

**John 7:1-29**  
**July 20, 2025**

**Open with Prayer**

**HOOK:**

Topic: "x"

[Does this topic touch my audience? Does it meet a need for them? What questions are they asking about this topic? What pain points or problems are they having with this topic? Do I know what I'm talking about? Live what I'm talking about?]

- What is my personal experience with "x?"
- What are my failure points or pain points with "x?"
- Transition to "we" all deal with "x"

**Transition:**

**BOOK:**

***Jesus Goes to the Feast of Tabernacles***

<sup>7</sup> After this, Jesus went around in Galilee, purposely staying away from Judea because the Jews there were waiting to take his life.

<sup>2</sup> But when the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles was near,

<sup>3</sup> Jesus' brothers said to him, "You ought to leave here and go to Judea, so that your disciples may see the miracles you do.

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

<sup>5</sup> For even his own brothers did not believe in him.

<sup>6</sup> Therefore Jesus told them, "The right time for me has not yet come; for you any time is right.

<sup>7</sup> The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that what it does is evil.

<sup>8</sup> You go to the Feast. I am not yet going up to this Feast, because for me the right time has not yet come."

<sup>9</sup> Having said this, he stayed in Galilee.

<sup>10</sup> However, after his brothers had left for the Feast, he went also, not publicly, but in secret.

<sup>11</sup> Now at the Feast the Jews were watching for him and asking, "Where is that man?"

<sup>12</sup> Among the crowds there was widespread whispering about him. Some said, "He is a good man."

Others replied, "No, he deceives the people."

<sup>13</sup> But no one would say anything publicly about him for fear of the Jews.

***Jesus Teaches at the Feast***

<sup>14</sup> Not until halfway through the Feast did Jesus go up to the temple courts and begin to teach.

<sup>15</sup> The Jews were amazed and asked, "How did this man get such learning without having studied?"

<sup>16</sup> Jesus answered, “My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me.

<sup>17</sup> If anyone chooses to do God’s will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.

<sup>18</sup> He who speaks on his own does so to gain honor for himself, but he who works for the honor of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him.

<sup>19</sup> Has not Moses given you the law? Yet not one of you keeps the law. Why are you trying to kill me?”

<sup>20</sup> “You are demon-possessed,” the crowd answered. “Who is trying to kill you?”

<sup>21</sup> Jesus said to them, “I did one miracle, and you are all astonished.

<sup>22</sup> Yet, because Moses gave you circumcision (though actually it did not come from Moses, but from the patriarchs), you circumcise a child on the Sabbath.

<sup>23</sup> Now if a child can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses may not be broken, why are you angry with me for healing the whole man on the Sabbath?

<sup>24</sup> Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment.”

### **Is Jesus the Christ?**

<sup>25</sup> At that point some of the people of Jerusalem began to ask, “Isn’t this the man they are trying to kill?”

<sup>26</sup> Here he is, speaking publicly, and they are not saying a word to him. Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Christ?

<sup>27</sup> But we know where this man is from; when the Christ comes, no one will know where he is from.”

<sup>28</sup> Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, “Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him,

<sup>29</sup> but I know him because I am from him and he sent me.”

### **Process Observations/Questions:**

Q: What stood out to you? What questions do you have? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you learn about man? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you learn about God or Jesus or the Holy Spirit? [Let people engage]

Q: What is your takeaway? [Let people engage]

### **LOOK:**

If we really seek God’s will, then we will not worry over who gets the glory. All truth is God’s truth and God alone deserves the glory for what He has taught us. No teacher or preacher can take the credit for what only can come from God. If he does go after the glory, then it is proof that his teaching is self-generated and not received from God.

### **Close in Prayer**

### **Commentaries for Today's Lesson:**

***Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). The Bible Exposition Commentary (Vol. 1, pp. 314-317). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.***

#### **Before the Feast: Disbelief (John 7:1–10)**

Mary bore other children, with Joseph as their natural father (Matt. 13:55–56; Mark 6:1–6); so Jesus would have been their half brother. It seems incredible that His brothers could have lived with Him all those years and not realized the uniqueness of His person. Certainly they knew about His miracles (see John 7:3–4) since everybody else did. Having been in the closest contact with Him, they had the best opportunity to watch Him and test Him; yet they were still unbelievers.

