

John 7 – Jesus – The Living Water

This chapter contains the wonderful truths that Jesus is the Water of Life and that He promises to give the Holy Spirit to those who believe on Him. - McGee

Jesus at the Feast of Booths

Joh 7:1 After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him.

“After these things.” This is a common expression with John who is giving us a chronological picture. The events of chapter 6 took place in Galilee at the Sea of Galilee; but before that, Jesus had been in Jerusalem where there had arisen the controversy concerning Him at the pool of Bethesda. It seems that the events of chapter 6 transpired about one year before the Cross in April; the events in chapter 7 occur about six months later, in October. Matthew 15–18 and Mark 7–9 and Luke 9 relate incidents which transpired during this period.

During the last year of His ministry, Jesus confined His activities to Galilee. It says that He walked no longer in Jewry, which means in Judaea, because the religious rulers there had a plot to kill Him. Jesus is following a divine schedule which His Father had given Him. These men could not touch Him until His time was come. We are now entering the last six months of His life, and the first incident which John records in that period is this occurrence of the Feast of Tabernacles.

Verse Joh_7:1 reveals that a storm is gathering about the person of Christ. Six months later that storm will break in all its fury upon Jesus on the Cross. Friend, that storm is still going on. There is more difference of opinion about Him than about any other person who has ever lived. They blaspheme Him and say the worst things about Him that ever have been said. He's controversial today.

Although the storm is gathering, Jesus chose this time to abandon His method of staying away, and He went up to Jerusalem because it was the Feast of Tabernacles. - McGee

Joh 7:2 Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand.

There were three feasts which every male Jew was required to attend in Jerusalem. Our Lord kept the Law; He had to go up to Jerusalem during the Feasts of Passover, Tabernacles, and Pentecost. The Feast of Tabernacles is described in Leviticus 23. This was a feast of great joy to celebrate Israel's wonderful deliverance out of the land of Egypt. Because they had lived in tents during the wilderness journey, this is a feast of tents, or booths. They didn't have campers, you see, but they did camp out in booths. There was the blowing of trumpets, and seventy bullocks were offered. There was the pouring out of water in the temple, with a double portion on the last day of the feast to remind them that God gave them water from the rock in the wilderness. They brought the water from the pool of Siloam and poured out literally barrels of water. During this festival, they illuminated the inner court with a regular torch parade. This was commemorating the pillar of fire that guided the children of Israel by night as they wandered in the wilderness. Now we can understand that the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire that led the children of Israel were both pictures of our Lord Jesus Christ.

All the feasts of Jehovah in the Old Testament have been fulfilled except the Feast of Tabernacles. This will be fulfilled when our Lord returns to the earth. Thus, it symbolizes the great joy of that time.

Joh 7:3-5 His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." For even His brothers did not believe in Him.

John 7 – Jesus – The Living Water

These brethren are not His disciples but are His half–brothers. Their names are given to us in Mat_13:55: James, Joses, Simon, and Judas. His half–brother, James, is the one who wrote the Epistle of James; His half–brother, Judas, probably is the one who wrote the Epistle of Jude. That was much later, of course, and at this point His brothers do not believe in Him. They are giving Him advice that He can't use at all. - McGee

Joh 7:6 Then Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready.

They are advising Jesus out of their unbelief, but Jesus does not take their advice. He is moving according to schedule, but it is His Father's schedule. He is not following the wisdom of the world, nor did He ever appeal to His own mind—it isn't that He doesn't think it is the right time to go. He is on a definite schedule from the Father; He is doing His Father's will.

Notice the little word yet in “My time is not yet come.” Jesus did not say that He would not go down to the feast, but He was not going down with them publicly to win public favor by something spectacular, or whatever they wanted Him to do. He would go at His Father's appointed time and in His Father's way. – McGee

Joh 7:7-9 The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil. You go up to this feast. I am not yet going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come." When He had said these things to them, He remained in Galilee.

The world is hostile to Christ. The reason is that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Light of the World. He turns on that Light, and that Light reveals everything that is wrong; it reveals sin. He condemns sin. That is the reason He is hated even today. He condemns sin by His very presence, by His very life. This raises a hostility in man because the heart of man is evil. Christ went to the Cross because He loved the human family. Redeeming love is what has broken the heart of hostile man.

