

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

RISING OPPOSITION TO JESUS' MINISTRY, JOHN 5:1-12:50

JESUS' MINISTRY IN JERUSALEM, JOHN 7:10-10:42

INTRODUCTION

A. Outline of the *Gospel of John* (1:1-4:42)

1. Prologue (1:1-18)
2. Preparation for Jesus' ministry (1:19-51)
3. Jesus' early ministry (2:1-4:54)
4. Rising opposition to Jesus' ministry (5:1-12:50)
 - a. Jesus' second visit to Jerusalem (5:1-47)
 - b. Jesus' ministry in Galilee (6:1-7:9)
 - c. Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem (7:10-10:42)
 - 1) Jesus' interaction with His brothers (7:1-9)
 - 2) Jesus' teaching in the Temple (10-24)
 - 3) Reaction to Jesus' teaching on His origin and destiny (25-36)
 - 4) Reaction to Jesus' teaching on the Holy Spirit (37-52)

B. Notes

- William Barclay, *The Festival of Tabernacles fell at the end of September and the beginning of October. It was one of the obligatory festivals, and every adult male Jew who lived within fifteen miles of Jerusalem was legally bound to attend it. But devout Jews from far outside the fifteen-mile radius delighted to go to it. It lasted altogether for eight days.*
- Thomas Constable, *This section of the text describes Jesus' teaching in Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles and the Feast of Dedication. John evidently included this teaching in his narrative because it contains important revelations of Jesus' identity, and because it explains the mounting opposition to Jesus that culminated in His crucifixion ... It helps the reader sense the atmosphere of public opinion in which Jesus then ministered.*
- Leon Morris, *It is apparent that the brothers were not alone in the thought that it would be natural for Jesus to be in Jerusalem for this feast. There was comment on his absence, or rather on the fact that he was not known to be present, for John introduces the section in which he tells us of the discussion by informing us that Jesus did go up to Jerusalem. It is apparent that his ministry is having an effect. The people are divided. They do not know what to say. But the hostility of the hierarchy is now plain and serious, so that open discussion is inhibited.*
- William Barclay, *Jesus chose his own moment and went to Jerusalem. Here we have the reactions of the people when they were confronted with him.*
- Warren Wiersbe, *The Feast of Tabernacles looked back to Israel's journey through the wilderness, and looked forward to the promised kingdom of Messiah. The Jews lived in booths made of branches to remind them of God's providential care of the nation for nearly forty years (Lev. 23:33-44) ... The feast may have been a jubilant time for the people, but it was a difficult time for Jesus, for it marked the beginning of open and militant opposition to Him and His ministry. Ever since He had healed the paralytic on the Sabbath Day, Jesus had been targeted by the Jewish leaders who wanted to kill Him (John 7:1, 19-20, 25, 30, 32, 44; and note 8:37, 40).*

JESUS' INTERACTION WITH HIS BROTHERS, JOHN 7:1-9

A. Concerning Jesus' brothers and ministry in Judea (1-5)

1. Jesus remained in Galilee because of increasing hostility from the Jews (1), *After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill him.*
 - a. Related verses
 - 1) John 5:18, *For this reason the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because he was not only breaking the sabbath, but was also calling God his own Father, thereby making himself equal to God.*
 - 2) John 8:37, *I know that you are descendants of Abraham; yet you look for an opportunity to kill me, because there is no place in you for my word.*
 - 3) John 8:40, *but now you are trying to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did.*
 - 4) John 11:53, *So from that day on they planned to put him to death.*

b. Comments

- 1) Edwin Blum, *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.*
- 2) “The Jews” refers to the religious establishment in Jerusalem.
- 3) Thomas Constable, *Opposition to Jesus had by now become so strong, particularly in Judea, that He chose to stay and minister around Galilee. This is a brief reference to Jesus’ later Galilean ministry, which the Synoptics describe more fully.*
- 4) Grant Osborne, *The people of Judea were much more strict and conservative than those in Galilee, with the result that there were many there who wished to execute Jesus for blasphemy (see John 5:18; Mark 3:6).*
- 5) Kenneth Gangel, *John wasted no time in establishing the Lord’s motive for staying in Galilee; the Jews in Judea wanted to kill him. Indeed, threats on the Lord’s life dominate this chapter (vv. 1, 13, 19, 25, 30, 32, 44).*
- 6) William Hendriksen, *John says that during these months Jesus was going about in Galilee. This is in harmony with the account as given in the Synoptics, which indicates that the Lord went from Capernaum in Galilee to the borders of Tyre and Sidon, traversing a large section of Galilee; then departing from Galilee in crossing over to Decapolis; went back again to Galilee (Dalmanutha); left it again for the region of Cesarea Philippi; and finally, covering another large stretch of Galilean territory, went on his way back to Capernaum.*
- 7) Leon Morris, *He records nothing at all that happened during this period. He is not writing a complete history, but making a selection for a definite twofold purpose, that of bringing out the messiahship of Jesus and that of bringing people to faith.*

2. Jesus’ brothers encouraged Him to go to Judea (2-4), ***Now the Jews’ Feast of Booths was at hand. 3 So his brothers said to him, “Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you are doing. 4 For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world.”***

a. Related verses

- 1) John 5:1, *After this there was a festival of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.*
- 2) John 6:4, *Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near.*
- 3) Leviticus 23:34, *Speak to the people of Israel, saying: On the fifteenth day of this seventh month, and lasting seven days, there shall be the festival of booths to the LORD.*
- 4) John 14:22, *Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, “Lord, how is it that you will reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?”*

b. Comments

- 1) *Feast of Booths*
 - a) Thomas Constable, *The Feast of Tabernacles (“Booths”) occurred six months after Passover (6:4). Matthew 12–17 and 21 record some events that happened during this six-month period, which John passed over without comment. That year the Feast of Tabernacles fell on September 10–17, A.D. 32. It was a fall grape and olive harvest festival (Exod. 23:16; Lev. 23:33–36, 39–43; Deut. 16:13–15) ... It commemorated the Israelites’ sojourn in the wilderness.*
 - b) Edwin Blum, *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.*
 - c) William Hendriksen, *It is rather generally assumed that John mentions this feast because he is about to report certain sayings of Jesus that were connected with its ceremonies (7:37; 8:12; 9:7).*
- 2) *Leave here and go to Judea ...*
 - a) Thomas Constable, *Jesus’ half-brothers advised Him to go to the feast so that His remaining disciples would continue to believe on Him and so that more people would become His disciples. They evidently supposed that Jesus wanted as large a following as possible. They believed that He could perform miracles, but they did not believe that He was who He claimed to be. They encouraged Him to promote Himself, perhaps because they saw some advantage for themselves in His doing so.*
 - b) Kenneth Gangel, *Jesus’ brothers (presumably half brothers all younger than he), still skeptical and perhaps even bitter about his popularity and notoriety, goaded him into making a public display of what he claimed to be. They were certainly right to argue, No one who wants to become a public figure acts*

in secret. But their motivation rested in their unbelief, as John indicated in verse 5.

- c) William Hendriksen, *When it appears that Jesus is not in a hurry to attend the feast, his brothers—James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas (or Jude), Matt. 13:55—begin to criticize him. They view his present behavior as being inconsistent. On the one hand, so they reason, Jesus is aiming at a high public office. Yet, on the other hand, he remains behind in Galilee, while “the public” is already on its way to Jerusalem.*
- d) Edwin Blum, *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 ... 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.*
- e) Leon Morris, *They point out that no one who claims to be a public figure (Berkeley, “to be in the limelight”) can establish himself by working in secret ... Galilee was far from the capital, and anything done there would be “secret” as far as the dwellers in the metropolis were concerned. And such things as messianic claims must be established in the capital city before the religious leaders.*
- f) Charles Swindoll, *Jesus’ brothers taunted Him, suggesting He should go to Jerusalem and perform some magic tricks in order to rally the world behind Him. They had certainly seen His miraculous “signs” and probably stood among those who wanted to make Him king for selfish reasons. Their taunt suggests that if He were the genuine article, He wouldn’t mind calling their bluff.*
- g) Grant Osborne, *This urging is similar to Satan’s temptation in the wilderness in Matthew 4:1–11, saying in effect, “You’ve got it, now flaunt it.” In essence they were daring him to prove himself first to them and then to the “world,” Jew and Gentile alike (as in 1:10; 3:16; 4:42; 6:51). They were tempting him to perform self-centered miracles purely to garner fame and fortune. Jesus would indeed prove himself to be Son of God and Savior, but not in the way they wanted.*

3. John declares that Jesus’ brothers did not believe in Him (5), ***For not even his brothers believed in him.***

a. Related verses

- 1) Matthew 13:57, *And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, “Prophets are not without honor except in their own country and in their own house.”*
- 2) Mark 3:21, *When his family heard it, they went out to restrain him, for people were saying, “He has gone out of his mind.”*

b. Comments

- 1) Thomas Constable, *Familiarity with Jesus did not and does not guarantee faith in Him (cf. Ps. 69:8). The way unbelievers plan to obtain glory for themselves is frequently contrary to God’s way of doing things (cf. Phil. 2:3–11). Two of these half-brothers were James and Jude, who later became believers and wrote the New Testament books that bear their names (cf. Acts 1:14; 1 Cor. 15:7).*
- 2) Edwin Blum, *Proximity to Jesus, either in a family or as a disciple, does not guarantee faith.*
- 3) Warren Wiersbe, *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.*
- 4) William Hendriksen, *It is certain that they did not see in him the Messiah who was to prove himself as such by means of suffering and the cross! Their Messianic conception was, in a sense, similar to that of the crowd which had partaken of the bread-cakes (6:15). It was thoroughly earthly and materialistic. Strictly speaking, it does not even follow that these brothers took Jesus to be the Messiah in any sense whatever. The story merely shows that they were charging him with inconsistency, and that they, in common with so many others, harbored secular ideas with reference to the coming and office of the Messiah. After Christ’s resurrection the attitude of these brothers changed completely (Acts 1:14).*
- 5) George Beasley-Murray, *The “success” that Jesus seeks and his mode of attaining it are of a different order from their imaginings (cf. 12:23–24, 31–32).*
- 6) F. F. Bruce, *At this stage, however, his brothers did not believe in him because he failed so utterly to live up to their preconception of the kind of person the Messiah would be and the kind of things he would do.*

