

John Chapter 7

The main thrust of the (sections of 7:1 to 8:59), can be summarized as “high intensity hatred”, since the smoldering dislike of Jesus (in chapters 5 & 6), erupted into a blazing inferno.

The culmination of this hatred occurs (in 11:45-57), where the Jewish authorities plot to kill the Son of God, culminating ultimately in His crucifixion.

Both chapters deal with Jesus at the Feast of Booths, or Tabernacles, in Jerusalem.

Especially noteworthy is the fact that two major themes associated with Tabernacles, i.e., water and light, come to prominence in these two chapters (verses 37-39 and 8:12).

At the next Passover following this celebration of Tabernacles, Jesus was crucified.

The central truth that dominates this whole passage is that Jesus was on a divine timetable.

His life was not random but it was operated according to God’s sovereign and perfect timing and His direction.

John (7:1-13), has two parts:

- (1) Jesus’ avoidance of the wrong time in God’s sovereign plan (verses 1-9), and
- (2) Jesus’ perfect obedience to the right time in God’s sovereign plan (verses 10-13).

John 7:1 "After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him."

A 6 month gap most likely took place between (chapters 6 & 7).

While chapter 6 occurred around Passover (6:4 – In April), chapter 7 occurs at the Feast of Booths, or Tabernacles (October).

John wrote nothing about those months since his purpose was not to present an exhaustive chronology of Christ’s life but to portray Him as the Messiah and Son of God and show how men reacted to Him.

“Walked in Galilee”:

Chapter 6 indicates Jesus spent two days with the multitude of 20,000 people (6:22), but He spent 7 months teaching His 12 disciples who believed in Him.

This phrase subtly highlights the great importance of discipleship, for Jesus concentrated great lengths of time upon training His future spiritual leaders.

Jesus now carries His message to people other than the Jews.

The Jewish rulers want to catch Jesus and kill Him.

Most students of the Bible believe that Jesus ministered about six months to these people.

John 7:2 “Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand.”

This is the third major feast of the Jews.

Passover and Pentecost were the other two.

The Feast of Trumpets occurred on the first day of the seventh month.

The seventh month is equivalent, approximately, to our October.

The Feast of Trumpets, many Christians believe, is the time of year for the rapture, because the Lord will blow the trumpet.

This is signaling in the Feast of Tabernacles or the Fall Harvest.

Tabernacles is the same as ingathering which is from the fifteenth to the twenty-second day of the seventh month.

The people dwelt in booths to commemorate their wilderness wanderings.

Ethanim was one of the names this seventh month was called by, and another was Tisri.

Many animals were sacrificed during this Feast of Tabernacles.

There were seventy bullocks sacrificed on the seven days and on the eighth day, just one.

There were fourteen rams offered during the seven days, two each day and one on the eighth day.

There were ninety-eight lambs offered, fourteen on each day (one through seven), and seven lambs offered on the eighth day.

Over all there were seven goats offered on the first seven days and only one on the eighth day for a sin offering.

The feast of Booths or Tabernacles was associated in the Old Testament with the ingathering of the harvest of grapes and olives, while grain was reaped between April and June.

The feast occurred for 7 days from the 15th to the 21st of Tishri (September – October).

According to Josephus, this feast was the most popular of the 3 Jewish feasts (Passover, Pentecost, and Booths or Tabernacles).

People living in rural areas built makeshift structures of light branches and leaves to live in for the week (hence “booth” or “tabernacles” (Lev. 23:42), which town dwellers put up similar structures on their flat roofs or in their courtyards.

The feast was known for water-drawing and lamp-lighting rites to which Jesus makes reference (If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink, (verses 37-38), and “I am the Light of the world” (8:12).

John 7:3 “His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest.”

In (verse 3) here, His brethren could be children of His mother, or they could be followers of Jesus who did not leave when the mass of His disciples left.

(Matthew 13:55), lists Jesus’ brothers as “James, Joseph, Simon and Judas.”

James authored the New Testament epistle that bears his name and became the leader of the Jerusalem church and Judas (or Jude), wrote the epistle that also bears his name.

Because of Jesus’ virgin birth, they were only the half-brothers of Jesus since Mary, not Joseph, was Jesus’ only human parent.

Perhaps here, the disciples that they wanted to see were those who had left because of the hard teachings of the Lord.

These brethren thought that if those disciples who left could see all the miracles, they might believe and come back.

John 7:4 “For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world.”

Here, these brethren are encouraging Jesus to do the miracles where everyone would know it.

It is as if they are saying “If you are going to do these miracles, let everybody know; so they will believe you.”

They are saying, “Why would you do such good things, and not let everyone see it, so you can get the credit for it?”

