SMITH FOR CHRIST

TEACHING THE WORD · WATCHING THE TIMES



DEEP DIVE

John

Chapter Seven, Verses 1–53

Rivers of Living Water — the Feast of Booths, a divided crowd, and the cry of the last great day

NASB 1995 | VERSE BY VERSE | FOUR VOICES | WITH DIAGRAMS

At the Feast of Booths everyone has an opinion about Jesus — His brothers, the crowds, the rulers, the officers sent to arrest Him — and on the last great day He stands and cries out to anyone who is thirsty. Read through four teachers — **David Guzik**, **R.C. Sproul**, **C.H. Spurgeon** and **Matthew Henry** — with the Greek behind John's key words.

THE PASSAGE

John 7:1–53

not yet · whose teaching · where from · living water · division

THE METHOD

Verse by Verse

Color-coded by teacher

WHAT'S INSIDE

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Five movements from Galilee to the great day of the feast

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"Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks." — John 7:46

SECTION I · THE PASSAGE

John 7:1–53

Rivers of Living Water — Hunted in Judea, argued over in the temple — and on the great day of the feast He calls the thirsty to Himself

† How to Read This Study

This study walks John 7 in 5 movements, in John's own order. Each movement opens with the full NASB 1995 text of those verses, marked with the Berean colors and shapes; then the Greek behind the key words; then the teachers, each in his own color — **David Guzik**, the pastor who walks the text verse by verse; **R.C. Sproul**, the theologian who presses every word for its doctrine; **C.H. Spurgeon**, the preacher who turns the doctrine into a call to the heart; and **Matthew Henry**, the Puritan commentator who gathers it into plain, practical counsel. The figures draw the passage so you can see where John is going. Read the Scripture first; then let each voice add its angle.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word — R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's
C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle — MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

KEY VERSE · 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.'"

† Before the Passage

John 6 ended with a sifting. After the Bread of Life discourse "many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore" (6:66), and Peter answered for the Twelve, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life" (6:68). Chapter 7 picks up some months later. Jesus stays in Galilee because "the Jews were seeking to kill Him" in Judea (7:1) — the plot first named after the healing at Bethesda (5:16–18). From here to chapter 10 the story is set in Jerusalem, in the temple, at the feasts, and the opposition hardens with every chapter.

The setting is the Feast of Booths (Tabernacles, Hebrew *Sukkot*) — "the fifteenth of this seventh month … for seven days to the LORD" (Leviticus 23:34), with a holy eighth day after it. It was the most joyful of the pilgrim feasts: the harvest was in, families lived in booths of branches to remember the wilderness years, and in Jesus' day the temple added two great ceremonies — a priest carried water from the Pool of Siloam each morning and poured it at the altar, and great lamps were lit in the Court of the Women. Both stand behind Jesus' words: the water behind 7:37–38, the light behind 8:12.

The Old Testament roots run through the chapter. The booths remembered the rock that gave water in the wilderness (Exodus 17:6). Isaiah had promised, “Therefore you will joyously draw water From the springs of salvation” (12:3). Zechariah saw a day when “living waters will flow out of Jerusalem” (14:8) — and in that same chapter the nations go up year by year to celebrate the Feast of Booths in the kingdom of the Messiah (14:16). The crowd’s arguments turn on Moses (vv. 19–23), on the Prophet promised in Deuteronomy 18:15 (v. 40), and on Micah 5:2, the Christ from Bethlehem (v. 42).

Read the chapter as one question asked by many voices: *Who is this man, and where is He from?* His brothers doubt Him (vv. 1–13), the scholars wonder at His learning (vv. 14–24), the people of Jerusalem argue His origin (vv. 25–36), He cries out on the great day (vv. 37–39), and the crowd splits — while the officers sent to seize Him come back empty-handed and Nicodemus speaks up in the council (vv. 40–52). Verse 53 begins the bracketed account of the woman caught in adultery, which is treated with John 8.

