



## International Bible Study Commentary

Verse-by-Verse Bible Lessons Thru the Bible

L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

### **John 7:37-44 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 7:37) 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 "great day" was the last day of the Festival of Booths, usually the eighth day of the Festival on the Sabbath. Rabbis usually taught sitting down, as Jesus taught the Sermon on the Mount to His disciples and the crowd (see Matthew 5-7). In this situation, Jesus stood to teach so the greatest number of people could hear what He said as He taught in the temple. Jesus once again "cried out" as He did in John 7:28, expressing great emotion because what

He had to say was of eternal, life-changing, redeeming, importance for everyone. He spoke with a sorrowful cry of compassion for everyone within hearing. The celebration at the temple included the priests bringing water from the Pool of Siloam to the altar. Perhaps during this part of the service, as a substitute for what the priests were doing, Jesus “cried out” about He himself providing living water to believers. Jesus himself offered believers more than any sacrifice, ceremony, or festival at the temple could offer; so, He invited everyone who was spiritually thirsty to come to Him. As the Samaritans recognized, Jesus is “the Savior of the world” (see John 4:42).

**(John 7:38) “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’”**

Jesus invited everyone, Jews and Gentiles (who worshiped in the Court of the Gentiles), who were spiritually thirsty to come to Him. Temple worship and sacrifices could not quench spiritual thirst (no “religion” can), but Jesus can quench spiritual thirst when believers come to Him. Only the one who believes in Jesus and comes to Jesus can be satisfied spiritually: these conditions must be fulfilled, and those Jesus does not satisfy spiritually have not fulfilled His conditions. In John 6:32-35, in comparison to the manna God provided in the wilderness, Jesus declared that He is the Bread from heaven that gives life to the world. In John 7, unlike the water that God provided along with the bread (manna) God gave the Israelites in the

wilderness (which the Festival of Booths commemorated), Jesus said He gives spiritual water whereby the believer will never thirst spiritually again. Jesus also made this promise to the Samaritan woman, which she and the whole town believed (see John 4:13-14). The LORD provided water to the Israelites in the wilderness when He told Moses to strike a rock (see Exodus 17:5-7). With reference to this event, the Apostle Paul referred to Jesus as the spiritual rock that provided spiritual water to the Israelites in the wilderness (see 1 Corinthians 10:1-4). Jesus made His promises of a better future, an eternal future, for all people everywhere as the Jews had their focus on and remembered God's saving actions in the past.

**(John 7:39) But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.**

After a thirsty believer comes to Jesus, Jesus will give them satisfying living water that will flow from a believer's heart and bless many as well as the believer themselves. Living water flows to give life beyond itself (think of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-26, which blesses the believer and those around them). In some sense, at that time Jesus gave all who believed in Him "a taste" of the Holy Spirit that would satisfy them as living water and bless others, but Jesus would not give believers the Holy Spirit as the "Power from on High" until the Day of Pentecost (see Luke 24:49 and Acts 2:1-4). John obviously

did not mean that the Holy Spirit did not exist prior to the Day of Pentecost, because in John 1:33, John wrote how John the Baptist said, “I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, ‘He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.’” John, the Gospel writer, obviously referred to Pentecost, when Jesus would give the Holy Spirit to believers. In addition, when Jesus taught people the truth and they believed the truths He taught, they learned truths that completely spiritually and mentally satisfied them. For this reason, today, when believers read the Bible and trust in Jesus as they read, the Holy Spirit gives them great spiritual satisfaction and truths they can totally trust and share to bless others. Believers can also pray for the Holy Spirit to give them moral and spiritual attributes, attitudes, and traits (fruits of the Spirit) that will bless others and them, as well as wisdom and power from on high to share the good news of Jesus Christ with others.

**(John 7:40) Some of the people therefore, when they heard these words, were saying, “This certainly is the Prophet.”**

Jesus’ words led some in the crowd to believe that Jesus was “the prophet” who would precede the coming of the Messiah and prepare His way, but this was the role of John the Baptist. Beginning with John 1:15, we know this was the role of John the Baptist. Because Jesus spoke in ways some in the crowd had never heard before, their

enthusiasm for and thoughtfulness regarding the soon coming of God's promised Messiah increased.