B. Reasons why Jesus chose to remain in Galilee (6-9)

1. Jesus knew it was not His time (6-7), *Jesus said to them, “My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. 7 The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil.*
 - a. Related verses
 - 1) John 2:4, *And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.”*
 - 2) John 15:18, *“If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you.*
 - 3) John 15:24, *If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not have sin. But now they have seen and hated both me and my Father.*
 - 4) John 3:19, *And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil.*
 - b. Comments
 - 1) *My time has not yet come ...*
 - a) *Thomas Constable, Jesus replied that it was not the right time (Gr. kairos) for Him to go to Jerusalem, namely, the Father’s time, which Jesus called “My time” (cf. 2:4). However, they could go to the feast at any time (Gr. kairos). They were not on a mission and a timetable from God as He was.*
 - b) *Leon Morris, It was not the right time for Jesus to go up. He would not get the opportunity he sought if he went up with the brothers at the beginning of the feast. It was better for him to wait till the crowds assembled so that he could suddenly come among them (in the spirit of Mal. 3:1) ... John’s picture of Jesus is of one steadily moving on to meet his divinely appointed destiny.*
 - c) *Edwin Blum, 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).*
 - d) *William Hendriksen, ... Jesus knew that his death as the Lamb of God must take place at the time of the next Passover, not during this feast of Tabernacles ... The will of Jesus being in complete accord with this eternal counsel of God, he naturally waits for the proper moment to arrive. For the brothers of Jesus there were no such considerations. They had no such conscious contact with the clock of God’s eternal counsel. Besides, they were as yet unbelievers. Hence, Jesus says, “... but for you the time is always suitable.”*
 - e) *George Beasley-Murray, If in Greek thought the “decisive moment” (καίρος) was determined by fate, in the biblical revelation it is determined by God. Jesus awaits an intimation from the Father as to the right time for action.*
 - f) *Louis Barbieri, Jesus was conscious of right timing. His words My time is not yet here (and v. 8; see comment on 2:4) reflect His concern as to when and how He will present Himself as Messiah. It was to lead to His death, not His fame. Your time is always opportune means Jesus’ brothers could go to the feast anytime without threats on their lives. The unbelievers of the world practice evil, and love others who do the same. But the world hates Jesus because He testifies that its deeds are evil.*
 - 2) *The world cannot hate you, but it hates me ...*
 - a) *Thomas Constable, Jesus alluded to the opposition that awaited Him in Jerusalem. His brothers had no particular reason to be careful about when they went to the feast, but Jesus would be in danger when He went. They were part of “the world,” but Jesus did not belong to it (1:10; cf. 15:18–21; 17:14, 16). Another reason for the Jews’ antagonism was Jesus’ convicting preaching that called for repentance and faith in Him.*
 - b) *Edwin Blum, 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 (ponera, “wicked”). Partly because of this, He lived carefully in order to fulfill the Father’s will.*
 - c) *Kenneth Gangel, At this point in their lives, all of Jesus’ brothers were still in the world, so they had nothing to fear from the enemies of Jesus. He had already condemned the world, so threats on his life were very real. He would go to the feast, but in his own timing and as a prophet, not a pilgrim.*
 - d) *Leon Morris, Jesus marks himself off from the world by his continuous testimony that the world’s deeds are evil. The evildoer does not care to have his sin rebuked, and the hatred of which Jesus speaks is the inevitable result.*

- e) Grant Osborne, *His brothers and their perspective are aligned not with God but with the world, so Jesus says, “The world cannot hate you, but it hates me” (v. 7). Theirs was a worldly sense of time with a worldly purpose, so what they asked would be lauded by the world. Jesus accuses the world of doing evil. The world, filled with darkness, hates the light (3:19–20), and when Jesus exposes it for what it is, it turns against him (3:20). It hates Jesus because, as he says, “I testify that its works are evil,” which is a legal metaphor picturing Jesus both proving the world’s guilt before the divine law court and proving to evildoers themselves that they are guilty (compare the Spirit “convicting the world” in 16:8–11).*
2. Jesus encouraged them to go without Him (8), **You go up to the feast. I am not going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come.**
- a. Related verse, John 2:4, *And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.”*
- b. Comments
- 1) Charles Swindoll, *Some have suggested that Jesus lied to His brothers, but He certainly did not. His statement didn’t preclude His going later, which He intended all along. He simply didn’t want to accompany His vainglorious brothers, who would have given His attendance a skewed perspective before the people. Instead, Jesus planned to journey more discreetly with His disciples and then to address the Judeans in the time and manner of His own choosing.*
 - 2) Thomas Constable, *Having offered His explanation, Jesus encouraged His brothers to go on to the feast without Him. Again He intimated that the Father was setting His agenda and He needed to follow it rather than their suggestion (cf. 2:4). God’s immediate will for Him was to stay in Galilee.*
 - 3) Edwin Blum, *“Going up” may have a geographical meaning (since Jerusalem is in the hills) as well as a theological meaning (going back to the Father).*
 - 4) Kenneth Gangel, *Verse 8 contains a key word, though it does not appear in some manuscripts. The word is yet, indicating to his brothers that Jesus fully intended to visit the feast, but not according to the time frames they had set.*
 - 5) Leon Morris, *... what they are urging him to do is to go up to keep the feast. This Jesus did not do, neither then nor later. He was absent for a good part of the ceremonies, perhaps for all of them. He went up to give certain teaching, not to observe the feast in the manner of a pilgrim. He is refusing to go up at their request and with a view to accomplishing what they set before him, but he is not refusing to go up to Jerusalem.*
3. Jesus remained in Galilee (9), **After saying this, he remained in Galilee.**
- a. Edwin Blum, *Jesus then for a time stayed in Galilee, doing the tasks of ministry which the Father had ordained.*
 - b. Leon Morris, *Jesus has made his position clear. And having done so, he acts in accordance with it. When the brothers go up to the feast he stays where he is, in Galilee.*
 - c. William Hendriksen, *Jesus has already indicated (verse 6) that the proper time to attend the feast has “not yet” arrived for him. Hence, having said these things he remained a little while longer in Galilee.*
 - d. F. F. Bruce, *The Evangelist’s point is rather that the whole incident marks his steadfast resolution not to run before the Father’s guidance nor yet to lag behind it.*
 - e. Grant Osborne, *He bided his time for a few days and waited on his Father’s timing. He had not refused to attend the festival; he refused to attend it with his brothers’ sinful expectations in mind.*
 - f. Louis Barbieri, *For a few more days, Jesus stayed in Galilee to avoid a premature death.*

JESUS’ TEACHING IN THE TEMPLE, JOHN 7:10-24

- A. Jesus appeared in Jerusalem with much controversy surrounding Him (10-13)
1. He went up privately (10), **But after his brothers had gone up to the feast, then he also went up, not publicly but in private.**
 - a. Related verse, John 7:3, *So his brothers said to him, “Leave here and go to Judea so that your disciples also may see the works you are doing;*
 - b. Comments
 - 1) Edwin Blum, *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).*
 - 2) Thomas Constable, *Jesus proceeded to head for Jerusalem shortly after His half-brothers left Galilee to go there because the Father led Him to go at that time. He did not announce His arrival with great publicity (or “publicly”), as His brothers had recommended, but went without fanfare. If He had gone sooner, the authorities would have had more opportunities to arrest Him (v. 1).*

- 3) Warren Wiersbe, *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.*
 - 4) Leon Morris, *John is clear that others do not lay down the pattern for Jesus. He is supremely the master of every situation. So in this case he went up when he was ready and in the way he chose.*
 - 5) Louis Barbieri, *Afterward, **He Himself also went up ... in secret**, successfully triumphing over the satanic temptation to seek human glory (cf. v. 4).*
 - 6) F. F. Bruce, *The time when it would be proper for him to make a public entry into Jerusalem had not yet come. Six months later it came (cf. John 12:12ff.). But now he bade farewell to Galilee, never to see it again before his death.*
2. Jews were looking for His appearance (11), ***The Jews were looking for him at the feast, and saying, "Where is he?"***
 - a. Related verse, John 11:56, *They were looking for Jesus and were asking one another as they stood in the temple, "What do you think? Surely he will not come to the festival, will he?"*
 - b. Comments
 - 1) Thomas Constable, *Since John usually used the phrase "the Jews" to describe the Jewish authorities who were hostile to Jesus (cf. 1:19; 7:13; et al.), that is probably who was trying to find Him here. Their intentions seem wicked.*
 - 2) Edwin Blum, *While Jesus' enemies were searching for Him, people were debating this controversial Teacher. The opposition against Jesus was growing.*
 - 3) Louis Barbieri, *The wisdom of choosing initially to remain obscure is confirmed by the fact that the Jewish authorities (v. 11) were seeking Him at the feast so they might kill Him (cf. v. 1).*
 - 4) Warren Wiersbe, *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 ... 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 ... 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.*
 - 5) F. F. Bruce, *The "Jews" who were looking out for him were members of the Sanhedrin, who hoped that, if he came to the festival, they might have an opportunity to arrest him this time. So they said, "Where is that man (ekeinos)?" Galilee, where he had spent the past year, was ruled by the tetrarch Herod Antipas and was not under their jurisdiction, but in Jerusalem they held the chief executive power in Jewish affairs, subject to the overriding authority of the Roman governor.*
 3. People were voicing opinions secretly concerning Jesus (12-13), ***And there was much muttering about him among the people. While some said, "He is a good man," others said, "No, he is leading the people astray." 13 Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of him.***
 - a. Related verses
 - 1) John 7:32, *The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering such things about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent temple police to arrest him.*
 - 2) John 7:40-43, *When they heard these words, some in the crowd said, "This is really the prophet." 41 Others said, "This is the Messiah." But some asked, "Surely the Messiah does not come from Galilee, does he? 42 Has not the scripture said that the Messiah is descended from David and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David lived?" 43 So there was a division in the crowd because of him.*
 - 3) John 9:22, *His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue.*
 - 4) John 12:42, *Nevertheless many, even of the authorities, believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue;*
 - b. Comments
 - 1) Thoms Constable, *Jesus was a controversial subject of conversation at the feast. His presence provoked considerable talk (Gr. goggusmos, grumbling, cf. 6:41, 61). Many of the common people from Judea, however, and pilgrims from elsewhere, debated His ministry in private, while suspecting that their leaders opposed Him. According to the Talmud, deceiving the people was a crime punishable by stoning. "The Jews" here clearly refers to Israel's leaders.*
 - 2) Edwin Blum, *Since the whole crowd was Jewish, fear of the Jews meant fear of the religious leaders.*

