



The Dynamic Gospel Study Guide – Book of John

John Chapter 7

1 After this, Jesus journeyed about in the region of Galilee. Judea was out of the question for the time being - the religious leaders there had sworn to kill Him.

2 When the Feast of Tabernacles was at hand,

3 His own brothers told Jesus “Now's the time to head for Judea. People are eager to witness Your healing miracles firsthand. We're all committed to go, so You'll (probably) be safe enough.

4 “Anyway, it's too late to keep a lid on it here in Galilee. The word is out all over the country. If You can't stop healing people, You might as well step into the limelight.”

5 This actually showed a fundamental lack of trust in Jesus' judgment. A spirit of fatalism was creeping in. Things were dicey and even His own brothers weren't thrilled where things were going. (The disciples hoped the tide of public opinion would finally swing in Jesus' favor and get them out of danger. As it was, they felt safer when they kept moving.)

6 “Oh, no you don't!” Jesus replied. “This isn't the time for a final push, no matter how eager **you** are to get on with it.

7 “Worried about your public image, are you? Well they're not concerned about you. It's Me they're after. I'm the One who keeps telling them how messed up they are.

8 “Go on, be gone with you! Enjoy the feast! I'm not coming yet. I will eventually, but all the pieces are not yet in place.”

9 That was the end of the discussion. The students left for Judea. Jesus stayed put in Galilee.

10 It was a ruse. Jesus made His way to Jerusalem on His own, incognito, remaining that way throughout the week.

11 When the religious leaders spotted the group of disciples they supposed Jesus must be with them and immediately went about setting traps.

12 Jesus was the talk of the town. Lively discussions ensued with huge arguments over His character. Was He good or bad? Godly or demonic? Some were convinced He was the Liberator, others equally convinced He was a sly deceiver.

13 But nobody dared to debate it openly in front of the religious leaders. They weren't about to risk getting arrested over it.

14 Midway through the festival week, Jesus stepped into the thick of things, and openly started speaking right in middle of the Temple grounds. This is where the religious leaders themselves debated the issues of the day. And still, no one recognized Him right away.

15 The angles Jesus added to the debate boggled their minds. He didn't sound like a seminary graduate, but His take on things probed deep spiritual truths. He obviously knew the scriptures.

16 They wanted to know if He subscribed to a new school of thought. “No,” Jesus answered. “I’m just repeating the positions of My Teacher - He sent Me here.

17 “If you understand what I’m saying, it’s pretty clear the scriptures have been saying it all along. It’s nothing new, so it comes from God. I’m not making stuff up or pulling it out of thin air.

18 “He who invents new doctrine is trying to put his stamp on the world and seeks personal glory. If I seek any glory, it’s for the One who sent Me. To hide His Truth or deny Him the glory He’s due would be a real injustice. I will not impute unrighteousness to Him!

19 “Didn’t Moses lay down the Law? And aren’t you, as the ‘keepers of the Law’ doubly responsible to keep it? So why do you go about wringing your hands all day, plotting to kill Me?”

20 “What?” the religious leaders replied. “Who **are** You? Are You possessed? How dare You accuse us of plotting murder!!”

21 Jesus went to the heart of the matter, revealing His identity. “Of all the amazing things I’ve done, only one in particular has left you speechless. You just cannot seem to get over it.

22 “And it has to do with the Sabbath. Now pay attention here: Ever since the time of Moses (and not even something that was originally required) circumcision has been performed religiously - even if the eighth day falls on a Saturday.

23 “So it’s OK to ‘cut up’ a man on the Sabbath, so that it doesn’t stop this all-important ceremony. I put a man back together on a Sabbath and you go berserk.

24 “Do you understand how hypocritical this is? Just because you won’t lift a finger to help someone on Saturday doesn’t mean I shouldn’t. Judge yourselves by the same standard you apply to Me.”

25 Then some of those from Jerusalem said “Ah - so **this** is the One we’ve heard all the rumors about. The priests plan to do Him in.

26 “But He’s no coward! He speaks right up and puts them in their place. What authority! What audacity! I’ll bet the rulers have already figured out He really **is** the Liberator.”

27 The religious leaders were busy attacking the credibility of Jesus to the assembled crowd. “How in the world could He possibly be the Liberator?” they argued. “We know what a hick He is and the backward area He comes from - isn’t the real Messiah supposed to be a mysterious visitor?”

28 “Good Grief!” Jesus replied. “Of course you know who I am and where My hometown is. But you obviously don’t know the One who sent Me! He’s the One who’s a total mystery to you! And now His ‘mystery’ is plain as sight - in **Me**! And you still don’t get it!

29 “I don’t share your confusion. It’s perfectly clear to Me since I’m on a first-name basis with the One who commissioned Me.”

30 The leaders had had enough. Temple or no Temple, they wanted to wring His neck. But, yet again, Jesus slipped away. It wasn’t time yet.

