

SBCOD Bible Study Notes

8-13-25

John 7

Jesus Goes To The Festival Of Tabernacles – Verses 1-5

¹ After this, Jesus went around in Galilee. He did not want to go about in Judea because the Jewish leaders there were looking for a way to kill him. ² But when the Jewish Festival of Tabernacles was near, ³ Jesus' brothers said to him, "Leave Galilee and go to Judea, so that your disciples there may see the works you do. ⁴ No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world." ⁵ For even his own brothers did not believe in him.

7:1-2 The Festival of Tabernacles is described in Leviticus 23: 33-44. This event occurred in October, about six months after the Passover celebration mentioned in John 6: 2-5. The festival commemorated the days when the Israelites wandered in the wilderness and lived in shelters (Leviticus 23: 43).

7:3-5 Jesus' brothers had a difficult time believing in him. Some of these brothers would eventually become leaders in the church (James, for example), but for several years they were embarrassed by Jesus. After Jesus died and rose again, they finally believed. We today have every reason to believe because we have the full record of Jesus' miracles, death, and resurrection. We also have the evidence of what the gospel has done in people's lives through the centuries. Don't miss this opportunity to believe in God's Son.

Jesus' Reply: We Are Of Different Worlds – Verses 6-9

⁶ Therefore Jesus told them, "My time is not yet here; for you any time will do. ⁷ The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that its works are evil. ⁸ You go to the festival. I am not going up to this festival, because my time has not yet fully come." ⁹ After he had said this, he stayed in Galilee.

7:6-9 Because the world hated Jesus, we who follow him can expect that many people will hate us as well. If circumstances are going too well, ask if you are following Christ as you should. We can be grateful when life goes well, but we must make sure it is not at the cost of following Jesus halfheartedly or not at all.

Jesus Goes Up To Jerusalem, Where Many Secretly Discuss Him – Verses 10-13

¹⁰ However, after his brothers had left for the festival, he went also, not publicly, but in secret. ¹¹ Now at the festival the Jewish leaders were watching for Jesus and asking, "Where is he?" ¹² Among the crowds there was widespread whispering about him. Some said, "He is a good man." Others replied, "No, he deceives the people." ¹³ But no one would say anything publicly about him for fear of the leaders.

7: 10 Jesus came with the greatest gift ever offered, so why did he often act secretly? The religious leaders hated him, and many would refuse his gift of salvation, no matter what he said or did. The more Jesus taught and worked publicly, the more these leaders would cause

trouble for him and his followers. So it was necessary for Jesus to teach and work as quietly as possible. Many people today have the privilege of teaching, preaching, and worshiping publicly with little persecution. These believers should be grateful and make the most of their opportunities to proclaim the gospel.

7:13 The Jewish religious leaders had a great deal of power over the common people. Apparently these leaders couldn't do much to Jesus at this time, but they threatened anyone who might publicly support him. One of the reprisals for believing in Jesus was excommunication from the synagogue (9:22). To a Jew, this was a severe punishment.

7:13 Everyone was talking about Jesus! But when it came time to speak up for him in public, no one said a word. All were afraid. Fear can stifle our witness. Although many people talk about Christ in church, when it comes to making a public statement about their faith, they are often embarrassed. Jesus says that he will acknowledge us before God if we acknowledge him before others (Matthew 10:32). Be courageous! Speak up for Christ!

Jesus Teaches At The Festival – Verses 14-18

¹⁴ Not until halfway through the festival did Jesus go up to the temple courts and begin to teach. ¹⁵ The Jews there were amazed and asked, “How did this man get such learning without having been taught?” ¹⁶ Jesus answered, “My teaching is not my own. It comes from the one who sent me. ¹⁷ Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. ¹⁸ Whoever speaks on their own does so to gain personal glory, but he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him.

7:14-18 Those who attempt to know God's will and do it will know intuitively that Jesus was telling the truth about himself. Have you ever listened to religious speakers and wondered if they were telling the truth? Test them: (1) Their words should agree with, not contradict, the Bible; (2) their words should point to God and his will, not to themselves.

The People Object That Jesus Is Crazy, And Has A Demon – Verses 19-24

¹⁹ Has not Moses given you the law? Yet not one of you keeps the law. Why are you trying to kill me?” ²⁰ “You are demon-possessed,” the crowd answered. “Who is trying to kill you?” ²¹ Jesus said to them, “I did one miracle, and you are all amazed. ²² Yet, because Moses gave you circumcision (though actually it did not come from Moses, but from the patriarchs), you circumcise a boy on the Sabbath. ²³ Now if a boy can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses may not be broken, why are you angry with me for healing a man's whole body on the Sabbath? ²⁴ Stop judging by mere appearances, but instead judge correctly.”

7:19-20 The Pharisees spent their days trying to achieve holiness by keeping the meticulous rules that they had added to God's laws. Jesus' accusation that they didn't keep Moses' laws stung them deeply. In spite of their pompous pride in themselves and their rules, they did not even fulfill a legalistic religion, for they were living far below what the law of Moses required. Murder was certainly against the law. Jesus' followers should do more than the moral law requires, not by adding to its requirements, but by going beyond and beneath the mere dos and don'ts of the law to the spirit of the law. Most of the people were probably not aware of the plot to kill Jesus (5:18). There was a small group looking for the right opportunity to kill him, but most were still trying to decide what they believed about him.

7:21-24 According to Moses' law, circumcision was to be performed eight days after a baby's birth (Genesis 17: 9-14; Leviticus 12: 3). This rite was carried out on all Jewish males to demonstrate their identity as part of God's covenant people. If the eighth day after birth was a Sabbath, the circumcision would still be performed (even though it was considered work). While the religious leaders allowed certain exceptions to Sabbath laws, they allowed none to Jesus, who was simply showing mercy to those who needed healing.

