

Where are you from, and where are you going?

One might say that these two questions describe the most important things about you.

Some of you here are from Beresford, or Centerville, or Alcester.

I have four kids. They are all from Beresford.

They grew up here. People here loved them and influenced them.

They are proud of that, to be from a part of the world where people work hard to grow food.

And they know that they are from a part of the world that people are not lining up to visit.

That's ok. They are from here and the people and values of this place have shaped them.

I'm from Illinois, the land of Lincoln, and of governors who go to jail when they leave office.

I was born in New York State to a mother and father who both had degrees in Physics.

My dad moved to Illinois to teach as a professor of Physics when I was three.

At supper, we would have discussions about the nature of light and time, atoms and special relativity.

I grew up in a loving and very intellectual home.

Early on, I wanted to be a scientist because of where I was from.

Where are you from? How has it shaped you?

Where are you going? This is maybe an even more important question.

Now, you might say, "I'm going to Minneapolis, or Chicago, or somewhere not like here."

Today, you are saying, "I'm going somewhere cooler and less windy."

But that is not really what I'm talking about.

Yes, you will live the rest of your life somewhere on this earth. But what about after that?

After that will be most of your time. This life will only be another 90 years or less.

What about after that? Where are you going?

You might answer, "Well, Pastor John, I'm going to heaven."

Oh? How do you know?

Do you know that most Americans think that they are going to heaven?

They think that because everyone thinks that. That is where people go when they die in the movies.

People think that they are going to heaven because they cannot bear the thought of going to hell.

People think that they are going to heaven because they go to church or have been baptized.

But these are not good reasons to believe that you are going to heaven.

If you tell yourself that you are going to heaven, realize that you are not a trustworthy source.

You have never been there. You do not know how to get there. On your own, you do not know the way.

Do you know that, in the history of the world, there is only one person who knows the way to heaven?

Do you know why?

It is because heaven is where He is from. He died and came back from the dead to bring us to heaven.

Now, He has gone to heaven and reigns in heaven and knows how to get you and I to heaven.

It is quite simple. And now I read from **John 14:1-6**.

How can Jesus say all that?

Jesus is the only one who can get you to heaven. That is where He is from. That is where He is now.

And He had done all that it takes to get you and I there with Him.

Jesus is God Himself come from heaven, now reigning in heaven.

John has written his gospel so that we would believe in Jesus. **John 20:30-31**

Some people have believed. The disciples are learning. Nicodemus is on the way.

The Samaritan woman Jesus met at the well believed as did many Samaritans.

There is the nobleman whose son Jesus healed from afar.

There is the man, lame for 38 years, at the pool of Bethesda that Jesus healed. But that might be all so far.

Already in chapter 7 we have learned that Jesus' own brothers are not trusting in Him.

They wouldn't mind if he were killed.

The Jewish leaders in Jerusalem are actually beginning to plan His murder. They definitely want Him dead.

The Jewish crowds are unsure. Some say that He is a good man, others that He is a false prophet.

Everyone wants to see Jesus do more miracles because that is amazing entertainment.
No one really likes it when He tells them that they are unrighteous sinners, which He does often.
In every case, Jesus is presenting a problem. The people do not understand Him.

I. Do you know where Jesus came from?

John 7:25-29

In verses 25-27 the people in Jerusalem, in the Temple where He is teaching, they are puzzled.

They are puzzled in three ways:

1. They are confused by the Jewish rulers who are rumored to want to kill Jesus.
2. They wonder about whether Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament.
3. They are confused about where Jesus is from.

First, as to the Jewish rulers, the people are confused. (vss. 25-26)

They know, or have heard, that they want to kill Jesus. Even in Galilee, Jesus' and His brothers had heard this. But here is Jesus teaching in the Temple. Everyone can see Him there and the Jewish rulers.

Why do they do nothing? People are wondering.

Next, the people are wondering then if Jesus really is the Messiah. (vs. 26)

Possibly that is the reason that the rulers are not arguing with Him, arresting Him and dragging Him off to die.

Maybe the rulers know something about Jesus that they are not telling anyone.

Maybe they know that He really is the Christ. Though, why then would they want to kill Him?

Finally, the people are confused about where Jesus is from. (vs. 27)

Their thinking runs like this: We know where Jesus is from. But no one will know where the Christ is from.

They are wrong on both counts.

They think that they know where Jesus is from. Obviously, He's from Nazareth in Galilee. Wrong!

Or, maybe we should say, partly wrong, or only partly right, incomplete at least.

They think that no one knows where the Christ will be from. Wrong! Completely wrong!

Anyone who read the Scriptures knew where the Christ would be from.

Matthew 2:1-6 The chief priests are quoting from Micah. He will be from Bethlehem.