I
MOVEMENT

JOHN 7:1–13

My Time Is Not Yet Here

Unbelieving brothers, a world that hates Him, and a Son who keeps the Father’s clock

> [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.* [2] *Now the feast of the Jews, ◷ the Feast of Booths, was near.* [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.* [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.”* [5] *For ⚠ not even His brothers were believing in Him.* [6] *So Jesus said to them, “◷ My time is not yet here, but your time is always opportune.* [7] *“The world cannot hate you, but ⚠ it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil.* [8] *“Go up to the feast yourselves; I do not go up to this feast because My time has not yet fully come.”* [9] *Having said these things to them, He stayed in Galilee.* [10] *But when His brothers had gone up to the feast, then He Himself also went up, not publicly, but as if, in secret.* [11] *So the Jews were seeking Him at the feast and were saying, “Where is He?”* [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.”* [13] *Yet no one was speaking openly of Him for fear of the Jews.*
>
> JOHN 7:1–13

> *“Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘On the fifteenth of this seventh month is the Feast of Booths for seven days to the LORD.’”*
>
> LEVITICUS 23:34

FIGURE · GALILEE, JUDEA AND THE QUESTION OF ORIGINS



7:1, 9 · GALILEE

He stays north: in Judea "the Jews were seeking to kill Him."

7:10, 14 · UP TO JERUSALEM

"not publicly, but as if, in secret" — then teaching in the temple mid-feast.

7:41–42 · BETHLEHEM

"the Christ comes … from Bethlehem, the village where David was" (Micah 5:2).

7:52 · "NO PROPHET … OUT OF GALILEE"

yet Jonah "was of Gath-hepher," a few miles from Nazareth (2 Kings 14:25).

The crowd argued that Jesus came from the wrong place; the map shows Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Jonah's Galilean hometown a few miles away.

καιρός … ὥρα

KAIROS … HŌRA · "TIME … HOUR" · G2540, G5610

Jesus tells His brothers, *ho kairos ho emos oupō parestin* — "My time is not yet here" (v. 6). *Kairos* (G2540) is not clock-time (*chronos*) but the fit, appointed moment, the opportunity. "Your time is always opportune": for men who do not belong to God, any season will do, because the world has no quarrel with them (v. 7). Later John uses the other word: no one laid a hand on Him "because His hour had not yet come" (v. 30; 8:20) — *hōra* (G5610), John's word for the cross and glory (2:4; 12:23; 17:1). The brothers want a public moment; Jesus waits for the Father's hour.

σκηνοπηγία

SKĒNOPĒGIA · "FEAST OF BOOTHS" · G4634

Literally "tent-pitching" — *skēnē*, tent or booth, and *pēgnymi*, to fasten or set up. It appears only here in the New Testament (v. 2). The Septuagint uses it for Sukkot (Deuteronomy 16:16). The same root stands in John 1:14: the Word became flesh and *eskēnōsen*, "dwelt" — pitched His tent — among us. At the feast of booths, the One who tabernacled among men walks into the temple.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik makes the first point plain: “It was not a lack of courage that made Jesus stay in Galilee.” Jesus was following His Father’s timing, not running from danger. His brothers, who did not yet believe in Him, urged Him to make a public show in Jerusalem, as if He needed a bigger stage. Jesus answered that their time was always open because their lives were not governed by the Father’s will, while His was — and Guzik draws the lesson for us: “God’s timing is an important expression of His will.” Then He went up quietly, while the crowds argued about whether He was good or a deceiver.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew’s

Sproul’s sermon “Unbelief” (17 November 2002) dwells on the troubling detail that Jesus’ own brothers did not believe in Him. He hears in their advice — go public in Jerusalem, show Yourself to the world — not saving faith but a hope for worldly power: they wanted the Messiah of their expectations to make His move. Jesus refuses their timetable and then goes up to the feast quietly, on His own. Sproul turns the text on his congregation with a searching question — do we believe in the real, biblical Jesus, or in one we would prefer? — and he closes the sermon by calling them to the Lord’s Supper.

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

In his exposition of the chapter Spurgeon calls it “a very painful truth, that those who were the near relations of the Saviour” did not believe in Him — and adds, “See how perverse is the human heart.” Nearness to Christ is not the same as faith in Christ. But the Lord was not hurried by their scorn: “Our Lord Jesus Christ did everything, as it were, by the clock.” “The very day in which he should go up to Jerusalem was marked down” in the Father’s purpose, and nothing — neither His brothers’ taunts nor His enemies’ plots — could move Him a day early or a day late.

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry notices the wording of verse 1: “It is not said, He durst not, but, He would not, walk in Jewry” — the withdrawal was prudence, not fear. Of the brothers he writes, “Many that have the same external privileges and advantages do not make the same use of them”; they had the same home and the same miracles in front of them and still did not believe. The world cannot hate those who are of it, but it hates Christ because He testifies against its evil: “the real cause of the world’s enmity to the gospel is the testimony it bears against sin and sinners.”

