



## International Bible Study Commentary

Verse-by-Verse Bible Lessons Thru the Bible

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### **John 7:1-13 Commentary** **New American Standard Bible**

**Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse [\*International Bible Study Commentary\*](#). **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the *International Bible Study Commentary* website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [\*International Bible Study Forum\*](#).

**(John 7:1) After these things Jesus was walking in Galilee, for He was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him.**

By teaching deeper and more personal truths, Jesus reduced His crowd size and had more time to teach His twelve disciples and those who saw the value of what He said and kept following Him. In Judea, Jesus would have faced constant debate and opposition that would have interfered with the time He had left on earth to teach those the Father drew to Him—eventually leading to His death. Jesus had come to die at His time, the time His Father and

He chose before He came (during Passover), not the time of those wanting to kill Him in Judea. Jesus preferred to stay in Galilee and did not “wish” to go to Judea any more than He “wished” to die on the cross, but Jesus came into our world wanting to do the will of His Heavenly Father, and He chose to obey the will of His Father in heaven no matter how He was tempted to do otherwise or what the personal cost. Before His arrest in the garden, Jesus prayed and said in Matthew 26:39, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want (or wish) but what you want (or wish).” May Jesus be our constant example and guide.

**(John 7:2) Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths, was near.**

The Festival of Booths, also called the Feast of Tabernacles, was a harvest festival held in late September and/or early October. It lasted eight days from a Sabbath through the following Sabbath. The festival celebrated and remembered the LORD’s care for the Hebrews when they traveled through the wilderness after the LORD freed them from slavery in Egypt. In the wilderness, the LORD traveled with them and fed them manna while they lived in tents or tabernacles. According to the LORD’s instructions, Moses also constructed a tabernacle or tent for the worship of the LORD in the wilderness. During the festival, the Jews made tents or booths (sometimes out of palm branches) in which to live. The Festival of Booths was one of three required festivals for the Jews to attend in

Jerusalem if they lived within fifteen miles of the city (Passover and Pentecost were the other two).

**(John 7:3) Therefore His brothers said to Him, “Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing.**

Jesus’ brothers may have been mocking Jesus when they told Jesus to go to Judea so His disciples in Judea could see the works He was doing. They may not have seen any of Jesus’ works or did not recognize Jesus’ works as signs that their brother was the Messiah. They may or may not have considered how dangerous it would be for Jesus to go to the festival. Even though they were His brothers, they certainly did not understand Jesus or His teaching. They thought Jesus was self-centered and seeking fame.

**(John 7:4) “For no one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be known publicly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world.”**

Jesus’ primary goal was not to be “widely known;” otherwise, Jesus would not have taught truths that offended the crowds that followed Him. Jesus came to teach the truth despite opposition and give believers in Him eternal life. Jesus often healed people in secret so He would continue to have time to teach the truth to His disciples, for they would soon begin teaching His truths after His death and resurrection. Jesus did not intend to do things just to draw great crowds, which would interfere

with His teaching. As unbelievers, Jesus' brothers did not understand Jesus' purposes. When they said, "IF you do these things," they expressed doubt that Jesus did the things that were reported of Him.

**(John 7:5) For not even His brothers were believing in Him.**

In John 6: 41-44, we learned that the Jews claimed to know Jesus' parents and brothers. In John 7:5, we learn that Jesus' brothers did not believe in Him. In this verse, we learn why Jesus' brothers misunderstood Him and why Jesus did as He did. Jealousy of their older brother may have blinded their eyes and stopped their ears from seeing and hearing the truth. Joseph, and later King David, also suffered ridicule from their brothers. Jesus was persecuted in this way too, and He must have felt deep sorrow for His brothers who rejected Him. In Galatians 1:19, we learn that after Jesus' resurrection, James, the Lord's brother, believed in Jesus; and he later wrote the Letter of James in the New Testament. We do not learn if any of Jesus' other brothers came to believe in Him. Jesus put his mother, Mary, under the care of John (writer of this gospel), so it seems none of His brothers believed in Him before His resurrection from the dead (more good evidence to believe in the resurrection of Jesus and the truths He taught). Many would only believe in Jesus after they saw Him raised from the dead.

**(John 7:6) So Jesus \*said to them, “My time is not yet here, but your time is always opportune.**

The Greek word for “time” in this verse is closer to meaning “opportunity” or “opportune time” or “right time.” The “opportune time” or “right time” had not yet come for Jesus to go to Judea. Jesus’ brothers could go to the festival or visit Judea anytime they chose. The right time for Jesus to go to Judea had not yet come. Jesus’ brothers could go to any festival whenever they wanted because they were not in danger from the Jews and no one was looking for them or interested in them. Jesus needed to finish teaching His disciples as much as possible before He was crucified, and His time for doing anything was always based on the time set by His Father.

**(John 7:7) “The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil.**

Jesus told His brothers a general truth. The world hated and hates Jesus and all God’s children because this world’s works are evil. By the actions of Jesus’ followers, if not also by their words, the children of God testify or bear witness to the fact that the works of those committed to living according to “this world” are doing evil. God’s children are hated for speaking out against evil. Those of “this world” will not hate those who go along with the world to get along with the world. Christians follow the true God and the teachings of the Bible. Jesus did not wish to go where He was hated, though He knew He had to keep testifying

that the works of “this world” are evil to influence people to repent and turn to Him for salvation from sin and doing evil works. Eventually, Jesus would go where He was hated, and His teaching would eventually lead to His crucifixion and death.

