

**John Chapter 7 v. 1-52 – Jesus at the feast of Tabernacles.**

<sup>1</sup> After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him. <sup>2</sup> Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand.

<sup>3</sup> His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. <sup>4</sup> For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world."

<sup>5</sup> For even His brothers did not believe in Him. <sup>6</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready. <sup>7</sup> The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil.

<sup>8</sup> You go up to this feast. I am not yet going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come." <sup>9</sup> When He had said these things to them, He remained in Galilee. <sup>10</sup> But when His brothers had gone up, then He also went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.

<sup>11</sup> Then the Jews sought Him at the feast, and said, "Where is He?" <sup>12</sup> And there was much complaining among the people concerning Him. Some said, "He is good"; others said, "No, on the contrary, He deceives the people."

<sup>13</sup> However, no one spoke openly of Him for fear of the Jews. <sup>14</sup> Now about the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught. <sup>15</sup> And the Jews marveled, saying, "How does this Man know letters, having never studied?"

<sup>16</sup> Jesus answered them and said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. <sup>17</sup> If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or *whether* I speak on My own *authority*.

<sup>18</sup> He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him. <sup>19</sup> Did not Moses give you the law, yet none of you keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill Me?"

<sup>20</sup> The people answered and said, "You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You?" <sup>21</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, "I did one work, and you all marvel. <sup>22</sup> Moses therefore gave you circumcision

(not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. <sup>23</sup> If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath?

<sup>24</sup> Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment." <sup>25</sup> Now some of them from Jerusalem said, "Is this not He whom they seek to kill? <sup>26</sup> But look! He speaks boldly, and they say nothing to Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is truly the Christ?

<sup>27</sup> However, we know where this Man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from."

<sup>28</sup> Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple, saying, "You both know Me, and you know where I am from;

and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. <sup>29</sup> But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me." <sup>30</sup> Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.

<sup>31</sup> And many of the people believed in Him, and said, "When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this *Man* has done?" <sup>32</sup> The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things concerning Him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him.

<sup>33</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "I shall be with you a little while longer, and *then* I go to Him who sent Me.

<sup>34</sup> You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come."

<sup>35</sup> Then the Jews said among themselves, "Where does He intend to go that we shall not find Him? Does He intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks?"

<sup>36</sup> What is this thing that He said, 'You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come'?"

<sup>37</sup> On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.

<sup>38</sup> He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." <sup>39</sup> But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

<sup>40</sup> Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, "Truly this is the Prophet." <sup>41</sup> Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Will the Christ come out of Galilee? <sup>42</sup> Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?"

<sup>43</sup> So there was a division among the people because of Him. <sup>44</sup> Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him. <sup>45</sup> Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why have you not brought Him?"

<sup>46</sup> The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!" <sup>47</sup> Then the Pharisees answered them, "Are you also deceived? <sup>48</sup> Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? <sup>49</sup> But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed."

<sup>50</sup> Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, <sup>51</sup> "Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?" <sup>52</sup> They answered and said to him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee." <sup>53</sup> And everyone went to his *own* house.

## **Introduction**

**Chapter 7 tells us that Jesus was at the "Feast of Tabernacles". Therefore we need to have some information about this festival in order to fully understand the passage.**

**It was an 8 day festival held at the end of September and the beginning of October.**

**It was one of the obligatory festivals which every male Jew who lived within 15 miles of Jerusalem was legally bound to attend. (About 20 k.m.) However many Jews from far and wide travelled to the festival if they were able.**

**All the Jewish people gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate God's provision during the 40 years in the desert. They camped out in booths or little huts to remind them of their time when they lived in tents in the wilderness.**

**During the festival there were two main themes," Water and Light." The Jewish people looked back to the past when God had provided water from the rock in the desert**

**(Exodus 17 v. 1-7)**

Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped in Rephidim; but *there was* no water for the people to drink. <sup>2</sup> Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, "Give us water, that we may drink." So Moses said to them, "Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the LORD?"

<sup>3</sup> And the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses, and said, "Why *is* it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" <sup>4</sup> So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!"

