

A photograph of a man carrying a young boy on his shoulders at a beach. The man is smiling and looking down at the boy. The boy is also smiling and has his arms outstretched. In the background, there is a blue ocean and a clear sky. A person is visible in the water to the left, and a surfboard is in the foreground at the bottom.

WEEK 5 | **JOHN 7-8**

THE DNA

Maybe we Australians don't pay as much respect to 'family of origin' issues as the English do, but we're still likely to weigh people up according to their heritage.

Thought Starter

They say in American power politics that being born a Kennedy or a Bush or a Clinton counts for something. Are there any Australian equivalents in business or politics?

Read John 7 and 8 in your own time before your group meets.

You'll notice the odd section from 7:53-8:11. This 'bonus extra' story about Jesus wasn't originally part of John's gospel. Some early church groups 'pasted in' the manuscript at this point, while others didn't. It's fun to read, and it's in keeping with the other words and actions of Jesus, but you'll notice it interrupts the theme of testimonies for and against Jesus.

ISRAEL JUDGES JESUS

Read John 7:14-29

1. From John 7:3-5, what are his own brothers concluding about Jesus?
2. From 7:10, 15, 27 and 41-42, what issues of origin counted against Jesus?
3. What conflicted judgments were the people making about Jesus in 7:12-13 and 40-41?
4. What's the problem with the way people are tending to judge Jesus? (7:21-24) What's the background to this?
5. What do the Pharisees conclude about his testimony in 8:13?

Did you notice? Jesus doesn't come from the right background. Even his own brothers don't believe in him (7:5). His education wasn't impressive (7:15). Everyone knows where he comes from: Galilee (7:27) - and nothing good ever comes from there (7:41,52)!

... WHICH JUDGES THEM

6. According to Jesus, what's the source of his teaching, and what does this say about those who are assessing him? (7:16-18)

7. From 7:28-29, where does Jesus really come from, and what does this say about those who are assessing him?

8. Things get heated in 8:12-30. Ultimately the issue comes down to who his Father is. Summarise his claims from 8:16, 18-19, 27-28 and 38.

9. If God really is the Father of Jesus, and the Pharisees refuse to believe this, what does that say about their own 'father'? (8:19, 39-44)

WHAT'S YOUR VERDICT?

10. The Jewish leaders and people were divided over Jesus. What positive responses do you see in 7:31 and 8:30-31?

11. If Jesus was right that they needed him to set them free from sin, what are some of the uncomfortable implications of their rejection of him?

What do you find hard about these implications today?
How do these chapters challenge your own judgment of Jesus?

Read right through John 9 before your group meets next week.