Here were men going up to a religious feast, yet rejecting their own Messiah! How easy it is to follow tradition and miss eternal truth. The publicans and sinners were rejoicing at His message, but His own half brothers were making fun of Him.

These men certainly had the world's point of view: if you want to get a following, use your opportunities to do something spectacular. Jerusalem would be crowded with pilgrims and this would give Jesus the ideal "platform" to present Himself and win disciples. No doubt the brothers knew that the multitude of disciples had deserted Jesus (John 6:66). This was His opportunity to recoup His losses. Satan had offered a similar suggestion three years before (Matt. 4:1ff).

Jesus had already turned down the crowd's offer to make Him King (John 6:15), and He was not about to yield to them in any way. Celebrities might ride to success on the applause of the crowd, but God's servants know better. By doing miracles during the feast, at the "official city," Jesus could muster a crowd, reveal Himself as Messiah, and overcome the enemy. The suggestion, of course, came from hearts and minds blinded by unbelief. This unbelief had been prophesied in Psalm 69:8—"I am become a stranger unto My brethren, and an alien unto My mother's children." (Since Jesus was not Joseph's natural son, He could not say "My father's children.") It was not the right time for Jesus to show Himself to the world (John 14:22ff). One day He shall return, and "every eye shall see Him" (Rev. 1:7). We have noticed that our Lord lived on a "divine timetable" that was marked out by the Father (John 2:4; 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20; 12:23; 13:1; 17:1).

Jesus was exercising caution because He knew that the Jewish leaders wanted to kill Him. Though they were "religious" leaders, they were a part of "the world" that hated Jesus because He exposed their evil works. By His character and His ministry, He revealed the shallowness and emptiness of their futile religious system; He called the people back to the reality of life in God. History reveals that the "religious system" often persecutes the very prophets of God who are sent to save it!

Some manuscripts do not have the word *yet* in John 7:8, but its absence does not alter the thrust of the statement. Jesus was certainly not lying or being evasive; rather, He was exercising sensible caution. Suppose He told His brothers His plans, and they told somebody else? Could the information possibly get to the leaders? "I am going to the feast when the right time comes,"

is what He said. After His family had gone, Jesus went to Jerusalem “under cover,” so as not to call attention to Himself.

In our Lord’s actions, we see a beautiful illustration of divine sovereignty and human responsibility. The Father had a plan for His Son, and nothing could spoil that plan. Jesus did not tempt the Father by rushing to the feast, nor did He lag behind when the proper time had come for Him to attend the feast. It requires spiritual discernment to know God’s timing.

### **In the Midst of the Feast: Debate (John 7:11–36)**

Note that this public debate about the Lord Jesus involved three different groups of people. First, of course, were the Jewish leaders (“the Jews”) who lived in Jerusalem and were attached to the temple ministry. This would include the Pharisees and the chief priests (most of whom were Sadducees) as well as the scribes. These men differed theologically, but they agreed on one thing: their opposition to Jesus Christ and their determination to get rid of Him. The exceptions would be Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea (John 19:38–42).

The second group would be “the people” (John 7:12, 20, 31–32). This would be the festival crowd that had come to Jerusalem to worship. Many of them would not be influenced by the attitude of the religious leaders at Jerusalem. You will note in John 7:20 that “the people” were amazed that anybody would want to kill Jesus! They were not up to date on all the gossip in the city and had to learn the hard way that Jesus was considered a law-breaker by the officials. The third group was composed of the Jews who resided in Jerusalem (John 7:25). They, of course, would have likely sided with the religious leaders.

The debate began before Jesus even arrived at the city, and it centered on *His character* (John 7:11–13). The religious leaders “kept seeking” Jesus, while the crowd kept arguing whether He was a good man or a deceiver. He would have to be one or the other, because a truly good man would not deceive anybody. Yes, Jesus is either what He claims to be, or He is a liar.

