



**Thirsty?
Come to the Source
John 7:32 – 53**

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Jesus has been busy confounding the religious elites, who want Him dead, as well as the general temple goers, who are still trying to decide just who He is.

The conversations we have been looking at have all been centered in on the Feast of Tabernacles, the really big Jewish camping festival that takes place every fall. This year it begins at sunset on Sept 29 and ends with nightfall on Oct 6. It was probably the best attended of all the festivals drawing many from out of town as well as the locals.

From a timing perspective, this is the last Feast of Tabernacles that Jesus will be attending before going to the cross which is around six months in the future based on where we are in John.

Many in the crowd have just concluded that He is Messiah and they have wrongly concluded that is the reason why He has not been arrested at this point. The religious elites are desperate to cancel Him, because they have concluded He is a danger to their positions.



That would be a wrong conclusion. But we do know that some of the elites heard what was being said because of their reaction here in John 7.

We are in the book of John in chapter 7 and will be picking up our text in verse 32. John 7:32 and following.

John 7:32–34

“The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering these things about Him, and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to arrest Him. Therefore Jesus said, “For a little while longer I am going to be with you, and then I am going to Him who sent Me. You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come.”” (NASB 2020)

Many of the religious elites had not heard Jesus teach and they were listening in, but overhearing the crowds begin to say things that challenged their authority and power base is just too much for one of the groups there. In the Temple, you have the Pharisees, probably the largest group there. You also have the Sadducees.

The Sadducees were the liberals of the day and did not believe in the resurrection. They were not heavily involved in getting the average Jew into their camp as they were rich, powerful, and in control. There were also the ultra conservative Essenes, but they were out in the desert in Qumran.

This leaves “the only significant Jewish group seeking to influence the religious views and practical behavior of ordinary Palestinian Jews “at ground level” ca. A.D. 28–30 was the Pharisees.” (Meier 2001, 338)

To the politically connected Pharisees, to think of Jesus as the Messiah, which He is, was dangerous and could adversely impact their position and place within the Roman Empire and in Jerusalem. Because they were looking at this solely through the lens provided to them by the enemy, power and the retention and exercise of it, Jesus must be arrested and dealt with.

To make that happen they must engage the chief priests. The chief priests, most likely the acting high priest and all the ex-high priests and their sons, were the political and religious aristocrats of Israel and recognized by Rome as who they would deal with on certain matters.

They were Sadducees. Temple political power brokers and they controlled the Sanhedrin.

“The Pharisees had heard the whispered talk of the people (cf. v. 12), and they determined to silence Jesus. Accordingly they brought the matter before the Sanhedrim, so that measures might be taken for His arrest.” (Bernard 1929, 277) Their politics left no other option.

I find it interesting that Satan uses politics to try and control what it is the Lord is doing in Jerusalem. That is a tactic he has not moved away from over the centuries either. The enemy takes great pains to make sure he has his people in positions of power in as many places as possible. When they outnumber or have more power than those who would stop them, persecution of believers is usually the result.

In the Temple political world, the Pharisees outnumbered the Sadducees, but the Sadducees had the positions of power since they had aligned themselves with the Roman Empire. So, to get anything done, they had to convince the Sadducee led group.

It really makes me wonder about the whole scope of what we call politics. Jesus, earlier in His ministry made the following comments about folks who would swear by something because perhaps, they were nuancing or spinning the truth. Interjecting politics into the day to day. Or just flat out lying and using this as a means to do so.



Matthew 5:34–37

“But I say to you: Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let your word be ‘Yes, Yes’ or ‘No, No’; anything more than this comes from the evil one.” (NRSVue)

This was not something that the Temple leadership would ever do, tell the unvarnished truth about anything. As we have already seen, starting back in chapter 1, they engage in power plays, word games, gas lighting, slander and lying. And that is on a good day. They were masters of the redirect.

Whenever we find ourselves having to spin our way out of something, stop. Just stop. Tell the truth. I have found that to do so in the business world shocks the day lights out of your boss. Soon you get a reputation for it and very quickly, no one wants your opinion anymore.

Machiavelli was right, “Politics have no relation to morals.”

We see politics everywhere it seems these days. I’m not talking about left or right, or even political parties, I am talking about jockeying for position, or power. Using innuendo, gas lighting, slander, or lying in an effort to make yourself look better than the competition. You, know, everything we see being touted as a virtue on social media these days.