<sup>5</sup> And the LORD said to Moses, "Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river, and go. <sup>6</sup> Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in 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. <sup>7</sup> So he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

**This was a harvest festival too and so the water was symbolic of a prayer for abundant rain. Summer was at an end and the rainy season was about to begin. The pouring of water was a visual interpretation of God's grace in sending rain.**

**Also it was a looking forward to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon Israel and the believers of all nations under the reign of the Messiah King.**

**The second theme at the festival was "Light". The Temple was illuminated with lots of large candle sticks. This was a reminder to look back to when God guided them by His light as a pillar of fire at night and a cloud during the day. (Exodus 13: v. 21)**

**The "Feast of Tabernacles" was also associated with ingathering of the harvest.**

**(Ex. 23:16, Lev. 23: v. 33-36, 39-43, Deut. 16: v. 13-15.)**

**The Rabbis used to say "If you have not seen Jerusalem during the feast of tabernacles you don't know what rejoicing means."**

**This festival was the most "Joyful" festival in the Jewish calendar. It was a bit like "Golden week" in Japan. Everybody was happy.**

**If you want to go to visit Jerusalem today, this is the best time to go.**

**So the "Feast of Tabernacles" was an exciting festival of looking back and thanking God for the past, but also looking forward to what God was going to do in the future.**

**Now we have this information about the "Feast of Tabernacles" we should be able to understand John Chapter 7 a little better.**

**Jesus wanted to avoid going to Judea because the Jewish leaders sought to kill him.**

**The brothers of Jesus advised Him to return to Judea and show himself to the world. However His brothers didn't believe in the real identity of Jesus as the Son of God.**

**Jesus said twice to His brothers "My time has not yet come".**

**These words make it clear that Jesus was following a pre-prepared agenda. He was following the Father's will. Jesus was in control of events, events were not in control of Jesus.**

This is very encouraging for us, because we sometimes feel that the world is out of control and that Jesus isn't in control of all things. However we must believe that in spite of all that happens in the world today Jesus has a pre-prepared agenda.

Even the brothers of Jesus wanted to interfere with the agenda of Jesus. They wanted Jesus to expose Himself to the world NOW!!. The devil is always in a hurry but God has plenty of time. He works to His own time-table.

Jesus sent His brothers to the "Feast of Tabernacles" and said to them that He wasn't going yet.

We know that Jesus needed to be at the festival on the last day to declare his speech on the offer of "Living Water". However He didn't need to go now.

Jesus reminded His brothers that the world hates Him because He testifies about its evil nature. Jesus makes it clear here that God doesn't have favorites. Even the Jewish nation, His own chosen people had a tendency to reject God. Even they were born with an evil heart and needed to submit to the teaching of Jesus.

It is very difficult for good sincere people, loving people, kind people, to admit that they have an evil heart that needs forgiveness and cleansing by Jesus. However if God's chosen people, His own nation need forgiveness, then all of us need forgiveness too.

In Chapter 7 John points out 3 important things.

The first is the exposing of the hearts of the Jewish People, the second is the revealing of Jesus true mission, and thirdly the people's response to Jesus.

1. Jesus exposes the hearts of the Jewish People.

Jesus explains in 3 steps the reason behind the refusal of the Jewish leaders to recognize who He is. God's Son.

- a) Step one – in v. 17 it says that the people chose not to do God's will. The Jewish people had God's word, but they chose not to do God's will. They didn't have a heart after God. Therefore they had no assurance that the teaching of Jesus was from God. God knows our hearts and if we are seeking after Him, we will know the truth of the words of Jesus.

We discovered in our Bible study on the 15<sup>th</sup> April that there were several situations in the book of Acts in the New Testament where God fearing people, became believers. The most well-known one was Lydia the seller of purple. In Acts chapter 16: v. 14 we are told that Lydia worshipped God, and the Lord opened her heart.

If we open up our hearts to God, we learn the truth about God. However if we close our hearts to God, then the truth about God is not known to us.

It was Thomas Manton who said "The heart alone sees God, and God alone sees the heart."

The Bible says that the heart is deceitful amongst all things, who can know it?

(Jeremiah 17: v. 9)

Well God alone can know our hearts. When you seek after truth from a sincere heart, God will reveal that to you.

The Jewish leaders claim to know God was false and hypocritical because their actions confirmed this. They were plotting to murder Jesus, making a sham of the Sabbath and this showed that their hearts were evil.

- b) Step two - The identity of Jesus. Jesus identifies Himself in several ways.

Firstly as the miracle worker. He says in v. 21 that He did one miracle and you all went crazy about it

Jesus also claims to keep the Sabbath, even though He broke a man-made rule on the Sabbath. The Sabbath was made by God for man, Man didn't make the Sabbath for God.

Jesus says that He knows God, because He was sent by God. (v. 29)

If anyone should know about the Sabbath it was Jesus. He created it. Whoever heard of a paddle telling a canoeist what to do? God is our creator owner, He tells us what to do and we submit humbly to His authority.