Jesus’ brothers wanted Him to put on a display of His miracles.

Although the text does not clearly state their motivation.

Perhaps they made the request for two reasons:

- (1) They wanted to see the miracles for themselves to determine their genuineness, and
- (2) They may have had similar crass political motives as did the people, namely that He would become their social and political Messiah.

Jerusalem's acceptance of Him was to be the acid test for them as to whether His own family would believe in Him as Messiah.

John 7:5 "For neither did his brethren believe in him."

As with the crowds in Jerusalem and Galilee, even His very own brothers did not believe in Jesus at first.

They did not become His followers until after the resurrection.

Mary's children did not believe that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, until He had rose from the grave.

They were raised with Him, and thought Him to be just like them.

The Scriptures do not say whether Mary their mother, told them or not about who their half-brother Jesus, really was.

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

The time for the Lord Jesus to be crucified and raised again, is what He is speaking of.

Jesus had an allotted time to be made manifest to the world.

This recalls the response to Jesus' mother at the wedding in Cana.

It also reveals the first reason why Jesus would not go to the feast: because it was not in God's perfect timing.

This sentence reveals Jesus' complete dependence on and commitment to the Father's sovereign timetable for His life.

Furthermore, Jesus never committed Himself to being motivated by unbelief, even that of His own half-brothers.

These brethren could show their work any time they desired to.

Their deeds were not of the magnitude to change the whole world like His was.

The brethren were not wanted by the Jewish rulers either.

Because Jesus' brothers did not believe in Him, they were of the world and therefore, knew nothing of God or His purposes.

Because of unbelief, they did not listen to His word, did not recognize God's schedule, and could not perceive the incarnate Word before them.

As a result, any time would do for them, preferably that moment.

John 7:7 "The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil."

Those who had rejected Jesus as their Savior and Lord hated Jesus and what He stood for.

Jesus had pointed out their sins.

The world cannot hate Jesus' brothers because they belonged to the world and we know the world loves its own.

The evil world system and all who reject the Word and Son of God lie in the control of the evil one himself.

He had not spared those who were leaders in the temple.

He had called them "whited walls".

They wanted people to believe they were of God, but their hearts were evil.

Works, without love and faith, are dead.

"I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil."

A true born again believer who is living a life for God's glory should experience the hatred and antagonism of the world.

John 7:8 "Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come."

This reveals the second reason why Jesus would not go to the feast in Jerusalem.

The Jews could not kill Him before God's perfect timing and plan was ready.

Jesus' commitment to God's timetable would not permit any deviance from what God had already decreed.

The Feast of Tabernacles was not the feast at which Jesus would be crucified.

Jesus didn't make a triumphal entry into Jerusalem at this time.

The Jews might try to seize Him before His time.

His brethren would go, because three of the feasts a year that many of the people went to Jerusalem to celebrate.

John 7:9 “When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee.”

We see here that our Lord stayed behind in Galilee for a time.

Perhaps He did not want to endanger the brethren.

The things He had said were for them to go up to the feast without Him.

He was living and ministering in Galilee.

John 7:10 “But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.”

The assumption is that the Father had directed Jesus to permit Him to go to Jerusalem.

The secrecy of His journey indicates His maximum discretion which was the complete opposite of what His brothers had demanded of Him (verse 4).

I really believe that Jesus let His brethren go up with the large company going to the feast and went without them, so they would not be endangered.

The hate of the rulers of the temple was already great against Jesus our Lord.

They were plotting to kill Him.

His secret entrance was to keep down problems.

He also, wanted to minister along the way and heal those in need.

Jesus will come into Jerusalem unnoticed by the leaders of the temple.

If they knew He was coming, they would be waiting for Him.

John 7:11 “Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he?”

They thought sure He would be with the worshippers coming to the feast.

They wanted (as we said), to kill Him.

I am sure they had heard of many of the wonderful miracles that He had done, and they wanted to get rid of Him.

He was getting all of the attention, and they were jealous.

The contrast between the phrase “the Jews” in this verse and “the crowds” (in verse 12), indicates that the term “Jew” designates the hostile Jewish authorities in Judea who were headquartered in Jerusalem.

The search for Jesus was certainly hostile in intent.

They feared, if the people followed Him, they would forget about them and the temple.

John 7:12 “And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people.”

None of these people actually knew who Jesus was.

Even those who thought Him to be good, thought of Him as a man.

This was their long awaited Messiah, and they did not believe Him.

Jesus Christ was God the Son.

This is the Word spoken of (in John 1:1), “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

In (verses 12 & 13), the crowds, made up of Judeans, Galileans, and Diaspora (scattered), Jews, expressed various opinions regarding Christ.