Politics is a problem even in the church. It tends to lead to sub-optimization and compromise and when it comes to God’s word, that simply isn’t possible on many things.

We see in our culture today progressive or rather, liberal churches supporting the satanically inspired ideas of the culture even going as far as to say the support is what the Lord would want. Hardly.

The big temptation is to cross the line and cease being only in the world; but compromising and becoming part of the world. That is where the religious elites of Jerusalem are. They are not believers. With the approval of the Sadducee led Sanhedrin, yes, the high priests were religious liberals and conservative politicians, off go the Temple Police to arrest Jesus. Jesus sees them trying to find a way past the crowd listening to Him.

John 7:33–34

“Therefore Jesus said, “For a little while longer I am going to be with you, and then I am going to Him who sent Me. You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come.”” (NASB 2020)

He knows His time is coming in around six months or so. He will truly only be with them a short while and with His mission completed, He will return to the Father.

When Jesus says, “You will seek Me, and will not find Me,” there are two meanings. Yes, they are going to try and arrest Him, often, but until it is His time, they simply will not find Him or be able to arrest Him.

Then there is the supernatural aspect to what it is He is saying. Those who are rejecting Him and His Word, will search for God. They believe they are in line for eternal life. But because they do not recognize Jesus, they really do not know the Father, just as Jesus has already said. As a result, they will not only be unable to find Him, but they will also be unable to go where He is going because they are unwilling to turn to Jesus Christ in faith as the only source for salvation. Later Jesus will say “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.” (John 14:6b, NASB 2020)

Do the unbelieving religious get it? Not hardly.



John 7:35–36

“The Jews then said to one another, “Where does this man intend to go that we will not find Him? He does not intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks, does He? What is this statement that He said, ‘You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come’ ?”” (NASB 2020)

This is what the world said then and it is what the world says even today. Ever wonder why people get it so wrong when they quote the Bible or make affirmations that they are indeed Christians but aren’t? Simple, without the Holy Spirit illuminating God’s word to them, they will never get it.

We’ve talked about this before, but it is important to remember, unbelievers cannot and do not know what God’s word is saying. They might get close, but they will never nail it. It is our responsibility to share our story, to share what the Lord has done for us. How He has saved us. Then leave it to the Holy Spirit to do His job.

I have never seen the value in debating those who are unbelievers about the Bible. I am looking forward to the day the Lord takes me home, either in the rapture or when my time is up. I know to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. But for those who do not know Jesus, they have nothing to look forward to except the Great White Throne Judgement. That produces fear as they approach death.

1 Corinthians 2:10–14

“But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (NKJV)

Here we learn that we cannot know the thoughts of God, as expressed to us in His word, except through the Holy Spirit. His job is to reveal God’s thoughts to us.

Every time we open up the Word, we are inviting the Holy Spirit to show us God’s thoughts towards us as He takes His word and applies it to our heart. This is why reading the word is so exciting to the believer. It is the Holy Spirit, taking the written word, applying it to our present circumstances and situations and giving us God’s thoughts on those providing us JIT guidance for living.

1 Corinthians 2:15–16

“But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. For “who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?” But we have the mind of Christ.” (NKJV)

That seriously jazzes me. Stop and think about it for a moment. We may not know anyone here on this planet who is “famous.” But the reality is, each of us, if we know Christ, know the one who created the universe, talked to Moses in the burning bush, told Balaam just how foolish he really was, laid in a manger, died on a cross and then rose from the dead. We, each of us, know as our closest friend, Jesus Christ. Jesus says this later in John.

John 15:15

“No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, because all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.” (NASB 2020)



As His friends, has He withheld anything from us? What has He given us? All things that I have heard is in the active voice. He is not only disclosing what He heard in the past, but into the present and on into the future. He is actively hearing and actively making known to us what He hears. "For the Lord GOD does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets." (Amos 3:7, ESV) But we are His friends.

For the believer, we are able to find Him.

For the religious leadership listening to Him, they do not get it and they begin to assume that Jesus is about to take His ministry on the road and minister to Jews living outside of Israel. They have consistently demonstrated that they are totally clueless about spiritual things. They are not believers.