- 3) Warren Wiersbe, *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.*
- 4) William Hendriksen on those who believed Jesus was leading the people astray, *They saw in Jesus a mere demagogue, a man to be shunned, a false prophet, one who was interested in getting the crowd or mob ... on his side, ingratiating himself with the multitudes for selfish purposes.*
- 5) Louis Barbieri, *Some were judging Him to be a good man, though not necessarily the Messiah. Others were saying that He leads the people astray—a charge punishable by death (Dt 13:9–10).*
- 6) F. F. Bruce, *What he had done on his previous visit to the capital, and perhaps news of what he had been doing since then in Galilee, formed the topic of excited conversation. What were they to think of him? As some thought of the help and blessing which his works and words had brought to many, they were compelled to the conclusion that here was no public enemy, as the rulers maintained, but a good man. But others maintained that his deeds of mercy and power were simply a smokescreen to cover his real intentions; he was actually an impostor, claiming to be what he was not, and thus misleading the common people.*
- 7) Grant Osborne, *The power of the leaders is seen in verse 13: the crowds are afraid to take part in an open discussion “for fear of the leaders.” We will see this again in 9:22, 34–35, when the officials cast anyone supporting Jesus out of the synagogue, in effect excommunicating them. They are now forcing the public to agree with them, using the threat of religious and social ostracism as a weapon to get their way.*

B. Jesus taught with authority in the temple during the Feast of Tabernacles/Booths (14-24)

1. The Jews marveled as Jesus taught (14-15), ***About the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and began teaching. 15 The Jews therefore marveled, saying, “How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?”***

a. Related verses

- 1) John 7:28, *So Jesus proclaimed, as he taught in the temple, “You know me, and you know where I come from. But I have not come of my own accord. He who sent me is true, and him you do not know.*
- 2) John 7:46, *The officers answered, “No one ever spoke like this man!”*
- 3) Luke 4:22, *All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?”*
- 4) Acts 4:13, *Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and ordinary men, they were amazed and recognized them as companions of Jesus.*

b. Comments

- 1) Thomas Constable, *Everything recorded as happening between 7:14 and 8:59 took place in the temple ... Toward the middle of the week Jesus began teaching publicly in the temple, perhaps in the court of the women ... The Judean Jews (cf. 1:19) marveled at Jesus’ understanding of religious matters (cf. Matt. 7:28–29; Mark 1:22). They knew that He had not had a formal theological education under the rabbis (cf. Acts 4:13)*
- 2) F. F. Bruce, *His knowledge of “letters” does not mean his ability to read and write; that was no rare accomplishment among Jews. It means his command of sacred learning.*
- 3) Alfred Edersheim, *To the Jews there was only one kind of learning—that of Theology; and only one road to it—the Schools of the Rabbis.*
- 4) A. T. Robertson, *It is sometimes true today that unschooled men in various walks of life forge ahead of men of lesser gifts with school training ... This is not an argument against education, but it takes more than education to make a real man.*
- 5) Edwin Blum, *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.*
- 6) Warren Wiersbe, *... 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.*
- 7) Kenneth Gangel, *Unlike the teaching of the rabbis, the message of Messiah comes from God himself. It was obvious Jesus had not attended official rabbinical schools, so where did he get such learning? Notice they did not ask Jesus directly but discussed this among themselves.*

- 8) Leon Morris, *They would not have been surprised at his knowing a little Scripture. The Bible was read regularly in the synagogues, and the Shema (Deut. 6:4–5) at any rate was memorized by all. Probably most people could quote some parts of the Bible. The surprise would be at the fact that Jesus could carry on a sustained discourse apparently in the manner of the rabbis, and perhaps also with the amount of Scripture he could quote.*
 - 9) William Barclay, *Up to this point the authorities had looked on him as a revolutionary Sabbath-breaker, which was in truth a serious enough charge; but from now on he was guilty not of Sabbath-breaking but of the ultimate sin, of blasphemy. As they saw it, he was talking of Israel and of God as no human being had any right to speak.*
2. Jesus declared that His teaching was from God (16-17), **So Jesus answered them, “My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me. 17 If anyone’s will is to do God’s will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority.**
- a. Related verses
 - 1) John 5:30, *“I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek to do not my own will but the will of him who sent me.*
 - 2) John 8:28, *So Jesus said, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will realize that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own, but I speak these things as the Father instructed me.*
 - 3) John 12:49, *for I have not spoken on my own, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment about what to say and what to speak.*
 - 4) John 14:10, *Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works.*
 - 5) John 14:24, *Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me.*
 - b. Comments
 - 1) Leon Morris, *His hearers had raised the question of his competence as a teacher. He raises the question of their competence as hearers.*
 - 2) Thomas Constable, *Jesus responded to the Jews’ observation about His lack of rabbinic training by explaining that His teaching had come from the One who had sent Him. He was referring, of course, to God the Father (cf. 5:19–30). His teaching had not come from Himself. He meant that His was not teaching that He had dreamed up or arrived at through independent study ... Jesus further claimed that the key to validating His claim that His teaching came from God was a person’s willingness to do God’s will ... If anyone was willing to do God’s will, not just to know God’s truth, God would enable that one to believe that Jesus’ teaching came from God (cf. 6:44).*
 - 3) C. K. Barrett, *The only condition for understanding the claims of Jesus is faith ... Such faith enables the believer to perceive the congruence of the moral character of Jesus’ mission with the divine will.*
 - 4) Merrill Tenney, *Spiritual understanding is not produced solely by learning facts or procedures, but rather it depends on obedience to known truth. Obedience to God’s known will develops discernment between falsehood and truth.*
 - 5) Edwin Blum, *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).*
 - 6) Warren Wiersbe, *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).*
 - 7) Kenneth Gangel, *God does not show us his will just to satisfy our curiosity; when we are prepared to do God’s will, then in God’s good time we will know it.*
 - 8) William Hendriksen, *Not only had he derived the contents of his teaching from his Father in heaven, but he had also been divinely commissioned to convey it to the people on earth. Let his enemies take note of this fact; namely, that in rejecting him and his message they are rejecting God himself (cf. 4:34; 5:23, 24, 30; Matt. 10:40).*
 - 9) Louis Barbieri, *Faith authenticates and internalizes God’s testimony (1Jn 5:10). The Word, when it is believed, is a life-giving seed (1Pt 1:23), bringing assurance through the Holy Spirit that God’s promises are true (cf. Heb 11:1).*

3. His purpose was to seek God's glory (18), ***The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood.***
- a. Related verses
- 1) John 5:41, *I do not accept glory from human beings.*
 - 2) John 8:50, *Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is one who seeks it and he is the judge.*
- b. Comments
- 1) Thomas Constable, *The person who advances his or her original ideas will glorify self. That may not be his or her underlying motive, though it often is, but that will be the result. Conversely, the person who advances the ideas of another ends up glorifying the other person rather than himself or herself. Jesus claimed to do the latter and to desire the glory of the One who sent Him. That desire demonstrated His righteousness and made it unthinkable that He would be deceiving the people (v. 12).*
 - 2) Edwin Blum, *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.*
 - 3) Warren Wiersbe, *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.*
 - 4) George Beasley-Murray, *A person who represents none but himself and talks on his own initiative is naturally anxious to win the approval of others; but one who seeks the honor of the one he represents is truthful and not false.*
 - 5) Charles Swindoll, *Those who are intimately knowledgeable with the ultimate source of truth (God) will have no trouble spotting other truth tellers. Moreover, people who care about the truth do not care about credentials so long as the truth is taught.*
 - 6) F. F. Bruce, *Jesus' whole desire is that those who hear what he has to say should glorify God by believing it, since it is God who has commissioned him.*
 - 7) Grant Osborne, *Pride is one of the greatest sins of the average Christian leader. A person who had ministered at several megachurches told me a while ago that narcissism was a given among virtually all the famous pastors. I hope that is an overstatement, but I have seen it all too often. In contrast, Jesus did not just speak truth, he was truth (14:6) and personified the true servant leader of God. As he said in Mark 10:45, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve."*
4. Jesus asked His accusers why they wanted to kill Him (19), ***Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why do you seek to kill me?"***
- a. Related verses
- 1) John 7:23, *If a man receives circumcision on the sabbath in order that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because I healed a man's whole body on the sabbath?*
 - 2) John 7:1, *After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He did not wish to go about in Judea because the Jews were looking for an opportunity to kill him.*
 - 3) Number 21:9, *So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.*
 - 4) Deuteronomy 18:15, *The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet.*
- b. Comments
- 1) Thomas Constable, *Jesus had just claimed that God had given Him His teaching and that He proclaimed it faithfully as a righteous man. Now He contrasted His critics with Himself. They claimed that Moses had given them his teaching, but they did not carry it out faithfully as righteous people ... They sought to kill Him even though Moses had taught that God's will was to refrain from murder (Exod. 20:13). Obviously they had not submitted to God's will as it came to them through Moses. It is no wonder that they failed to understand Jesus' teaching.*
 - 2) Edwin Blum, *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.*
 - 3) Kenneth Gangel, *The Law of Moses was clear in its position against murder, yet that is precisely what rested in their hearts during this conversation. In spite of all their bragging, their villainous hearts betrayed their*

own breaking of the law.

