK** from which the water (Spirit) flows in the Exodus story:

Exodus 17:6 (CSB) ⁶ I am going to stand there in front of you on the rock at Horeb; when you **hit the rock, water will come out of it and the people will drink**." Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel.

Paul later writes the Exodus story and points to Jesus as the **ROCK**.

1 Corinthians 10:3-4 (CSB) ³ They all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and **that rock was Christ**.

The water (Spirit) will flow and fill the people when the **ROCK** is struck - what imagery of Jesus being killed!

The Old Testament prophets often described a time coming when the transforming Spirit of God would be poured out generously on all people (Isa. 32:15-20; Joel 2:28, Ez. 36:25-27). **Sometimes this is described metaphorically, like water being poured out**.

Isaiah 44:3 (CSB) ³ For I will **pour water** on the thirsty land and streams on the dry ground; I will **pour out my Spirit** on your descendants and my blessing on your offspring.

The **ROCK** had not yet been **STRUCK**. Jesus had not yet been "lifted up" on the cross, resurrected, and ascended to the Father. But when that happens, **those who believed in Jesus were going to receive the Spirit**. Jesus is claiming to be the **ONE** whom the water ceremony represented! *Is that a CRAZY claim or a CHRIST claim?* The people wondered the same thing.

John 7:40-43 (CSB) ⁴⁰ When some from the crowd heard these words, they said, "This truly is the Prophet." ⁴¹ Others said, "This is the Messiah." But some said, "Surely the Messiah doesn't come from Galilee, does he? ⁴² Doesn't the Scripture say [*see Micah 5:2] that the Messiah comes from David's offspring and **from the town of Bethlehem**, where David lived?" ⁴³ So the crowd was divided because of him.

Some thought Jesus was the foretold **Prophet** like Moses (Deut. 18:17-19). Others thought he was **the Messiah**. Those familiar with the Micah 5:2 passage foretelling the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (house of bread), thought Jesus was **from Galilee**. They obviously didn't know that Jesus **WAS** born in **the town of Bethlehem**.

The crowd was divided because of him. The same will be true today. Who you say Jesus is will cause a great divide between you and others - even friends & family. And **while Christians are to love all, we are expected to LIVE for ONE**.

John 7:44-52 (CSB) ⁴⁴ Some of them wanted to seize him, but no one laid hands on him. ⁴⁵ Then the servants came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, "Why didn't you bring him?" ⁴⁶ The servants answered, "No man ever spoke like this!" ⁴⁷ Then the Pharisees responded to them: "Are you fooled too? ⁴⁸ **Have any of the rulers or Pharisees believed in him?** ⁴⁹ But this crowd, which doesn't know the law, is accursed." ⁵⁰ Nicodemus—the one who came to him previously and who was one of them—said to them, ⁵¹ "Our law doesn't judge a man before it hears from him and knows what he's doing, does it?" ⁵² "You aren't from Galilee too, are you?" they replied. "Investigate and you will see that no prophet arises from Galilee."

⁵ Gerald L. Borchert, *John 1-11*, vol. 25A, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 290.

⁶ John F. MacArthur Jr., *John 1-11*, *MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2006), 312-313.

This was a dig at **the crowd** and **the servants**, who **don't know the law**. Who does know the law? The **rulers** and **Pharisees**. Do any of them believe in Jesus? The expected answer was, "NO!" But then there's Nicodemus, and he speaks up.

No prophet arises from Galilee. Oh REALLY? *Jonah came from a town* (Gath-hepher) *in Galilee* (2 Kgs 14:25; cf. the Son of Amittai, Jonah 1:1).⁷ These self-righteous men bowed up at Nicodemus instead of listening to his wisdom, proving that, "A fool's way is right in his own eyes, but whoever listens to counsel is wise." (Prov. 12:15 CSB).

* **We will skip scribal addition from John 7:53-8:11.** Watch how the story continues to flow.

John 8:12-13 (CSB) ¹² Jesus spoke to them again: "I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life."

While the water ceremony occurred every morning of the festival, a lighting ceremony happened every evening - remembering God's presence and protection in the pillar of fire during the Exodus and His shekinah glory that glowed above the Tabernacle.

4 large stands, each with 4 large bowls were placed in the Court of Women (where only Jews or those who converted to Judaism could go). Priests climbed up to these 16 golden bowls, filled them with oil, and lit them - so that all of Jerusalem was illumined.⁸

Verse 20 tells us that Jesus was speaking by the treasury, which is in the Court of Women. **So...Jesus was in this very place where the lighting ceremony takes place when He says these words:**

John 8:12 (CSB) ¹² Jesus spoke to them again: "I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life."

We don't know if this happened when the lamps were lit or not. But Jesus said that they were symbolic of HIM - the light of the world!!!

The Pharisees were tired of these CRAZY CLAIMS, so the animosity intensifies. Read **John 8:12-30** on your own.

John 8:24 (CSB) ²⁴ Therefore I told you that you will die in your sins. For **if you do not believe that I am he, you will die in your sins.**"

These religious leaders will **die in their sin**, in other words - NOT FORGIVEN...unless WHAT? They must **believe** in Jesus...that He is **I AM**, the "light of the world", who pours out the Spirit like water on all who believe Jesus.

John 8:28-30 (CSB) ²⁸ So Jesus said to them, "**When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he**, and that I do nothing on my own. But just as the Father taught me, I say these things. ²⁹ The one who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, because I always do what pleases him." ³⁰ As he was saying these things, **many believed in him.**

Jesus would soon be **lifted up** on the cross because of this arrogant audience, who thought Jesus made CRAZY claims instead of Christ claims. Jesus would be obedient to the Father's plan, regardless of the pain. And **many believed in** Jesus that day.

BIG QUESTION: Do YOU believe these are CRAZY CLAIMS OR CHRIST CLAIMS?

If believe these are CHRIST CLAIMS, and you BELIEVE Jesus, where's the evidence?

* **Want to talk further?** Please contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Justin** (704-618-6144), **Christy** (673-9764), or another follower of Jesus soon! Or call our **deacons & wives:** Tom & Martha Waddail, Steve & Debbie Bass, Freddy & Joyce Howard, Jere & Darlene Burnette, Alan & Christy Androski, Willy & Melissa Gamalero.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What challenged or encouraged you from today's teaching? (Look back over your notes & share!)
2. Share your questions, concerns, or encouragements from talking about the textual variant of **Jn 7:53-8:11**. Do you think it's good to discuss this? Explain your answer?
3. **Read John 7:37-38 and 8:12-13.** How did the background info on the water ceremony & lighting ceremony during the Festival of Shelters amplify what Jesus said? What exactly is Jesus claiming?
4. **Read Exodus 17:6, 1 Cor. 10:3-4, and Isaiah 53:5.** Talk about the symbolism and significance between the ROCK and Jesus.
5. **Read John 8:24.** What does it mean to "die in your sins" and why should this warning cause us pause?

⁷ Gerald L. Borchart, *John 1-11*, vol. 25A, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 294.

⁸ Gary M. Burge, *John, The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 255-256.