Division Over Who Jesus Is – Verses 25-29

²⁵ At that point some of the people of Jerusalem began to ask, "Isn't this the man they are trying to kill?" ²⁶ Here he is, speaking publicly, and they are not saying a word to him. Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Messiah? ²⁷ But we know where this man is from; when the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from." ²⁸ Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, "Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own authority, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, ²⁹ but I know him because I am from him and he sent me."

7:25-26 This chapter shows the many reactions people had toward Jesus. They called him a good man (7:12), a deceiver (7:12), demon-possessed (7:20), the Messiah (7:26), and the Prophet, whose coming had been predicted by Moses (7:40). We must make up our own minds about who Jesus is, knowing that whatever we decide will have eternal consequences.

The Officers Try To Arrest Jesus As Many Believe In Him – Verses 30-39

³⁰ At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come. ³¹ Still, many in the crowd believed in him. They said, "When the Messiah comes, will he perform more signs than this man?" ³² The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering such things about him. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple guards to arrest him. ³³ Jesus said, "I am with you for only a short time, and then I am going to the one who sent me. ³⁴ You will look for me, but you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come." ³⁵ The Jews said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we cannot find him? Will he go where our people live scattered among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks?" ³⁶ What did he mean when he said, 'You will look for me, but you will not find me,' and 'Where I am, you cannot come'?" ³⁷ On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. ³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." ³⁹ By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

7:30-37 Jesus' words, "come to me and drink," alluded to the theme of many Bible passages that talk about the Messiah's life-giving blessings (Isaiah 12:2-3; 44:3-4; 58:11). In promising to give the Holy Spirit to all who believed, Jesus was claiming to be the Messiah, for that was something only the Messiah could do.

7:38-39 Jesus used the term living water in 4:10 to indicate eternal life. Here he uses the term to refer to the Holy Spirit. The two go together: Wherever the Holy Spirit is accepted, he brings eternal life. Jesus teaches more about the Holy Spirit in chapters 14–16. The Holy Spirit empowered Jesus' followers at Pentecost (Acts 2) and has since been available to all who believe in Jesus as Savior.

Jesus Brings Division Among The Crowd – Verses 40-44

⁴⁰ On hearing his words, some of the people said, “Surely this man is the Prophet.” ⁴¹ Others said, “He is the Messiah.” Still others asked, “How can the Messiah come from Galilee? ⁴² Does not Scripture say that the Messiah will come from David’s descendants and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?” ⁴³ Thus the people were divided because of Jesus. ⁴⁴ Some wanted to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him.

7:40-44 The crowd was asking questions about Jesus. Some believed, others were hostile, and others disqualified Jesus as the Messiah because he was from Nazareth, not Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). But he was born in Bethlehem (Luke 2:1-7), although he grew up in Nazareth. He may have had a pronounced Galilean accent. If they had looked more carefully, they would not have jumped to the wrong conclusions. When you search for God’s truth, make sure you look carefully and thoughtfully at the Bible with an open heart and mind. Don’t jump to conclusions before knowing more of what the Bible says.

Unbelief Of The Jewish Leaders – Verses 45-49

⁴⁵ Finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests and the Pharisees, who asked them, “Why didn’t you bring him in?” ⁴⁶ “No one ever spoke the way this man does,” the guards replied. ⁴⁷ “You mean he has deceived you also?” the Pharisees retorted. ⁴⁸ “Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him? ⁴⁹ No! But this mob that knows nothing of the law—there is a curse on them.”

7:45-46 Although the Romans ruled Palestine, they gave the Jewish religious leaders authority over minor civil and religious affairs. The religious leaders supervised their own temple guards and gave the officers power to arrest anyone causing a disturbance or breaking any of their ceremonial laws. Because these leaders had developed hundreds of trivial laws, it was almost impossible for anyone, even the leaders themselves, not to break, neglect, or ignore at least a few of them some of the time. But these temple guards couldn’t find one reason to arrest Jesus. And as they listened to Jesus to try to find evidence, they couldn’t help hearing the wonderful words he said.

7:47-49 The Jewish leaders saw themselves as an elite group that alone had the truth, and they resisted the truth about Christ because it wasn’t theirs to begin with. It is easy to think that we have the truth and that those who disagree with us do not have any truth at all. But God’s truth is available to everyone. Don’t copy the Pharisees’ self-centered and narrow attitude.

The Reaction To Nicodemus’ Small Stand For Jesus – Verses 50-52

⁵⁰ Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their own number, asked, ⁵¹ “Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing?” ⁵² They replied, “Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee.”

7:50 This passage offers additional insight into Nicodemus, the Pharisee who visited Jesus at night (chapter 3). Apparently Nicodemus had become a secret believer. Since most of the Pharisees hated Jesus and wanted to kill him, Nicodemus risked his reputation and high position even though he only spoke up indirectly for Jesus. His statement was bold, and the Pharisees immediately became suspicious. After Jesus’ death, Nicodemus brought spices for his body (19:39). That is the last time he is mentioned in Scripture.

7:51-52 Nicodemus confronted the Pharisees with their failure to keep their own laws. The Pharisees were losing ground— the temple guards came back impressed by Jesus (7: 46), and one of the Pharisees' own, Nicodemus, was defending him. With their hypocritical motives being exposed and their prestige slowly eroding, they began to move to protect themselves. Pride would interfere with their ability to reason, and soon they would become obsessed with getting rid of Jesus just to save face. What was good and right no longer mattered.