

JOHN 7:1-13
DISBELIEF!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to John chapter 7 as we continue our in-depth study of the Gospel of John.

Keep in mind that in John chapter 6 we saw that the Feast of Passover was close, which occurs in March or April. (John 6:4)

As we move into John chapter 7, we are some six or seven months down the road and the reason we can be so certain about that is we are told of another feast that is going on. And that is the Feast of Tabernacles, and this feast occurred in late September or early October. (John 7:2)

Keep in mind that the rest of the Gospel of John is going to cover those last six months or so of Jesus' ministry here on earth before His crucifixion. The Feast of Passover is some six months or so away at this point!

As we have seen, in John chapter 5, while Jesus was in Jerusalem, the Jewish religious leaders wanted to put Jesus to death because He not only healed a lame man on the Sabbath day, but He also claimed to be equal with the Father, making Himself God.

Thus, Jesus withdrew to the area of Galilee.

Let me share with you an overview of this chapter. We are told,

Because it was not yet time for Christ to die, He traveled up to Jerusalem for the Feast of Booths without drawing notice of the crowds. At the right moment, the Lord went into the temple to teach.

Some of the multitude argued with Him, but others kept quiet. Jesus openly proclaimed that He was sent from God the Father and that soon He would return to Him in heaven. On the last day of the feast, the Lord revealed that those who trust Him will receive the inner witness of the Spirit of God. Though the officials of the Jews wanted to arrest Christ, no one was able to seize Him.

- Elmer Towns, The Gospel of John, p. 69

Over the next few weeks we are going to be looking at John chapter 7 and I am going to break this chapter down into three main points.

DISBELIEF – JOHN 7:1-13

DEBATING JESUS – JOHN 7:14-36

TRUTH DIVIDES – JOHN 7:37-53

I find this interesting. When you look at what the Jewish religious people did, when you look at what the Jews in general did, we are no different today. And yet, we think we are so smart, so much wiser and in the end, we haven't changed at all!

Why do I believe that?

Because we can have family and friends that are unsaved and when we share with them, they tend to mock us, make fun of us, come against us. It really doesn't matter how much our lives have changed for the better, the work that they see happening in our lives, they still reject it, just as the brothers of Jesus did!

We have family, friends, even strangers, when they hear what we have to say, they may debate us and they will have their arguments, but when their arguments are held up to the light of Scripture, when the evidence is exposed, they have nothing to stand on. Thus, they may call us names, and make fun of us because they have nothing to say to discredit us.

And in the end, when all the evidence is put forth of who Jesus is, what He has done, where we stand in regard to God, they, many times just walk away. You see, truth will divide and since they don't want to accept the truth that is before them, because they can't argue against it, they will walk away from it!

This morning we are going to focus on the topic – ***DISBELIEF!***

And here's the point. If you do not believe in God, if you reject Jesus, you have nothing to base your life upon and I think that is one of the reasons so many people in America are so discouraged, depressed, they have no hope.

Now I know that some would like to argue that point but think about it. Look at the things of this world, like our government. Many placed their hope in the government when Donald Trump was President, but now that Joe Biden is in office, many have lost hope, they are angry, they are discouraged.

That is just one example.

But, if you place your hope in Jesus, He will never disappoint you. I am not saying your life will be easy, but He will not disappoint you, He will see you through.

Let me give you this example to show you what I mean. We are told,

Rock and roll musician Paula Cole laments her loss of faith:

As a child, I felt what we call God, that spirit, that energy. Then you get schooled by society, and I rationalized that it didn't exist. It made me profoundly unhappy that there was no meaning, no logic, no unity of all life.

- USA Today, as quoted in World (October 30, 1999), p. 29

First of all, her problem was her concept of God, *“that spirit, that energy”* is not God. So she started out with the wrong information and then when she was *“schooled by society”* even the false God she was trying to get close to, was swept away and in the end, she was unhappy because she saw that *“there was no meaning, no logic, no unity of all life.”*

Maybe some of you are feeling like Paula Cole and you are discouraged, unhappy, feeling *“what is the point of life?”* and you are going to just walk away!