- 4) Leon Morris, ... *Jesus points out that there is a difference between receiving and keeping the Law. Moses gave them the Law, but none of them keeps it (Paul points out that there is profit in circumcision only when the Law is kept; being a Jew is not simply a matter of pride of race, Rom. 2:25–29). Far from keeping the Law they are seeking to put Jesus to death (cf. v. 1).*
 - 5) William Hendriksen, *The double denunciation, aimed at the leaders, comes like a thunderbolt and a lightning flash. It shows that Jesus was at this very moment reading the hearts of these men. He knew that while they tried to pose as the guardians of the law of Moses, a law which is summarized in the one word love, they had hatred and murder in their hearts (cf. 5:18).*
 - 6) George Beasley-Murray, *Moses gave the Law—the Moses whose proud disciples his hearers claim to be (9:28), and in whom they trust (5:45). Yet none of them keeps the Law, as is evident in their rejection of Moses' testimony to Jesus (5:45–46) and still more in their desire to kill him to whom Moses bore witness.*
 - 7) Louis Barbieri, *The attempt to kill (murder) Jesus (cf. v. 1) was in actuality a violation of the sixth Commandment (Ex 20:13). Instead of recognizing the Father speaking through His Son, the crowd (v. 20) absurdly accused Jesus of demon possession (cf. Jn 8:48; 10:20; Mt 12:24).*
 - 8) Charles Swindoll, *The religious officials were angry with Jesus and had rebuked Him for breaking with tradition, manmade rules they had substituted for the law of Moses (Matt. 15:3, 7–9; Mark 7:8). With this statement, Jesus turned the tables. He accused them of seeking to kill Him despite their own violation of the law.*
 - 9) F. F. Bruce, *Moses spoke of him in advance as the coming prophet, yet they gave no credence to Moses' testimony regarding him (John 5:45–47). Now he invokes Moses again as a witness against them because, for all their professed veneration for Moses' law, they themselves were guilty of breaking it.*
 - 10) Grant Osborne, *In verse 19 Jesus challenges the authority of the leaders on the basis of their lack of obedience to the law of Moses. Their lack of righteousness is proved by their willing transgression of the Torah.*
5. The crowd scoffed at Jesus' accusation (20), ***The crowd answered, "You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill you?"***
- a. Related verses
 - 1) John 8:48, *The Jews answered him, "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?"*
 - 2) John 8:52, *The Jews said to him, "Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died, and so did the prophets; yet you say, 'Whoever keeps my word will never taste death.'*
 - 3) John 10:20, *Many of them were saying, "He has a demon and is out of his mind. Why listen to him?"*
 - 4) Mark 3:22, *And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons."*
 - 5) John 5:18, *For this reason the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because he was not only breaking the sabbath, but was also calling God his own Father, thereby making himself equal to God.*
 - 6) John 11:53, *So from that day on they planned to put him to death.*
 - b. Comments
 - 1) Kenneth Gangel, Jesus' direct answer put an end to the private murmurings and opened a public dialogue. Apparently he touched a nerve with his reference to murderous hearts.
 - 2) Thomas Constable, *Many of Jesus' hearers did not realize the depth of the hateful antagonism of Israel's leaders toward Him. They naively thought that He was crazy to think that someone was trying to kill Him. The Jews of Jesus' day commonly thought of mental illness, in this case paranoia, as being demon-induced. This explains their reference to Jesus having a demon (cf. 10:20).*
 - 3) Edwin Blum, *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).*
 - 4) Warren Wiersbe, *The first "debate" was with the Jews: but the visitors to the city entered into the discussion (John 7:20) ... 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).*
 - 5) Gerald Borchert, ... *It would be the equivalent of calling Jesus 'paranoid' today. Categorizing people is a time-honored way of refusing to take them seriously. It is crucial to note at this point that it was the Jewish people who were designated by the evangelist as the hostile name-callers.*

- 6) William Hendriksen, *We can imagine how they, consisting, no doubt, mostly of people who had come from afar, felt themselves aggrieved by the question of Jesus. While their cheeks are glowing with indignation, they burst out with the exclamation, "You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill you?" They feel certain that an evil spirit must have taken possession of his mind, and must have made him insane. This crowd of pilgrims evidently did not know that the leaders at Jerusalem had already in their hearts planned to put him out of the way.*
- 7) Grant Osborne, *Few in the crowd felt any animosity to Jesus, and none were aware of the leaders' plans, so to them he was simply delusional and paranoid. As a result they rose up in defense of the leaders.*
6. Jesus condemns them for their hypocrisy (21-23), **Jesus answered them, "I did one work, and you all marvel at it. 22 Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. 23 If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man's whole body well?"**
- a. Related verses
- 1) Genesis 17:10, *This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised.*
 - 2) John 5:16, *Therefore the Jews started persecuting Jesus, because he was doing such things on the sabbath.*
 - 3) Matthew 12:2, *When the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the sabbath."*
- b. Comments
- 1) *I did one work*
 - a) Thomas Constable, *The one deed (lit. work, Gr. ergon, i.e., a miraculous work) that Jesus had done, to which He referred, was evidently the healing of the paralytic at the Bethesda pool (v. 23; 5:1–9). It had caused all who heard of it to marvel (5:10–18). Furthermore it had started the controversy about Jesus in Jerusalem.*
 - b) Kenneth Gangel, *Apparently the Lord brought up the healing of the lame man (ch. 5) on the Sabbath and told them again to stop worshipping the day and to worship the God who gave the day.*
 - c) Leon Morris, *... there is no doubt that he is referring to the curing of the man by the pool Bethesda that caused such a discussion about Jesus' attitude to the Sabbath (5:1–9). It is the only miracle John has described that Jesus did in Jerusalem (though cf. 2:23).*
 - 2) *Moses gave you circumcision ...*
 - a) Thomas Constable, *Jesus' parenthetic reference to the fact that the circumcision legislation really began with the patriarchs, and not Moses, was a slight depreciation of Moses. Jesus' critics claimed to follow Moses faithfully, but in keeping the circumcision law, they were not truly honoring him but Abraham instead (Gen. 17:9–14).*
 - b) Edwin Blum, *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.*
 - c) Leon Morris, *He immediately points out that circumcision did not originate with Moses, but with the patriarchs. But it was included in the Law of Moses, and it was in accordance with the precepts of that Law that the Jews governed their practice in circumcising.*
 - 3) *you circumcise a man on the Sabbath*
 - a) Thomas Constable, *Circumcision was an operation designed to ensure good health, not restore health. The circumcised child was not ill. Jesus, on the other hand, had healed a man who had suffered with a serious handicap for 38 years. Furthermore, circumcision was also only a purification rite, but healing a paralytic involved deliverance from enslavement. Therefore it was unfair for Jesus' critics to be angry with Him for what He had done.*
 - b) Leon Morris, *So binding did they regard the command to circumcise on the eighth day (Lev. 12:3) that they held this to override the Sabbath ... Thus, though they would scrupulously avoid all manner of things that even remotely looked like work lest the Sabbath be profaned, they had no hesitation in carrying out the ritual requirement of circumcision on that day. Had his opponents understood the implications of the Mosaic provision for circumcision on the Sabbath they would have seen that deeds of mercy such as he has just done were not merely permissible but obligatory. Moses quite understood that some things should be done even on the Sabbath. The Jews had his words but not his meaning.*

- c) Edwin Blum, *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.
- d) Charles Swindoll, *If the rite of circumcision could override the Sabbath rules, then why wouldn't the miraculous, God-orchestrated healing of a desperately infirm man do the same thing? No later than AD 100, Rabbinic Judaism came to this very conclusion: The Rabbis counted 248 parts to a man's body. In the Talmud (b. Yoma 85b) R. Eleazar ben Azariah (ca. A.D. 100) states: “If circumcision, which attaches to one only of the 248 members of the human body, suspends the Sabbath, how much more shall the saving of the whole body suspend the Sabbath?”*
7. Jesus declared that one should not judge by appearance (24), **Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.**
- a. Related verses
- 1) John 8:15, *You judge by human standards; I judge no one.*
 - 2) Isaiah 11:3, *His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear;*
 - 3) Deuteronomy 1:17, *You must not be partial in judging: hear out the small and the great alike; you shall not be intimidated by anyone, for the judgment is God's. Any case that is too hard for you, bring to me, and I will hear it.”*
- b. Comments
- 1) Thomas Constable, *Jesus concluded His defense by warning His hearers against judging according to outward appearance (cf. Deut. 16:18–19; Isa. 11:3–4; Zech. 7:9). Their superficial judgment about what was legitimate activity for the Sabbath had resulted in superficial judgment about Jesus' work and person ... They needed to pass judgment on the basis of righteous criteria: what was truly right.*
 - 2) Edwin Blum, *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 ... In their darkness they erred. Jesus called them to make a right judgment; ultimately this was a call for them to repent.*
 - 3) Warren Wiersbe, *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.*
 - 4) William Hendriksen, *What the people (both the leaders and the rest) should do is this: they should calmly reflect on these matters. They should cease being so rash in their judgments ... Compare the somewhat similar thought expressed so beautifully in 1 Sam. 16:7 b: “For Jehovah sees not as man sees; for man looks on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looks on the heart.”*
 - 5) Louis Barbieri, *Blinded by their traditions, Christ's opponents were judging Him (v. 24) by what “appeared” to them as right (according to appearance), but was not a righteous judgment.*
 - 6) Charles Swindoll, *The “appearance” to which Jesus referred was the symbolic show of righteousness that was undoubtedly impressive in the temple. He called for Jews to ignore fancy robes and big hats in order to discern who is telling the truth by comparing his or her deeds to the commands of Scripture. The deeds of Jesus reflected the grace of God and did not violate the Sabbath.*
 - 7) F. F. Bruce, *Righteous judgment would penetrate beneath surface appearances and judge according to the spirit and purpose of the law.*
 - 8) Grant Osborne, *Jesus is accusing them of judging wrongly on the basis of a superficial use of the law. Theirs was an earthly perspective on the law, ignoring the divine or heavenly perspective, and they needed to see the situation of healing on the Sabbath from God's viewpoint. Then they would realize that Jesus was not breaking the Sabbath but was actually upholding its true purpose. He was a law-keeper, not a lawbreaker.*
 - 9) William Barclay, *A passage like this may sound remote to us; but when we read it we can see the keen, clear, logical mind of Jesus in operation, we can see him meeting the wisest and most subtle men of his day with their own weapons and on their own terms, and we can see him defeating them.*