II
MOVEMENT

JOHN 7:14–24

My Teaching Is Not Mine

An unschooled teacher, a test anyone can take, and a call to judge rightly

14 But when it was now the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and began to teach. 15 The Jews then were astonished, saying, “How has this man become learned, having never been educated?” 16 So Jesus answered them and said, “My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. 17 “If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself. 18 “He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him. 19 “Did not Moses give you the Law, and yet none of you carries out the Law? Why do

> *you seek to kill Me?”* [20] *The crowd answered, “You have a demon! Who seeks to kill You?”* [21] *Jesus answered them, “I did one deed, and you all marvel.* [22] *“For this reason Moses has given you circumcision (not because it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and on the Sabbath you circumcise a man.* [23] *“If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath so that the Law of Moses will not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made an entire man well on the Sabbath?* [24] *“Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.”*
>
> JOHN 7:14–24

γράμματα οἶδεν

GRAMMATA OIDEN · “BECOME LEARNED” · G1121

Literally, “How does this man know letters, having not learned?” — *pōs houtos grammata oiden mē memathēkōs*. *Gramma* (G1121) is a letter of the alphabet or a writing; in the plural, learning, the scholar’s training (Acts 26:24, “your great learning”). Jesus had not sat under a recognized rabbi. His answer is that He did not need to: “My teaching (*didachē*) is not Mine, but His who sent Me.” Then He offers a test anyone can take — “If anyone is willing (*thelē*) to do His will, he will know” (v. 17). The will comes first; understanding follows obedience.

κατ᾽ ὄψιν

KAT’ OPSIN · “ACCORDING TO APPEARANCE” · G3799

Opsis (G3799) is sight, face, outward look; it occurs only three times in the New Testament (John 7:24; 11:44, Lazarus’ face wrapped in a cloth; Revelation 1:16, Christ’s face shining like the sun). “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment” — *tēn dikaian krisin krinete*. The crowd judged a Sabbath healing by its surface; Jesus argues from their own practice: if circumcision may be done on the Sabbath to keep Moses’ Law, how can making “an entire man well” break it (vv. 22–23)?

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes that the leaders’ question — how can He know so much without the schools? — was a sneer dressed up as surprise. Jesus’ answer was that His teaching came from the One who sent Him: “He was not self taught; Jesus was God taught.” A man who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; the one who seeks the glory of the Sender is true. On the Sabbath healing Guzik shows how Jesus turns their own circumcision rule against them, and he presses the command of verse 24 with a line from Marcus Dods: “No righteous judgment can be come to if appearances decide.”

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew’s

Sproul (“Christ the Scholar,” 24 November 2002) puts Jesus’ reply this way: “I brought it with Me from heaven. I don’t teach anything on My own, but My doctrine comes from the Father.” He is careful with the two natures: in His humanity Jesus learned and grew in understanding, yet His teaching was never in error, because it was the Father’s. Verse 17 is a moral test, not an intellectual one — “If you wanted to do the will of God, you would hear My voice, and you would listen to Me.” On the Sabbath he shows that the Law not only permits but “requires circumcision on the Sabbath day,” so the critics are condemned by their own practice.

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon sees in verse 17 the order of spiritual knowledge: "A practical life of godliness makes a man a far better critic as to what truth is" than all the learning of the schools. The heart that is willing to obey will soon know whether the doctrine is from God. He also warns against teachers who exalt themselves — the true preacher is one who speaks to the glory of God, not his own. And of Jesus' answer about circumcision and the Sabbath he says simply, "Surely, there was never a more triumphant answer than that."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry draws the principle of verse 17 into one sentence: "Those who resemble God are most likely to understand him." Verse 18 gives the test of any teacher: "Those who speak from God will speak for God, and for his glory," while "self-seekers are self-speakers." On verse 24 he writes, "We must not judge concerning any by their outward appearance," and he applies it to Christ Himself, whose "outward appearance was far short of his real dignity and excellency" — "though his appearance was ever so mean, they ought to receive him."

III
MOVEMENT

JOHN 7:25–36

Where Is He From?