But when Jesus began to teach openly in the temple, the debate shifted to *His doctrine* (John 7:14–19). Character and doctrine go together, of course. It would be foolish to trust the teachings of a liar! The Jews were amazed at what He taught because He did not have any credentials from their approved rabbinical schools. But since He lacked this “proper accreditation,” His enemies said that His teachings were nothing but private opinions and not worth much. It has often been said that Jesus taught with authority, while the scribes and Pharisees taught from authorities, quoting all the famous rabbis.

Jesus explained that His doctrine came from the Father. He had already made it clear that He and the Father were one in the works that He performed (John 5:17) and in the judgment that He executed (John 5:30). Now He claimed that His teachings also came from the Father, and He would make that astounding claim again (John 8:26, 38). When I teach the Word of God, I can claim authority for the Bible but not for all of my interpretations of the Bible. Jesus rightly could claim absolute authority for everything that He taught!

But does not *every* religious teacher make a similar claim? How, then, can we know that Jesus is teaching us the truth? *By obeying what He tells us to do.* God’s Word proves itself true to those

who will sincerely do it. The British preacher F.W. Robertson said that “obedience is the organ of spiritual knowledge.” John 7:17 literally reads, “If any man is willing to do His [God’s] will, he shall know.” This explains why the Jewish leaders did not understand Jesus’ teachings: they had stubborn wills and would not submit to Him (John 5:40).

Is our Lord suggesting here a “pragmatic test” for divine truth? Is He saying, “Try it! If it works, it must be true!” and thus suggesting that if it does not work it must be false? This kind of a test would lead to confusion, for almost any cultist could say, “I tried what the cult teaches, and it works!”

No, our Lord’s statement goes much deeper. He was not suggesting a shallow “taste test” but rather the deep personal commitment of the person to truth. The Jews depended on education and authorities and received their doctrine secondhand, but Jesus insisted that we experience the authority of truth *personally*. The Jewish leaders were attempting to *kill Jesus*, yet at the same time they claimed to understand God’s truth and obey it. This proves that an enlightened and educated mind is no guarantee of a pure heart or a sanctified will. Some of the world’s worst criminals have been highly intelligent and well-educated people.

Satan offered Adam and Eve knowledge, but it was knowledge based on disobedience (Gen. 3:5). Jesus offered knowledge as the result of obedience: first the yoke of responsibility, then the joy of knowing God’s truth. Dr. G. Campbell Morgan said it perfectly: “When men are wholly, completely consecrated to the will of God and want to do that above everything else, then they find out that Christ’s teaching is divine, that it is the teaching of God.”

If we really seek God’s will, then we will not worry over who gets the glory. All truth is God’s truth and God alone deserves the glory for what He has taught us. No teacher or preacher can take the credit for what only can come from God. If he does go after the glory, then it is proof that his teaching is self-generated and not received from God. This is the origin of many cults and church splits: somebody “invents” a doctrine, takes credit for it, and uses it to divide God’s people.

The first “debate” was with the Jews: but the visitors to the city entered into the discussion (John 7:20). Jesus had boldly announced that the leaders wanted to kill Him because He had violated the Sabbath and then claimed to be God (see John 5:10–18). The orthodox Jews broke the Sabbath laws when they had their sons circumcised on the Sabbath, so why could He not heal a man on the Sabbath? “Why go ye about to kill Me?”

The visitors, of course, did not know that their leaders were out to kill Jesus; so they challenged His statement. But their reply contained a serious accusation—that Jesus had a demon. This was not a new accusation, for the leaders had said it before (Matt. 9:32ff; 10:25; 11:18–19; 12:24ff). “You must be crazy to think that anybody wants to kill You!”

Our Lord used the very Law of Moses to refute the enemy’s argument; but He knew that they would not give in. Why? Because their standard of judgment was not honest. They evaluated things on the basis of superficial examination of the facts. They judged on the basis of “seems”

and not “is.” Unfortunately, too many people make that same mistake today. John 7:24 is the opposite of verse 17, where Jesus called for sincere devotion to truth.