REACTIONS TO JESUS' TEACHING CONCERNING HIS ORIGIN AND DESTINY, JOHN 7:25-36

- A. The crowd discussed Jesus' origin (25-31)
1. The crowd was confused by the lack of response by the religious leaders (25-26), *Some of the people of Jerusalem therefore said, "Is not this the man whom they seek to kill? 26 And here he is, speaking openly, and they say nothing to him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Christ?"*
 - a. Related verses,
 - 1) John 7:1, *After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He did not wish to go about in Judea because the Jews were looking for an opportunity to kill him.*
 - 2) John 18:20, *Jesus answered, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret.*
 - 3) John 7:48, *Has any one of the authorities or of the Pharisees believed in him?*
 - b. Comments
 - 1) Leon Morris, ... *some of his hearers wondered whether the rulers' failure to arrest him was due to a recognition that he really was the Christ, the Messiah. This leads to some discussion of the origin of the Christ. It is clear that there was much uncertainty about Jesus, and a variety of reactions to his message.*
 - 2) Thomas Constable, *Though many of the Jewish pilgrims in the temple courtyard did not realize how antagonistic the religious leaders were to Jesus (v. 20), some of the local residents of Jerusalem did. They marveled that Jesus was speaking out publicly and that the authorities were not opposing Him ... The situation led some of the locals to suspect that the leaders might actually know that Jesus was the Messiah ("the Christ").*
 - 3) Edwin Blum, *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.*
 - 4) Kenneth Gangel, *A twofold trap emerged from their misunderstanding. First, they determined they knew where Jesus came from (Nazareth), thereby denying the virgin birth. Second, they argued that no man would know the origin of Messiah, but the prophets spoke much of this with specific references to Bethlehem. As with many people today, ignorance of the facts about Jesus led them into further theological error.*
 - 5) Leon Morris, *They were sure that Jesus was the man. Why, then, was no action taken? They were impressed by Jesus' words and by his manner. He spoke openly despite the plan to kill him. So they put two and two together. He was apparently immune from arrest, for no one even spoke to him, let alone took action against him ... They began to wonder whether this indicated that their leaders really knew that Jesus was the Christ (see on 1:20, 41).*
 - 6) Louis Barbieri, *Could it be that they had changed their minds and now secretly thought that He was the Christ? Little did they know that some rulers like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea (cf. 12:42; 19:38-39) really did know that Jesus was the Christ.*
 - 7) Grant Osborne, *They are surprised that a "wanted man" so bold as to challenge the leaders could have such a public persona without being arrested (7:26). The authorities had never been so tentative in handling others. Could they have studied the evidence and "concluded that he is the Messiah?" That would be a remarkable switch given the severity of their opposition to this point.*
 2. They thought they knew Jesus' background (27), *But we know where this man comes from, and when the Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from.*
 - a. Related Verses
 - 1) John 6:42, *They were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?"*
 - 2) John 7:42, *Has not the scripture said that the Messiah is descended from David and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David lived?"*
 - 3) John 8:14, *Jesus answered, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid because I know where I have come from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going.*

b. Comments

- 1) Charles Swindoll, *Another tradition in Jewish theology (still common today) apparently interpreted “suddenly” in Malachi 3:1 to mean the Messiah would appear mysteriously and perhaps magically (cf. John 6:41–42). Their complaint is ironic in view of 9:29! Nevertheless, many in the crowd began to believe, although they found it difficult to overcome the traditional evidences of the Messiah they had come to expect.*
- 2) Thomas Constable, *The people of Jerusalem felt inclined to disbelieve that Jesus was the Messiah, because they believed that their human Messiah’s earthly origins would be unknown. This belief was a tradition. It was certainly not scriptural, since the Old Testament clearly predicted that Messiah’s birthplace would be Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2) ... The common understanding of Jesus’ origin was that since He was known to have grown up in Nazareth, He apparently was born there too. Not only did the people fail to perceive His heavenly origin, but they were also wrong about His earthly origin.*
- 3) Edwin Blum, *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.*
- 4) Kenneth Gangel, *We should not infer that the Bethlehem reference of the Old Testament had been completely missed. The Herod-appointed scribes of Matthew 2 had no problem coming up with that name. But the spiritual blindness, especially in Jerusalem, had reached such levels that theological confusion about Jesus had clouded public thinking.*
- 5) Leon Morris, *While some appealed to prophecies like that cited by Herod’s scribes, others must have interpreted these same Scriptures differently, for they ascribed to the Christ a mysterious supernatural origin and a sudden appearance on the scene ... It is typical of John’s irony that he leaves the objection without comment. Those who know the truth about Jesus’ origin know that it is baseless.*
- 6) William Hendriksen, *According to the present chapter of John’s Gospel there were two opinions among the Jews regarding the origin of the expected Messiah: a. according to some, no one would know where he came from (7:27); b. according to others, he would be born in Bethlehem (7:41, 42; cf. Matt. 2:3–5).*

3. Jesus proclaimed His true background (28-29), ***So Jesus proclaimed, as he taught in the temple, “You know me, and you know where I come from. But I have not come of my own accord. He who sent me is true, and him you do not know. 29 I know him, for I come from him, and he sent me.”***

a. Related verses

- 1) John 7:14, *About the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and began teaching.*
- 2) John 7:27, *But we know where this man comes from, and when the Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from.”*
- 3) John 8:42, *Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now I am here. I did not come on my own, but he sent me.*
- 4) John 8:19, *Then they said to him, “Where is your Father?” Jesus answered, “You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also.”*
- 5) John 15:21, *But they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me.*
- 6) John 8:55, *though you do not know him. But I know him; if I would say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you. But I do know him and I keep his word.*
- 7) John 6:46, *Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father.*
- 8) John 9:33, *If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”*

b. Comments

- 1) Thomas Constable, *Jesus said that His hearers did know Him and where He was from. Probably He meant that they knew who He was superficially (cf. v. 24), and they knew that He came from Nazareth (6:42), but they knew less than they thought. They did not know the One who had sent Him, though Jesus did know Him, because He had come from that One. Jesus was speaking ironically: they knew of His earthly origins but not of His heavenly origin ... The One who had sent Jesus on His mission was true ... Jesus meant that the true God really had sent Him, regardless of what others might think about His origin and mission. Unfortunately they did not know the One who had sent Him, even though they prided themselves on knowing the true God (cf. Rom. 2:17–19). They did not know God because they did not know their Scriptures (cf. 5:46). They did not know Jesus because they did not know the Father who had sent Him.*
- 2) Warren Wiersbe, *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.*

- 3) Edwin Blum, *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.*
- 4) Kenneth Gangel, *Once again Jesus answered rumors with direct proclamation. The origin of Messiah left most people in confusion, but that origin also linked him with God. In effect, Jesus' response to their confusion was three simple statements: (1) You know me in terms of my physical presence on earth; (2) but I really came from the Father and you do not know that because you do not know him; and (3) nevertheless, I know him because he sent me to earth.*
- 5) Leon Morris, *As in verse 16, he has disclaimed originality for his teaching, so here he disclaims responsibility for his mission. He did not set out on any self-chosen task. On the contrary, he was sent (see on 3:17), and that by One who is true. These last words should not be overlooked. The Jerusalemites did not accept the fact of Jesus' divine mission. In their minds no one sent him; he was acting on his own initiative ... The implication is plain: if they do not know the Father who sent him, how can they be expected to know the Christ whom the Father sent?*
- 6) William Hendriksen, *The fact that when Jesus spoke these words, he was deeply stirred, so that he cried out, harmonizes beautifully with the idea that what we have here is not a calm statement of fact but an exclamation of the character: "So you know me, and you know where I am from!" In the light of this stinging ridicule it is not too difficult to understand that the persons addressed were anxious to have Jesus arrested (7:30).*
- 7) Louis Barbieri, *The Lord's reply may be sarcastic as if to say, "So you think that you both know Me and know where I am from?" Jesus repeated previously mentioned descriptions of His identity: (1) He did not come of Himself but by the Father's authority; (2) the One who sent Jesus is true, but they did not know Him; and (3) Jesus knew the Father, because He was from the Father (1:1, 18), and He sent Him.*
- 8) F. F. Bruce, *So the coming of Jesus among men confronts them with the issue of the true knowledge of God. God cannot be known unless heed is paid to the one who is his Word ... Jesus asserts afresh his unique relation to the Father, and his hearers cannot miss the implication of his words.*
- 9) Grant Osborne, *These people were proud of their covenant relationship and claimed to know God (Rom 2:17, 23), but Jesus shows that people cannot know the true God until they have come to know his Son ... so these Jews who think they can know God from the law of Moses are tragically mistaken and know nothing of the God of the new covenant in Jesus the Christ. In this new covenant age God has revealed himself anew and shown new vistas of his being that can only be known through Jesus.*

4. Responses to Jesus' teaching (30-31)

- a. The leaders sought to arrest Jesus (30), ***So they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come.***

1) Related verses

- a) John 7:44, *Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.*
- b) John 10:39, *Then they tried to arrest him again, but he escaped from their hands.*
- c) Matthew 21:46, *They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.*
- d) John 8:20, *He spoke these words while he was teaching in the treasury of the temple, but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.*
- e) John 7:6, *Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always here.*