Don't do it. Listen to what God has for you.

Here in John chapter 7 we will see those who did not believe that Jesus is Almighty God. But when you look at the evidence, you look at how God's timing was perfect to bring forth the Savior of the world, I pray that your faith is restored, and you are encouraged.

And for all of us here, I pray as we go through this chapter that you will see that Jesus is more than the bread of life, and here in John chapter 7 we will see Jesus as the living water, but He is more than living water, like I have said. He is Almighty God, the One who came to save us from our sins!

I have broken these verses we will be looking at this morning into the following points,

OPPOSITION – JOHN 7:1-2

HIS BROTHERS DISBELIEF – JOHN 7:3-5

THE FATHER’S PERFECT TIMING – JOHN 7:6-9

DISBELIEF OF THE JEWS – JOHN 7:10-13

With that as our introduction, let’s begin reading in John chapter 7, beginning in verse 1 and let’s see what the Lord has for us this morning as we study His Word and look at the topic of – ***DISBELIEF!***

JOHN 7

VERSES 1-2

John opens up by saying, “**After these things . . .**”

After what things?

After the events of chapter 6.

Remember what we read in John chapter 6. We saw the feeding of the 5,000 men plus women and children with five barely crackers and two small, pickled fish.

The walking on the water to reach His men who were struggling to get across the Sea of Galilee during a violent wind storm.

The declaration that He is the Bread of Life and if you want that life, that satisfaction, you must partake of Him.

Then John tells us that Jesus “**walked in Galilee**” even though many had rejected Him.

The Greek word translated “**walked**” is in the perfect tense, denoting continual action. So His ministry is in the area of Galilee at this time.

He was not meandering around with no purpose. And even though we don’t know much about this time, Jesus always had a purpose for what He did and where He went and that is important for us to understand.

If we don’t get that then we can just meander through life as Christians and what is our purpose, what are we doing for the Lord? Let us not meander through life but walk with a purpose, to honor God and do the work that He has called us to do!

Now we might not think much about this but keep in mind that the events of John chapter 6 occurred around the time of Passover in April.

Now we have come to the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths, as verse 2 tells us, which took place in October.

That means the cross is less than 6 months away now!

What we have is a gap of some six months between chapters 6 and 7 of John. We do not know much about this time period except that Jesus “**walked**” among the people of Galilee, continuing to show them who He was even though many rejected Him!

We are also told that He did not go to Jerusalem because the Jews wanted to kill Him, because He, being a man, made Himself equal with God the Father.

And we see this – ***OPPOSITION*** there in Jerusalem against Jesus!

This opposition was primarily from the Jewish religious leaders, and they wanted to kill Jesus. We saw that in John 5:18 where we are told, “**Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.**”

We are also told that the timeframe here, as I have said, was around the time of the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths.

Let me share with you regarding what this Feast of Booths (Sukkot) or the Feast of Tabernacles is all about, because most people do not know too much about it. We know about Passover and the Feast of Firstfruits, but the Feast of Booths, not too much.

In Leviticus 23:33-44 we are told of this feast, and I will try to summarize it for you.

This was a harvest feast taking place on the 7th month of the Jewish religious calendar, the month of Tishri or late September or early October.

It was a great time of celebration as the harvest was brought in.

It was also a reminder of how God provided for them during their wilderness wanderings those 40 years.

And lastly, it spoke of the coming of the Messiah who will sustain them and provide for them, setting up the Kingdom.

The first day of the Feast was a holy day as well as the eighth day. During those first six days of the feast the priest would go to the pool of Siloam and gather water into a golden pitcher and then travel back to the Temple and pour the water out over the altar after walking around the altar once.

Then on the seventh day the priest would do the same but instead of circling around the altar just once, he did it seven times and then poured out the water.

Then, on the eighth day, (known as *Shemini Atzeret*) it was considered a sacred assembly or *Sabbath* - no work of any kind was permitted. And on this eighth day the priest would not pour out any water and by this he was showing that God fulfilled His promise for His people, and it was a holy day, that is why no work was permitted.