Matthew 2:15 tells us that He will come out of Egypt.

Jeremiah 23:5-6 He will come from David.

Isaiah 9:1-7 He will be from Galilee.

Daniel 7:13-14 He will come from heaven.

Isaiah 49:15-20 He will be God Himself, come to us from heaven.

It does seem confusing. I can understand why people might say "no one knows where He is from."

But, in fact, they did know. He would be from Bethlehem and Galilee and Egypt and heaven.

How could He be from all those places?

Well, now we know, as unbelievable as it once seemed. It is now rather simple.

He came from heaven to be born in Bethlehem, fled to Egypt, and came back to Galilee.

But, Jesus, when He answers the question wants to make clear which of these places is of greatest importance.

Where is He from? (vss. 28-29) He is from heaven, from beside the throne of God the Father.

Jesus comes from the Father.

This is of particular importance because Jesus wants them, and us, to know that God the Father sent Him.

This is the reason that John begins his gospel the way that he does.

John 1:1-5 He was with God.

John 1:9-13 He stepped out of eternity and came into the world. Will you receive Him? **John 13:20**

John 1:14-18 He came to show us the Father's glory, to explain the Father, to dwell among us.

So, God Himself from beside God the Father has come into our world, into our time, as one of us.

He came to tell us the truth. (vs. 28) He came as God the Father's representative. (vs. 28)

Jesus is sent by God from heaven into this world so that you will believe and know the truth.

There is no one else like this, no one who has ever spoken like this.

There is no one else that has proved it by His own prophesied death and resurrection.

So, what are you going to do about it?
Jesus has come from God the Father into our world so that you can know the truth and know God.
What are you going to do about it?
There are all kinds of things going on in this world, good, bad, clear, confusing, truth, lies...
But Jesus has come from God into this world to tell us what God, our creator, says.
Are you going to listen to Him?
Are you going to trust Him?
Are you going to do what He says?
Nothing could be more important.

Do you know what some people who heard Him then did?
They were trying to kill Him. Why? Because they didn't like what He was saying.
A man sent from God is speaking to them and they want to kill Him because they don't like what He's saying.
Don't be like that. That is stupid.
But some began believing in Him, trusting Him. (vss. 30-32)
In fact, those who were trying to kill Jesus were doing so because others were believing in Him.
Jesus then answers their anger by taking the conversation in a new direction, where He is going.

II. Do you know where Jesus went?

John 7:30-36

Consider what He says in verses 33-34. Jesus is going back to the Father.
And they can't come. They will not be able to find Him.
They are instantly puzzled again. (vss. 35-36) They are wondering if Jesus is heading off to Athens or Rome.
Nothing of the sort. Jesus is explaining clearly, if they would pay attention, that He's going back to heaven.
Even worse, for those with whom Jesus is here speaking, He's telling them that they can't come to heaven!
Why? It is because they are not trusting Him.
He came into their world, and they are not receiving Him. They do not welcome Him.
And the same would be true for you. Jesus is speaking to you across the ages through the Bible.
Will you welcome Him into your life? Will you receive Him?
Will you listen to Him, trust Him, obey Him?
He has come from God after all, and now gone back to God.

Do you know where Jesus is right now?
In one sense He is with us through the power of the Holy Spirit of God whom He has sent.
In another sense He sits at the right hand of God, serving as our great High Priest and mediator.
Hebrews 1:1-3 Jesus became the atoning sacrifice that we all need and sat down in heaven.
Hebrews 4:7-16 Jesus want you to draw near to Him, your reigning High Priest in heaven.
Hebrews 7:23-27 He is constantly praying for you if you trust in Him.
The present ministry of Jesus Christ to you is possible because He is right now in heaven.

This old world is going to be a mess, and increasingly so before Jesus finally returns.
We just bombed Iran. Iran will retaliate. Wars will come and go, as will governments.
There will be earthquakes, storms, fires, heat, cold, rain, and droughts. No one will solve these problems.
People will get elected, or not, different parties will come and go.
You will get sick, then get better, maybe get sick again.
You will be sad, then happy. There will be hardships and joys.
Everything matters. You need to hang on to Jesus, trusting Him, repenting of sin, growing in Him.
And then you will die, or Jesus comes back in the sky.
Then we're done. Then you go to hell or heaven, depending on if you trust the one who came to save you.
If you trust in Jesus and follow Him, then you go to heaven where He is forever.
You get to have a place in the coming New Heavens and New Earth that He is preparing.
It will be better and more real than anything you've ever experienced, and you'll have perfect health.

Where are you from? Where are you going? Do you know? There is nothing more important for you.
Jesus is in heaven with the Father. He wants you there. Don't you want to be there with Him?