The residents of Jerusalem entered the conversation (John 7:25). They knew that the rulers wanted to kill Jesus, and they were amazed that He was teaching openly and getting away with it! Perhaps the rulers had been convinced that indeed He is the Messiah, sent from God! Then why were they not worshiping Him and leading others to worship Him?

Their question (John 7:25) suggested a negative answer: “No, the rulers do not believe that He is the Christ, do they?” They were able to defend their conclusion with logic:

1. Nobody knows where the Christ comes from.
2. We know where Jesus of Nazareth came from.
3. Conclusion: Jesus cannot be the Messiah.

Once again, the people could not see the truth because they were blinded by what they thought were dependable facts. Jesus had met this same kind of resistance in the synagogue in Capernaum (John 6:42ff). Even the learned teachers—the “expert builders”—would not be able to identify the Chief Cornerstone, even though they had studied the God-given “blueprints” for centuries! (Acts 4:11)

At this point, our Lord raised His voice so that everybody could hear (note also John 7:37). He was probably speaking in a tone revealing irony: “Yes, you think you know Me and where I came from! But really, you do not!” Then He explained why they did not know Him: *they did not know the Father!* This was a serious accusation to make against an orthodox Jew, for the Jews prided themselves in knowing the true God, the God of Israel.

But Jesus went even further: He boldly asserted that He not only knew the Father, but was sent by Him! He was once again claiming to be God! He was not simply *born* into this world like any other human; He was *sent* to earth by the Father. This means that He existed before He was born on the earth.

This was certainly a crisis hour in His ministry, and some of the leaders tried to have Him arrested; but “His hour was not yet come.” Many of the pilgrims put their faith in Him. It was a faith based on miracles, but at least it was a beginning (see John 2:23; 6:2, 26). Nicodemus first became interested in Jesus because of His miracles (John 3:1–2), and eventually he openly professed faith in Christ.

The Pharisees and chief priests, who presided over the Jewish religious establishment, resented the fact that the people were trusting in Jesus. Apparently these “believers” were not afraid to tell what they had done (John 7:13, 32). This time, the rulers sent members of the temple guard to arrest Jesus, but it was Jesus who “arrested” them! He warned them that they had but “a little while” to hear the truth, believe, and be saved (see John 12:35ff). It was not Jesus who was in danger, but those who wanted to arrest Him!

As in previous messages, the people misunderstood what Jesus was saying. Within six months, Jesus would go back to the Father in heaven, and the unsaved Jews would not be able to follow

Him. What a contrast between “where I am, there ye cannot come” (John 7:34) and “that where I am, there ye may be also”! (John 14:3)

Had these men been willing to do God’s will, they would have known the truth. Soon it would be too late.

**Blum, E. A. (1985). *John*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 298-301) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books**

### **3. The ministry in galilee (7:1–9)**

This section prepares the way for another confrontation of Jesus with His opponents in Jerusalem. This ministry in relative obscurity in Galilee provides a delay in the coming conflict.

7:1. **After this** is a vague time reference. Since the events recorded in chapter 6 took place shortly before the Passover (6:4), that is, in April, and the Feast of Tabernacles (in October) was now near (7:2), about six months were spent by **Jesus** in His ministry **in Galilee**. Galilee was safer because His enemies were in **Judea ... waiting to take His life**.

7:2. The **Feast of Tabernacles** was one of the three great **Jewish** feasts. Josephus called it their holiest and greatest feast (*The Antiquities of the Jews* 8. 4. 1). This feast, also called the Feast of Ingathering, was a time of thanksgiving for harvest. It was a happy time; devout Jews lived outdoors in booths made of tree branches for seven days as a reminder of God’s provision in the desert during their forefather’s wanderings. The feast also signified that God dwells with His people.

7:3. **Jesus’ brothers**, sons of Mary and Joseph after Jesus’ birth, were at this time unbelievers (cf. Mark 3:21, 31–35; 6:3; John 7:5). They logically argued that the messianic question could not be settled in Galilee, as Jerusalem was the religious capital. The popular Feast of Tabernacles would be the right time for Jesus to present Himself as the Messiah. If He would display His powers in **Judea**, He might be able to recapture the lost crowds.