They also would build these booths or lean-tos with palm branches, placing them in such a way as to get more shade than sun through them.

Then, at night you could look up and see the stars in the night. Thus, this would be a time for fathers to tell their children of all God had done for them, provided for their ancestors.

During these Feasts Jerusalem could swell up to more than a million visitors. The three main feasts that were required by every adult male Jew living within a 20-mile radius of Jerusalem to attend were the Feast of Passover, the Feast of Pentecost and Tabernacles or Booths or Ingathering's.

If you lived outside of that 20-mile radius of Jerusalem, you were required to come as often as you could.

One writer gives us this insight. He wrote,

“Upon arrival in Jerusalem, the pilgrims focused their energies upon building booths for the feast. By the afternoon of Tishri 14, thousands upon thousands of leafy booths lined the streets and dotted the surrounding fields and hills. All were carefully located within a Sabbath's day's journey (a little more than a half mile) of the Temple.

At sundown, the blast of the shofar (ram's horn) from the Temple announced the arrival of the holiday. A sense of increased excitement fell over the city as darkness came. Myriads of twinkling campfires studded the surrounding countryside like an intricate lacework of tiny amber jewels. Well into the night, muffled laughter and cheery conversations could be heard drifting over the night breezes.”

And we are going to see Jesus use this Feast of Tabernacles in a way that shows who He is, and we will see that as we move on through this chapter!

And this was a big feast for the Jewish people. According to Josephus, he called it their holiest and greatest feast. (The Antiquities of the Jews 8. 4. 1)

Warren Wiersbe sums this feast up for us like this. We are told,

The Feast of Tabernacles looked back to Israel's journey through the wilderness and looked forward to the promised Kingdom of Messiah. The Jews lived in booths made of branches to remind them of God's providential care of the nation for nearly forty years (Lev 23:33-44).

Following the Feast of Trumpets and the solemn Day of Atonement, Tabernacles was a festive time for the people. The temple area was illumined by large candlesticks that reminded the people of the guiding pillar of fire; and each day the priests would carry water from the Pool of Siloam and pour it out from a golden vessel, reminding the Jews of the miraculous provision of water from the rock.

The feast may have been a jubilant time for the people, but it was a difficult time for Jesus, for it marked the beginning of open and militant opposition to Him and His ministry.

Ever since He had healed the paralytic on the Sabbath Day, Jesus had been targeted by the Jewish leaders who wanted to kill Him (John 7:1,19-20,25,30,32,44; and note 8:37,40). He remained in Galilee, where He would be safer, but He could not remain in Galilee and also observe the feast.

- Warren Wiersbe, The Wiersbe Bible Commentary – NT, p. 252

One other point and then we will move on. Did you know that the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles will be celebrated in the Kingdom Age? It will and it will be celebrated to honor the Messiah and His dwelling with His people!

In Zechariah 14:16-19 we are told, **“And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, on them there will be no rain. If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the Lord strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.”**

So Jesus is remaining in the area of Galilee because of this militant *OPPOSITION* against Him by the Jewish religious leaders. The timeframe is the Feast of Tabernacles. And that will lead us into our second point – *HIS BROTHERS DISBELIEF!*

VERSES 3-5

Now as we open up this section, we have some words that are difficult for some people. We are told that these men are, **“His brothers . . .”** John 7:3.

Within the Roman Catholic Church and I am sure others as well, they believe that Mary was a virgin perpetually or that she never had any other children, Joseph and Mary never had sexual relations.

Yes, they never had sexual relations until after the birth of Jesus. Jesus was virgin born, but afterward they had a healthy marriage relationship that included sexual relations.

And out of that we see that Mary and Joseph had other children. Again, very difficult for some to believe, but why listen to the words of man when the Bible is very clear on this.

Let me show you what I mean.

In Matthew 12:46-47 we are told, **“While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him. Then one said to Him, ‘Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You.’”**

Here we see Matthew tell us that the brothers of Jesus or His half-brothers were with their mother Mary and seeking to speak with Jesus.

