

John 7: Choosing to Believe
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John chapter 7 reminds us of another of the “sevens of John” – seven times Jesus’ time is referenced:

1. “My hour has not yet come” - John 2:4
2. “My time has not yet come” - John 7:6
3. His hour had not yet come - John 7:30
4. His hour had not yet come - John 8:20
5. “The hour has come” - John 12:23
6. His hour had come - John 13:1
7. “Father, the hour has come.” - John 17:1

John 7 shows us the struggles many had in believing in Jesus. We might see about three ways that these struggles were occurring. First, sometimes Jesus said hard things, such as in John 6. We see that “*many of His disciples withdrew, and were not walking with Him anymore*” because of His sayings. In John 7 we see that sometimes things about Jesus did not make sense. It is debated in John 7 over His heritage; this was an issue even to Nathanael, who asked “*what good came from Nazareth*” in John 1. All knew that the Messiah comes from David and Bethlehem, and yet Jesus was (apparently) of Nazareth. Finally, it would seem as though Jesus movement was just not working out. He was like a political candidate losing in the poles and losing supporters all the time; by the end it would just be Him on the cross, and that would seem to be an utter defeat. Consider the words of the disciples in Luke 24:21: “*But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened.*”

Yet Jesus disciples made a choice to believe. We might consider three reasons they believed. First, they knew that there was nothing better to believe. As Peter said in John 6:18-19 “*Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. And we have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.*” Second, they considered the whole of Jesus’ works and concluded that Jesus was the logical choice, even if some things were confusing. They said in John 7:31 “*When the Christ shall come, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He?*” Finally, we might consider the words of Nicodemus in 7:51 “*Our Law does not judge a man, unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?*” We see in this the idea that a reasonable person finds no matter of disbelief in Jesus.

This leads us to an important conclusion – believing in Jesus is a choice. We all choose to believe. We choose to accept God’s Word; we choose to act on God’s Word; we choose to believe it will provide all answers. Faith is NOT a movement or action on us from God; faith is our accession to believe. We all CHOOSE to believe because there is nothing more rewarding to believe; because there is nothing more real to believe; because there is nothing unbelievable about Jesus.

Consider what we must choose to believe about Jesus. We choose to believe that one day He will return; we chose to believe that one day there will be a Resurrection of the Dead; We believe that there is an Eternal home in Heaven, and that there is a day of Judgment.

We see in the Scriptures that belief is a choice by seeing numerous occasions when a group of people, given the exact same evidences, made different choices of believe. We see it in the thief on the cross, in the people of Jericho, or in the report of the twelve spies. In each instance, there was a clear choice to believe. What will you choose to believe?