7:4–5. It did not seem rational to Jesus’ brothers for Him not to show off His glory. If He really was what He claimed to be, they reasoned, He should publicly demonstrate it. They advised Him to display Himself in a powerful, brilliant way: **Show Yourself to the world**. But God’s way was a public display on a cross of humiliation. John explained that **even His own brothers did not believe in Him**. This sad note sounds again (cf. 1:10–11; 12:37). Proximity to Jesus, either in a family or as a disciple, does not guarantee faith.

7:6–7. **Jesus** responded that His time differed from theirs. They could **come** and go without any significance; **for them any time is right**. But He always pleased the Father, so His time movements were those the Father desired. It was not yet time for the public manifestation (the Cross). Several times John noted that Jesus’ **time had not yet come** (2:4; 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20). Then in His intercessory prayer, just before the Cross, He began, “Father, the time has come” (17:1; cf. 12:23, 27; 13:1).

The world was not dangerous to the brothers of Jesus because they were part of it (**the world cannot hate you**). But the world hated Jesus **because** He is not of it. He had come into it as Light and pointed out its sin and rebellion against the Father. The world has its religions, its programs, its plans, its values, but Christ witnessed **that it is all evil** (*ponēra*, “wicked”). Partly because of this, He lived carefully in order to fulfill the Father’s will.

7:8–9. **I am not yet going up to this Feast** is clearly the thought in light of verse 10. However, most Greek editions of the New Testament omit the word “yet,” because it is considered a difficult reading, but it is more likely in the original. If Jesus said, “I am not going up to the Feast,” was He lying since He *did* go to the Feast? (v. 10) No, He simply meant that He was not going up to the Feast “right then,” as they suggested. Jesus then for a time **stayed in Galilee**, doing the tasks of ministry which the Father had ordained.

“Going up” may have a geographical meaning (since Jerusalem is in the hills) as well as a theological meaning (going back to the Father).

#### *D. Jesus’ return to Jerusalem and the resumption of hostility (7:10–10:42).*

1. the feast of tabernacles (7:10–8:59).

a. *The anticipation of the feast (7:10–13).*

7:10. Because of plots to kill Him (vv. 1, 25) Jesus made a covert entry into the city. It was not yet the time for His messianic manifestation (the Cross).

7:11–13. While Jesus’ enemies **were** searching **for Him**, people were debating this controversial Teacher. The opposition against Jesus was growing. A **widespread whispering** (lit., “grumbling”; cf. 6:41, 61), occurred. (Cf. the Israelites’ grumbling in the wilderness.) The charge, **He deceives the people**, had ominous tones for the penalty for this, according to Talmudic law, was death by stoning. Since the whole crowd was Jewish, **fear of the Jews** meant fear of the religious leaders.

#### *b. Jesus at the feast (7:14–36).*

7:14–15. The first three days passed without anyone seeing **Jesus**. The crowds wondered if He would come and perhaps claim to be the Messiah. Then **halfway through the Feast** He began teaching in **the temple courts**. As the official religious leaders listened to Him along with the crowds they **were amazed** (cf. Mark 1:22). His teaching was learned and spiritually penetrating. Yet He had never been a disciple in any Rabbinic school. They wondered how this could be possible.

7:16–17. The religious authorities figured that either a person studied in a traditional school or else he was self-taught. But Jesus’ reply pointed to a third alternative. His **teaching** was **from** God who had commissioned Him (cf. 12:49–50; 14:11, 24). **Jesus** was God-taught, and to know Jesus properly one must be God-taught (6:45). In order to evaluate Jesus’ claim, one must desire **to do God’s will**. Since Jesus is God’s will for man, people must believe in Him (6:29). Faith is the prerequisite for understanding. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6).

7:18. If Jesus were only self-taught (speaking **on His own**) or a genius, then His ministry would be self-exalting. But He did not seek **honor for Himself**. The true goal of man should be to

glorify (**honor**) God and enjoy Him forever. Jesus is what man ought to be. His purpose is to represent His Father correctly (1:18). He is a **Man of truth** (i.e., reliable; cf. 6:28; 8:26) without any injustice.

