



## International Bible Study Commentary

Verse-by-Verse Bible Lessons Thru the Bible

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### **John 7:45-53 Commentary New International Version**

#### **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 7:45) Finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests and the Pharisees, who asked them, “Why didn’t you bring him in?”**

Since Jesus was teaching in the temple, the Sanhedrin or Council, composed of priests who were mostly Sadducees with some Pharisees, sent temple police to arrest Jesus. In John 7:32, we read, “The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering such things about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent temple police to arrest him.” The police listened intently to what Jesus said, but the Father worked upon them and removed any incentive they had to arrest

Jesus, because Jesus' hour had not yet come, and probably because the Father did not want to cause a confrontation with the police that would detract from the crowd carefully contemplating what Jesus did and taught. The Father had sent the Son so whoever believed in Him might receive eternal life; so, Jesus taught until His hour to die came.

**(John 7:46) “No one ever spoke the way this man does,” the guards replied.**

The temple police had to give a reason for disobeying the Council and not arresting Jesus. The best reason they could think of related to Jesus' teaching and His influence over the crowds. Jesus had not threatened them or made them fearful to arrest Him; Jesus just kept teaching the truth in front of them and the crowd. They listened as Jesus spoke with authority and made claims about himself that no one else ever made as far as they knew. If true, and His claims were true, the police probably did not want to risk failure if they tried to arrest Jesus and Jesus fought against them. Before His hour came and when His hour came, Jesus never fought with the police or others who wanted Him arrested. Jesus simply hid himself or walked through the crowd unmolested until He allowed himself to be arrested.

**(John 7:47) “You mean he has deceived you also?” the Pharisees retorted.**

The Pharisees had already decided not to believe what Jesus taught or His claim that He was the Messiah.

Therefore, they concluded without good reasons that anyone who believed in Jesus must be deceived and deceived by Jesus. By “too” they meant the crowds who gladly listened to Jesus and who rejoiced when He healed them of their diseases. The crowds had seen enough signs from Jesus to believe in Jesus and what He taught. They thought Jesus was the Prophet or the Messiah.

**(John 7:48) “Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him?”**

The Pharisees, Sadducees, and chief priests were the elite among the Jews. The Sadducees and priests collaborated with the Romans for power and wealth. The Pharisees tried to coexist with the Romans by avoiding contact with them as much as possible as they interpreted the Law of Moses and followed their rabbinical traditions in ways that would avoid conflict. Since none of the elite believed in Jesus, they thought their unbelief as the elite was reason enough for everyone to think as they did and not believe in Jesus. In their opinion, they were the authorities to be believed, followed and obeyed—not Jesus, the Messiah they denied—because He was a threat to their power and position with the Romans and over the people.

**(John 7:49) No! But this mob that knows nothing of the law—there is a curse on them.”**

By “know the law,” the Pharisees meant that to find salvation a person must know and obey all 613 laws that they had developed with their ancestors over the centuries

based on their study of the Law of Moses, plus all the traditions they had developed based on debates among themselves about these laws. Of course, their idea of how to achieve salvation was an impossible task for them or anyone else to achieve. Their laws, traditions, and punishments for disobedience were some of the “heavy burdens” that Jesus said they placed on others. In Matthew 23:4, Jesus said of them: “They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others; but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them.” Jesus lifted more than a finger to remove them when He fulfilled the Law of God and died on the cross for the salvation of those who believed in Him. After His resurrection from the dead, He gave salvation to all who followed Him and would follow Him in the future. Those in the Council tried to justify their elite status as being a gift of God to them, a gift and blessing from God that they deserved. They condemned the ones they called the “People of the Land;” that is, the hard-working people—the farmers, the shepherds, the carpenters, and those who worked with their hands. They condemned as “uneducated” the people who did not believe as they did: these they considered beneath them. They applied Deuteronomy 27:26 to those who did not obey them and follow their interpretations of God’s law: “Cursed be anyone who does not uphold the words of this law by observing them.” For this reason, among others, they cursed the crowds who believed in Jesus, and also cursed and condemned Jesus and wanted to kill Him.

**(John 7:50) Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their own number, asked,**

Immediately, Nicodemus, whose visit with Jesus was described in John 3, asked a question that showed the Pharisees were violating the law upon which they thought their salvation depended. Nicodemus knew that taking the side of Jesus in their midst would be fruitless. He probably knew the truth Jesus taught (or a truth similar to it) in Matthew 7:6—“Do not give what is holy to dogs; and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under foot and turn and maul you.” By asking them one question, Nicodemus confronted them with their sins against Jesus and the people. If they truly knew God and sought to follow God, they would have considered Nicodemus’ rebuke and have repented of their sins. Because they did not repent, they proved they did not really know God.

**(John 7:51) “Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing?”**

Of course, the Law of Moses does not permit judging someone guilty of a crime without a hearing or trial, especially a crime that would result in the death of the person judged guilty. The Pharisees surely knew the Law of God in Deuteronomy 16:20, which reads, “Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue, so that you may live and

occupy the land that the LORD your God is giving you.” But they refused to obey God’s Law and seek only justice regarding Jesus, His Apostles, and those who believed in Him; therefore, forty years later, after the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and their temple, they no longer lived, or they no longer occupied Jerusalem or their land. Proverbs 29:27 reveals a universal truth that we can see and understand even today as we watch the news or listen the people around us: “The unjust are an abomination to the righteous, but the upright are an abomination to the wicked.” Remember what Jesus said to His brothers in John 7:7, “The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify against it that its works are evil.” Because Jesus testified that their deeds were evil, the wicked Pharisees detested the upright Jesus and wanted to kill Him. The wicked will do the same or similar today to those who seek to be upright and follow Jesus; especially to those who testify about them that their deeds are evil.

**(John 7:52) They replied, “Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee.”**

Rather than face the truth that they were breaking the law of God with their unjustifiable attacks against Jesus and their efforts to find a way to kill Jesus, they attacked Nicodemus personally and directly. Since they could not overcome his wise application of the Law to their sinful actions or prove Nicodemus wrong, they accused him of being one of the despised Galileans that they detested on

racial and religious grounds. They knew Jesus and His disciples were Galileans; so, they tried to silence Nicodemus by accusing him of thinking like a Galilean instead of the way they thought (they knew he was not from Galilee). The Pharisees and chief priests were totally self-centered and self-consumed. They would do anything for power or wealth. They thought nothing of the Law of Love as revealed by the LORD through the Law of Moses. They had no interest in pursuing the justice that the Law of Love requires; that is, to give a just hearing to others (who may or may not be in the wrong) and try to restore them to a right relationship with God and others. Finally, they showed that they did not really know the Scriptures that they bragged they knew, for prophets had arisen from Galilee: Jonah and Hosea are two examples among others in addition to Jesus. Primarily, they used the Scriptures as another means of exercising control over others, not to help others.

**(John 7:53) Then they all went home,**

This verse indicates that the Council ended its deliberations and each member went home. This was also the end of the last day of the Feast of Booths when many in Jerusalem would also be returning home. Jesus went to the Mount of Olives (see John 8:1).

## Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Why did the temple police not arrest Jesus? Give at least two reasons.
2. What accusation did the Pharisees make against the temple police?
3. What are some indications that the Pharisees were arrogant and proud?
4. Why do you think Nicodemus said what he did?
5. Give two examples of where the Pharisees were wrong.

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