

Twenty-One Days With John

Day 7 – John 7

Prayer:

Jesus, You are the Messiah. You have come as Prophet, Priest and King to fulfill all our sins. As we consider Your word and ministry, open our hearts to praise You for Your work of salvation given, by grace, to us. In Your name we pray. Amen.

Meditation:

Remember how John has a penchant for recording Jesus' ministry in the context of feasts and festivals in John 5:1 and 6:1? Now look at John 7:2. Wouldn't you know it. This narrative occurs during a feast! This time it's the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles. Leave it to John to repeat this stylistic element "signature"

The Feast of Tabernacles is one of three major Jewish feasts. It occurs in the seventh month of the Jewish Calendar, Tishri—our October. Also known as the Festival of "Sukkoth" (a Hebrew word meaning "booth"), this feast is a remembrance of how the Jews set up "booths" every night for the entire duration of their 40 years in the wilderness.

The final day of the Feast of Tabernacles, the eighth day, marked the beginning of a time of rest ("Sabbath"). Scholars might have interesting thoughts in how this may related to John's "seven day chronology" mentioned in Day 6.

Not to be overlooked, *Yom Kippur*, the "Day of Atonement" also falls in this same month of Tishri, on the tenth day (Lev. 23:27). These two Feasts—which occurred during Tishri, and were marked by the "Sabbath" trumpet of Leviticus 23:23—pointed to the anticipation of the coming of the New Covenant of God. This, they believed, would be, ushered in by none less than the Messiah Himself.

One can probably imagine that, since so much of the activities of Tishri centered around the Exodus and God's covenant of atonement, intense conversation regarding the Law of God ("Torah") and the Messiah ran rampant at this time. But was it God's time to reveal the Messiah? Would the Messiah consent to appear at this time?.

Perhaps this is a reason for Jesus' delay. In an atmosphere charged with Messianic-furor, He might easily have fallen victim to His enemies' ploys to destroy Him whom many claimed was the Messiah. "Where is that man?" Jesus' opponents asked in John 7:12.

Halfway through the feast, John records, Jesus appeared in the temple courts, teaching. There, in the temple, Jesus got into a rather public confrontation with the "Jews." Throughout this Gospel Jesus' opposition are called the "Jews". By "Jews," John doesn't mean every single Jew living in Israel (cf. "the people living in Jerusalem in 7:25).

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Instead, John is referring to the Jewish leaders, specifically the ones of the Jewish ruling parties which opposed Jesus, His teachings and thereby the Covenant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the Law of Moses.

Notice how the content of the exchange between Jesus and the “Jews” centered around topics and themes most prominent during this festival month: the Law (or “Torah”) (7:19); Moses, the Patriarchs, and circumcision (7:22); and most importantly, “Who is the Christ (that is, the “Messiah”)?” (7:26).

The Jews tried to discredit the possibility that Jesus was the Messiah.

“We know where this man is from; when the Christ comes, no one will know where he is from” (7:27 [NIV]).

Jesus’ reply in 7:28-29,

“Yes, you know Me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on My own, but He who sent Me is true. You do not know Him, but I know Him because I am from Him and He sent Me.”

Jesus’ reply is nothing less than a bold, unmistakable affirmation that He is *indeed* the true Messiah, the Christ, the promised one sent by God. The Pharisees might know where Jesus was born, that is, in Nazareth, but they didn’t know where He was *really* from: His Father in Heaven. Nor *could* they know. Though they claimed to be children of Abraham, they didn’t know the Father. They were spiritually blind.

The remainder of John 7 chronicles the two opposing factions. The Jews—who wanted Jesus killed—and those “thirsty” ones who would “drink” and follow Jesus (7:37-38).

Is Jesus the Christ? Or just another blasphemous lunatic that should be eradicated? The choice is just as crucial for us as it was for John’s hearers. Before you make your decision, take heed of Nicodemus’ counsel to his fellow Jews.

“Does our law condemn anyone without first hearing him to find out what he is doing?” (7:51)

Jesus *is* on trial in John’s Gospel. Listen to the witnesses. Consider the testimony. Look at the evidence. When all is considered, the jury must affirm Jesus truly is the Messiah, the Christ, the Chosen One of God to save the world.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, You are the Christ. You are the Messiah. We know from where You came and why You came. You came from Your Father in heaven to save us. Thank you for providing remarkable witness and irrefutable testimony of Your person and ministry. Send Your Holy Spirit to those who would deny You. Help them to at least listen and consider Your words, Your works, Your teaching and Your miracles. Help them see all these signs as ones which are proof positive that You are God’s Messiah. In Your name we pray. Amen.

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* **Note:** You may have noticed a comment in your Bible stating that John 7:53-8:11 are not included. These were omitted because The earliest and most reliable manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not include them. We are grateful that Christian scholars demonstrate their integrity by being very careful to be sure we have the very best representation of God's inspired Word possible.

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