In Matthew 13:55-56 we are told, **“Is this not the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?”**

Here in Matthew chapter 13 we not only see the half-brothers of Jesus mentioned by name, but also we are told that Mary and Joseph had daughters!

So we see here in John chapter 7 that the brothers of Jesus are prodding Him to go to Jerusalem for this feast. Please understand that this was not because they believed that Jesus is the Messiah, not at all. They were mocking Him in disbelief!

Listen to how these verses here in John 7 are written in The Living Bible. We are told, **“Go where more people can see your miracles!’ they scoffed. ‘You can’t be famous when you hide like this! If you’re so great, prove it to the world!’ For even his brothers didn’t believe in him.”**

It is hard to understand how they grew up with Jesus, but they never recognized who He was until after His death and resurrection, and then they believed. In fact, James became the leader in the church in Jerusalem and wrote an epistle or letter. And the same with Jude, he wrote an epistle or letter as well.

But at this point, they were still unbelievers, and they are mocking Him, making fun of Him, challenging Him to go to Jerusalem and prove who He says He is. Do some miracles in Jerusalem!

Bruce tells us, ***“It was widely believed that when the Messiah came he would make himself publicly known in some spectacular way.”***

Here we see sibling rivalry, and yes, even in this family.

But think about it. Imagine living with Jesus as your brother! ***“Can’t you be more like your brother Jesus! Look at how He works. He treats us so nice.”***

That would get old really quick, and these guys did not believe, at least not yet as I have said!

So we see here – ***HIS BROTHERS DISBELIEF.***

How is Jesus going to answer them?

What is He going to do?

Is He going to give in to their demands?

We don’t have to guess because we will see that John is going to tell us what Jesus said to His unbelieving half-brothers.

And as we will see, and the next point, - ***THE FATHER’S PERFECT TIMING!***

VERSES 6-9

This is so important for us to understand, these first few words that Jesus spoke here, “. . .
‘My time has not yet come . . .’” John 7:6.

In other words, Jesus was completely in-tune and submitted to the Father's will and thus, God the Father had a perfect time set forth and Jesus was not going to get ahead of that or ignore it!

What an important lesson for us to learn. That we are to submit to God's will for our lives and not our own, not what the world wants us to do. Let me give you some examples of Jesus and how He willingly submitted to God the Father's direction, His will!

In John 6:38 we are told, "**For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.**"

John 4:34, "**Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.'**"

In John 5:30 we are told, "**I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.**"

In Luke 22:42 we are told, "**... 'Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.'**"

In the Incarnation we see Jesus completely surrendered to the will of God the Father. Did He have a choice?

I guess He did because He said in Luke 22, "**not My will, but Yours, be done.**" In other words, He did not want to experience that pain when He bore the sins of the world and the Father turned His face from the Son. Yes, there was the pain of the beatings and the crucifixion, but I think this was much more severe. Something that was never experienced in eternity past and will never be experienced again!

And we see Jesus say, "**... not My will, but Yours, be done.**"

Jesus was completely submitted to the will of the Father; the timing of God the Father was important to Him.

Now let me deal with this word, “**time.**” The Greek word that is used here is *KAIROS* and it speaks of a period of time in which something is to be accomplished.

Barclay adds this insight to this word as he wrote, *“In this passage the word is kairos, which characteristically means an opportunity; that is, the best time to do something, the moment when circumstances are most suitable.”*

Therefore, there was a time, according to the Father’s will, for Jesus to go up to Jerusalem, but not yet. Jesus was going to remain in Galilee for a time, but His brothers went on ahead of Him. Keep in mind that Jesus did not say that He was not going to go up to Jerusalem, just not yet!

And that is important because there are some who try to say that Jesus did lie, and that is not true. Not even close.

One example of this is from Schopenhauer, the German philosopher of pessimism, he pretentiously wrote, *“Jesus Christ of set purpose did utter a falsehood.”*

If He did, then He could not die for our sins. And He did not lie. He is talking about a certain time that He was going to go and **“My times has not yet come.”** John 7:6.