The crowd thinks it knows His origin; the rulers send officers; He speaks of going away

25 *So some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, "Is this not the man whom they are seeking to* ↻ *kill*? 26 *"Look, He is speaking publicly, and they are saying nothing to Him. The rulers do not really know that this is the* ↻ *Christ*, *do they?* 27 *"However, we know where this man is from; but whenever the* ↻ *Christ may come, no one knows where He is from."* 28 *Then Jesus cried out in the temple, teaching and saying, "You both know Me and know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but* △ *He who sent Me is true*, *whom you do not know.* 29 *"I know Him, because I am from Him, and He* ↻ *sent Me."* 30 *So they were seeking to seize Him; and no man laid his hand on Him,* ◷ *because His hour had not yet come*. 31 *But* ☆ *many of the crowd believed in Him*; *and they were saying, "When the* ↻ *Christ comes, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He?"* 32 *The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about Him, and the chief priests and the Pharisees* ↻ *sent officers to seize Him.* 33 *Therefore Jesus said, "For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who* ↻ *sent Me.* 34 *"You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and* ⚠ *where I am, you cannot come*." 35 *The Jews then said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we will not find Him? He is not intending to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks, is He?* 36 *"What is this statement that He said, 'You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come'?"*

JOHN 7:25–36

πιάσαι

PIASAI · "TO SEIZE" · G4084

Piazō (G4084) is to lay hold of, grip — used of catching fish (21:3, 10) and of arresting a man. Eight of its twelve New Testament uses are in John, and three fall in this chapter: "they were seeking to seize Him" (v. 30), the chief priests and Pharisees "sent officers to seize Him" (v. 32), "some of them wanted to seize Him" (v. 44). Every time, the hand stops short — "because His hour had not yet come" (v. 30; 8:20). No one takes Jesus until He gives Himself up (10:18; 18:4–8).

διασπορά
DIASPORA · "THE DISPERSION"

"He is not intending to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks, is He?" (v. 35). The *diaspora*, "scattering," was the name for Jews living outside the land (James 1:1; 1 Peter 1:1). The jibe is sarcastic — would He stoop to teaching Gentiles? — and John lets the irony stand: within a generation His word would go exactly there, to the scattered Jews and to the Greeks (12:20–21, 32).

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes the confusion in Jerusalem: some believed the Messiah would appear from nowhere, so a man whose hometown they knew could not be the Christ. They thought they knew where He came from; they did not know He came from the Father. Jesus spoke with settled certainty about His origin and His mission — "Jesus was not a confused man, wondering if He was really the Son of God." The officers sent to arrest Him could do nothing, because His hour had not yet come, and many in the crowd reasoned that the Christ could hardly do more signs than this man had done.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's "Christ the Scholar" reads the crowd's confusion in verse 27 — "when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from" — as people who know Jesus' village but not His home. In the next sermon, "Who Is This Man?" (1 December 2002), he takes Jesus' words "for a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me" as pointing to the ascension, which he calls the most neglected dimension of Christ's life in the church today. Where Jesus is going, His enemies cannot follow: He returns to the Father's right hand.

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Expounding these verses, Spurgeon notes that the people had a vague notion, "perhaps derived from that passage in Isaiah," that the Christ's origin would be hidden in mystery. Why did no one lay hands on Him? "His hour was not yet come," and "Something seemed to hold them back" — an awe that restrained them. He calls the crowd's whispering "no fire more to be dreaded than a smouldering fire." Jesus' words about going to the Father are "a blessed way" to speak of His departure; once He ascended, no officer could arrest Him again. And the sneer about the Dispersion? "That was always their fear."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

On verse 27 Henry writes, "Familiarity breeds contempt, and we are apt to disdain the use of those whom we know the rise of" — "Christ's own received him not, because he was their own." He sees Providence in verse 30: "God can tie men's hands to admiration, though he should not turn their hearts." "Yet a little while" was a comfort to Christ, who "had but a little time to continue here in this troublesome world," and a warning to His enemies: "They should in vain seek the presence of the Messiah."