**(John 7:41) Others were saying, "This is the Christ." Still others were saying, "Surely the Christ is not going to come from Galilee, is He?"**

Others in the crowd came to believe Jesus was the Messiah because of Jesus' signs (see John 7:31) and the truths He spoke with authority. His signs gave greater authority to the truths He spoke than the teachings of the scribes and Pharisees, who simply quoted and applied the teachings and traditions of the rabbis before them. Some wanted to know if Jesus fulfilled their preconception of the Messiah by saying that they had never heard of the Messiah coming from Galilee. However, the prophets Micah, Elijah, Jonah, Nahum, and Hosea came from the area that in Jesus' day was called Galilee. In Isaiah 9:1-2, the LORD spoke through the prophet and foretold the Messiah would come from Galilee, "But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined." And in Isaiah 9:6, we learn some of the Messiah's other titles and future work: "For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor,

Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”  
Therefore, their question was more related to their ignorance of the scriptures and their prejudice against Galileans.

**(John 7:42) “Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the descendants of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?”**

Jesus did not speak to the crowds about His miraculous birth in Bethlehem, about how His family fled to Egypt, and then how and when they returned to Nazareth in Galilee in fulfillment of prophecy (see Matthew 2). Many in the unbelieving crowd would have scoffed at such a claim, as some still do. At this point in time, not even His brothers believed in Jesus (see John 7:5). For obvious reasons, it is doubtful that Mary would have told Jesus’ younger brothers about Jesus’ miraculous conception and destiny as the Messiah until after His resurrection from the dead. If she had told them before Jesus’ death and resurrection, during His earthly life Jesus would never have fulfilled their expectations regarding what the Messiah would say and do. They would have been terribly disappointed in Him and they would have been constantly giving Him advice, as they did anyway because they misunderstood Jesus’ intentions (see John 7:3-4). As we have seen, Jesus chose to teach directly and most importantly about having come from His heavenly Father, about having been sent by the Father, and about teaching people the truths that the Father wanted Him to tell them.

Some found these claims incredible, so they refused to believe the most important and saving truths that Jesus taught about himself as Son of God and Savior.

**(John 7:43) So a division occurred in the crowd because of Him.**

Some in the crowd refused to decide whether Jesus was the prophet or the Messiah. For some of them, Jesus became just another interesting person to discuss.

**(John 7:44) Some of them wanted to seize Him, but no one laid hands on Him.**

One group in the crowd thought Jesus was the prophet; the second group thought Jesus was the Messiah; the third group could not make up their minds about Him; the fourth group sided with the Pharisees and chief priests and wanted Jesus arrested. Having seen and heard the same evidence as those who believed Jesus was the prophet, the Messiah, or just a puzzling person, the unbelievers went a step further and rejected Jesus entirely. He did not fit their expectations, and they preferred to just go along with the authorities—the temple police were there to arrest Jesus. Jesus was not what many people expected or wanted. But Jesus could not be arrested until the time set by His Father who had sent Him. Jesus needed more time to teach His disciples all they needed to know before His crucifixion, and if at that time Jesus had given the crowd irresistible, overwhelming, undisputable, irrefutable, and undeniable proof of who He was, many would have tried to compel

Him to be their King in Jerusalem according to their expectations and a devastating war with Rome would have begun. Many in the crowd would have never bothered to listen to His teachings about what God's Messiah had come into the world to accomplish; they would simply have expected Him to solve all their worldly problems—beginning with Rome and not with themselves.

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

1. In what way was Jesus' teaching in the temple similar to what He taught the Samaritans?
2. What are two conditions that Jesus told people they must fulfill in order to have their spiritual needs met?
3. What will happen to the person who fulfills these two conditions?
4. Do you think John thought the Spirit existed before Jesus was glorified? Give a reason for your answer.
5. List four ideas that those in the crowd had about Jesus.

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Contact: P.O. Box 1052, Edmond, Oklahoma, 73083 and [lgp@theiblf.com](mailto:lgp@theiblf.com).