



**Jesus and Well Meaning Spin Doctors  
Family Issues, Death Threats and  
The Jewish Camping Festival  
But Time to Teach  
John 7:1-15**

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Today, we are going to learn that those who knew Jesus the best, did not yet believe that He is the Messiah. His mother Mary knows, she was there, but the half-brothers of Jesus still don't get it.

Just imagine growing up with an older brother who never does anything wrong...ever. No, I mean He really never does anything wrong because He is God in the flesh. He was the example of the fully obedient child. Which would not have been entirely a good thing for his half-brothers who were only fully human.

I doubt He ever had to be told to pick up His toys or clean His room.

It is sometime in the early fall in Galilee and the time for the Feast of Booths / Tabernacles was rapidly coming up. Of the three major festivals, this is the only one taking place in the fall after the harvest is in. Because of that, it was usually well attended. Per Deuteronomy 16:13 – 15, it was seven days of feasting and looking at the last phrase of verse 15, joy was to be the major theme. "A better way to translate that



last phrase might be, “You shall have nothing but joy.” Rejoicing is a major theme for Tabernacles.” (Brickner 2006, 31)

One of the requirements for those celebrating this feast involved camping. Yes, Jesus is going to take part in a Jewish camping festival.

The idea was to remember what it was like living in the wilderness. The instructions for this and other festivals are in Leviticus 23. The people were supposed to live for 7 days in what is called a sukkah or booth. It was “a kind of dwelling or shelter that shepherds would make while they watched their flocks. It was a temporary structure that the shepherds would tear down before moving on with their flocks to different pastures.” (Brickner 2006, 34)

To participate would mean going to Jerusalem. Jesus is not exactly on the most favored list of the Jewish religious leadership in the Temple there in Jerusalem.

From what we see in John, the last time Jesus was there, He healed a man who had been disabled for a long time, and He did it on the Sabbath. The healing itself, something that points to the Kingdom being here, they missed. They were too busy dealing with their legalistic viewpoints and in the conversation with Jesus He made several statements which they understood as His claiming equality with God.

John 5:17–18

“But He answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.” For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.” (NASB 2020)

Jesus provided them even more evidence prior to His returning back to His base of operations in Galilee. The leadership, after much thought, now wants Jesus dead. He knows this.

Let’s pick up our text in John 7

John 7:1–9

“After these things Jesus was walking in Galilee, for He was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him. Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths, was near. So His brothers said to Him, “Move on from here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing. For no one does anything in secret when he himself is striving to be known publicly. If You are doing these things, show Yourself to the world.” For not even His brothers believed in Him. So Jesus said to them, “My time is not yet here, but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify about it, that its deeds are evil. Go up to the feast yourselves; I am not going up to this feast, because My time has not yet fully arrived.” Now having said these things to them, He stayed in Galilee.” (NASB 2020)

Our text says He walked but that is a way of saying He stayed and ministered in and around Galilee. The folks in Judea either wanted Him crowned or killed...either one is not conducive to ministry.

Jesus had a base of operations in Capernaum at the north end of the Sea of Galilee, actually a large lake in northern Israel fed by the Jordan River as well as other tributaries. After the last round of back and forth with the folks in the Temple, Jesus decided to stay in Galilee and minister there. The main reason, the Jewish leadership wanted Him dead.

He knows He has a date in less than a year with the cross, and there are various prophecies tied up with that, so Jesus has been avoiding going there in order not to further precipitate any additional actions by the enemy. But we do know Satan wants Him dead and Satan and his minions are egging on the religious establishment to make that happen.



That will all change when the time arrives, but for now , that is still in the future.

I get it. When I was recalled to active duty and sent to Kuwait, upon arrival, I was informed that due to the position I was filling, there was a bounty on my head. There was a group, Al Qaeda, that had taken a rather negative view to the presence of kafirs, non-Muslims, in the country. When I traveled, I was usually armed, in civilian clothes and with a least one bodyguard who was also armed.

I wasn't that concerned since I knew the Lord had my back. But there were others who were worried on my behalf. The easy thing would be to not travel and hunker down on base. But duty called.

