

John 7:1-9

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[0 : 00] As he's carried along by the Spirit, is to present Jesus as the Christ, the promised Messiah who would come to deliver his people from the domain of the enemy, the power of sin and death.

We will not unpack the first six chapters. We don't have nearly enough time for that. But be reminded, this is what he is pressing upon his readers.

It is not difficult for us to arrive at this conclusion. He tells us, John chapter 20, verse 30 and 31.

Now, Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in his name.

As he unfolds his telling of Jesus' works, he also repeatedly juxtaposes those who reject Jesus as the Christ and those who receive Jesus as the Christ.

[1 : 04] You see this over and over again, rejection and receipt. This thematic element is established at the outset of John's writing. Chapter 1, verse 9 and following.

The true light which gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.

He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

Now, I am grateful for the way in which we carefully set ourselves to work verse by verse through books of the Bible. If we didn't think this practice, and if we didn't find it to be profitable, we would stop and we would begin to preach God's Word in a different way.

From time to time, we do that very thing. However true this may be, this is a good practice, right? However true this may be, we must be careful that we do not lose the forest for the trees.

[2 : 16] This reject-slash-receive theme carries the narrative along, and as we will see in the coming months, it intensifies in John's narrative.

John MacArthur wrote in his commentary on this passage that we'll look at today, chapters 7 and 8 usher in a new, more volatile section of John's Gospel, as the smoldering resentment that Jesus encountered in chapters 1 through 6 finally bursts into a blazing inferno of hatred.

And we know this leads finally to Jesus' crucifixion. In fact, we will see in chapter 8, the very end of it, a failed attempt to kill Jesus.

Jesus undoubtedly came to die. We know this to be true. But we have seen that he always submitted himself to the divine timeline.

There was a plan for when and how this death was to take place. Let me note a couple of places for you that we see this.

[3 : 30] John chapter 2, verse 1 and following. On the third day, there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee. And the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples.

When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, they have no wine. She knows who he is. She knows what he can accomplish. And Jesus said to her, we have a record.

Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come. And then in chapter 5, in verse 19, Jesus says, Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing.

For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. Always submitting himself to the divine timeline.

In the build-up for what will happen at the conclusion of the Feast of Booze, we see this same submission to the Father's perfect will, to his perfect timing.

[4 : 42] So our text for today is John chapter 7. We'll look at the first nine verses. Join me in a word of prayer as we open it together. Father, we ask that you would help us this day as we take up your word together.

We humbly come to you knowing that we can't do this well. We can't understand it as we should.

We can't give it the application for our lives without the help of your Spirit.

We ask that you would work in us mightily this morning, both in delivery and in receipt of your word.

That it would be for your glory and for our good.

We want to believe its promises. We want to obey its commands. We want to have affection for you, its author. So we pray this. We pray it for the glory of Christ. Amen.

John chapter 7, beginning in verse 1. After this, Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill him.

[5 : 44] Now the Jews' Feast of Booz was at hand. So his brothers said to him, Leave here and go to Judea that your disciples also may see the works you are doing.

For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world. For not even his brothers believed in him.

Jesus said to them, My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil.

You go up to the feast. I am not going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come. After saying this, he remained in Galilee.

Now at the very outset, you may be wondering, Why verses 1 through 9? I don't know. If you're like me, I have already scanned on beyond.

[6 : 46] I'm wanting to see where the rest of the text goes. And you might be thinking, Why stop at 9? No one that I have read concerning this chapter divides it this way, except for one.

You may be able to guess, if you know me, who that one is. Because they most regularly end this section at verse 13. The ESV, translation of the Bible that I study from, doesn't have a subtitle break until the end of verse 24.

I point this out simply to say that the division is not inspired. And so we just want to take up the text and consider it in the most helpful way.

And this seems good to me. I get to practice a little bit of prerogative as I'm prepping these outlines for the text. There are, of course, other good ways to do so.

So, why then like this? And it's because verses 1 through 9 are a chiasm. Yep, you got it.

[7 : 50] They're a chiasm. So, my intention is for us to follow the chiasmic structure of the book of John all the way through. It's really brilliant. I'm not going to spend a bunch of time trying to convince you that that's the case.

