

## John 7:1-24

### *Jesus Attends the Feast*

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John Chapter 6 was the pinnacle of Jesus' popularity, now He is facing a steadily deepening hostility. Our Lord's rejection is widespread, intense, and very apparent. At this point Jesus has to stay away from Judea for the Jews are intent on arresting Him and putting Him to death. It was not yet time to make a bold entrance at Jerusalem. Our Lord spent this six-month period, just prior to the crucifixion, focusing on His disciples and maintaining a low profile in Galilee.

**What three pilgrimage feasts/festivals are Jewish men required to attend yearly?** Exodus 23:14-17

- Feast of Tabernacles (Booths or Ingathering)
- Passover
- Pentecost (Firstfruits or Weeks)

The feast of Tabernacles occurred six months after Passover. It was a fall grape and olive harvest festival. In Jesus' day it was the most popular of the three required Jewish feasts. It commemorated the Israelites' sojourn in the wilderness. Many devout Jews built shelters out of branches and lived in them for the week to simulate the wilderness conditions in which their forefathers had lived.

**Where is Jesus' opposition coming from now?** Jewish religious leaders (verse 1) and citizens of Jerusalem (verse 12). John usually used the phrase "the Jews" to describe the Jewish authorities who were hostile to Jesus

**What do Jesus' brothers (step-brothers) want Him to do?** His brothers urge Jesus to publicly make Himself known in Jerusalem/Judea, (where the Feast of Tabernacles was being celebrated) the place where many are already determined to kill Him.

**Why? What is their motive?** What our Lord's brothers say to Him was rooted in unbelief and rejection—not in faith. Our Lord's brothers are not giving Him a piece of good advice. They are probably embarrassed by Jesus and fed up with His ministry. These brothers are aware that the Jews in Judea are seeking to kill Jesus. They urge Him to leave Galilee, the place of safety (and also the place where they lived), and to go to Jerusalem, the place of greatest danger.

**Application:** Let those who will follow our Lord take note that when we follow Christ, men will respond to us as they have to Him. Jesus was rejected by His family. We should expect that we may experience this, too. Have you experienced this?

**What does this incident tell you about Jesus' brothers?** They don't realize who He is. Lest we be too hard on the brothers... What if one of your brothers came up to you and said "I am the Savior of the world." How would you respond? Everyone is clueless about Jesus at this point—including His brothers.

**What becomes of the brothers after Jesus' resurrection and ascension?** All become believers. James was a leader in the early church and wrote the book of James. Jude, another half-brother of Jesus, wrote the New Testament book that bears his name.

**How did Jesus respond to His brothers' suggestion that He go up to Jerusalem? What is the issue?** This is not the right time (verse 6). Jesus is on a mission. He is following the Father's plan. There is a timetable to it which He must follow. This is a timing issue, not a courage issue. Jesus isn't afraid of men.

**Why does He go up secretly instead of with his brothers?** So as not to incite the crowd. He slips in the back door, contrary to the brothers' wishes who want Him to make a public display. Jesus is headed into dangerous territory. All of this enables Him to keep a "low profile," avoid undue attention, and thus not reveal His presence until well into the feast, when it will be difficult to arrest Him.

**What effect does Jesus have on the crowd?** John 7:12-13, 30-31, 40-41 He polarizes the crowd.

Consider Matthew 10:34-36: "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace on the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn 'a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.'"

**What effect does Jesus have on people today?** Very similar. It's easy to talk about God. It's not offensive. Everything changes when you start talking about Jesus and who He is.

**Why are they whispering and watching what they say?** The Jews are on the lookout for Jesus as they are expecting Him to appear for the feast. There is considerable conversation concerning Jesus by those in the crowd. The Jewish authorities apparently forbade anyone to talk about Jesus, but this only keeps their conversations down to a "low roar." John describes these conversations about Jesus as mumbling or murmuring—out of fear of the Jewish leaders.

**How do the Jews respond to Jesus' teaching?** In those days Jewish young men studied under a rabbi. But Jesus' source of learning was from the Father. Suddenly, Jesus appears in Jerusalem, boldly teaching in the temple! The Jews are amazed, not only at His courage but at His content (verse 15). They have to admit that He is a really good teacher.

They unwittingly praise Him by saying, "**How did this man get such learning without having studied?**" (John 7:15). They cannot understand how One who has not had a formal theological education under the rabbis has such a keen understanding of the Scriptures. They stand in awe of the One whom they choose to reject as their Messiah.

**How does Jesus answer their question?** Jewish rabbis normally cited other rabbis as the sources of their information but Jesus said His teaching comes from God. It is not simply the continuation of rabbinic tradition.

Jesus doesn't point to His credentials, but to His teaching (doctrine). It is as if He says, "I don't have a seminary degree, but judge Me by My teaching." If the Jewish leaders listened carefully to the teaching of Jesus, they would know that it was all rooted in the Old Testament Scriptures, and that it is from God.

**What does Jesus mean in v. 17?** One of the most important things is a commitment to follow God's will. Once a person makes that commitment God begins to convince him or her what is true. Faith must precede reason, not the other way around. Submission to God rather than intellectual analysis is the foundation for understanding truth, particularly the truth of Jesus' teachings

**In verse 20, why does the crowd question whether someone's trying to kill Jesus?** Many of Jesus' hearers do not realize the depth of the animosity of Israel's leaders toward Him. They naively think He is crazy to think that someone is trying to kill Him.

*Note:* 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

**What is the controversy involving circumcision all about?** Jesus' critics permitted an act on the Sabbath that resulted in the health of part of a person—circumcision of an infant. They should not, therefore, object to His healing a whole adult on the Sabbath.

**What does Jesus mean by saying, "Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment"?** Their superficial judgment about what was legitimate activity for the Sabbath has resulted in superficial judgment about Jesus' work and person. He tells them to stop doing that. They need to judge on the basis of righteous criteria—what is truly right.

*Application:* **What are some things that are not okay to judge?** A person's heart, motives, eternal destiny, relationship with God.

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**MEMORIZE: John 7:17**