Jesus would also be feeling the pull of the Feast about to take place. He wants to be there especially with all who travel to Jerusalem for the event. He has a plan for how and when to go, but His half-brothers decided to put in their 10 cents.

I am sure there are some who just took great offense when I said Jesus had half-brothers. Sorry about that, He also had some half-sisters too. Mary and Joseph had kids. They were good Jews.

Mark 6:3

"Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him." (ESV)

A couple of His half-brothers would be used of the Holy Spirit to write two books of the New Testament. Jacob wrote the book we know as James. He became the chief elder in Jerusalem was later killed by the same Jewish leadership in 62 AD. Jude, also known as Judas, wrote about contending for the faith in the church of the last days for us in the short little book of Jude.

In Jewish culture, being the eldest, which Jesus is, would also include helping His widowed mother raise the family. It is entirely possible they traveled along with Him. Jewish families were supposed to support each other. But most of His family did not believe in Him yet. That would all change post resurrection, but right now, when they speak, it is the world speaking.

Apparently, they are taking a few marketing classes down at Capernaum U and they give Jesus their idea of a business plan to promote His enterprise. There are some who see these comments here as rather catty, but I think they reflect the world.

One thing I have learned as we worked towards getting Calvary Chapel going is that the world doesn't want you to succeed, but the world also offers to help you market their way too. I have lost track of the number of solicitations I have received to assist with social media, web sites, podcasting, as well as market studies and positioning.

I get it. I actually worked on an MBA. I spent time in business. The ministry of the church is not business.

As we step out and follow the Lord, the temptation is to just treat it as another business case to resolve.

But when we pray first, we realize something.

Isaiah 55:8-9

“My thoughts,” says the LORD, “are not like yours, and my ways are different from yours. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways and thoughts above yours.” (GNB)

Then add to that the encouragement God gave to Zerubbabel as he rebuilt the Temple.



Zechariah 4:6

"Therefore he told me, "This is the LORD's message to Zerubbabel: 'Not by strength and not by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD of Heaven's Armies." (NET 2nd ed.)

Jesus' family has some suggestions for ministry growth. Remember, they are not yet believers. They were getting ready to go and they thought Jesus, showing up with His normal retinue of disciples, the 12 and any others He would pick up along the way, would make for a real show upon entering Jerusalem. Go for all of the press you can.

Be public about this. Perform some miracles here and there and show up with a large group of followers in Jerusalem.

In John 6, Jesus had just separated the wheat and chaff.

This sounded like adding back in all of the followers who were not believers that He just managed to send home. Jesus knows just how dangerous appearing in Jerusalem like this would be. His family, not so much. He wants to go, but not with a brass band, heavy press coverage, paparazzi and His crew traveling in style.

John 7:4-5 "For no one does anything in secret when he himself is striving to be known publicly. If You are doing these things, show Yourself to the world." For not even His brothers believed in Him." (NASB 2020)

Does Jesus, the Son of God, the Messiah, the creator of the universe, need management coaching?

Does He really need their advice?

Stop for a moment. Have you or I ever prayed to the Lord, and in the process of praying and bringing our petitions to the Lord, begin to give Him advice as to just how He could answer that prayer? Fortunately, He loves us, just like He loved His family. He listens, but also makes a comment or two.

Indeed, God has provided, and He did so in a manner in which He is the one who gets the glory. Are we still praying for a place to meet, yes, someplace where we could also have other ministries going on as well. He will do that by the way. But I am not going to coach the Lord on how to do it.

His brothers did not believe in him. Therefore Jesus gave further explanation as to why their judgments were so faulty. In brief, they had projected onto him what they would have done under similar circumstances, without reckoning with the uniqueness that stamped him. (Carson 1991, 307)

Jesus loves His family. This answer will reflect that. I don't think they were being malicious in their advice; I really think they were trying to help. This really was good solid political advice for that culture. "Jesus' brothers wanted to see immediate evidence of Jesus' claimed identity (perhaps to vindicate the family's honor); by contrast, Jesus was committed to the Father's timing (7:6)." (Keener 2012, 706)

They still do not know who He really is. They do not know that He has a specific date he is targeting. There is still that issue with some wanting to make Him king too. His half-brothers may have even been thinking about that and considering it would be good to be related to the King. They still have no idea.