We see this so clearly in the life of Saul of Tarsus. He was breathing out threats. He hated the Lord Jesus and anyone who followed Him. But when he came to know the Lord Jesus as his Savior, it broke his heart, and he could say, “He loved me, and gave himself for me” (see Gal_3:20). – McGee

Joh 7:10 But when His brothers had gone up, then He also went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.

He probably traveled with His disciples on a back road and entered into the city through the sheep gate. I believe He always entered Jerusalem through the sheep gate until the time of His so–called triumphal entry when He appeared publicly, offering Himself to the nation and actually demanding that they either accept or reject Him. – McGee

Joh 7:11-13 Then the Jews sought Him at the feast, and said, "Where is He?" And there was much complaining among the people concerning Him. Some said, "He is good"; others said, "No, on the contrary, He deceives the people." However, no one spoke openly of Him for fear of the Jews.

The “Jews” are the religious rulers—they were looking for Him and expecting Him because the Law required that He come to the feast. There was a lot of discussion concerning Him, but it was all done quite secretly because anyone would be attacked for making any statement that would be inclined in His favor and would be in danger of arrest. - McGee

Joh 7:14 Now about the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught.

Quite suddenly, He appeared in the temple. This Feast of Tabernacles is in the calendar of God and sets before us the coming of Christ in His return to earth and the events and stages which lead up to that. This feast speaks of the consummation of all things. He will appear suddenly. “... and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple ...” (Mal_3:1). This will be fulfilled in His return to the earth. - McGee

John 7 – Jesus – The Living Water

Joh 7:15 And the Jews marveled, saying, "How does this Man know letters, having never studied?"

Have you noticed how often we find Jesus teaching? Note the priority which He gave to the Word of God. The Jews (these would be the religious leaders) were astounded because He had no formal training in the rabbinical schools. They marveled that He could speak as He did. Even His enemies were forced to admit, "Never man spake like this man" (v. Joh_7:46). - McGee

Joh 7:16 Jesus answered them and said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.

To reject the message of Jesus is to reject the message of God. In chapters 4 and 5, He has insisted that to reject Him is to reject God. Don't ever tell me that He didn't make Himself equal with God. You may reject that He is, but you can never say that the Bible does not declare Him to be equal with God. - McGee

Joh 7:17 If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.

"If anyone is willing to do His will" is the way Weymouth translates this. The Old Testament invites, "O taste and see that the LORD is good ..." (Psa_34:8). We have an adage that says, "The proof of the pudding is in the eating of it." Jesus invites you; come and make a laboratory test. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." There must be an attitude of love for the Word of God. Someone has said that human knowledge must be known to be loved, but divine knowledge must be loved to be understood. Here we have the steps: knowledge, love, obedience. That is what He asks you to do.

It's so easy to sit on the sidelines and be a Monday morning quarterback. We love to tell others how it should have been done or to speak our mind without really knowing. Jesus says, "Taste the Lord!" "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." That is the wonder of the Word of God. Friend, if you are willing, God will make it real to you. The Holy Spirit will confirm it to you. - McGee

Joh 7:18 He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.

The question is whether men want to hear God. If they do, then God will speak to them in His Word. Then they will accept Jesus Christ who came to speak for the Father. Unfortunately, men are often more interested in a man who is seeking his own glory. If Jesus Christ had been trying to find some new cult, these men would have listened. But Jesus was not glorifying Himself; rather, He was giving all the glory to the Father and so "... the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" – McGee

Applications:

- 1. It is becoming and right to walk prudently: Christ did so.**
- 2. In religion the wisdom of this world is almost wholly wrong. It was so with Christ's brethren.**
- 3. A man's friends are often the last to believe in His greatness and goodness. It was so with Christ.**
- 4. The more a man resembles Christ, the more he will be hated by the world.**

- Biblical Illustrator

Joh 7:19 Did not Moses give you the law, yet none of you keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill Me?"

