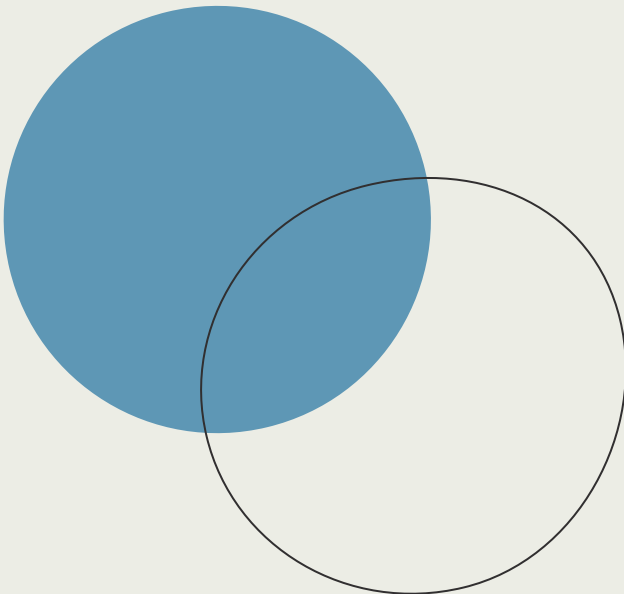


The Word

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Episode 16



Mixed responses

JOHN 7:1-52

*In the previous episode:
Jesus' teaching about
His death makes
some walk away.*

*In this episode:
Jesus continues to
divide opinion.*

¹ After this, Jesus went around in Galilee. He did not want to go about in Judea because the Jewish leaders there were looking for a way to kill him.

² But when the Jewish Festival of Tabernacles was near, ³ Jesus' brothers said to him, 'Leave Galilee and go to Judea, so that your disciples there may see the works you do.'

⁴ No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world.'

⁵ For even his own brothers did not believe in him.

The time is not right

During the Festival of Tabernacles (tents), Jews came to Jerusalem and lived in tents to remember God's faithful leadership during the forty years in the wilderness after their escape from Egypt. It was one of three major religious holidays.

Look out for the wide range of responses to Jesus in this episode. Faith, confusion, amazement, hostility... some even think that Jesus is demon-possessed.

Almost everyone has an opinion, though not always the one you'd expect.

What do Jesus' brothers think He should do?

- They think Jesus should be in the capital city showing people how powerful He is, not stuck in the countryside. **(v. 3)**
- But they don't yet understand what it means for Him to be the Son of God. **(v. 5)**

⁶ Therefore Jesus told them,
'My time is not yet here; for
you any time will do.

⁷ The world cannot hate you,
but it hates me because I
testify that its works are evil.

⁸ You go to the festival. I am
not going up to this festival,
because my time has not yet
fully come.'

⁹ After he had said this, he
stayed in Galilee.

¹⁰ However, after his brothers
had left for the festival, he went
also, not publicly, but in secret.

¹¹ Now at the festival the Jewish
leaders were watching for Jesus
and asking, 'Where is he?'

Here is the reason Jesus isn't ready to go public: the timing isn't right. This isn't the moment to arrive in Jerusalem with cheering crowds (we'll see that in chapter 12).

All the way through His ministry, Jesus is following a plan and is in control. He knows when His time will come. **(v. 6)**

Why didn't Jesus tell His brothers He was going to Jerusalem privately?

- This isn't the time to play into the hands of the religious leaders who want Him dead. **(v. 11)**
- Better to slip into Jerusalem without His usual huge following.

¹² Among the crowds there was widespread whispering about him. Some said, ‘He is a good man.’

Others replied, ‘No, he deceives the people.’

¹³ But no one would say anything publicly about him for fear of the leaders.

¹⁴ Not until halfway through the festival did Jesus go up to the temple courts and begin to teach.

¹⁵ The Jews there were amazed and asked, ‘How did this man get such learning without having been taught?’

Jesus provokes strong responses.

- Some think He is a good man. **(v. 12)**
- Some think He is a fake.

What does Jesus do?

- He arrives quietly in order to teach in the temple courts. **(v. 14)**

¹⁶ Jesus answered, ‘My teaching is not my own. It comes from the one who sent me.

¹⁷ Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.

¹⁸ Whoever speaks on their own does so to gain personal glory, but he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him.

¹⁹ Has not Moses given you the law? Yet not one of you keeps the law. Why are you trying to kill me?’

How does Jesus answer the question of His identity?

- He insists He is from God. (v. 16)
- He insists He is true. (v. 18)
- He says that He is seeking God's glory, not His own.

And then He turns the spotlight on the religious leaders: they are the ones who want to commit murder. (v. 19)

Jesus didn't need to go to the festival to build a public profile. He is here to teach for God's glory, not His own.

But how will people respond?