It just is. And I hope you'll catch up to that if you haven't already. So, I put in your notes for you this morning that chiasmic structure so that you could see it. First things corresponding to the last things and so forth.

It's stepping in to a central interpretive point. It's not always the most important thing being said, but it's trying to help us to understand the rest. And so you look at verse 4 and 5.

For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world. For not even his brothers believed in him.

It helps us to see that what John is doing here is he's drawing our attention to this fact. They're asking him to do something which on the surface can seem like a good thing to request of him.

[8 : 48] But, this insertion of his, not even his brothers believed in him. We'll address more what that means later.

So, I think it helps us as we take the text up. And I hope it will continue to help us as we study it. Together. I have a very simple and brief three-point outline for our consideration.

Number one, let's look at the setting of what's happening here. Verses 1 and 2 and then verse 9. After this, Jesus went about in Galilee.

After this, sometime chronologically after. It doesn't necessarily mean immediately following. But we should be reminded of what was going on previously.

John chapter 6 and verse 66. After this, many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. It's following a hard saying.

[9 : 50] It's something difficult that he said as he taught in the synagogue of Capernaum. And what we often call the bread of life discourse.

If you weren't here for our study of that, I encourage you to go back and study it. Listen to Francis. Francis did a wonderful job of unpacking that text for us in two weeks before Christmas.

Really helpful. And this huge following he has suddenly disperses. And he turns to the apostles and he says, are you also going to go? And Peter says, to whom will we go?

Right? You have the words of life. It's after this takes place. So that's what's going on in the life of Jesus. He's remaining in Galilee, which is a rural area outside of the region of Judea, which is where Jerusalem is located.

So he's staying out on the outskirts. And to be sure, this is a largely Jewish population that lives in this pretty remote area.

[10:54] And so we're going to see that he wouldn't go to Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill him. And we know that. We mean that to understand the Jewish elite, those in power who could put this execution into place.

So he's in Galilee. And you may recall in chapter 5, John records a trip Jesus takes to Jerusalem. And he heals a man on the Sabbath.

In verse 16 and following of John 5 records for us. And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus. Because he was doing these things on the Sabbath.

But Jesus answered them, My father is working until now, and I am working. And then verse 18 says, This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him.

Because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own father, making himself equal with God.

[11:56] Because after this episode that he goes back to Galilee, and he's yet to return to Judea, to this region. And we'll see him later in the chapter do this very thing.

He's outside in Galilee, not going to Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill him. And we're going to see later in this chapter that this is not about fear.

This is all about timing. It wasn't yet the right time. Jesus submitting to the divine timeline that is laid before him.

Verse 2 tells us that the Jews' Feast of Booths was at hand. It sets it in the last part of the year, September into October.

The Feast of Booths, or the Feast of Tabernacles, is instituted in Exodus chapter 23. Restated, Leviticus 23, Deuteronomy 16.

[13:01] We're going to talk more in the coming weeks about details concerning this feast as those details become more relevant. So, I'm going to begin reading in Exodus chapter 23, verse 14, down through verse 17.

Three times in the year you shall keep a feast to me. You shall keep the feast of unleavened bread. That's the first one.

As I commanded you, you shall eat unleavened bread for seven days at the appointed time in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt. None shall appear before me empty-handed.

You shall keep the, second one, feast of harvest, of the first fruits of your labor, of what you sow in the field. You shall keep the, third feast, the feast of ingathering.

And this is, this is an insertion on my part, this is the feast we are seeing in our text today. It's also called the Feast of Booths, or the Feast of Tabernacles. And we're going to spend some time in the future proving that, that this Feast of Ingathering is the Feast of Booths.

[14:12] Back to the text. At the end of the year, when you gather in from the field the fruit of your labor. And verse 17 says, three times in the year shall all your males appear before the Lord God.

That's the detail that I want you to note. The men, Jewish men, were expected to go. Even those who had been dispersed, there was an expectation.

I doubt that they all did, but that's what they were supposed to do. Attending this feast, where temporary structures or booths, would be set up and lived in for seven days, was part of the normal societal expectation.

which means that huge crowds would have gathered for this extended time in Jerusalem. This is a massive, massive crowd. Of course his brothers were going.

Of course he should go. I cannot overemphasize at this point how central Jerusalem was to first century Judaism.