John 7 – Jesus – The Living Water

The Lord then made a direct accusation against the Jews. He reminded them that Moses gave them the law. They gloried in the fact that they possessed the law. They forgot that there was no virtue in merely possessing the law. The law demanded obedience to its precepts or commandments. Although they gloried in the law, evidently none of them kept it, for even then they were plotting to kill the Lord Jesus. The law expressly forbade murder. They were breaking the law in their intentions concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. – Believers' Bible Commentary

Joh 7:20-21 The people answered and said, "You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You?" Jesus answered and said to them, "I did one work, and you all marvel.

The people felt the sharp edge of Jesus' accusation but, rather than admitting He was right, they began to abuse Him. They said that He had a demon. They challenged His statement that any of them was seeking to kill Him.

Jesus now went back to the healing of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda. It was this miracle that stirred up the hatred of the Jewish leaders against Him, and it was at this point that they began their vicious plot to kill Him. The Lord reminded them that He did one work, and they all marveled at it. Not that they marveled at it with admiration, but rather they were shocked that He should do such a thing on the Sabbath. – Believers' Bible Commentary

Joh 7:22-24 Moses therefore gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath? Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

Circumcision is a rite which goes back to Abraham and is older than the Mosaic Law. He is showing them their own inconsistency in their practice. In trying to keep the Law, they broke the Law. If a child was eight days old on the Sabbath Day, they would break the Sabbath Law and circumcise the child. They have no reply to this! Then Jesus warns them against making superficial judgments. That is still a difficulty with most of us today. We make superficial judgments because we don't have all the facts. - McGee

Can This Be the Christ?

Joh 7:25-27 Now some of them from Jerusalem said, "Is this not He whom they seek to kill? But look! He speaks boldly, and they say nothing to Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is truly the Christ? However, we know where this Man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from."

By this time, it had become well-known in Jerusalem that the Jewish leaders were plotting against the Savior. Here some of the common people asked if this was not the One whom their rulers were pursuing.

They could not understand that the Lord Jesus was allowed to speak so openly and boldly. If the rulers hated Him as much as the people had been led to believe, why did they allow Him to continue? Is it possible that they had come to find out that He was truly the Messiah after all, as He claimed to be?

The people who did not believe Jesus to be the Messiah thought they knew where He came from. They believed He came from Nazareth. They knew His mother, Mary, and supposed that Joseph was His father. It was commonly believed by the Jews of that day that when the Messiah came, He would come suddenly and mysteriously. They had no idea that He would be born as a Baby and grow up as a Man. They should have known from the OT that He would be born in Bethlehem, but it seemed that they were quite ignorant of the details concerning the coming of the Messiah. That is why they said, "When Christ comes, no one knows where He is from."

John 7 – Jesus – The Living Water

Joh 7:28-29 Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple, saying, "You both know Me, and you know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me."

This is quite oratorical. Jesus is saying, "Do you really know Me? You think you know Me; you see Me, but you don't really know Me. You think you know where I have come from, but you don't really know." - McGee

Joh 7:30-31 Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come. And many of the people believed in Him, and said, "When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this Man has done?"

The Jews understood the significance of Jesus' words and realized He was claiming to be the Messiah. They considered this to be sheer blasphemy, and attempted to arrest Him, but were not able to lay hands on Him because His hour had not yet come. The power of God preserved the Lord Jesus from the wicked schemes of men until the time came when He should be offered up as a sacrifice for sin.

Actually, many of the people believed on the Lord Jesus. We would like to think that their belief was genuine. Their reasoning was this. What more could Jesus do to prove He was the Messiah? When the Christ came, if Jesus was not the Messiah, would He be able to do more numerous or more wonderful signs than Jesus had done? Obviously from their question they believed the miracles of Jesus proved Him to be the real Messiah. – Believers' Bible Commentary

Officers Sent to Arrest Jesus

Joh 7:32-33 The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things concerning Him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him. Then Jesus said to them, "I shall be with you a little while longer, and then I go to Him who sent Me.

As the Pharisees moved in and out among the people, they heard this undercurrent of conversation. The crowd was murmuring about the Savior, not in the sense of complaining against Him, but secretly revealing their admiration for Him. The Pharisees were afraid that this might enlarge into a great movement to accept Jesus, and so they sent officers to arrest Him.