7:19. The audience boasted in Moses' **Law** (9:28). Jesus attacked their self-confident religion. They assumed they were Law-keepers. But their hearts (inner thoughts) were full of evil (Mark 7:6–7, 20–22; Matt. 5:21–22). He knew them (John 2:24–25), and that their hatred would lead to murder.

7:20. Instead of repenting because His light had rebuked their darkness (3:19–20), they insulted Him, saying He was **demon-possessed**. People had said the same of John the Baptist (Matt. 11:18). Jesus had told His half-brothers the world hated Him (John 7:7), because “everyone who does evil hates the light” (3:20). To call Jesus, who is sent from God, demon-possessed is to call light darkness (cf. 8:48, 52; 10:20). They denied His accusation that they were **trying to kill** Him. But earlier they were in fact trying to do that very thing (5:18). (Cf. Peter who denied he would deny Jesus; Mark 14:29.)

7:21–23. The **one miracle** (lit., “work”) Jesus referred to was His healing of the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda, which He had performed in Jerusalem at His last visit (5:1–18). This started a fierce controversy. Circumcision is a religious rite that predated **Moses**. Abraham circumcised as a sign of the covenant (Gen. 17:9–14). But **Moses gave** Israel **circumcision** in the sense of establishing it as part of the Levitical system. Under the Mosaic Law, “On the eighth day the boy is to be circumcised” (Lev. 12:3). If that day fell on a Sabbath, circumcising a boy would seemingly violate the Sabbath Law of rest. Yet the Jews circumcised **on the Sabbath**. Therefore, Jesus argued, if care for one part of the body was permitted, then certainly the **healing** of a **whole** body (that of the paralytic) should be allowed **on the Sabbath**. Hence they had no reason to be **angry** with Him.

7:24. Their problem was that they understood the Scriptures only superficially. They majored in minors and missed the intents of many passages (cf. Matt. 23:23; John 5:39–40). They were **judging by mere appearances**. Their superficial understanding was caused by their hostility against God's Representative. In their darkness they erred. Jesus called them to **make a right judgment**; ultimately this was a call for them to repent.

7:25–26. Some of the local people were amazed at His bold public teaching. They knew of a plot **to kill** Him. Yet the leaders were **not** doing what **they** said they would do. Why? Had **the authorities** changed their minds? People were confused over the lack of leadership in the nation. They felt that if He was a deceiver, He should be locked up, or if He was the Messiah, they should accept Him.

7:27. The crowds assumed that Jesus (**this Man**) was only a Galilean carpenter from the city of Nazareth. They also believed that the Messiah (**the Christ**) would be unknown until His public appearing. A reader of the Gospels recognizes the irony. Jesus is more than a Galilean; He is the *Logos* who was virgin-born in Bethlehem. Yet He was relatively unknown until His manifestation (the Cross and the Resurrection).

7:28–29. **Cried out** introduced a solemn announcement (cf. 1:15; 7:37; 12:44). He responded to their supposed knowledge of Him (7:27) with irony. He is **from** the Father. God is **true** (“reliable”; cf. v. 18; 8:26) and had **sent** Jesus. Whereas His enemies did **not know** Jesus or God (1:18; cf. Matt. 11:27), Jesus knows the Father **because** of His origin (John 1:1, 14, 18) and divine mission.

*White, J. E. (1998). John. In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), Holman Concise Bible Commentary (p. 475). Broadman & Holman Publishers.*

### **God’s Time (7:1–13)**

Some might wonder why Jesus would purposefully stay away from Judea because the Jews there were waiting to take His life, especially in light of the fact that Jesus willingly went to His death at the time of the crucifixion. Simply put, it was not time. The time for surrendering of His life would come, but not now; there was more God desired to be accomplished through His life. All would transpire at the moment God intended.