Now maybe this is not something that you have thought about but let me throw this out to you.

Did you know that the whole life of Jesus was planned out in eternity past?

Everything, where He would go, when He would go, what He would do and so on.

And Jesus was never early or late with His appointments.

Think about the meeting He had with the woman at the well in Samaria. He just happened to get there when she was approaching and that was an appointment that was determined before the foundations of the world were established!

Listen to what Paul says about Jesus and when He was born, when God became flesh and dwelt amongst us. In Galatians 4:4-5 we are told, **“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”**

I like the way The Living Bible puts these verses, **“But when the right time came, the time God decided on, he sent his Son, born of a woman, born as a Jew, to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law so that he could adopt us as his very own sons.”**

How clear is that! God’s perfect timing to send forth the Son into the world to redeem man from His sins!

Make no mistake about it, God’s timing is perfect!

Think about it, God’s timing was the perfect time *politically speaking*.

What do I mean by that?

Listen carefully. We are told,

“It was a time when the pax Romana extended over most of the civilized earth and when travel and commerce were therefore possible in a way that had formerly been impossible. Great roads linked the empire of the Caesars, and its diverse regions were linked far more significantly by the all-pervasive language of the Greeks. Add the fact that the world was sunk in a moral abyss so low that even the pagan cried out against it and that spiritual hunger was everywhere evident, and one has a perfect time for the coming of Christ and for the early expansion of the Christian gospel.” (Boice)

Not only that, but it was the right time *prophetically speaking*.

Remember that in Daniel we are told that it would be 483 years until the Messiah came and if you counted off 173,880 days from the command to forth to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, which was given on March 14, 445 B. C. (Nehemiah 2) you would come to April 6, 32 A. D. until the coming Messiah!

It is a day we call Palm Sunday, the only time that Jesus came as Messiah the King into Jerusalem, just as Daniel was told!

And listen to what Paul tells us here, that at this appointed time, “**God sent forth His Son**” to redeem sinful man who was under the curse of the Law!

Jesus came to “**redeem**” us; EXAGORAZO, (ex-ag-or-ad’-zo) in the Greek, and it speaks of buying back or buying out of and was often used of slaves whose freedom was purchased.

Think about that, we were slaves to sin under the Law, but Christ bought us out by His sacrifice and now, instead of being a slave to sin we are an heir of God, sons of God! We have been set free!

Paul also tells us that Jesus was “**born of a woman**” which speaks of His humanity and the virgin birth.

He was fully God, and He was fully man!

He was born into a society that was in bondage to the Law and yet He kept it perfectly, and only He could, as He said in Matthew 5:17, “**Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.**”

Notice that He did not say we are to fulfill the Law, because we can’t, but He could, and He did!

And the reason that this is so important is that because He was sinless, He could pay in full the penalty for our sins as Peter tells us in I Peter 1:18-21, **“knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.”**

I like the way that Govett put it. He said, *“Christ, by nature Son of God, became a son of man, that we, by nature sons of man, might become sons of God. Wonderful exchange.”*

Amen to that!

Not only that but Jesus was crucified at just the right time, Passover, when the lambs were to be sacrificed for the sins of the people.

He rose from the grave at just the right time, on the Feast of Firstfruits!

And He is coming again right on time, and I think that time is getting closer and closer!

So what Jesus is saying to His brothers is this, *“My life is being lived according to a divine schedule, according to the sovereign will of God the Father - but your lives are not on any such schedule.”*

That was the life of Jesus, according to the divine plan of God the Father!

But notice what He says to His half-brothers, **“. . . but your time is always ready.”**

What does He mean by that?

An unbeliever’s life is not lived according to God’s plan or His schedule, they are doing their own thing when they want to and whatever they want to. Yes, God knows what they will do, but it is their choice and not according to what God the Father wants.

We see Paul speak of this in Ephesians 2:1-3 as he speaks of what God has done in our lives and what we were doing before we got saved. He wrote, “**And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.**”

What did we do, how did we walk before we were saved and what unbelievers are doing today?