They really do not understand what He is saying. They discuss what He said, repeating it verbatim, trying to understand. When they begin questioning if He is going to the diaspora, they had concluded that He is irrational and cannot be the Messiah as the Messiah would never go to teach the dispersion or the gentile Greeks.

It appears they were being unconsciously prophetic about what the church would do shortly after the resurrection.

When they restated Jesus' statement, the conversation ended and yes, there was no arrest made at that point.

All of that took place on the fourth day of the festival, now we come to the last and great day of the feast, the 7th day.

Leviticus 23:36

"Seven days you shall present the LORD's offerings by fire; on the eighth day you shall observe a holy convocation and present the LORD's offerings by fire; it is a solemn assembly; you shall not work at your occupations." (NRSVue)

Under the Law, the Feast and the rules connected with it ended on the 7th day of the Feast. The 8th day is referred to as "Shmini Atzeret, which means "the eighth day of the assembly." It refers to the added eighth day (Lev. 23:36). Technically, it is considered an independent holiday from the Feast of Tabernacles, but it comes immediately afterward and is thus always connected with the Feast." The Bible commands it but gives no reason for it. (Fruchtenbaum 1983, 6)

Some commentators believe that what Jesus is saying is on the 8th day.

Looking at the context of John 7 & 8, the events taking place and what Jesus says are tied up to the 7th day of the Feast, the last and great day, not the 8th day as some say.

Jesus is going to make a statement to all on this day that is Messianic. But we need to understand some of the background of what was going on in Temple. You see, there is a water drawing ceremony that has been taking place during the festival for over 100 years. Everyday for 6 days and it climaxes on the 7th day. Traditionally, the water would be drawn from the Pool of Siloam and then brought up the ½ mile to the Temple. "The water was poured out on the southwest corner of the Altar of Sacrifice because the grooves which drew the blood away were located there." (Fruchtenbaum 1983, 14)

A procession of priests would go down from the Temple Mount to the Pool with 3 golden flasks, fill them, and then return while singing the Psalms of Ascents (Psalms 120 – 134). "The water libation: How so? A golden flask, holding three logs in volume, did one fill with water from Siloam. [When] they reached the Water Gate, they blow a sustained, a quavering, and a sustained blast on the shofar [The priest] went up



on the ramp [at the south] and turned to his left [southwest]." (Neusner 1988, 288) This was done for 7 days.

So, every morning, at the crack of dawn, there has been a procession going down the hill to the Pool. "When the High Priest arrived at the pool, he dipped the golden pitcher into the pool, filling it, then headed back to the Temple. He led the entire procession back to the Temple through the Water Gate. There the crowd paused as trumpet players blew three blasts on silver trumpets. Then the priests would sing or shout, "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation" (Isaiah 12:3 NKJV)." (Brickner 2006, 80)

This was all carefully timed as well because there is a sacrifice taking place each morning. When they would return to the Temple they would be "timing it, that they should arrive just as they were laying the pieces of the sacrifice on the great Altar of Burnt-offering, towards the close of the ordinary Morning-Sacrifice service." (Edersheim 1896, 158)

This is an area normally off limits to all but the Priests but that was not the case for this celebration.

For all of the prior days, the priests brought the water back with three blasts of a shofar, went around the altar once and then poured out the water. But on the seventh day, that all changed, "there were seven circuits around the altar and three times seven blasts of the trumpets. As the seven circuits around the altar were made, the people would cry out each time, "Ana hoshia na, ana El na, hoshana ve-hoshia na— Please bring salvation now. Please, God, please, save and bring salvation now!" With each circuit the chant would grow louder and more intense. Such was the great crescendo of praise to God associated with the last day of the feast." (Brickner 2006, 85)

This is not a quiet crowd, they are singing the Psalms, they are loudly giving praise. They are making the worship band look really bad because the people are all in it.

They are looking for the hope and promise of the coming salvation to be provided by the Messiah. There is also a procession going on at the same time bringing willow branches into the Temple altar area. Whether they made a canopy with them, put or just leaned them on the altar, the people would pick them up and shake them timed with the idea of water about to be poured out.