IV
MOVEMENT

JOHN 7:37–39

If Anyone Is Thirsty

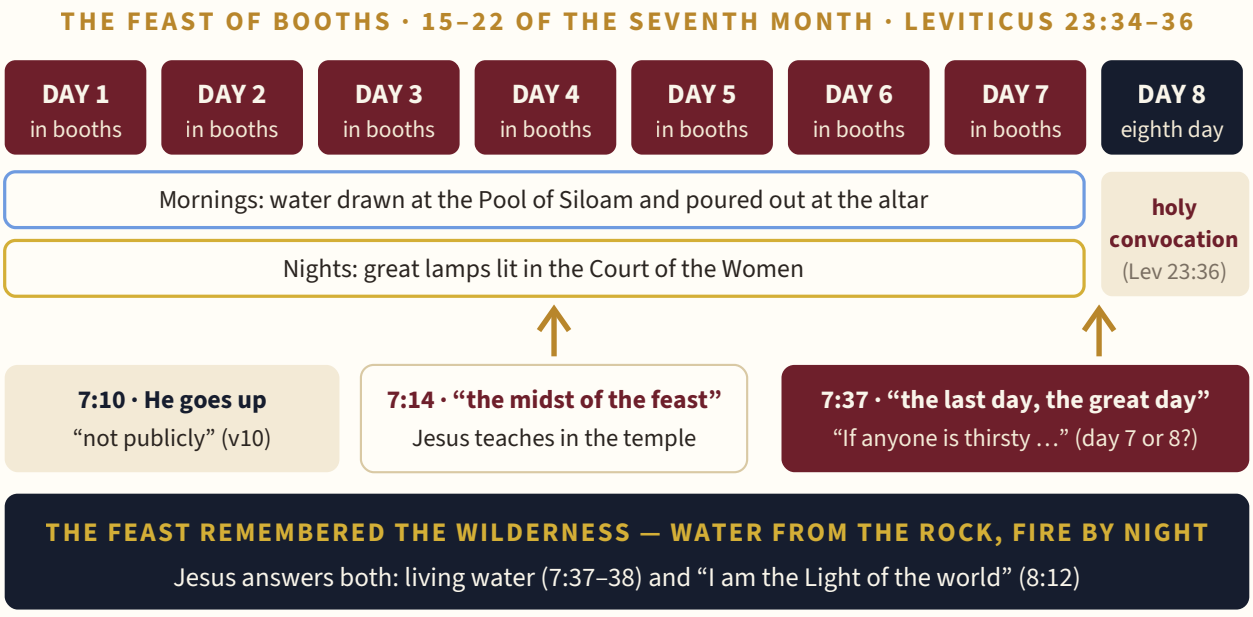
On the great day of the feast, the water of the altar points to the Spirit He will give

> 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.* 38 *"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'"* 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.*
>
> JOHN 7:37–39

> *"Therefore you will joyously draw water From the springs of salvation."*
>
> ISAIAH 12:3

> *"And in that day living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea; it will be in summer as well as in winter."*
>
> ZECHARIAH 14:8

FIGURE · JESUS AT THE FEAST OF BOOTHS



The feast's two temple ceremonies — water in the morning, light at night — are the backdrop for His cry in 7:37 and His claim in 8:12.

ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας αὐτοῦ

EK TĒS KOILIAS AUTOU · "FROM HIS INNERMOST BEING" · G2836

Koilia (G2836) is the belly, the womb — the KJV's "out of his belly" is literal. Figuratively it is the hidden center of a person, what we would call the heart. Jesus does not say a trickle; He says "rivers" (*potamoi*), and the water is "living" (*hydatos zōntos*) — running water, the same phrase He used with the Samaritan woman (4:10). No single Old Testament verse reads exactly this way; Jesus gathers the promise of Isaiah 58:11, Ezekiel 47:1–12 and Zechariah 14:8. Grammatically "his" may point to the believer or to Christ Himself; John's comment in verse 39 makes either reading end in the Spirit.

οὔπω … ἐδοξάσθη

OUPŌ … EDOXASTHĒ · "NOT YET GLORIFIED" · G1392

John adds a note in verse 39: "the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." The Greek is starker — *oupō gar ēn pneuma*, "for not yet was Spirit" — and translators rightly add "given"; the Spirit existed, but His new-covenant outpouring waited. *Doxazō* (G1392), "glorify," is John's word for the cross, resurrection and return to the Father (12:16, 23; 13:31; 17:1, 5). The glory comes first, then the river (16:7; Acts 2:33).