They walk “**. . . according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air . . . conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.**”

The Greek word for “**walked**” in Ephesians 2:2 should be translated as *meandered*.

I find that interesting as Jesus walked with a purpose, according to the will of God the Father. But here we see the unsaved walk without a purpose, they are following the course that the world is setting, and they are satisfying their fleshly desires by what they do!

When you are walking with a purpose you are looking straight ahead, you are paying attention, you have a goal in mind, and you are determined to do it.

But when you meander, look out!

I remember years ago, maybe some forty years ago now, I was at a nursing conference in Milwaukee. I didn't know the area, but I just thought I go for a morning run, it was dark, and the snow was falling, it was beautiful.

But I was meandering, I guess, I was not paying attention and all of a sudden, ***“BANG!”***
I ran into a sign that knocked me on my back!

Not a good thing but as you can see, it did not affect me at all! I know, some of you are thinking, ***“That explains everything!”*** Let me move on, like I did after I got up from the ground, looking around to see if anyone saw me run into that sign!

And when you meander you also are really not going anywhere, you are just walking around. Like one man said, not me, but a man, ***“It takes me five minutes to walk from one end of the mall to the other - it takes my wife all day.”*** Again, I did not say that, but some guy did, and I have not heard from him in a long time. I wonder what ever happened to him?

We as Christians can meander as well. We need to be careful and walk with a purpose, know what God wants us to do. We have a divine purpose for our lives. And we need to understand that everyone of us have a divine purpose to fulfill, don't forget that.

Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:15-16, **“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”**

How important that is for us to understand today! We are to walk with precision and accuracy, looking at where we are going, being careful because this world is very evil, and it is very dangerous!

I like the way one writer put it. He wrote, ***“As believers walk through the spiritual mine field of the world, they are to be constantly alert to every danger that Satan puts in their way.”***

Exactly. Listen to on the New Living Translation puts Proverbs 4:25-27, **“Look straight ahead, and fix your eyes on what lies before you. Mark out a straight path for your feet; stay on the safe path. Don't get sidetracked; keep your feet from following evil.”**

That says it all. Pay attention, look straight ahead, don't lose sight of where you are going!

What is also interesting here is that Jesus said to His brothers and really to all who don't believe, "**The world cannot hate you . . .**"

Why is that?

It is as Dods wrote, "*There is no danger of your incurring the world's hatred by anything you do or say; because your wishes and actions are in the world's own spirit.*"

That should just make sense and if that is true, and it is, then what Jesus said next just makes sense.

He said of the world or the people of this world, "**. . . but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil.**"

The world is fine when the standards to live by are in accordance with the sin that they are living. But once you set the standard to God's standard, then they are angry, hateful, intolerant of those who are living accordingly!

You see, your light, the way you are living, the Word of God being taught, exposes their darkness and they try to extinguish the light or put out the light so their deeds will not be exposed.

Jesus warned us of how the world will treat us in John 15:18-20, "**If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.**"

That is what we have seen here in the Gospel of John. Jesus exposed the sins of the people, and they did not like it, especially the Jewish religious leaders and they are plotting to kill Jesus!

The same is true today. You come against the heresy that is being taught in the church and you get people mad at you, angry at you, they lash out at you!

Don't let the fear of man drive you, let the Spirit of God lead you!

Again, Jesus tells His brothers to go up to the Feast and He was going to stay in the Galilee area for a time.

And as we will see, at the "time" that God determined, Jesus will go to the Feast!

Because there is – ***THE FATHER'S PERFECT TIMING!***

As we read on, we will see the – ***DISBELIEF OF THE JEWS!***

VERSES 10-13

Here we see the half-brothers of Jesus head to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles. And when they traveled for these feast days they usually did so with others. Large groups of people would travel together for protection and because they were going to Jerusalem for a feast, they were going to worship God and celebrate!

