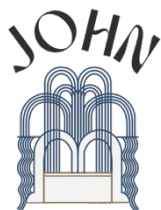


An Exposition of the
GOSPEL OF JOHN



“The Hatred of Christ by the World”

John 7:1-13

Theme: Unbelief cannot dictate the work of God.

Introduction: The longer a person walks with Christ, the more clearly he recognizes a sobering truth: the world does not just disagree with Jesus—ultimately, it hates Him. This hostility is not new. It did not start with modern secularism or cultural decline. It was present when Christ walked the earth, it surrounded His ministry, it followed His disciples, and according to Scripture, it will grow until He returns. Jesus Himself said plainly, *“The world... hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil.”* (John 7:7, NASB95) **[Read Text]**

Nowhere is this more evident than in John 7, where the “world’s” hatred comes from three directions at once:

- The religious leaders who wanted Him dead (v. 1),
- The crowds who murmured and speculated (vv. 11–12),
- And even His own brothers who did not believe in Him and tried to push Him into a public display (vv. 3–5).

Everything surrounding Jesus in this passage is filled with suspicion, hostility, and unbelief. Yet John wants us to see something deeper: none of this hostility—whether from unbelievers in His own family or the murderous rage of corrupt leaders—can control or derail God’s sovereign plan. Christ moves only according to the timetable of the Father. Human schemes do not rush Him, threaten Him, delay Him, or alter even a single moment of His mission. As He states with divine certainty, *“My time is not yet here... My time has not yet fully come.”* (John 7:6, 8)

This is the anchor of the passage and the anchor of our hope: **Unbelief cannot dictate the work of God.**

Men may plot, pressure, oppose, or misunderstand, but God’s purposes stand. And Christ demonstrates this with perfect calmness and unwavering resolve—even entering Jerusalem *“as it were, in secret”* (v. 10) so that He arrives at the exact moment and circumstances the Father ordained.

This morning, we will consider John’s inspired record under three headings that expose the world’s hatred and God’s sovereignty:

- I. **The Atmosphere of Hostility – vv. 1–5**
- II. **The Argument of Hostility – vv. 6–9**
- III. **The Assessment by Hostility – vv. 10–13**

Through these verses, we will see how unbelief surrounds Christ with hatred, but cannot alter the plan of God by one second. Let’s look at this carefully as we work through this text.

I. The Atmosphere of Hostility – 7:1-5

A. The Conflict in the Heart of Jesus – vv. 1-2

1. *“After these things ...”* - we understand that there is a break of about 6 or 7 months between the events recorded in chap. 6 and the beginning of chapter 7.
2. Jesus had found the need to limit His travel and activity to a fairly private ministry to His disciples as He *“was walking in Galilee, for He was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him.”*
3. In essence, Jesus withdrew Himself from a public ministry and endeavored to spend time preparing the disciples for what would happen at the following Passover [Mar/Apr] (about 6 months after the *“Feast of Booths”* [Sept/Oct]).
4. He couldn’t go freely into *“Judea”* because there was a plot to kill Him – a plot that had apparently been refined and intensified since it first came up – cp. *John 5:18*.
5. However, there is a conflict that arises in the heart of the Lord Jesus – a desire to be able to celebrate a very joyous feast – *“Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of booths, was near.”*
 - a) *This was one of the Feasts that the people of Israel loved to participate in every year, around October – cp. Leviticus 23:33-34.*
 - b) *It was comparable to our Thanksgiving, as the harvest is celebrated.*
 - c) *It had double significance, as it commemorated not only the productivity of the harvest but also the divine guidance they received during the wilderness journey.*
 - d) *As part of the observance,*
 - (1) The temple trumpets were blown each day.
 - (2) There was the outpouring of water, drawn from Siloam, in commemoration of the refreshing stream that had come forth miraculously from the rock at Meribah – and in anticipation of blessings both for Israel and for the world in the Kingdom.
 - (3) There was the illumination of the inner court of the temple, where the light of the grand candelabra reminded one of the pillar of fire by night, which had served as a guide through the desert.
 - (4) There was also a torch parade.
 - (5) In addition, in commemoration of the transitory wilderness wanderings of their forefathers, they built booths (or tents) to live in while they were visiting Jerusalem, a tradition that continues even to today in Israel.
 - e) *Jesus would want to be present at such a major time but clearly knew the Father’s will in the matter.*
6. Jesus wanted to go to honor the Lord by offering a sacrifice, but He also

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knew that the Father had a specific plan for Him that Jesus would not violate.

B. The Confrontation in the Home of Jesus – vv. 3-4

1. It is in this environment that Jesus is approached by His brothers – *“Therefore His brothers said to Him, ...”* – they saw the private nature of His ministry – one that had been previously so public.
2. They urge Him to go prove Himself – *“Leave here and go into Judea, so that your disciples also may see your works which You are doing.”*
3. The brothers of Jesus (identified as James, Joseph, Simon, and Jude in *Matthew 13:55*), *“were not believing in Him”* – *v. 5*.
4. About 1 ½ years earlier, Jesus’s brothers, out of embarrassment and misunderstanding, sought to restrain Him by an “intervention” – cp. *Mark 3:21*.
5. They had the same concept of Messiah as did the disciples who had turned away from Him 6 months earlier – all political, and temporally focused.
6. They believed that Jesus must attain glory and fame by means of a miraculous demonstration of power, and that if He didn’t get on with it, He would never attain the prominence that the Messiah should have – *“For no one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be known publicly.”*
7. They then charge Him with failing to be consistent – *“If You do these things, show Yourself to the world”* – stop hiding out and keeping your identity under-cover.