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik explains the setting: on the earlier days of the feast water was poured out at the altar, recalling God's provision in the wilderness, and on the eighth day that ceremony was apparently absent — so Jesus stood up and offered the water Himself. He starts with the need: "Thirst is not anything in itself; it is a lack of something." The remedy is simple — come and drink — and he borrows Spurgeon's blunt line, "Any fool can drink: in fact, many are great fools because they drink too much of poisonous liquors." The rivers that flow from the believer are the work of the Holy Spirit, given once Jesus was glorified.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul ("Who Is This Man?") pictures the moment: "this is while the Jews are pouring the water out, remembering the water that came from the rock." Into the middle of the ceremony Jesus cries out that He is the source the ceremony pointed to. John's note that the Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified leads Sproul to the work of the Spirit after Pentecost: "Today, that is the chief ministry of the Holy Ghost: to take the work of the Son and bring it to fruition in us." The living water is the Spirit applying what Christ accomplished.

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

In "The Preacher's Last Sermon for the Season" (No. 1875) Spurgeon begins with the need: "Thirst rings the alarm bell, and mind and body set to work to supply the demand." The invitation is to come directly to Christ — not to a creed, a ritual or a feeling — and "We must come to Christ and bring nothing of our own except our thirst, and that coming is believing." Then drink: "the first action of the infant, the easiest act of the man." No one is too far gone: "The more unfit the more you are invited; your very unfitness is your fitness."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry paraphrases the cry: "If any man desires to be truly and eternally happy, let him apply himself to me." The water flows from Christ into the believer and then out of him: "Believers drink of a rock in them, Christ in them." And on John's note in verse 39 he writes, "The death of Christ is sometimes called his glorification" — the Spirit would be given only after the cross had done its work.

V
MOVEMENT

JOHN 7:40–53

Never Has a Man Spoken Like This

A divided crowd, officers who come back empty-handed, and Nicodemus in the council

40 *Some of the people therefore, when they heard these words, were saying, "This certainly is the Prophet."*
41 *Others were saying, "This is the Christ." Still others were saying, "Surely the Christ is not going to come*
from Galilee, is He? 42 *"Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the descendants of David, and*
from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" 43 *So a division occurred in the crowd because of Him.*
44 *Some of them wanted to seize Him, but no one laid hands on Him.* 45 *The officers then came to the chief priests*
and Pharisees, and they said to them, "Why did you not bring Him?" 46 *The officers answered, "Never has a*
man spoken the way this man speaks." 47 *The Pharisees then answered them, "You have not also been led astray,*
have you? 48 *"No one of the rulers or Pharisees has believed in Him, has he?* 49 *"But this crowd which does not*
know the Law is accursed." 50 *Nicodemus (he who came to Him before, being one of them) said to them,*
51 *"Our Law does not judge a man unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?"* 52 *They*
answered him, "You are not also from Galilee, are you? Search, and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee."
53 *[Everyone went to his home.*

JOHN 7:40–53

"But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity."

MICAH 5:2

FIGURE · TWELVE OPINIONS, ONE DIVISION

"A DIVISION OCCURRED IN THE CROWD BECAUSE OF HIM" · JOHN 7:43

DOUBT AND OPPOSITION	OPENNESS AND FAITH
HIS BROTHERS · V4 "show Yourself to the world"	**OTHERS IN THE CROWDS · V12** "He is a good man"
SOME IN THE CROWDS · V12 "He leads the people astray"	**MANY OF THE CROWD · V31** they "believed in Him"
THE CROWD · V20 "You have a demon!"	**SOME OF THE PEOPLE · V40** "This certainly is the Prophet"
PEOPLE OF JERUSALEM · V27 "we know where this man is from"	**OTHERS · V41** "This is the Christ"
OTHERS · V41 "Surely the Christ is not … from Galilee"	**THE OFFICERS · V46** "Never has a man spoken …"
THE PHARISEES · V47 "You have not also been led astray"	**NICODEMUS · V51** the Law "first hears from him"

Henry: "a good opinion of Christ is far short of a lively faith in Christ."

Read down both columns: everyone in John 7 has an opinion about Jesus, and the chapter will not let any of them stay neutral.