We see this played out as Mary and Joseph are heading home from celebrating Passover and in Luke 2:41-50 we are told, **“His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know it; but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day’s journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances. So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, ‘Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously.’ And He said to them, ‘Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?’ But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.”**

Let’s face it, that does not look good if you end up losing the Son of God! Okay, He wasn’t lost but they didn’t know where their Son, Jesus was at.

Now some may wonder how they lost track of Jesus as they traveled back home from Jerusalem.

The answer is simple. They were traveling with a large crowd of people, and they assumed that their Son, Jesus was in this crowd. And after a three-day journey they realized that He was not with them, and they have to head back to Jerusalem to find Jesus! And there He is in the Temple asking questions and answering questions.

That is what the half-brothers of Jesus were doing, traveling to Jerusalem with this large crowd of people.

But we also see that Jesus did not go “openly” or with these large processions of people, but He ends up going alone.

That is what Alford tells us, “*Not in the usual caravan-company, nor probably by the usual way.*” (Alford)

And another wrote, “*That is to say, He went up, but not at His brothers’ instigation, nor with the publicity they had recommended.*” (Dods)

Now I do understand that some feel that Jesus was being deceptive with the way He handled this. Not at all. He just did not want to cause any trouble because His “. . . time has not yet come . . .” John 7:6.

As one writer put it, “*The secret departure for Jerusalem was not an act of deception. It was an attempt to avoid unwelcome publicity. Jesus’ enemies were watching for him, obviously for the purpose of arresting him.*” (Tenney)

But for the Jewish religious leaders, they knew that Jesus would come to Jerusalem for these Feast days because Deuteronomy 16:16 required Him to.

Therefore, they were looking for Him, not to receive Him and His teachings, but looking to capture Him so they might put Him to death. But they did not find Him yet; He did not present Himself openly at this time.

Now, as the crowds grew in Jerusalem there was some discussion about Jesus –

DISBELIEF OF THE JEWS!

Some say that He was good and others that He was not good, that He was deceiving the people.

And how true this is. There is no neutrality with Jesus. You are either for Him or against Him!

Even today people have all kinds of opinions about Jesus but that is meaningless without a relationship with Him and apart from what the Bible says of Jesus!

Here's the thing. If you are not for Him, if you are not taking a stand for Jesus, you are really against Him. I know, hard to believe, but it is true, not because I said it, but Jesus said it!

Jesus put it this way in Matthew 12:30, "**He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.**"

And what we see here is a lot of whispering going on about Jesus and, like I have said, some said He was good, and others said He was not good!

I find that very interesting. You see, people still do that today.

It is hard to find someone who is neutral about Jesus, that does not have an opinion of who He is why He came.

Some said He was good, but if they did not receive Him as Almighty God, the One who has come to save them from their sins, if they thought He was just a good teacher, then their words are empty.

Remember what we have seen over and over again here in the Gospel of John, that Jesus continually taught that He is Almighty God, equal with God the Father.

Now, if that was a lie, then how can Jesus be a good teacher, someone you can trust?

You can't and that is the problem for many today. They look at the humanity of Jesus and it ends there. But the Scriptures make it very clear that you either receive Him as Almighty God who came down to earth, the Incarnation, to die for your sins or you are listening to the words of man instead of what the Word of God is telling you!

And I don't want you to think that this was something easy for the Jewish people and the Jewish religious leaders to accept. It was not.

These were radical claims by Jesus but as we have seen in our previous studies, Jesus gave four witnesses that testified of who He is. We saw John the Baptist, the miracles that He did, the testimony of God the Father calling Jesus God, and the witness of the Scriptures that testify that Jesus is the Messiah, Almighty God who has come to save us from our sins!

Even though these were radical statements; they had the witnesses to assure them that what Jesus was saying was very true!

Thus, these radical claims do not allow any neutrality concerning Him. You either believe or you don't. He was either a good man or He was a deceiver.

He can't be both!

He was either the Son of God or He wasn't the Son of God.

And what we see here is this division and disputing about who Jesus really is and that is true even today!

Let me say this to those of you who are here, those listening on the radio or the Internet, you too have an opinion about Jesus.