- c) Step three – The response of the crowd - From v. 12-31 the crowd by their response reveal their hearts. In v. 19 they sought to kill Jesus.

In v. 30 they sought to capture Jesus. There was confusion amongst the people in v. 25-27. There was "Gossip" among the people, (v.12-13) there was uncertainty about the identity of Jesus. In v. 31 it says "When the Christ comes, he will do more signs than these."

Even today, 2000 years later people are very ignorant about Jesus, who He is and about the truth of His ministry.

Even today many intelligent people prefer to believe a lie rather than the truth about Jesus. Why? Well Jesus says their hearts are evil.

## 2. Jesus reveals His Mission – v. 37-39.

On the last day of the feast of Tabernacles Jesus reveals His "Mission".

Every day at the festival a Priest took a golden water jar and went down to the pool of Siloam and filled it with water. He carried it back through the water gate while the people recited Isaiah chapter 12: v. 3 "Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation"

The water was carried up to the Temple altar and poured out as an offering to God. While things were being done people were singing Psalm 113 – 118

The Levite choir led the singing and they were accompanied by flute players.

On the last day they marched 7 times around the altar before pouring the water out as an offering to God. The last day was very dramatic and very noisy, full of praise to God for His provision in their wilderness wanderings in the desert for 40 years.

It was probably at the point just after the final pouring of water upon the altar that Jesus stood up and CRIED OUT, " If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me, as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. The festival was a visual aid to point to the spiritual truth of what Jesus was trying to teach.

So what exactly did Jesus say? What was His mission?

- a) If anyone - Jesus says that His appeal was to anyone and everybody. There was nobody who was excluded from the invitation. We live in a world today where many people are excluded from things because of lack of education, money, race, religion, or family background or even disability. However Jesus will never exclude anybody from His invitation.
- b) If anyone thirsts - Jesus is very clear that He is available to anyone who is thirsty.

By this Jesus means thirsty for forgiveness of sins, thirsty to make peace with God. You don't have to force a thirsty man to drink water, he drinks because he is desperate for refreshment.

Jesus is interested in people who are sincerely spiritually thirsty. Are you desperate today to know forgiveness of your sins, to know the God who created you, to know what life is all about? Well Jesus invites you to come.

- c) **If anyone thirsts, let him come to ME and drink** - You don't come to the Pastor or Church leader or anybody else. You come to Jesus personally. We have already learnt in John's Gospel that Jesus is everywhere present and He knows everybody's heart. Therefore He knows where we are now, even though we can't see Him. You might well ask, "How do I know that Jesus is here today?"

I will tell you how you will know Jesus is here. You will know when you come to Him and sincerely ask Him for the forgiveness of your sins, based upon His death on the cross for you 2,000 years ago. I wouldn't be here today if Jesus wasn't real. That goes for most people in this room. However we must come to Jesus Himself. We must ask Him personally. Jesus is real and He IS here TODAY.

- d) **Jesus says that we have to believe in Him as the scripture has said** - It is no use believing in a Jesus of your own making. You must believe in the Jesus of the Bible.

The people at the feast that day only had the Old Testament scriptures. Where is Jesus in the Old Testament? He is everywhere in type and foreshadowed. The Prophet Isaiah never stops talking about Jesus.

He is described by Isaiah in chapter 53 as the person who has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, He was wounded for OUR sins, the punishment for our peace was upon Him, through His punishment we can have peace with God.( Is.53:v. 4-5)

John the Baptist described Jesus as the "lamb of God" who had come to take away our sin. The Jews were used to sacrificing an innocent lamb to provide for the forgiveness of their sins. We don't have time to cover all the things that the Old Testament says about Jesus. However it is important that we believe in the Jesus of the Bible. Whatever you believe about Jesus, must have a Bible reference, otherwise it is not the Jesus, who invites you to come to Him. We must believe in the Jesus of the Bible.

The Jesus that many people don't want to believe in is contained in Luke's gospel chapter 14: V. 25-30.

I will read from the N.L.T to make it 100% clear.

<sup>25</sup> A large crowd was following Jesus. He turned around and said to them, <sup>26</sup> "If you want to be my disciple, you must hate everyone else by comparison—your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple.

<sup>27</sup> And if you do not carry your own cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple. <sup>28</sup> "But don't begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it?

<sup>29</sup> Otherwise, you might complete only the foundation before running out of money, and then everyone would laugh at you. <sup>30</sup> They would say, 'There's the person who started that building and couldn't afford to finish it!'