The words of verse 33 were undoubtedly spoken to the officers who came to arrest Him, as well as to the Pharisees and to the people in general.

The Lord Jesus did not weaken His previous claims at all. If anything, He only strengthened them. He reminded them that He would only be with them a little while longer, and then He would go back to God the Father who sent Him. Undoubtedly this only made the Pharisees the more angry. - Believers' Bible Commentary

Joh 7:34-36 You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come." Then the Jews said among themselves, "Where does He intend to go that we shall not find Him? Does He intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? What is this thing that He said, 'You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come'?"

In a coming day, the Pharisees would seek Him and would not be able to find Him. There would come in their lives a time when they would need a Savior, but it would be too late. He would have gone back to heaven, and because of their unbelief and wickedness, they would not be able to meet Him there. The words of this verse are especially solemn. They remind us that there is such a thing as the passing of opportunity. Men may have the opportunity to be saved today; if they reject it, they may never have the opportunity again.

John 7 – Jesus – The Living Water

The Jews failed to understand the meaning of the Lord's words. They did not realize He was going back to heaven. They thought that perhaps He was going on a preaching tour, ministering to the Jewish people scattered among the Greeks, and also perhaps even teaching the Greeks themselves.

Again, they expressed their wonder at His words. What did He mean when He said that they would seek Him and would not be able to find Him? Where could He go without their being able to follow Him? The Jews here illustrate the blindness of unbelief. There is no heart as dark as the heart that refuses to accept the Lord Jesus. In our own day, we have the expression “there are none so blind as those who will not see.” This was exactly the case here. They did not want to accept the Lord Jesus, and therefore they could not.

Rivers of Living Water

Joh 7:37-39 On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Though not mentioned in the OT, the Jews had a ceremony of carrying water from the Pool of Siloam and pouring it into a silver basin by the altar of burnt offering for each of the first seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles. On the eighth day, this was not done, which made Christ's offer of the water of eternal life even more startling. The Jewish people had gone through this religious observance, and yet their hearts were not satisfied because they had not truly understood the deep meaning of the feast. Just before they departed for their homes, on the last day, that great day of the feast Jesus stood and cried out to them. He invited them to come to Him for spiritual satisfaction. Pay particular attention to the words. His invitation was extended to anyone. His gospel was a universal gospel. There was no one who could not be saved if he would simply come to Christ.

But notice the condition. The Scripture says, “If anyone thirsts.” “Thirst” here speaks of spiritual need. Unless a person knows he is a sinner, he will never want to be saved. Unless he realizes he is lost, he will never desire to be found. Unless one is conscious of a great spiritual lack in his life, he will never want to go to the Lord to have that need supplied. The Savior invited the thirsting soul to come to Him—not to the church, the preacher, the waters of baptism, or the Lord's Table. Jesus said, “Let him come to Me.” No one or nothing else will do. “Let him come to Me and drink.” To “drink” here means to appropriate Christ for oneself. It means to trust Him as Lord and Savior. It means to take Him into our lives as we would take a glass of water into our bodies.

Verse 38 proves that to come to Christ and drink is the same as to believe on Him. All who believe on Him will have their own needs supplied and will receive rivers of spiritual blessing that will flow out from them to others. All through the OT it was taught that those who accepted the Messiah would be helped themselves and would be channels of blessing to others (e.g. Isa_55:1). The expression “out of his heart will flow rivers of living water” means out of the person's inward parts or inner life would flow streams of help to others. Stott points out that we drink in small gulps or sips, but these are multiplied into a mighty confluence of flowing streams. Temple warns: “No one can be indwelt by the Spirit of God and keep that Spirit to himself. Where the Spirit is, He flows forth; if there is no flowing forth, He is not there.”

It is clearly stated that the expression “living water” refers to the Holy Spirit. Verse 39 is very important because it teaches that all who receive the Lord Jesus Christ also receive the Spirit of God. In other words, it is not true, as some claim, that the Holy Spirit comes to indwell people sometime after their conversion. This verse clearly and distinctly states that all who believe on Christ receive the Spirit. At the time the Lord Jesus spoke these words, the Holy Spirit had not yet been given. It was not until the Lord Jesus went back to heaven and was glorified that the Holy Spirit descended on the day of Pentecost. From that moment on, every true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ has been indwelt by the Holy Spirit. – Believers' Bible Commentary

John 7 – Jesus – The Living Water

Division Among the People

Joh 7:40-42 Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, "Truly this is the Prophet." Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Will the Christ come out of Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?"