There is no neutrality amongst us. You are either going to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, the Savior of the world, or you have to believe that He is a liar, a fraud, a deceiver!

But when you look at the evidence, He is not a liar, He is not a fraud, and He is not deceiving anyone. If you reject who He is then you are being deceived!

Let me share this with you so you get a clear picture of what this is all about. We are told,

The argument appears in Lewis' Mere Christianity. Lewis introduces the argument by observing how most people who don't believe that Jesus is God are still attracted to Him as a moral teacher. While He is not God, these people say, He was a great moral teacher.

Lewis presents the argument as a sort of minor digression, a throw off. Here it is, in one paragraph:

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: "I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God." That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic - on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg - or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to . . . Now it seems to me obvious that He was neither a lunatic nor a fiend: and consequently, however strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I have to accept the view that He was and is God.

Stated a little more formally, the argument goes like this:

Jesus claimed to be God. His claim is either true or false. If it is true, then, ipso facto, He is God. If the claim is false, then either He said it knowing it was false, in which case He is a liar, or He said it not knowing it was false, in which case He was mad. Therefore, we are left with three logical options: He is either God, or a liar, or a lunatic.

To say Jesus was a liar will seem quite a stretch for most people (even unbelievers), particularly if they think He was a great moral teacher. A great moral teacher would not, by definition, lie, and certainly not tell a lie of such magnitude as to claim to be God when He wasn't.

To say Jesus was a lunatic is also a stretch, since His teaching would appear to be the quintessence of sanity - and, of course, a great moral teacher is, again by definition, sane. So if He was not a liar and not a lunatic, the only other logically possible conclusion is that He is God.

Notice that, among the three logical possibilities, great human moral teacher is not one of them. That Jesus was merely a great human moral teacher is, literally, not logically possible. . . .

If Jesus claims to be God and the claim is true, then He is God; and if He claims to be God and the claim is false, then He was a liar or a lunatic. Either His claim is true or false.

. . . what it does is to cancel out the possibility that Jesus was simply a great moral teacher, and put the person who denies His deity in a dilemma from which there is no easy escape.

- bit.ly/3DZXvVB

That is what some of these Jewish people were doing by denying who Jesus said He was, and it is what the Jewish religious leaders were doing.

Now verse 13 is interesting as John tells us, “**However, no one spoke openly of Him for fear of the Jews.**” Why were the people nervous about the Jewish religious leaders hearing them speak of Jesus?

Because they could be kicked out of the Synagogue, removed from the fellowship! And you could lose your job! And, if you were accused of deceiving the people, according to the Talmud, you could be put to death by stoning. So, they had good reason to be a little nervous.

Bruce put it like this, *“Whether they approved or disapproved of him, they did not voice their opinions too loudly or too publicly. The authorities did not wish him to be discussed at all, and anyone who disregarded their wishes was liable to feel their displeasure.”*

In the days we are living in we need to redeem the time because I believe we are here for such a time as this! I think the time is here for us to proclaim the Gospel message, to stand up for the truths of God found in the Word of God!

Will there be **OPPOSITION!** You bet there will.

May we not enter into **DISBELIEF** but lean on the Lord with all of our might and be directed by Him!

You see, God has His **PERFECT TIMING** for us to do things and I think there are things that He want us to do every day. I think many of these things come so naturally that we don't even see the hand of God working. We need to be looking and have thankful hearts.

And may we not walk in **DISBELIEF!** May we trust in the Lord with all of our hearts, believe what His Word has said and then walk accordingly!

And I will close with this. We are told,

An Australian native preacher went to a little church in the bush to preach. It was dusk when he arrived, the place was without light, and he wondered what to do about it. Presently, he saw twinkling lights moving about through the bush. His congregation was arriving. Each person carried a hurricane lamp, and as they came in they placed their lamps upon a shelf around the chapel wall. Soon the whole place was flooded with light. Each had contributed light that had dispelled the darkness. Your share is needed in a world which desperately needs the illumination of the gospel.