2) Comments

- a) Thomas Constable, *Evidently those Jews who intended to arrest (Gr. piazo) Jesus wanted to prevent Him from teaching the people (cf. vv. 32, 44; 8:20; 10:39). However, they could not do this because His hour (Gr. hora)—the time for His crucifixion and its consequences—had not yet arrived. God prevented Jesus' premature arrest.*
- b) Edwin Blum, *They could not lay a hand on Him because the Father's hand was over Him.*
- c) Leon Morris, *The time for Jesus' death was not yet, and his enemies could not bring that time forward no matter how they might try.*
- d) William Hendriksen, *Jesus had made the loftiest claims with respect to his own person and origin, had exposed to ridicule the pretended knowledge of the Jerusalemites, and had told them in blunt, unmistakable language that they did not even know God (7:28, 29)! So we are not surprised to read: Therefore they were anxious to arrest him.*
- e) Louis Barbieri, *Most of the crowd joined with the rulers in seeking to seize the Lord, yet they could not. John described both human (6:15; 10:39) and divine means (7:30, 44; 8:20) that prevented Jesus from being arrested.*

- f) Grant Osborne, *The authorities were not in charge; God was. This is a primary theme in John's Gospel and refers to the hour of destiny, the "set time" that would "fully come" (Gal 4:4) when God's plan of salvation would be finalized at the cross (John 2:4; 4:23; 7:6; 8:20; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 16:4, 32; 17:1). Their foolish attempt to arrest Jesus and stymie God's plan was doomed until the Father said, "It is time."*
- b. Many in the crowd believed in Jesus (31), ***Yet many of the people believed in him. They said, "When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done?"***
- 1) Related verses
 - a) John 8:30, *As he was saying these things, many believed in him.*
 - b) John 10:42, *And many believed in him there.*
 - c) John 11:45, *Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.*
 - d) John 12:11, *since it was on account of him that many of the Jews were deserting and were believing in Jesus.*
 - 2) Comments
 - a) Thomas Constable, *Even though some of the Jews tried to arrest Jesus many from the multitude believed in Him. Jesus' presence provoked a division among His hearers (cf. 1:11–12; 3:18–21) ... Some believed because of the signs that He had performed. This was not a strong basis for faith (cf. 2:11, 23; 4:48). They concluded that He was the Messiah, but the common understanding of Messiah was that He would be a powerful human deliverer. Probably few, if any, of these Jews believed that Jesus was also God Incarnate.*
 - b) Edwin Blum, *The exposure of Jesus and His teaching moved many in the crowd to believe on Him. They logically thought that His miraculous signs marked Him out as unusual. Certainly the Messiah could not do any more miracles than this Man. But the crowd's faith in Jesus as Messiah was tentative and was not linked to belief in His atoning death.*
 - c) William Hendriksen, *They probably were ready to accept Jesus as the political Messiah of their dreams. They based their attitude upon the miracles which they had seen or about which they had been hearing such glowing reports.*
 - d) Warren Wiersbe, *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.*
 - e) Kenneth Gangel, *Surely even Messiah would not do more miraculous signs than they had seen Jesus do. He fulfilled Scripture; he gave eternal life to those who wished it; he healed the sick; and he mended broken hearts. Nevertheless, seeing still precedes believing, a violation of the faith principles of John's Gospel.*
 - f) Grant Osborne, *In contrast to the leaders, "many in the crowd believed in him" (v. 31). Certainly their faith was incomplete and was anchored in the miraculous signs, like the people described in 2:23–25, but this was an important first step (10:38). While their belief was inadequate in itself, they still realized that Jesus' deeds were worthy of the Messiah and so made a preliminary step of faith and began to follow Jesus (as in v. 27). Certainly, they reasoned, the Messiah will not "perform more signs than this man."*
 - g) Leon Morris, *Many of them came to believe on him (see on 1:12, 41). The reason for their faith was not profound: they could not conceive that when the Christ came he would do more miracles than Jesus did ... But throughout this Gospel it is better to believe on the basis of miracles than not to believe at all, so there is no condemnation of this faith as inadequate.*
 - h) F. F. Bruce, *If the prophets of old gave proof that they were God's messengers by the signs which they performed, it was natural to believe that the Messiah would be accredited by even greater signs, which would provide conclusive evidence of his office and mission. But would the signs which the Messiah might be expected to perform be greater than those which Jesus was actually performing before their eyes? Such considerations moved many of his hearers to believe in him.*

B. The Pharisees sought to arrest Jesus as He taught (32-36)

1. The Pharisees responded to the comments made concerning Jesus (32), ***The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to arrest him.***

a. Related verses

- 1) John 7:12, *And there was much muttering about him among the people. While some said, "He is a good man," others said, "No, he is leading the people astray."*
- 2) John 7:45-46, *The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why did you not bring him?" 46 The officers answered, "No one ever spoke like this man!"*

b. Comments

- 1) Edwin Blum, Since many in the crowd were turning to Jesus, they would set aside the Pharisees' traditional teachings (cf. Mark 7:1-23). The Pharisees, as the guardians of Jewish traditions ... realized something needed to be done about Jesus soon.
 - 2) F. F. Bruce, *Those members of the crowd who wondered how the Messiah, when he came, could possibly perform greater signs than those being performed by Jesus in their midst, did not dare voice their thoughts aloud, but exchanged them under their breath with one another ... The temple police were responsible for the maintenance of law and order within the temple precincts. They were a picked body of Levites, and their commander (the "captain of the temple") was an official wielding high authority, next only to the high priest, and he too was usually drawn from one or another of the leading chief-priestly families.*
 - 3) William Hendriksen, *As the Pharisees saw it, things were beginning to look very serious. People were actually beginning to regard this impostor as the true Messiah. The mumbling of voices which expressed these sentiments had been heard. Intervention was necessary. It could not be delayed any longer.*
 - 4) Thomas Constable, *The Pharisees heard that some of the Jews present were voicing their belief that Jesus must be the Messiah. These comments moved them to act immediately to arrest Jesus ... Probably the arrest warrant came from the Sanhedrin. The temple police were Levites who were responsible to the Sanhedrin.*
 - 5) Grant Osborne, *The attempt to arrest Jesus in verse 30 now leads to the official decision of the "chief priests and the Pharisees" to carry out the arrest (v. 32), unusual because they were normally opposing parties in the power structure of Judea. Yet they had united in their opposition to Jesus. This was probably an arrest warrant from the ruling council itself, the Sanhedrin, and carried out by the temple police or guards ...*
 - 6) Leon Morris, *It is not without its interest that the Pharisees heard all this but that it was "the chief priests and the Pharisees" who took action. The Pharisees would have their finger on the public pulse rather than the chief priests who were more remote. And the Gospels indicate that the Pharisees were more active in opposing Jesus, and therefore more likely to be taking an interest in what he said and did. But the chief priests were in the place of power. More effective action was possible by combining with them.*
 - 7) George Beasley-Murray, *Whether these police officers were instructed to arrest Jesus at once we are not told; it is feasible that they were ordered to watch for a favorable opportunity to arrest him without creating an uproar (cf. Mark 14:1-2).*
2. Jesus spoke of His soon departure (33-34), ***Jesus then said, "I will be with you a little longer, and then I am going to him who sent me. 34 You will seek me and you will not find me. Where I am you cannot come."***

a. Related verses

- 1) John 12:35, *Jesus said to them, "The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going.*
- 2) John 13:33, *Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.'*
- 3) John 14:19, *In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live.*
- 4) John 16:5, *But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?'*
- 5) John 8:21, *So he said to them again, "I am going away, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come."⁵ But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?'*
- 6) Note John 16:16-19.

b. Comments

- 1) Thomas Constable, *Jesus again said that His hour had not yet come, only in different words. When His hour later passed, He would go to the Father. The Jews would search for Him but be unable to find Him. He was going where they could not come, namely, to heaven. Death was not the end for Jesus. They could not come where He was going because of their present unsaved condition. That required regeneration and translation (cf. 8:21; 13:33).*
- 2) Edwin Blum, *You will look for Me is a prophecy that the Jewish nation will long for her Messiah. She is doing this now, not knowing that Jesus is her Messiah. Later she will weep for Him (Zech. 12:10–13; Rev. 1:7). The time of spiritual opportunity is now. A time will come when it is too late. He went bodily to heaven where unbelievers cannot come (cf. John 8:21).*
- 3) Warren Wiersbe, *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).*
- 4) Kenneth Gangel, *Only six months remained in Jesus’ earthly pilgrimage—the period from the Feast of Tabernacles to the Feast of Passover. So he told the crowd that his invitation would be activated by the ascension ... Again the Jews interpreted these words in earthly terms.*
- 5) Leon Morris, *His life and his death are determined by the Father, not the Pharisees. It is true that in due course he will return to him who sent him, where the thought is that of the accomplishment of a mission, with a hint also that his proper and natural abode is not here. But any suggestion that his enemies are in control is excluded.*
- 6) William Hendriksen, *When Jesus adds: And where I am you cannot come, he means this: “I am going to the Father; but you have rejected the Father by rejecting me. Hence, where I am you cannot come.” In the presence of the Father there is no room for those who have refused to accept the Son.*
- 7) F. F. Bruce, *After being told about the sending of the police to arrest Jesus, the readers are left in suspense regarding the outcome of their mission. Before John tells how they fared, he relates further words spoken by Jesus at the festival. These words plainly refer to the fact that Jesus had but a short time left before the completion of his earthly mission and his return to the Father.*
- 8) Grant Osborne, *The time of his passion is mere months away, and it will be time to ascend back to the Father (see 3:13–14; 6:62). Then he will return to the One who has sent him—the God in heaven who has given him his mission in the first place and sent him to earth (6:33, 38, 41, 42, 50, 51, 58). His coming death was not an end to his ministry but the beginning of the next phase of it as well as a return to his preexistent glory (1:1–2; 17:5) ... The main point of this paragraph is Jesus’ statement that “you will look for me, but you will not find me,” which frames the whole passage (v. 34, repeated in v. 36). Jesus’ words here contain a double meaning. On the earthly plane, they will seek often to arrest him yet will not be able to find him until the hour appointed by the Father. We will see this in 7:45–47. On the spiritual plane, they will search for God and for eternal life but be unable to find it because they are not willing to turn to Jesus in faith and find God’s salvation, for it is contained only in him (14:6, “No one comes to the Father except through me”).*