II. The Argument of Hostility – 7:6-9

A. The Antagonism for the Will of God – vv. 6-7

1. Jesus responds by indicating that they didn’t have the same orientation as His – they weren’t concerning themselves with the agenda of the Father – since they didn’t know Him – *“Your time is always opportune ...”*
2. However, for Him, this is not the case – *“My time is not yet here”* – that is, the time for the major confrontation with the religious leadership of the Jews
3. This demonstrates for us that one of the characteristics of the world is a complete disregard of the will of God – it doesn’t even consider it as a relevant issue.

4. In essence, Jesus is stating that He has to be careful not to precipitate a confrontation with the Jews—one that would be more likely if He were to arrive in Jerusalem early (before most pilgrims arrive).
5. He indicated that his brothers didn't understand the issues because they were not in a position of contrast or conflict with the world (essentially, they were still part of the world) – *“The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that it's deeds are evil.”*
 - a) The *“world”* referred to here is the realm of evil - mankind alienated from the life of God, and manifesting open hostility to God and his Anointed One.
 - b) Thus, the essential reason the ungodly are so antagonistic to Christ Jesus (and those who represent Him) is given here – because He condemns them in both word and deed.

B. The Allegiance to the Will of God - vv. 8-9

1. Instead of being induced to indulge in their advice to go “show His stuff” – Jesus prioritizes the will of God – *“Go up to the feast yourselves; I do not go up to this feast because My time has not yet fully come.”*
2. Jesus is clearly devoted to doing the will of God perfectly – and He had not yet received the Father's instruction to head to Jerusalem.
3. Consequently, *“having said these things to them, He stayed in Galilee”* – although this stay is only brief, as He later heads on to Jerusalem when He is able to be there without as great a chance of Him being arrested.

III. The Assessment by Hostility – 7:10-13

A. The Attentiveness by the World – vv. 10-11

1. The brothers of the Lord Jesus were happy to leave the Lord – to whom they had not yet turned for living water and spiritual bread – so they could go to Jerusalem and remain devoted to their ceremonial traditions and past blessings from the Lord
2. They were essentially dismissive of His nonsense and “haughtiness.”
3. Jesus waited for them to go, then He *“himself also went up, not publicly, but as it were, in secret.”*
 - a) Again, *“My time has not yet fully come”* – *“Time”* (**καίρως**) refers to the divinely appointed moment for His public manifestation and ultimately His death (cf. [John 2:4](#); [8:20](#); [12:23, 27](#)).
 - b) Jesus refuses to be pushed into a public appearance that would provoke premature confrontation. He will not allow unbelievers—even family—to dictate His ministry.

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- c) *Had He arrived publicly, the people would have attempted to crown Him as a political Messiah (cf. **John 6:15**).*
- d) *His secrecy preserved the true nature of His mission—He came as the Lamb, not yet the Lion.*
- 4. The world's attentiveness is on externals, rituals and ceremonies, not on the Person and work of Jesus Christ as Jesus' brothers demonstrated.
- 5. However, *"the Jews were seeking Him at the feast and were saying, 'Where is He?'"* – *"the Jews"* ought to be contrasted to the people of Israel or *"the crowds"* – *"the Jews"* were the leadership who were hostile to Him.
- 6. Again, they were seeking Him to kill Him – hoping that He would come early before the crowds got too large or before He was able to sway a huge following behind Him.

B. The Apprehension of the World – vv. 12-13

- 1. The crowds at the Feast were also looking for Him, but they had a varying degree of attitudes – *"There was much grumbling among the crowds concerning Him."*
 - a) *Some thought He was a prophet—or had come from God at the least—"some were saying, 'He is a good man'."*
 - b) *"Others were saying, 'No, on the contrary, He leads the people astray.'" – they failed to see His heart and therefore misunderstood His teaching.*
- 2. Thus, the world had very little appreciation for the man, but rather, "hated Him."
- 3. However, since the Sanhedrin had not yet come out with a public announcement of condemnation to Jesus, people were not willing to stick their neck out – *"Yet no one was speaking openly of Him for fear of the Jews."*

So What?

- 1. How does recognizing that God – not people, pressures, or circumstances – controls the timing of His work reshape the way you respond to situations that feel urgent or hostile?
- 2. Where are you tempted to allow the unbelief of others – family, coworkers, culture – to influence or redirect your obedience to Christ, and what would faithfulness look like instead?
- 3. How can Christ's calm submission to the Father's timetable strengthen your confidence as you navigate seasons of confusion, opposition, or delayed answers to prayer?
- 4. In what ways do I feel tempted to "rush ahead" of God's timing or to modify obedience to avoid discomfort or opposition?

Theme: *Unbelief cannot dictate the work of God.*