The spectrum ranged from superficial acceptance (“He is a good man”), to cynical rejection “He leads the people astray”.

The Jewish Talmud reveals that the latter view of deception became the predominant opinion of many Jews (Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 43a).

John 7:13 “Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.”

They would get in terrible trouble with the rulers of the synagogue, if they spoke up in favor of Jesus as being Lord.

Their fear of these Jewish leaders kept them from speaking up.

They believed because of the miracles, but were afraid to express their opinions because of fear of punishment.

Fear of our neighbors' and friends' comments sometimes keeps us from sharing things God has revealed to us in His Word.

We are afraid they will laugh or make fun, and we just keep quiet.

(In verses 14 – 24), the increasing hostility to Jesus did not prevent His teaching ministry.

Instead, Jesus relentlessly set forth His claims regarding His identity and mission.

In the midst of the Feast of Tabernacles, when Jews from all over Israel had migrated into Jerusalem, Jesus once again began to teach.

In this section, Jesus set forth the justification of His ministry and then also taught with authority as God's Son.

In this passage, 5 reasons are set forth as to why Jesus' claims regarding Himself are true:

1. His supernatural knowledge originated from the Father Himself (verses 15-16),
2. His teaching and knowledge could be confirmed by testing (verse 17),
3. His actions demonstrated His selflessness (verse 18),
4. His impact on the world was startling (verses 19-20),
5. His deeds demonstrated His identity as the Son of God (verses 21-24).

John 7:14 "Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught."

Jesus may have waited until the middle of the feast in order to prevent a premature "triumphal entry" that some may have forced upon Him for political motivations.

This would have been at the time when most of the people would be there.

Jesus had no fear at all.

One of the things that made the Jewish rulers hate Him so, was because the people, every time they heard Him speak, were amazed with what power and authority He spoke.

Jesus taught according to the custom of the teachers or rabbis of His day.

Prominent rabbis would enter the temple environs and expound on the Old Testament to crowds who sat around them.

They also compared His words as being not at all like the scribes and Pharisees.

They had more power.

They were amazed, not only of the mighty miracles He did, but also at the power in His Word.

This feast went on for eight days, and this was in the very middle of the feast.

John 7:15 “And the Jews marveled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?”

You see, Jesus Christ was not of the Levitical tribe who were trained for ministry in the temple.

Jesus was of the tribe of Judah.

Jesus is the Word of God.

Read all of (chapter 1 of John), to prove this.

The Word took on flesh and dwelt among us.

If He is the Word, why would He not know it perfectly?

If they (Jews), had known the Word, they too, would have recognized Jesus as that Word.

Jesus’ knowledge of Scripture was supernatural.

The people were amazed that someone who had never studied at any great rabbinical centers or under any great rabbis could display such profound mastery of Scripture.

Both the content and also the manner of Jesus’ teachings were qualitatively different than any other teacher.

John 7:16 “Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.”

The qualitative difference of Jesus’ teaching was found in its source, i.e., the Father had given it to Him.

It originated from God the Father Himself, in contrast to rabbis who received it from man.

While rabbis relied on the authority of others (a long chain of human tradition), Jesus’ authority centered in Himself.

We probably would have understood this better if it had said “Not only mine, but the Father's", and that is just what it is saying.

Jesus is telling these Jews that God's doctrine doesn't change.

They just really do not understand what that doctrine is saying.

They have a portion of His doctrine, but do not understand the portion they have been given.

Jesus said, over and over, that He did not come to change the law, but to fulfill the law.

John Chapter 7 Questions

1. Why did Jesus walk in Galilee instead of in Jewry?
2. What feast was at hand?
3. Name the three most important feasts.
4. Their 7th month was equivalent to what month approximately, on our calendar?
5. At what feast time do many Christians believe the rapture will occur?
6. At what feast time did people dwell in booths?
7. Where did Jesus' brethren tell Him to go?
8. Why did they want Him to go?
9. Who were they wanting Him to show His miracles to?
10. Why do you think His brethren didn't believe in Him?
11. What reason did Jesus give them for not doing this?
12. Why did the Lord Jesus say the world hated Him?
13. Why did Jesus tell them to go to the feast without Him?
14. Where was Jesus when He told them to go ahead to the feast?
15. When did Jesus go to the feast?
16. Why does the author believe Jesus went at this time?
17. What did the Jews ask the brethren of Jesus?

18. What were the murmurings of the people about?
19. How were both views wrong?
20. Why did they not speak openly?
21. When did Jesus go to the temple?
22. Why did the Jewish rulers hate Jesus?
23. Why did they marvel at Jesus' knowledge?
24. Who did Jesus say His doctrine was of?
25. What did Jesus say, over and over, about the law?