3. The Jews asked questions indicating they did not understand Jesus statements (35-36), ***The Jews said to one another, “Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him? Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? 36 What does he mean by saying, ‘You will seek me and you will not find me,’ and, ‘Where I am you cannot come’?”***

a. Related verses

- 1) John 8:22, *Then the Jews said, “Is he going to kill himself? Is that what he means by saying, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come’?”*
- 2) 1 Peter 1:1, *To the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,*
- 3) John 12:20, *Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks.*

b. Comments

- 1) Thomas Constable, *Again Jesus’ hearers thought that He was speaking of physical matters and earthly places. “The Dispersion” was the term that described the Jews who had scattered from Palestine and were living elsewhere in the world. Jesus’ hearers thought He meant that He would be ministering to Jews, or perhaps Gentile proselytes, who were living outside Palestine ... These Jews did not understand where Jesus was going any more than they understood where He had come from (v. 27). They were so exclusive in their thinking that they thought it very improbable that Jesus would leave Palestine.*
- 2) Edwin Blum, *The question then was, Will Jesus go teach the heathen? Without the Jews realizing it, this question was prophetic of the spread of the gospel after Jesus’ Ascension.*

- 3) R. V. G. Tasker, *Here, as more than once in this Gospel, the Jews are unconsciously prophesying. The departure of Jesus in death would indeed be beneficial, but not because it would remove from the earth a false Messiah, as they supposed, but because, as a result of the proclamation of the gospel which would follow His death and resurrection, Gentiles would be brought into the people of God.*
- 4) Kenneth Gangel, *Where would he go? ... All this seemed preposterous to Jews gathered for the Feast of Tabernacles, but that is precisely what happened in the early chapters of Acts. Paul sought out synagogue after synagogue across Asia Minor and Greece, proclaiming the gospel to Jews, Jewish proselytes, and pagan Gentiles.*
- 5) Leon Morris, *It is clear that the saying puzzled them greatly. And it not only puzzled them; it apparently made them uneasy. Was there perhaps some meaning in it that still eluded them? Was the Man from Nazareth mocking them? Should they have understood more?*
- 6) B. F. Westcott, *In spite of all, Christ's words cannot be shaken off. They are not to be explained away. A vague sense remains that there is in them some unfathomed meaning.*
- 7) Grant Osborne, *John's repetition of Jesus' words in verse 36 emphasizes the seriousness of their error. In reality Jesus' words served as both a rebuke and an invitation. The knowledge that they at present could not follow Jesus to heaven was a rebuke of their unbelief but at the same time an opportunity to repent and come to Jesus. Their inability and unwillingness to respond meant that they had no hope.*

REACTIONS TO JESUS' TEACHING ON THE HOLY SPIRIT, JOHN 7:37-52
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A. Jesus taught on the Holy Spirit (37-39)

1. His promise of living water (37-38), *On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"*

a. Related verses

- 1) Numbers 29:35, *On the eighth day you shall have a solemn assembly; you shall not work at your occupations.*
- 2) Isaiah 55:1, *Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.*
- 3) John 4:14, *but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life."*
- 4) John 6:35, *Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.*
- 5) Isaiah 12:3, *With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.*
- 6) John 4:10, *Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."*

b. Comments

- 1) *On the last day of the feast, the great day*
 - a) Alfred Edersheim, *For the rabbis 'the last day' of the festival was the eighth day, but they never spoke of it as the greatest day. Since the water-drawing rite and the dancing in the light of the great menoras were omitted on the eighth day, the description of 'the greatest day' is thought by many to denote the seventh day, when the priests processed around the altar with the water drawn from Siloam not once but seven times ... It is also to be recognized that the invitation [of Jesus] would have been equally relevant on the eighth day, which was celebrated as a Sabbath with appropriate ceremonies and was attended by a great congregation.*
 - b) Warren Wiersbe, *It has been pointed out that this "great day," the twenty-first of the seventh month, is the same date on which the Prophet Haggai made a special prediction about the temple (Hag. 2:1-9). While the ultimate fulfillment must await the return of Christ to this earth, certainly there was a partial fulfillment when Jesus came to the temple. Haggai 2:6-7 is quoted in Hebrews 12:26-29 as applying to the return of the Lord.*
 - c) William Hendriksen, *The designation "the last, the great day of the feast" accords better with the eighth than with the seventh day; for the eighth day marked the close not only of the feast of Tabernacles but of the entire great cycle of annual, religious festivals.*
 - d) Louis Barbieri, *Jesus was declaring that He was the true spring water in the temple, which brings eternal life (cf. Is 12:3; 55:1). Also, Booths (Tabernacles) celebrated the supply of water given through the rock Moses struck in the wilderness. Jesus fulfilled the imagery of this Rock that provided life-giving water (1Co 10:4). In essence, Jesus claimed to fulfill what the Feast of Booths signified.*

- e) Charles Swindoll, *One ritual observed each day of the Feast of Tabernacles involved a solemn procession in which a priest carried a goblet of water from the Pool of Siloam (fed by the Gihon Spring), through the Water Gate, and into the inner temple court. As the congregation sang a hymn based on Isaiah 12:3, the priest poured the water on the altar, commemorating the Lord's provision of water in the wilderness (Num. 20:8–11). The Feast of Tabernacles thus built toward a climactic convocation (Lev. 23:36).*
- f) Thomas Constable, *This water rite had become a part of the Israelites' traditional celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. Essentially it symbolized the fertility and fruitfulness that the rain brought. In the Old Testament God likened His blessings in the messianic kingdom to the falling of rain (Ezek. 47:1–7; Zech. 13:1). The Jews regarded God's provision of water in the wilderness, and rain in the land, as foretokens of His great blessings on the nation under Messiah's reign. Thus the water rite in the Feast of Tabernacles had strong messianic connotations. .*
- 2) *If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink ...*
- a) Thomas Constable, *Jesus stood in order to announce His invitation to everyone in the temple courtyard. Normally rabbis sat when they taught. Therefore His standing position, as well as His words, stressed the importance of what He said. Jesus' claim was even more striking because on the eighth day no water was ever poured out. When Jesus called out His invitation, He was claiming to be the fulfillment of all that the Feast of Tabernacles anticipated. He announced that He was the One who could provide messianic blessing: that He was the Messiah. Jesus' words compared His own Person to the rock in the wilderness that supplied the needs of the Israelites.*
- b) Edwin Blum, *His offer, Come to Me and drink, was an offer of salvation (cf. 4:14; 6:53–56).*
- c) Leon Morris, *... the festal observance has included an acted prayer for water and Jesus is proclaiming the answer to the prayer in a way the worshipers would never have expected.*
- d) Warren Wiersbe, *Jesus was referring to the experience of Israel recorded in Exodus 17:1–7. That water was but a picture of the Spirit of God. Believers would not only drink the living water, but they would become channels of living water to bless a thirsty world!*
- e) William Hendriksen, *What is far more important to remember in connection with the events of this day—whether it be regarded as the seventh or as the eighth day of the feast—is the fact that the Lord, far from turning himself away from the multitudes, many of whom in one way or another had rejected him, extended his gracious invitation: “If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink.*
- f) William Barclay, *It is as if Jesus said: ‘You are thanking and glorifying God for the water which quenches the thirst of your bodies. Come to me if you want water which will quench the thirst of your soul.’ He was using that dramatic moment to turn people's thoughts to the thirst for God and the eternal things.*
- g) William Hendriksen, *It was as if he wanted to say, “Do you not realize that this water points to me, and that all these reminders of the life of your fathers in the wilderness lose their most vital significance apart from me?”*
- 3) *as the Scripture has said ...*
- a) Thomas Constable, *There is no specific passage in the Old Testament that contains the same words that Jesus mentioned here. Consequently He must have been summarizing the teaching of the Old Testament (cf. Exod. 16:4; 17:6; Num. 20; Neh. 8:5–18; Ps. 78:15–16; Isa. 32:15; 44:3–4; 58:11; Ezek. 39:29; 47:1–9; Joel 2:28–32; Zech. 14:8). One writer believed that Jesus had Ezekiel 47:1–11 particularly in view.*
- b) Edwin Blum, *When Jesus added, As the Scripture has said, He did not identify the Old Testament passage(s) He had in mind. But He may have thought of Psalm 78:15–16 and Zechariah 14:8 (cf. Ezek. 47:1–11; Rev. 22:1–2).*
- 4) *Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water*
- a) Edwin Blum, *Streams of living water will flow from within one who believes in Jesus. That is, he will have a continual source of satisfaction, which will provide life continually (cf. 4:14).*
- b) Warren Wiersbe, *Just as water satisfies thirst and produces fruitfulness, so the Spirit of God satisfies the inner person and enables us to bear fruit. At the feast, the Jews were reenacting a tradition that could never satisfy the heart. Jesus offered them living water and eternal satisfaction!*
- c) Leon Morris, *When the believer comes to Christ and drinks, that believer not only slakes his thirst but receives such an abundant supply that veritable rivers flow from him. This stresses the outgoing nature of the Spirit-filled life.*

d) John Hendriksen, *The general idea of the passage is, of course, perfectly clear: not only do those who drink from the Fountain, Christ, receive lasting satisfaction for themselves—everlasting life, salvation full and free—(the idea expressed in 4:14), but in addition, life in a bounteous manner communicates itself to others. The blessed one becomes, by God’s sovereign grace, a channel of abundant blessings to others. The church proclaims the message of salvation to the world, so that the elect from every clime and nation are gathered in.*