σχίσμα

SCHISMA · "DIVISION" · G4978

Our word "schism." *Schisma* (G4978) is a tear, as in a patched garment (Matthew 9:16), and then a split among people. John uses it three times, each time of people divided over Jesus: here (7:43), among the Pharisees over the man born blind (9:16), and among the Jews after the Good Shepherd discourse (10:19). Jesus Himself said He came to bring division (Luke 12:51). The word is a sign that He cannot be politely ignored. A note on verse 53: the NASB opens a bracket there — "[Everyone went to his home." — because 7:53–8:11 is missing from the earliest manuscripts of John; see the John 8 study.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik walks through the split: some said the Prophet, some the Christ, and some objected that the Christ must come from Bethlehem, not Galilee — not knowing that Jesus had been born there. The officers came back without Him, saying, "No man ever spoke like this Man!" (NKJV), and the Pharisees answered with contempt for the common people. When Nicodemus asked for a fair hearing he was mocked as a Galilean, and Guzik points out the leaders' error of fact as well as of heart: a prophet had come from Galilee — Jonah.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul opens with the officers: "With their tails between their legs, the officers go back to the authorities in Jerusalem." Sent to arrest Jesus, they were arrested by His words. On the crowd's division he says, "What else is new? That division is as serious this morning as it was that day in Jerusalem." The Pharisees despise the people as ignorant of the Law, while breaking the Law themselves, and Nicodemus — who had come to Jesus by night — finds his voice: "Excuse me. Is this the way we operate with our law?"

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon preached verse 46 as "The Unrivalled Eloquence of Jesus" (No. 951, 18 September 1870). The officers came to take Him, but "they could not take him, for he had fairly taken them." What made His speech unlike any other? "His sermons were not guesses, but testimonies." "He did not debate, but declared." He was clear and deep, authoritative and humble, tender and faithful at once, and "He was manly all through; love in him abounded." In his exposition he adds that Nicodemus' question scattered the council: "Nicodemus had scattered them all by his startling question."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry calls the officers' report "a very great truth, that never any man spoke with that wisdom, and power, and grace" as Christ. He warns that "a good opinion of Christ is far short of a lively faith in Christ," and that the Pharisees' scorn of the crowd is an old pattern: "so the folly of men has commonly debased and despised those whom God has chosen." Nicodemus' plea becomes a rule for every court: "Facts, and not faces, must be known in judgment." And the council ends as verse 53 says: "They broke up the assembly in confusion, and with precipitation, and every man went to his own house."

VI
THEME

CROSS-REFERENCES

The Passage in the Whole Bible

From the rock in the wilderness to the river of the water of life

> *"Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.*
>
> EXODUS 17:6

> *"Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk Without money and without cost."*
>
> ISAIAH 55:1

> *"The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him."*
>
> DEUTERONOMY 18:15

> *"He restored the border of Israel from the entrance of Hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the LORD, the God of Israel, which He spoke through His servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was of Gath-hepher."*
>
> 2 KINGS 14:25

> *"but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."*
>
> JOHN 4:14

> *"Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear."*
>
> ACTS 2:33

> *"The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.' And let the one who hears say, 'Come.' And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost."*
>
> REVELATION 22:17

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik reads the rulers' boast of verse 52 against 2 Kings 14:25: Jonah the son of Amittai was a prophet from Galilee, so even on their own ground the Pharisees were wrong.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul ties the water ceremony of the feast back to Exodus 17 — the Jews pouring out water "remembering the water that came from the rock" — and forward to Pentecost, when the glorified Christ poured out the Spirit.

SECTION II · STUDY HELPS

At a Glance

Four voices, one chapter

Four teachers, one chapter. Guzik keeps the setting and the timing in front of us; Sproul preached the chapter in three Sunday sermons in late 2002 and presses the questions of unbelief, authority and the Spirit; Spurgeon turns the cry of verse 37 into an invitation for the thirsty; Henry gathers it into Puritan counsel for the heart. They differ little on this chapter; the main open question — whether the "great day" is the seventh or the eighth — they leave open too.

THE MOVEMENT	GUZIK · the text	SPROUL · the doctrine	SPURGEON · the heart	HENRY · the counsel
I · Not yet	Not cowardice but the Father's timing; God's timing expresses His will.	His brothers wanted a celebrity, not a Savior; do we trust the real Jesus?	Near relations, no faith; Christ did everything by the clock.	He would not, not durst not; same privileges, different use.
II · His teaching	Not self-taught but God-taught; appearances cannot decide.	Doctrine brought from heaven; verse 17 is a moral test, not an intellectual one.	Godly living makes a better critic of truth than learning.	Those who resemble God best understand Him; judge worth, not looks.
III · Where from	They knew His town, not His Father; Jesus was never confused about who He was.	"A little while longer" points to the ascension — the neglected doctrine.	No man laid hands on Him; the Father kept the hour.	God tied their hands to admiration, though not their hearts.
IV · Living water	Thirst is a lack; any fool can drink; the rivers are the Spirit.	Water poured for the rock; the Spirit brings the Son's work to fruition in us.	Bring nothing but your thirst; your unfitness is your fitness.	Believers drink of a rock in them; His death is His glorification.
V · Division	Born in Bethlehem after all; Jonah was from Galilee.	Officers with their tails between their legs; the division continues today.	They could not take Him, for He had taken them; not guesses but testimonies.	A good opinion falls far short of faith; facts, not faces.