31 For many who watched the showdown, Jesus’ performance sealed the deal - they were now believers. “How could He **not** be the Liberator?” they asked. “Could anyone come along who will do more than He is already doing?”

32 The Fundamentalists heard the talk on the streets. It was getting completely out of hand. They quickly worked out a pact of convenience with their adversaries among the chief priests, signing off on the official arrest warrant.

33 Jesus told those close to Him, “It won’t be long now. It’s just about time for Me to start the journey home.

34 “When it gets most desperate, you’ll urgently pursue Me. But for that time I’ll be beyond your reach.

35 Spies were everywhere. It wasn't long before that private message between Jesus and students made it to the police. "He thinks he can evade us completely, does He? We'll see. Maybe He'll feel safer in another country, even preaching to the pagans! They'll be more easily duped.

36 "Does He think we're playing hide-and-seek here? Does He really think we won't be able to find Him? He dares us with a "catch-me-if-you-can?" Good luck with THAT!"

37 On the last day of the feast, Jesus let loose with one more appeal to all of Jerusalem. "If you've ever been thirsty for the Truth, step forward now. It's last call.

38 "Put your faith in Me and the prophecy comes true for **you**. The one that says "from where you were parched deep inside, a new spring will gush forth with waters of life."

39 That scripture is rightly understood as a metaphor for God's Holy Spirit. It would eventually (and literally!) be received by all of Jesus' followers, when the time came for Him to return to Heaven.

40 Many who heard this message declared "He's the One who's about to make the old prophecies come true! The final prophet Moses talked about!

41 But others limited their adulation, saying "No, He looks more like the Liberator, but the scriptures say nothing about this Anointed One coming from Galilee.

42 "Doesn't the Word say that the Messiah will come from the descendants of King David? That means from Bethlehem, right here in Judea."

43 And so the argument raged, even among those who were following Jesus.

44 And there were others sent by the religious police just waiting for the next opportunity to seize Jesus and throw Him in prison. But no scheme worked out.

45 When the toughs came back to their Temple masters empty-handed, they were chided openly. "He's just one man! You couldn't figure out how to haul in one single unarmed person??"

46 The police replied "You haven't heard Him speak, apparently. He's extremely convincing. We couldn't trap Him with His own words."

47 "That's just great!" added the Fundamentalists. "He's hooked the Temple police, now.

48 "Are WE next? Are the very rulers and teachers of the Law themselves going to fall for this impostor?"

49 "Impossible. If we're the last people on earth we'll not be swayed. Anyone who's stupid enough to follow this man has no clue what the Law says. Their folly damns them."

50 Nicodemus wasn't so sure about that and had been harboring reservations for a while. This being the same Nicodemus who had earlier secretly visited Jesus. That encounter left him leaning more and more toward Jesus. No time like the present to speak up!

51 "Does our Law permit us to condemn someone before he's had a fair trial? How do we know this man has really done anything wrong, in a legal sense?"

52 His fellow Fundies were stunned by the defense of Nicodemus. "What? Are you His cousin or something? Sticking up for the hick preacher from Galilee? Search the scriptures all you want and you won't find a single genuine prophet who has ever hailed from that part of the country. And it **won't** happen. **Ever.**"

53 The debate had gone as far as it could for the day. The officials retired for the evening.

Explain the Context:

From your reading provide a short answer to the following:

What is the theme of this chapter?	What is the BIG Idea?
What is something that surprised you?	What is this chapter <i>not</i> saying?

Take a moment to consider these questions:

- 1) How does Jesus' interaction with his brothers remind us of his "human-ness"?
- 2) Why is their unbelief significant in this story?
- 3) What could be Jesus' reasoning for secretly going to Jerusalem? Based on this example, when is mis-leading other's acceptable or appropriate? Why?
- 4) Look up the "Festival of Tabernacles" (or Festival of Ingathering) and consider the significance of the celebration in your own life. How has God "brought you out" of Egypt?
- 5) How does the debate over Jesus' identity in verse 25 encourage you to pause before you judge a person's intentions?

- 6) How significant do you think it is that Jesus cries out “If anyone is thirsty, come to me and drink!” on the most important day of the festival?

- 7) In Chapter 7, Nicodemus makes his first attempt at defending Jesus – do you see this as significant? Was it worth it? (Read more about him in John 3: 1-21 & John 19:39)

- 8) In verse 52 the council asks Nicodemus, “You aren’t from Galilee too, are you?” How is this a dismissal of Nicodemus defense of Jesus and a refusal on their part to do the work of finding out who Jesus really is?

Apply the Scripture

Write the verse that stood out to you while reading [in this translation or your favorite].

How does this verse challenge you? Does it reveal an attribute of God's character?

For further study:

- Exodus 23:14-16
- Leviticus 23: 34-43
- Numbers 29: 12
- Isaiah 55: 1
- John 3: 1-21
- John 19: 39