**Don't fool yourself by believing in a Jesus of your own making, make sure that you are believing in the Jesus of the Bible. That is the Jesus who will satisfy your heart.**

- e) **Finally Jesus promises rivers of living water for people who will believe in Him.**

In v. 39 Jesus tells us that He is talking about the Holy Spirit.

Jesus was eventually going to give the Holy Spirit to all who believed in Him.

Firstly Jesus had to die on the cross for our sins, be buried, be raised from the dead on the third day, appear to many people, and then be seen returning to heaven. Then Jesus would pour out His Holy Spirit upon people who believed in all that was achieved on the cross.

In 2 Corinthians 5: v. 21 it says that God made Jesus, who knew NO sin, to be an offering for sin for us, that we might become righteous in God's sight.

Jesus has an unlimited supply of His Holy Spirit to quench the spiritual thirst of all who would come to Him. This means He has plenty of supply for you, if you will come.

### 3. The people's response – v. 40-52.

The text tells us that the people's response was quite varied.

In v. 40 many from the crowd believed that Jesus was the "prophet".

We have already discovered from Deuteronomy 18: v. 15 that God promised a "prophet" like Moses would be raised up from amongst God's people.

God would put His words in His mouth and He will speak whatever God says.

Some of the crowd were quite perceptive.

In v. 41 we are told that some thought that this person was "The Christ".

For us today it is difficult to see how people could separate the "Prophet" from the "Christ". We know that Jesus fulfilled both the prophecies of the "Prophet" and the "Christ". However at that time, they didn't connect the two, so there were two conflicting views.

In v. 41- 42 there was argument about where Jesus actually came from.

They acknowledged that the Messiah would come from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem. They were right about that, but wrong in assuming that Jesus was a Galilean by birth. As we know from Luke's Gospel Mary and Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem to be registered as part of a national census. This was where Jesus was born.

Some people wanted to arrest Jesus, but nobody laid hands upon Him.

It appears that an official arrest warrant had already been issued. (v. 32)

The Temple guards who could have arrested Jesus returned to the chief priests and Pharisees. They got into trouble for not arresting Jesus. Their excuse was that nobody ever spoke like Jesus. The Temple guards would have been Levites, schooled in the Law of Moses. They perceived something in the words of Jesus that challenged their heart. The Temple guards were accused of compromising their theology.

Nicodemus was one of the Jewish leaders, supported Jesus and declared that a person could not be judged until a full hearing took place.

#### Summary

In Chapter 7 we have discovered that Jesus took full advantage of the Feast of Tabernacles to declare that He had come as the rescuer of the Jewish people.

He invited all people to come to Him and He promised "Rivers" of living water to those who came to Him and believed in Him as the scriptures taught.

The reaction of the crowd was mixed and Jesus avoided capture because He was in total control and His time had not yet come for His arrest.

**What was the application to the people at that time and what is the application to us here today at O.I.C.?**

**To the people at that time, their hearts were exposed. They claimed to know God and keep His Law, but they failed to recognize who Jesus was and that He was a fulfillment of the scriptures that they said they believed in.**

**In spite of the claims of all the religious people, they didn't actually know God.**

**In v. 7 Jesus calls these people "evil". These are His words not mine.**

**God's people are unable to respond in a positive way to this rather uncomfortable Messiah. He didn't fit into the mindset of what they were looking for. They were in control of their religion and they didn't want any interference.**

**To us today there is a very similar application.**

**Most people today have some sort of religion or rules that they live by.**

**Some are based upon culture and tradition. However in the main they are all manmade. We feel comfortable with our own rules and regulations. We are all creatures of habit and we don't like change. Change can be disruptive and challenging.**

**When Jesus speaks into our life situation, we are not always happy because He exposes our religion and our motives. We don't want to acknowledge our need for Jesus and don't respond to his invitation to believe in Him.**

**We don't really want to admit that we have an evil heart that needs forgiveness and cleansing.**

**Jesus offers us spiritual life now and forever, but we often settle for rubbish that doesn't even last or fully satisfy our needs.**

**What can we do about it? Well we can come to Jesus and admit our sin, acknowledge Him as the Son of God. The person sent from Heaven to rescue us.**

**We can acknowledge Him as Lord of our life and we can begin a real discipleship life-style that represents true Christianity.**

**We no longer follow our own agenda but respond to what Jesus wants to do through us by His Holy Spirit.**

**The question is are you willing to come to Jesus and let Him have full control of your life?**

**He guarantees that His power will be like rivers of living water that will never end.**

**"If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink, He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of His heart will flow rivers of living water."**

**(John 7: v. 37-38)**