**(John 7:8) “Go up to the feast yourselves; I do not go up to this feast because My time has not yet fully come.”**

This verse has confused some people who have concluded that Jesus told a falsehood. However, we know that Jesus never lied, but always spoke the truth. Jesus was telling His brothers that He was not going with them to the festival because it was not the right time or the opportune time for Him to go to the festival. If Jesus had gone with them, we can only imagine how His brothers could have mocked Jesus and have drawn unfavorable attention to Jesus as they traveled with the other pilgrims. It was not an opportune time for Jesus to travel with His brothers. His time had not fully come. Let us remember, for good reasons Jesus did not wish to go to Judea, and perhaps planned not to go to the festival when He spoke to His brothers. However, after His brothers left, Jesus’ Heavenly Father may have told Jesus that it was now the right time to go to the festival, for Jesus did go to the festival and began teaching about four days after the festival began. John does not tell us all the details of Jesus’ discussion with His brothers but abbreviated their discussion. We know that Jesus never told a lie despite what this verse

seems to say. The Bible does not answer all our questions about the meaning of every verse, but we know Jesus' character, and Jesus' holy nature would not permit Him to tell a lie. It seems obvious to me that most probably Jesus only went to the festival when He did because after His brothers left His Father told Him it was time to go.

**(John 7:9) Having said these things to them, He stayed in Galilee.**

Jesus did what He told His brothers. He remained in Galilee with His disciples. As the crowds made their pilgrimage to Jerusalem, Jesus continued to teach His disciples privately in Galilee. His time to go to the festival would not come until His Father said it was time for Him to go. Jesus always obeyed His Father and when it was time to go Jesus went, despite what He might have wished to do.

**(John 7:10) But when His brothers had gone up to the feast, then He Himself also went up, not publicly, but as if, in secret.**

We learn in John 7:14, "About the middle of the festival Jesus went up into the temple and began to teach." Jesus' brothers wanted Him to go publicly and probably show works and do healings as He went to the festival and in Jerusalem at the festival. Like other unbelieving Jews, His brothers wanted Jesus to show signs, which, as unbelievers in Jesus, they doubted He could do. In Matthew 4:5-7, we learn how Satan tempted Jesus to make

a big show in Jerusalem, which His brothers also tempted Jesus to do, but Jesus did not succumb to their temptations. Jesus obeyed His heavenly Father and did not go publicly to the festival. Jesus went secretly and quietly and about four days after the crowds arrived, He began to teach in the temple.

**(John 7:11) So the Jews were seeking Him at the feast and were saying, “Where is He?”**

John often used “the Jews” when referring to the religious leaders in Jerusalem, for Jesus and His disciples were also Jews. Jesus always did what His Father wanted, and at the opportune time Jesus arrived at the festival while the Jews wondering about where Jesus was. Since the festival would have been a natural and obligatory place for Jesus to appear, they expected to see Jesus there. But Jesus would not enter Jerusalem in a public way that proclaimed He was the Messiah until Palm Sunday before the Passover Festival and His crucifixion.

**(John 7:12) There was much grumbling among the crowds concerning Him; some were saying, “He is a good man”; others were saying, “No, on the contrary, He leads the people astray.”**

Depending on your translation, there was considerable murmuring, grumbling, whispering, or complaining about Jesus at the festival. If Jesus had gone to the festival with his brothers, He probably would have experienced people complaining and demanding signs the entire way to

Jerusalem. Before attending the festival, Jesus gave the crowds an opportunity to discuss among themselves what type of person they thought Jesus to be. Then, while they were wondering about Him, Jesus would begin teaching them publicly in the temple. Notice: Jesus gave people time and opportunity to consider carefully what He had done and what He had said before making decisions about Him. Jesus did not force people to make decisions about Him without giving them enough good evidence to satisfy reasonable minds. But at some point, people need to choose whether they will accept and receive Jesus as described in the Bible or not. At the very minimum, the crowds argued about whether Jesus' actions, healings, and words indicated that Jesus was a good or bad person. Of course, Jesus is far more than a good person, and He would continue to reveal who He was to the people by His words and actions.

**(John 7:13) Yet no one was speaking openly of Him for fear of the Jews.**

The people knew that the religious leaders, "the Jews," opposed Jesus. They knew the consequences of saying very loud that Jesus was a good man. They could be expelled from the synagogue and shunned by others if they said a good word in Jesus' behalf. Speaking openly in behalf of Jesus could lead to great hardships, economic hardships and persecution. They believed that if they were expelled from worship in the temple and fellowship in the synagogues that they would lose all access to God. They

believed they would not be able to make the sacrifices required by the law at the temple to remain acceptable to God. To say Jesus was a good man or the possible Messiah was dangerous. Later, proclaiming the truth about Jesus would cost some believers their life or at least imprisonment. With the consequences of belief and unbelief being so high, by obeying His Heavenly Father, Jesus entered the festival in Jerusalem at the right or most opportune time under the best circumstances possible and began to teach.

### **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further**

1. Why did Jesus not wish to go to Judea?
2. Why did Jesus' brothers want Him to go to the festival?
3. Why did Jesus choose not to go to the festival with His brothers?
4. Why did the world then and the world now hate Jesus (and Christians)?
5. What did the crowds say about Jesus during the festival?

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