Imagine the sound of thousands of people singing together and shouting, "LORD, SAVE US!" Imagine the sound of hundreds shaking their willow branches until the leaves fell off. Trumpets blowing louder and louder, musicians, choirs raising their voices. And finally as the last of this sevenfold circuit was made around the altar, the water was poured out in a climax of jubilation. Nothing but joy! (Brickner 2006, 86)

In Judaism, the pouring out of the water was a symbol of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the last days. The rabbis taught that, in the last days, there will be an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon Israel before the Messiah comes. (Fruchtenbaum 1983, 14-15)

And today, at the climax, as the water is being poured out and the people are crying "Lord, Save Us," and the shofars blast out, there is a response. Messiah is indeed in the house, and He takes the stand in order to be seen and heard by the thousands gathered there.

It was then, immediately after the symbolic rite of water-pouring, immediately after the people had responded by repeating those lines from Psalm 118.—given thanks, and prayed that Jehovah would send salvation and prosperity, and had shaken their Lulabh towards the altar, thus praising 'with heart, and mouth, and hands,' and then silence had fallen upon them—that there rose, so loud as to be heard throughout the Temple, the Voice of Jesus. He interrupted not the services, for they had for the moment ceased: He interpreted, and He fulfilled them. (Edersheim 1896, 160)

He is the one that Zechariah said would rebuild the Temple at the end of the Tribulation, the same Temple that Ezekiel tells us will have water gushing forth from it (Ezekiel 47) turning into a river less than a mile



away heading towards the east. He is the one that will indeed fill His people with the Holy Spirit fulfilling another promise in Zechariah.

Here He is, and He is saying this can all happen now!

John 7:37–39

“Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. The one who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’ ” But this He said in reference to the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” (NASB 2020)

This is a personal invitation from Messiah. He is calling for the people to recognize their spiritual thirst. They have been crying out Lord save us, and here He is saying come to me, come to the source of what you are looking for.

He is the true Water of life. Jesus' timing was perfect. The people were thinking about God's miraculous provision of water in the wilderness. They have been living and camping outdoors in order to identify with those who came through the wilderness. Just as God would satisfy their thirst, Jesus would satisfy the spiritual thirst of any and all who come to Him. And for all who do, the promise given in Zechariah and Ezekiel of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, indeed a new covenant, was soon to be for all.

The rabbis interpreted the outpouring of water as referring to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon Israel. Yeshua interpreted the ceremony as symbolizing the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer. (Fruchtenbaum 1983, 29)

He is dealing with the ministry of the Holy Spirit that indeed would begin on the Day of Pentecost just a few months away. The permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit which became possible only after His ascension to the Father.

Jesus has just stood up and said that He is the one who will fulfill the water libation ceremony, He is the giver of water, the Holy Spirit.

Once again Jesus is saying what He has said to the woman at the well, He is the source of the water and only He can resolve the thirst problem. This means that we can only come to Jesus on His terms, not ours. Later in John, Jesus says this, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.” (John 14:6b, NASB 2020)

Are you thirsty? Have you been looking at finding satisfaction in other places.

Before coming to Christ, we all think we have an idea of how to have our thirst, our spiritual longing resolved. It might be in the acquisition of wealth, or maybe in philosophy or mysticism. I thought it could be taken care of by being the best at everything I would do. Some look at finding satisfaction in manipulating people to do what they want. Some, as we have discussed, want power. What Jesus is saying is simple, none of that will solve your thirst, only I do.

He did not limit the invitation either. Jesus said, “If anyone is thirsty.”

The crowd He is talking to are locals, folks from elsewhere in Israel, some of the diaspora, and possibly some gentiles too.

What He just said was groundbreaking for a Jew, He said “anyone.” There are no limitations. He set no limitations to where you are from, what you have done or who you are. He simply says if “anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.” He is promising you and me, that if we come to Him on His terms



without any preconditions, in other words there is nothing we must do beforehand to prepare for this, He will truly satisfy.

He didn't say "come to church." Or come to this Mountain top, or this Temple, or this or that guru. He just says come to me.

He didn't say do this ceremony, or do this prayer, or do anything really. He just says come to Me and drink. He is the fulfillment of all the Feast was anticipating. He is the Messiah and He is the supplier of anything we would ever need. He simply makes the offer and says, come.

To do that, well we call that faith. Faith that what He is saying He will do, He will do for you. When we drink, we are taking water and making it part of ourselves. Who is it that Jesus is making this invitation to. Religious people who think they have it all together.