### **Authoritative Teacher (7:14–24)**

At the appropriate time, halfway through the Feast of the Tabernacles, Jesus revealed Himself and began to teach. The crowds were surprised that Jesus had not studied under any of the noted Jewish scholars. Jesus responded to their amazement. His teaching was not his “own” but “comes from him who sent me.” This interchange should not be taken as a disparagement of education or learning. Jesus was uniquely empowered and gifted by God for His mission, and His words were God’s words.

### **Spirit Promised (7:25–44)**

Many falsely understood that no one would know the origin or birthplace of the Messiah, and since they knew of Jesus’ origins, He could not be the Messiah. This is to be understood in light of the Jewish tradition, though not a biblical idea, that the Messiah would be a man of mystery. As a result they tried to seize Jesus, but apparently they were unable to lay even a single hand upon Him because “his time had not yet come.” On the last day of the feast, Jesus promised to all who would believe in Him “streams of living water,” which the author of the Gospel interpreted for us as the Spirit given later at Pentecost.

*Allen, J. P. (1972). John. In H. F. Paschall & H. H. Hobbs (Eds.), The Teacher’s Bible Commentary (pp. 673-674). Broadman and Holman Publishers.*

### **Open Hostility with the Jews (John 7:1–53)**

*The passage*—Another evidence of John’s use of time is seen in verse 1. In a single sentence he covers the events of six months. He refers to the end of Jesus’ ministry of special training around Galilee.

It is now October and the Feast of Tabernacles, only six months before the crucifixion. The feast was celebrated for seven days with a holy convocation on the eighth. It was a joyous commemoration of Israel’s dwelling in tents in the wilderness.

The Jewish leaders have made Jesus an open issue (vv. 11, 12). So the question is, will he go up to Jerusalem and risk the hostility of the rulers?

**Special points**—Jesus’ brothers enter the picture here in a surprising way. Apparently they have unworthy motives. Their names appear in Matthew 13:55. They were actually his half brothers, all younger than he, and were for years under his care and support. They had been friendly when John wrote 2:13, but certainly they had not accepted his messianic claims. Verse 5 makes that clear. They either wished to involve him in difficulties, or gain from his popularity, or cause a showdown. In any case, they were acting beyond their rights.

It here appears how sensitive Jesus was to timing. He knew what was ahead, but he refused to let others force him to be a victim of circumstances. He would act, not merely react. He was in control; he would give his life, not just have it taken. So he spoke of his time, “My time is not yet come” (v. 6). The word means “season,” the fitting and proper season for showing himself to the world (v. 4).

The time was really nearer than the brothers thought. Jesus would, indeed, go up to Jerusalem, but not on their terms. He went and found the city in a turmoil over him.

John portrays three groups in the bitter debates. “The Jews” (v. 11) refers to the hostile ruling class. The depth of their feelings is seen in the literal reading of verse 11, “Where is that fellow?” On the other hand, “the people” (v. 12) denotes the Galilean crowd. They were divided but were asking honest questions. The third attitude is seen in “the people of Jerusalem” (v. 25, RSV). They knew their leaders better than the visitors to the city. They knew that Jesus’ charge that they wanted to kill him (vv. 19–20) was true.

Jesus would not remain in hiding. He boldly disputed with his accusers. And on the last great day of the feast he made another startling claim. One of the features of the worship had been the daily pouring out of the drink offering. With that in his mind, Jesus cried out, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink” (v. 37). With courage he declared that God would no more honor the ceremonies of the ancient wells of salvation. Henceforth there was to be a new source of the Water of life. It would be in him.

**Truth for today**—There is a significant truth in verse 17. It is a supreme test for knowing what is God’s will. “If any man’s will is to do his will, he shall know . . .” (RSV). In Jesus’ usage, that was to be their way of knowing whether God had sent him. In ours, the same principle applies. Whoever wants to know God’s will must *want to do* that will before he can know it. It doesn’t say, “if any man’s will is to *know* his will.” The question is on doing.

God never submits his will to us for our approval! He shows himself to us if we desire to act. Our acceptance is to be in advance. Then one truly wants it. God always reveals the next step to us while we are on the way to doing what we already know to do.

**The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). John 7:1-29. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.**