This is something for us to remember as we pray and wait on the Lord. He always answers our prayers. Yes, no, or not now. He is telling His brothers, not now.

John 7:6-9

"So Jesus said to them, "My time is not yet here, but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify about it, that its deeds are evil. Go up to the feast yourselves; I am



not going up to this feast, because My time has not yet fully arrived.” Now having said these things to them, He stayed in Galilee.” (NASB 2020)

In response to His half-brothers, Jesus lets them know that He is not operating on their time schedule. The reality, there are multiple prophecies involved in His life all of which He knows about. He also knows who the true enemy is and the source of what He is being told.

Jesus knows He is a target of the Religious Leadership and Satan. They want Him dead and if He shows up like His half-brothers are suggesting, that will indeed provide the impetus to get rid of Him before the time has arrived. They may be aware of some tensions between Him and those in the local synagogue, but they may not be aware of the intense hatred in Judea that so far resides only in a few.

John 7:7

“The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify about it, that its deeds are evil.” (NASB 2020)

Jesus is alluding to the opposition in Jerusalem.

His family is not on anyone's radar, but He knows that He is. The reason, those unbelieving members of His family are still part of the world. The word world used here is the Greek word *kosmos*. It means the fallen world system to include the seen and unseen realms.

This fallen world system does not hate members who belong to it. But when we become believers, we are no longer part of the *kosmos*, but we have now pledged our allegiance to the Kingdom of God. Our King is Jesus, not self.

When we follow the Lord in baptism, we are declaring to the world, the *kosmos*, the fallen world powers, that we no longer follow them. We identify with Jesus in His death, burial and resurrection and have new life in Him.

We are, in effect, telling these fallen ones, that we are now on the other side. We have renounced everything from the past, including them, and are now new in Jesus Christ.

When we see this word, normally translated as world, it means much much more than we think.

It means “the universe and all individual creatures, the visible world and the invisible, nature and history, humanity and the spirit world, are all brought under the single term *κόσμος*. The *κόσμος* is the sum of the divine creation which has been shattered by the fall, which stands under the judgment of God, and in which Jesus Christ appears as the Redeemer.” (Sasse 1964-, 893)

Jesus has and is consistently speaking against this world system. That is why He has a target on His back. When we stand for the Lord in this crazy culture, we too get treated the same. Jesus will later confirm this fact to His disciples.

John 15:20–21

“Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you as well; if they followed My word, they will follow yours also. But all these things they will do to you on account of My name, because they do not know the One who sent Me.” (NASB 2020)

With that, Jesus tells His half-brothers to go to Jerusalem without Him. He is not going at this time. “Jesus’ response to his brothers is not that he is planning to stay in Galilee forever, but that because his life is regulated by his heavenly Father’s appointments he is not going to the Feast when they say he should. The ‘counsel of the wicked’ (Ps. 1:1) cannot be permitted to set his agenda. His ‘not’ turns down



his brothers' request; it does not promise he will not go to the Feast when the Father sanctions the trip." (Carson 1991, 309)

So, Jesus stays in Galilee while the large groups head south all planning to arrive just prior to the beginning of the Festival, that way they have time to set up their campsites and get a really good location.

John 7:10–14

"But when His brothers had gone up to the feast, then He Himself also went up, not publicly, but as though in secret. So the Jews were looking for Him at the feast and saying, "Where is He?" And there was a great deal of talk about Him in secret among the crowds: some were saying, "He is a good man"; others were saying, "No, on the contrary, He is misleading the people." However, no one was speaking openly about Him, for fear of the Jews. But when it was now the middle of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple area, and began to teach." (NASB 2020)

Later Jesus will go to Jerusalem very publicly with the press releases and the large retinue, but not for this feast.

His intent is stay on the Father's schedule and when the Father says to go, He does so. He is not intending to go to the feast in order to be revealed as the Messiah, Daniel already set the date for that, and it will be in the spring.