[15:26] This is where it was happening. Pilgrimage was normal and it was expected. That sets the stage for us.

And then we see in verse 9, after his interaction with his brothers, it says, after saying this, he remained in Galilee.

Now he won't stay there, and we'll get into it next week. But at this time, in this episode, it's all set here in Galilee. Now the second point, a request is made of him, we see this in verses 3 through 5, by his brothers.

So his brothers said to him. Now his brothers here are understood, I think rightly so, to be the other male children of Joseph and Mary.

They would have been Jesus' half-brothers. Right? We get their names in Matthew chapter 13, verse 55. James, Joseph, Simon, Judas, who I think takes on the abbreviated version Jude, because the name Judas became very unpopular.

[16:39] It's these brothers, right? It's his earthly family brothers is who we are talking about here. And they say to him, leave here, leave Galilee, go to Judea.

Right? Go to this feast, so that your disciples also may see the works you are doing. And we have to do a little bit of thinking here to understand what it is that they may mean by this request. They clearly had seen his works. Right? We know that they were present at the Cana wedding, chapter 2, verse 12. We know that his disciples had seen his miracles, which makes this statement possibly confusing.

What does he mean that your disciples also may, as if the disciples hadn't seen the works and they need to see the works. And I want to offer to you two probable possibilities and maybe the two of them are both true at the same time.

First, they may have been aware of the vast number of disciples who had abandoned Jesus recorded in chapter 6. After this, many disciples abandoned Jesus and they want him to perform more miracles to satisfy them before all is lost.

[18:04] Before all is lost. The momentum of his movement from their perspective may have been waning and this was an opportunity to breathe some life back into it.

Go to this place. Those who were once your followers will be there and perhaps they'll see some more of your works and re-engage in what you're up to.

Secondly, they may have had in mind future disciples. They may have had out there some other disciples. a vast number of Yahweh worshippers would have been here.

They would have been there from all sorts of nations. Verse 4, they say, if you do these things, show yourself to the world. This is likely what they mean here.

But there is a fundamental misunderstanding about who the Christ would be in this day and certainly in the minds of his brothers.

[19:06] They thought the Messiah, the Christ, was going to come as a military ruler. They looked at the oppression that the Old Testament talked about as merely temporal.

It was about the Roman oppression that they were experiencing and they were looking for somebody to rise up and be a king like David in the land. It was all temporal.

It was all about what was happening right then, geopolitically, in their day. They failed to understand who the Christ truly is.

Not even his brothers believed in him. They certainly knew that he existed. They didn't have to have some mental assent to the historical Jesus.

People today say that they believe that Jesus was a real man who really existed. The historical evidence weighs in, yes, he existed. They knew that. They grew up with him.

[20:07] They lived in a home with him. Shook their fists at their perfect older brother, I'm sure. What is it that it's saying here? John is saying for not even his brothers believed in him.

Believed that he was the Christ. Believed all that he had already taught to be true about what it is that he came to do. the fact that his discipleship group, this band of fickle followers had dispersed was concerning to them.

They thought, ah, we thought he was the guy. And here they are now, scattering all over the place. Perhaps we can make a suggestion to him that will rally everybody back together.

The fact that John includes for not even his brothers believed in him suggests to me that they were setting him up even for failure. You're not really who you say you are. Let's just go see what happens when you go and you don't work in secret but you seek to be known.

Will you manage to pull together the following that we expect the Messiah would have? And so this is the request. It is not rightly motivated.

[21 : 23] It is a misunderstood request that they are making of Christ. And John leaves no doubt of that for us in verse 5. And so Jesus responds to the third point, the response.

Jesus says to them, my time has not yet come, but your time is always here.

Now it's of interest. The use of the word time in Greek versus the use of the word we have translated hour in Greek.

So I read to you already from John chapter 2. This is again verse 4. This is at the Cana wedding. Jesus said to his mother, woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come. And then we'll see later in John chapter 8 and verse 20. no one arrested him because his hour had not yet come.

[22 : 29] And then much later in John chapter 12 verse 23, the hour has come. glorified. But here John uses a different word, time.

I have to tell you I was humbled this week trying to track D.A. Carson's explanation of the difference between the two. I read and re-read and re-read the pages that he wrote on these two Greek words.