What Jesus has just done is tell them that everything you have just done reflects a thirst. You have asked for God to come and save and poured water on a corner of the altar, using the same channel to allow the blood to flow away from the altar immediately after a sacrifice has taken place.

Here is the picture, the sacrifice on the altar, blood still in the channel, and now water mixing with the blood. A graphic picture of what was going to take place in six months or so on a hillside near there.

What happens when we come to Him as per His open invitation?

John 7:38

"The one who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" (NASB 2020)

Jesus has already stated that Moses wrote about Him and that He is the bread of heaven and now He is the source of living water. Just as He told the woman at the well. Because of what He will do on the cross, He makes possible for us, to be filled with the Holy Spirit and as we are enabled and empowered by the Spirit to do the ministry, He has called us to, literally, water, the Holy Spirit, comes from within us since He is now part of us.

As we come to Him in answer to His invitation, He satisfies our thirst. He blesses us with the assurance that our sins are forgiven, that in itself is a blessing. But He goes further and then says that is not the end of it, we are so filled with Him, He becomes such a part of us, that He, in turn, can then use us to be a blessing to others.

Clearly, Jesus is pointing ahead to what will happen on Pentecost, so much so that John adds an editorial comment here.

John 7:39

"But this He said in reference to the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." (NASB 2020)

What Jesus is discussing here, is possible only because of the achievement of what He accomplishes on the cross. That must come first, then the resurrection and Christ glorified.

Wow. This has been a powerful morning for those at the feast. They have a lot to process, and we overhear some of them talking about it.

John 7:40–44

"Some of the people therefore, after they heard these words, were saying, 'This truly is the Prophet.' Others were saying, 'This is the Christ.' But others were saying, 'Surely the Christ is not coming from



Galilee, is He? Has the Scripture not said that the Christ comes from the descendants of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" So a dissension occurred in the crowd because of Him. And some of them wanted to arrest Him, but no one laid hands on Him." (NASB 2020)

Jesus caused division then and still does today. Notice that everyone had an opinion, that's what He does. He forces the issue, and a decision is needed.

But what we hear in the crowd is what we hear today. Some say He is a Prophet, such as Islam. There are those who agree He is indeed Messiah, and they are believers. But then there are those who think they have the answers without checking into the facts. He did indeed come from Bethlehem. And then there were those who were upset with what had just taken place and the clear message that He is Messiah, yet they do not believe it and want to have Him arrested and removed from consideration. They want to cancel Jesus. He causes division after all.

But what about the religious professionals. Remember, they have an outstanding arrest warrant for Jesus.

John 7:45–53

"The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them, "Why did you not bring Him?" The officers answered, "Never has a man spoken in this way!" The Pharisees then replied to them, "You have not been led astray too, have you? Not one of the rulers or Pharisees has believed in Him, has he? But this crowd that does not know the Law is accursed!" Nicodemus (the one who came to Him before, being one of them) said to them, "Our Law does not judge the person unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?" They answered and said to him, "You are not from Galilee as well, are you? Examine the Scriptures, and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee." And everyone went to his home." (NASB 2020)

The Temple Police simply couldn't arrest Jesus. It wasn't His time, but they were also blown away by His teaching and they are now considering what they have heard. And yes, they just said the crowd is accursed because they don't understand Torah as they do. But most of the Pharisees are from Judea and are rather bigoted against those country hicks from up north in Galilee. You see that in what they say. They even overgeneralize the facts in order to make a point. In reality, there was indeed a prophet from Galilee, his name was Jonah, whose life became a type of Christ. He came from Gath Hopher, 3 miles north of Nazareth in Lower Galilee.

This brings us to the end of chapter 7, and just as the people there at the festival were in decision mode, we are too. Jesus has presented facts about Himself that demand an answer. Is He the Messiah, is He the Savior, or not.

His offer stands, "If anyone is thirsty, let Him come to Me and drink." How about you. What is it that you're currently chasing after this time? A job? A spouse? Money? Good times? Dope? Booze? I don't know, but He does, and the invitation is for you right now.

Romans 3:21–24

"But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins." (NLT)

Romans 10:9–13

"If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be



disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”” (NLT)

ABC’s of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

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