JOHN 7:1–53 · A COMPARATIVE READING

† Key Insights to Carry

- **Nearness is not faith.** His own brothers grew up with Him, saw His works, and "were not believing in Him" (v. 5). Spurgeon calls it "a very painful truth." Yet by Acts 1:14 they are praying with the apostles, and James and Jude wrote Scripture — unbelief in John 7 was not the end of their story. THE TEXT
- **Two words for time.** *Kairos* in verses 6 and 8 — the fit moment; *hōra* in verse 30 — the hour of the cross. The brothers want a moment of publicity; Jesus waits for the hour of glory. THE GREEK
- **Jesus kept the Father's clock.** Spurgeon: "Our Lord Jesus Christ did everything, as it were, by the clock." He would not go early to please His brothers, and His enemies could not seize Him early to please themselves (vv. 30, 44). SPURGEON
- **Obedience opens understanding.** "If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching" (v. 17). Henry: "Those who resemble God are most likely to understand him." The will comes before the proof. HENRY
- **Judge rightly, not by the surface.** *Kat' opsin*, "according to appearance" (v. 24). Guzik, quoting Dods: "No righteous judgment can be come to if appearances decide." GUZIK
- **Jesus is the fulfillment of the feast.** While the priests poured water remembering the rock, Jesus stood and cried out, "let him come to Me and drink." Sproul: "this is while the Jews are pouring the water out, remembering the water that came from the rock." SPROUL

- **Thirst is the only qualification.** Spurgeon: "We must come to Christ and bring nothing of our own except our thirst, and that coming is believing." SPURGEON
- **The river waited for the glory.** "The Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (v. 39). The cross, the resurrection and the ascension came first; then Pentecost (Acts 2:33). THE TEXT
- **The arresting officers were arrested.** Sent to seize Him, they came back saying, "Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks" (v. 46). Spurgeon: "they could not take him, for he had fairly taken them." SPURGEON
- **Nicodemus is moving.** He came by night (3:2); here he speaks up for a fair hearing (7:50–51); at the cross he brings a hundred pounds of spices for Jesus' burial (19:39). Faith that starts small can grow in the open. THE TEXT

† Questions for the Table

1 **Who in my own family has watched my life and still doesn't believe? What does Jesus' patience with His brothers teach me about waiting for them?**

His brothers didn't believe in John 7 — and were praying with the church in Acts 1:14.

7:3-5; Acts 1:14

2 **Where am I pushing God to act on my timetable — "show Yourself" — instead of trusting His time?**

Kairos, the fit moment, belongs to the Father.

7:6-8, 30

3 **Is there a truth in Scripture I keep arguing with because I'm not yet willing to obey it?**

Verse 17: the will comes before the knowing.

7:17

4 **Where have I judged a man — or been judged — by appearance? What would "righteous judgment" look like there?**

Facts, not faces (Henry).

7:24; 1 Sam 16:7

5 **What am I thirsty for right now, and where have I been trying to drink instead of coming to Jesus?**

Bring nothing but your thirst (Spurgeon).

7:37-38; Isa 55:1

6 **Like Nicodemus, where do I need to speak up for Jesus in a room that is against Him?**

Small steps of courage in the open.

7:50-51; 19:39

John 7 is crowded with opinions about Jesus — good man, deceiver, Prophet, Christ, a man with a demon, a teacher like no other. Only one response answers His cry: if you are thirsty, come to Him and drink. The Spirit He gives does not trickle; He flows like rivers from the inside out.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

† Sources

Each teacher's section summarizes the pages below in our own words; short quotations are verbatim from them. Matthew Henry (1662–1714) completed his *Commentary* himself through the Gospels and Acts. Henry's Commentary and C.H. Spurgeon (1834–1892) are in the public domain; Guzik and Sproul are summarized — consult each author's own work.

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