Because He is not going up with the crowd as they go up to Jerusalem, it seemed to be more of, in secret as it were. He does not go there to arrive early and set up camp early either. Instead, it appears He leaves, intentionally to arrive mid-festival, after most everyone else has arrived.

We learn though that from the earliest groups arriving for the festival, the Temple leadership has had their eyes and ears out looking for Him. I wouldn't be surprised if they had checkpoints set up on all the major roads leading into Jerusalem to "welcome" those who were coming but in reality, to look for Jesus.

If He had traveled as He did in the past, with the large group of followers with Him, He would have been easy to spot. But they can't seem to find Him. One reason would be simple, He looks like everyone else.

Isaiah was right.

Isaiah 53:2

"He sprouted up like a twig before God, like a root out of parched soil; he had no stately form or majesty that might catch our attention, no special appearance that we should want to follow him." (NET 2nd ed.)

There were no runners ahead of the crowds extolling Him for the miracles taking place as He traveled north, there were no large groups centered on Him. And they are concerned.

Their spies can overhear the crowds talking about Him. There appears to be an awareness in those arriving in Judea that there is a manhunt going on. The checkpoints may not have been as invisible as the leadership believed they would be.

John 7:12–13

"And there was a great deal of talk about Him in secret among the crowds: some were saying, "He is a good man"; others were saying, "No, on the contrary, He is misleading the people." However, no one was speaking openly about Him, for fear of the Jews." (NASB 2020)

For the first time the religious authorities are depicted as a threat not only to Jesus himself but also to those who might voice favourable opinions about him, and the phrase 'for fear of the Jews' will recur with a similar force in 9:22; 19:38; 20:19. (Lincoln 2005, 245)



This method of operation has never gone out of vogue. We see it being used in our culture today to ferret out those who disagree with the culture and their various views on just about everything.

There is the “one who must not be spoken of” or you too will be under investigation. Then there are the social views that if you disagree and take a Biblical viewpoint, you are labeled intolerant and a hater. Gas lighting has been treated by some as a new phenomena, but it isn’t. We see the effects of it by the Jewish Religious hierarchy appearing in the comments of the people.

They are fearful to speak openly about Jesus. But when discussions did take place, apparently in some of the camps away from prying ears, thoughts were all over the place. I find it interesting that these are still the same things that people say about Jesus today. He is still just as controversial today as He was then.

But here we see Satan beginning to develop alternatives to the truth. Never forget thought that Satan is a liar (John 8:44).

Jesus has limited to only two options, but most of the culture rebels at this.

Jesus Himself, because He claims to be Messiah (John 4:26) and the “I am” (John 8:58) has limited our choices to one of two options, He is either who He claims to be, God, or He is a lunatic. There really is no other option left.

Those talking about Him in Jerusalem said, “He is a good man.” But would a good man claim to be the Messiah? Would a good man claim to be God?

What we see in the comments is Satan beginning to test the waters for those objections we hear today from those who aren’t sure about Jesus Christ. Satan, “he knows, and only too well for his own comfort, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. He does not teach it, but he knows it. He gets men to teach that Jesus is not the Christ, the Son of God, very God of very God, because “he is a liar, and the father of it.” He gets men to teach that Jesus is a good man, that He is a great example, but that He is not Divine, that He does not save by the shedding of His blood but by His example and His teaching; for the Devil is, as I say, a liar, and the father of it; but all the time the Devil knows that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. (Torrey 1922, 197-198)

The other extreme was also brought up, “He is misleading the people.” But no details are provided. We could go on and on about different objections that are around today. Dr. Michael Brown authored five volumes responding to just Jewish objections to Jesus as Messiah. He is God. John is clear.

Satan’s goal is to distract anyone who is considering the claims of Jesus, to stop doing so. The Jewish Religious leadership has taken actions to support this, and we will see it demonstrated later in John 9.