Many who listened were now convinced that the Lord Jesus was the Prophet of whom Moses spoke in Deu_18:15, Deu_18:18. Others were even willing to acknowledge that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah. But some thought this was impossible. They believed that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and there was no prophecy in the OT that the Christ would come out of Galilee.

These Jews were right in believing that the Christ would come from the town of Bethlehem and be descended from David. If they had just taken the trouble to inquire, they would have found that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and that He was a direct descendant of David through Mary.

Are you also studying enough to verify if what people say is true?

Joh 7:43-44 So there was a division among the people because of Him. Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him.

Because of these differing opinions and because of their general ignorance, there was a division among the people because of Christ. It is still the same. Men and women are divided on the subject of Jesus Christ. Some say He was simply a Man like the rest of us. Others are willing to admit that He was the greatest Man who ever lived. But those who believe the Word of God know that "Christ ... is over all, the eternally blessed God" (Rom_9:5).

Efforts were still being made to arrest the Lord Jesus, but no one was successful in taking Him. As long as a person is walking in the will of God, there is no power on earth that can hinder him. "We are immortal until our work is done." The Lord's time had not yet come, and so men were unable to harm Him in any way.

Joh 7:45-46 Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why have you not brought Him?" The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!"

Now the Pharisees and chief priests had sent officers to take Jesus. The officers had returned but did not have the Lord with them. The chief priests and Pharisees were annoyed and asked the officers why they had not brought Him.

7:46 Here was an instance where sinful men were compelled to speak well of the Savior, even if they did not themselves accept Him. Their memorable words were, "No man ever spoke like this Man!" Doubtless these officers had listened to a good many men in their day, but they had never heard anyone speak with such authority, grace, and wisdom. – Believers' Bible Commentary

Joh 7:47-48 Then the Pharisees answered them, "Are you also deceived? Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him?"

In an effort to intimidate the officers, the Pharisees accused them of being deceived by Jesus. They reminded them that none of the rulers of the Jewish nation believed in Him. What a terrible argument this was! It was very much to their shame that leading men in the Jewish nation had failed to recognize the Messiah when He came.

These Pharisees were not only unwilling to believe on the Lord Jesus themselves, but it is clear that they did not want others to believe on Him either. So, it is today. Many who do not want to be saved themselves do everything in their power to prevent their relatives and friends from being saved also. – Believers' Bible Commentary

Joh 7:49 But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed."

John 7 – Jesus – The Living Water

Here the Pharisees spoke of the mass of the Jewish people as ignorant and accursed. Their argument was that if the common people knew anything at all about the Scriptures, they would know that Jesus was not the Messiah. The Pharisees could not have been more wrong! – Believers' Bible Commentary

Be careful, Life and death is in the tongue. Speaking curses is generally not wise.

Joh 7:50-53 Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, "Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?" They answered and said to him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee." And everyone went to his own house.

At this point Nicodemus spoke to them. It was he who came to Jesus by night and who learned that he must be born again. It would appear that Nicodemus had actually trusted the Lord Jesus Christ and been saved. Here he stepped forward, among the rulers of the Jews, to say a word for his Lord.

Nicodemus' point was that the Jews had not given Jesus a fair chance. The Jewish law did not judge a man before it heard his case. And yet that was what the Jewish leaders were doing at this very point. Were they afraid of the facts? The answer was obviously that they were.

Now the rulers turn on one of their own company, that is, on Nicodemus. They asked him with a sneer if he was also one of Jesus' followers from Galilee? Did he not know that the OT spoke of no prophet as coming out of Galilee? Here, of course, the rulers showed their own ignorance. Had they never read of the prophet Jonah? He had come from Galilee.

The Feast of Tabernacles was now over. The men returned to their own homes. Some had met the Savior face to face and trusted in Him. But the majority had rejected Him, and the leaders of the Jewish people were more determined than ever to do away with Him. They considered Him a threat to their religion and way of life.