2. John’s explanation that Jesus spoke on the Holy Spirit (39), *Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

a. Related verses

- 1) Isaiah 44:3, *For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my spirit upon your descendants, and my blessing on your offspring.*
- 2) 1 Corinthians 12:13, *For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.*
- 3) Galatians 3:14, *in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*
- 4) Joel 2:28, *Then afterward I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.*
- 5) Luke 24:49, *And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”*
- 6) Acts 2:33, *Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear.*
- 7) John 14:16-17, *And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. 17 This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.*
- 8) John 16:7, *Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.*

b. Comments

- 1) Thomas Constable, *John helped his readers to understand that Jesus was referring to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which happened after Jesus’ death, resurrection, and ascension on the day of Pentecost (cf. 15:26; 16:7; Acts 1:5, 8; 2). That outpouring was something that God had not done before. It was similar to what Joel predicted He would do in the last days (Joel 2:28–32; cf. Acts 2:16–21). “Those who believed in Him” includes all subsequent believers, in addition to the believers on the day of Pentecost (cf. 1 Cor. 12:13).*
- 2) Edwin Blum, *John explained that the “living water” (v. 38) was the coming gift of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit within a believer satisfies his need of God, and provides him with regeneration, guidance, and empowerment ... Jesus referred to the special baptizing, sealing, and indwelling work of the Spirit in the Church Age, which would start on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:5, 8).*
- 3) Kenneth Gangel, *Thank God for John the interpreter for surely we would have theology of all sorts flowing from the “streams of living water” in this passage. But John left no question about meaning because the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is one of his great themes. We find more detailed teaching on this theme in chapters 14–16, but the glorification of Jesus is another important message in this book. We see it repeated in 8:54; 11:4; 12:28; 13:31–32; and 14:13.*
- 4) Leon Morris, *The expression translated “the Spirit had not been given” is difficult. There is nothing in the Greek corresponding to “given” and a more literal rendering would be “for it was not yet Spirit.” This probably points to the period after Pentecost. The gift of the Holy Spirit to the infant church that day transformed everything, so that all that followed might be called the era of the Spirit. The Bible does not speak of the Spirit as totally inactive until that point; there is much about him in the Old Testament and the Gospels. But nothing can compare to his activity in the apostolic age. Then it “was Spirit” in a way it had never been before. John tells us that it was the work of Jesus that made the difference. It was not yet Spirit because Jesus had not yet been glorified. Calvary is the necessary prelude to Pentecost.*
- 5) William Hendriksen, *To be sure, the third person of the Trinity existed from all eternity, and caused his influence to be felt long before Pentecost (cf. 3:3, 5); but as yet the Spirit was not present ... in the sense already indicated; the reason being because Jesus was not yet glorified.*
- 6) George Beasley-Murray, *The kingdom having come, the Spirit was sent by the exalted Lord (20:22), and so the Spirit’s ministry in the world is especially directed to that of communicating the life of the kingdom of God to humankind (see John 3:3, 5, 6, 8). It is this all-important work of the Spirit in the world that prompted the Evangelist’s observation, “The Spirit was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified” ...*

- 7) Grant Osborne, *The Spirit did not come during Jesus' life but awaited his entering into glory upon his death and resurrection, and then came at Pentecost (Acts 2). This in fact is the theme of Jesus' Farewell Discourse in chapters 14–17: he must depart so the Spirit may come. The Spirit would culminate Jesus' mission. Jesus provided the gift, and the Spirit was the operative force who carried out the directive.*

B. There was disagreement concerning Jesus (40-44)

1. Some believed Jesus was a prophet or Messiah (40-41a), *When they heard these words, some of the people said, "This really is the Prophet." 41 Others said, "This is the Christ."*

a. Related verses

- 1) John 6:14, *When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world."*
- 2) John 7:26, *And here he is, speaking openly, but they say nothing to him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Messiah?*
- 3) John 7:31, *Yet many of the people believed in him. They said, "When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done?"*

b. Comments

- 1) Thomas Constable, *Jesus' spectacular offer led some people to conclude that He was the promised Prophet (Deut. 18:15, 18; cf. Acts 3:22) or possibly the Messiah ("the Christ"). Evidently it was His claim of providing living water—as Moses had provided physical water—that led to their associating Jesus with one of those predicted individuals. Formerly Jesus had provided bread like Moses had provided manna (6:14) ... apparently these Jews did not equate "the Prophet" with "the Christ." They apparently looked for two separate individuals to come, since they seem to have anticipated a suffering servant and a triumphant Messiah in two different people.*
 - 2) Edwin Blum, *The crowd continued to debate Jesus' identity. Some saw Him as the Prophet mentioned by Moses (Deut. 18:15, 18). He would speak God's words to people but not in the awesome display of Mount Sinai from which Moses spoke. Jesus is indeed that predicted Prophet (Acts 3:22)*
 - 3) Leon Morris, *Some of them were so much impressed by Jesus' words (for "words" see on 14:24) that they affirmed him to be "the Prophet" (i.e., the prophet of Deut. 18:15) ... Evidently there was a considerable section of the Jews who looked for the prophet's appearance. The attitude recorded here is more logical than that of 6:14. There people saw the prophet in Jesus on account of the "sign" they saw him perform, whereas here it is his words that impress. The words of a prophet are more characteristic than any doing of miracles.*
 - 4) George Beasley-Murray, *It is of interest to observe that the reactions to Jesus at the feeding miracle and at Tabernacles have to do with events connected with Moses, namely the descent of the manna and the gift of water from the rock; the same gifts were expected of the Messiah, namely the return of the manna ... and the gift of abundant water.*
 - 5) Charles Swindoll, *Note their distinction between "the Prophet" and "the Christ," whom some first-century theologians thought to be two distinct individuals. In fact, "they" are one person, and He was addressing them in the temple.*
 - 6) F. F. Bruce, *The early Christians may have been the first to identify the prophet like Moses with the Messiah of David's line, and they did so because they recognized in Jesus the one who fulfilled what was written of both these expected figures.*
 - 7) Grant Osborne, *The Moses prophet fits the manna imagery behind chapter 6, and the water imagery of 7:37–38 would fit the water from the rock in Exodus 17. Many Jews separated the two figures in messianic expectation, and that seems to be the case here.*
2. Others rejected Jesus because He was from Galilee (41b-42), *But some said, "Is the Christ to come from Galilee? 42 Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?"*

a. Related verses

- 1) John 7:52, *They replied, "Are you from Galilee too? Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee."*
- 2) Matthew 1:1, *An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.*
- 3) Micah 5:2, *But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.*
- 4) Matthew 2:1, *In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem,*
- 5) Luke 2:4, *Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David.*

b. Comments

- 1) Thomas Constable, *Others doubted that Jesus was the Messiah because of His apparent Galilean origins. One indication that the Jews expected Messiah to appear soon is the fact that these people could refer to messianic predictions spontaneously.*
- 2) Merrill Tenney, *Perhaps this is another illustration of Johannine irony, for Jesus was born in Bethlehem. The very passage that convinced his critics that he could not be the Messiah was one of the strongest to prove that he was.*
- 3) Edwin Blum, *According to Samuel and Isaiah (2 Sam. 7:16; Isa. 11:1) the Messiah was to be born into a Davidic family. Micah predicted that He would be born in Bethlehem ... David's hometown (Micah 5:2). Jesus is from a Davidic family (Matt. 1:1–17; Luke 3:23–38; Rom. 1:3) and was born in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:1–6), but the crowd ignorantly overlooked those facts.*
- 4) Kenneth Gangel, *How foolish to recognize that Messiah was prophesied to come from Bethlehem and yet not check the facts of Jesus' birth. Rejecting hearts are blinded still to the fact that Christ's origin was not Galilee but Bethlehem; indeed, it was not earth, but heaven.*
- 5) F. F. Bruce, *John knew well enough, and so did many of his readers, that Jesus was indeed "born of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Romans 1:3), and that Judaeen Bethlehem, not Galilaean Nazareth, was his birthplace. The fallacy inherent in this objection to the possibility of his being the Messiah was plain; no need to point it out in so many words.*

3. There was confusion concerning how to respond to Jesus (43-44), ***So there was a division among the people over him. 44 Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.***

a. Related verses

- 1) John 7:12, *And there was considerable complaining about him among the crowds. While some were saying, "He is a good man," others were saying, "No, he is deceiving the crowd."*
- 2) John 7:30, *Then they tried to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him, because his hour had not yet come.*

b. Comments

- 1) Thomas Constable, *These opinions divided the people then as they still do today. Some of those who heard Jesus issue His invitation wanted to arrest Him (cf. vv. 30, 32; 8:20; 10:39), but no one did, undoubtedly because such action was contrary to the Father's sovereign will.*
- 2) Edwin Blum, *The crowd's divided opinion about Jesus enabled Him to continue His ministry without immediate arrest ... Many of the people held a favorable opinion of Jesus even though they did not personally commit themselves to Him (cf. 7:12, 31, 40–41). His enemies had to be careful lest a riot would result. So for a time, no one touched Him. Twice later the Jews were again divided over Jesus (9:16; 10:19–21).*
- 3) Leon Morris, *The crowd of pilgrims was not unanimous in its views of Jesus. Some thought him to be a prophet, some the Christ, and some wanted to arrest him (v. 44; it would appear that this refers to the crowd and not to the police spoken of in vv. 32, 45–46). No actual attempt at arrest is described, simply the will to do it ... No arrest could take place before his "hour" had come.*
- 4) George Beasley-Murray, *People confronted with the revelation of God in Christ are not allowed to remain neutral; they divide before him as before the judgment seat of God (cf. 3:19–21; 12:31–32, 46–49, and for further instances of such division see vv 12–13, 30–31; 9:16; 10:19).*
- 5) Charles Swindoll, *As often occurred with Jesus, the audience split into two groups, based on their reaction to the truth. Some believed while others sought His destruction. No one, however, dared touch Him in public while opinions remained divided.*
- 6) Grant Osborne, *Everywhere Jesus goes in John's Gospel he encounters the darkness in every person (1:5, 9), leading to negative reactions as the darkness rejects the light of God (3:19–20).*
- 7) William Hendriksen, *... officers had already been sent to arrest Jesus; which introduces us to the next paragraph: 7:45–52.*

TO BE CONTINUED, LORD WILLING!