They will resort to casting anyone out of the Temple who supports Jesus. This is in effect, excommunication. The fear reflected here by the general populace of Judea is very real. As groups arrive, they too pick up on the tension because the Jewish leadership “are now forcing the public to agree with them, using the threat of religious and social ostracism as a weapon to get their way.” (Osborne 2018, 187)

Of course, we don’t see any of that going on in our culture today. No one today would use cancelling you as a weapon, would they?

Jesus is headed into a hornet’s nest, and He knows it. He is continuing to intentionally confront the fallen ones. They are using whoever they can get to listen to them and that is most of the Jewish religious leadership in the Temple.



The approach taken by the leadership reflects their reliance on the political methods used during that day. None which Jesus used.

The Jewish leaders thought Jesus would be in and around the various camps teaching. He isn't.

They thought He would show up with a large retinue signaling His arrival. That will come in a few months, but not this time.

They thought He would arrive preannounced by healings and miracles so they would clearly know He is there and could argue against what He has done. He didn't do that either. Everything they anticipated He would do; He did not do.

Jesus understands that He is deeply involved in spiritual warfare. His decision making is bathed in prayer and reflects an awareness of this level of combat. Since we are His followers, what does this tell us about how we should operate? Armor on, always.

Ephesians 6:10–13

"Finally, build up your strength in union with the Lord and by means of his mighty power. Put on all the armour that God gives you, so that you will be able to stand up against the Devil's evil tricks. For we are not fighting against human beings but against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark age. So put on God's armour now! Then when the evil day comes, you will be able to resist the enemy's attacks; and after fighting to the end, you will still hold your ground." (GNB)

Jesus is modeling for us spiritual warfare operations.

At this point, the fallen members of the unseen realm have no clear idea of what it is Jesus will do. They also do not have any understanding at all what His true mission is (1 Corinthians 2:6-8) and that their defeat by way of the cross and resurrection, is imminent. We do know they are the enemy and continue to be so today.

When an enemy wants nothing but your defeat and annihilation, neutrality means choosing death. The war raging in the unseen world for the souls of human imagers of Yahweh is that kind of war. Neutrality is not on the table. (Heiser 2015, 335)

We are provided God's armor and we need to avail ourselves of it every day.

How does Jesus show up? He is coming to the festival after all. But not as expected. He shows up, in the middle of the festival around day 4, in the Temple, teaching.

John 7:14–15

"But when it was now the middle of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple area, and began to teach. The Jews then were astonished, saying, "How has this man become learned, not having been educated?" (NASB 2020)

At this time, the main Temple building was surrounded by three different courts, the court of the women, the court of Israelite men, and the court of the Gentiles; the Temple area. Jesus shows up, unannounced, and begins teaching in one of these courts.

So much for the plans. Jesus has done this in such a manner that isolating Him from the crowds in order to arrest Him is impossible.

As He sits down to teach, the normal place for a teacher at that time was seated, crowds begin to come around Him. There has been no miracle this time like there was the last time He was in the Temple (John





5). But the way He teaches and what He teaches draws crowds, and soon the leadership knows He is there and they start listening as well.

Then, startled by the character and contents of the words which they heard, these men, who were never ready to admit any true greatness on the part of the Lord, were able to contain themselves no longer. (Hendriksen and Kistemaker 1953-2001, 9)

First, they were amazed at His audacity. They were looking for Him to arrest and kill Him, and He simply walks in and begins to teach. Then they listen to His teaching, and they became astonished. His teaching is not like theirs, where they would make references to this Rabbi or other as support for an argument.

Jesus taught with authority. The words of Jesus still teach with authority today as well. His words still astonish and change lives.

Amazingly, He is also still controversial. The reason why He clearly stated to His family. "The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify about it, that its deeds are evil." (John 7:7, NASB 2020)

We will pick up the discussion with the leadership next week.

Let me ask you a question though, is Jesus still a controversial subject for you?

Do you find Him suddenly showing up over and over again, just like He showed up in the Temple? Are you finding your objections a bit hollow?

Just as Jesus was moving towards an appointment, we all are as well.

Hebrews 9:27

"And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment," (NKJV)

This is why Jesus came in the first place. To free us from the judgement hanging over our heads because we all have a sin problem.

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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