I think the summary goes something like this. I'm going to try to dispel it for you. I believe Carson would probably go, ah, you missed my point. But I think this is what he was trying to communicate, that John is using the word for hour to refer to Jesus' crucifixion and the word for time in reference to the details leading up to that hour.

Perhaps we can see some clarification in the phrase in verse 8. For my time has not yet fully come. My time has not yet fully arrived. The hour isn't here. The point is, Jesus recognizes that the Father has a divine timeline.

[23 : 50] That he is sovereign. That he reigns over all things. And he is perfectly submitted to that timeline.

God is working out a perfect plan. You see this picture of this as Jesus submits. He recognizes that the Father knows best.

He's ordaining all the steps, even the wicked condemnable steps, to accomplish his perfect plan. I hope that brings you comfort as I say it. Peter acknowledges this in his sermon in Acts chapter 2. verse 21 and following.

He says, And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know.

[25 : 01] This Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God. God ordained that a thing would happen and Peter does not let them off the hook for being the ones who carried out the evil action.

Praise God, verse 24, God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death because it was not possible for him to be held by it. The coming of Christ was not plan B.

The death of Christ not then plan C. As if God is reacting to us all the time. He is an eternal purpose for his people.

And Jesus fully recognizes this. Submits himself. My time has not yet come. He says, but your time is always here.

Why? Because his brothers were not concerned about submitting themselves to the timeline of God the Father. God is what he's communicating there. I'm submitting myself to the divine timeline and you are not.

[26 : 10] Go whenever you want to. I'm constrained to go when I'm sent. He helps us to understand that with verse seven.

The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil. Why has his time not come?

Because if he were to go when they wanted him to go, he would have been seized. The Jews were seeking to kill him and it wasn't time yet for him to die. They could go with no concern for time or for their safety because the world cannot hate them.

Why? Because they are of the world. Jesus says later, John said, it hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own.

That's what he's saying here to his brothers. The world cannot hate you because you belong to the world. Hates Jesus because he testifies about it that it is evil.

[27 : 21] He condemns the evil of the world and therefore the world hates him. And if we pick back up in John 15 verse 19 he says to the disciples, but because you are not of the world but I chose you out of the world therefore the world hates you.

So brothers, you go whenever you want to because it doesn't really matter but it matters for me. Verse 8 you go up to the feast. I am not going up to this feast for my time has not yet fully come. Now as a little anecdote we'll get into some application some translations you may have one in front of you that says I am not yet going up to this feast for my time has not yet fully come and if you care to be nerdy like me I sometimes am about Greek and textual criticism and original manuscripts some people believe that some of the early manuscripts the word yet was added in there to bring some clarity it doesn't really matter that much either way he says I am not going up to this feast and some people are concerned because then he does go up to the feast and they suggest they reconcile it by inserting the word yet either way we will see in the following verses that he does in fact go he says to his brothers you go up to the feast I am not going up to the feast for my time has not yet fully come I submit myself to the divine timeline of the father a couple three quick applications and I'll close in a word of prayer first

I just want to say believe that Jesus is the Christ if you have yet to do this take up and read this is the son of God the one who came lived the life that's demanded of you you could not live you have broken God's law and you desperately need someone who can step in for you and grant to you righteousness need someone who died in your place to bring you the forgiveness for your sins and one who is raised and alive that you might have life in him we see in this moment these brothers that do not believe and we don't know the total story of all four of them but we do know that James and Jude both after Jesus resurrection placed their faith in him they penned books in our bibles James became one of the leaders of the church in Jerusalem believe it's not too late it's a record of the brothers perhaps working for his good temporal kingdom building perhaps that's what they wanted perhaps they were looking for his condemnation to make him to look a fool we find them believing later that he is in fact the

Christ secondly just marvel at the perfect submission of God the son to God the father the way in which he submits himself to this divine timeline the mystery of the incarnate Christ is on display here and I don't think we do well to try to wrap our minds around the exact nature of the son obedience to the father it's very hard to understand but we do well to be astounded by it and to take a lesson from it God the son perfectly submitting to God the father in all things may we be more like him thirdly here's the lesson submit yourself to God's perfect timing we do not have time to speak of all the negative and positive implications of the fact that there exists a divine timeline I will suggest to you that your job is to always know exactly what it would be does God give direction to his people he most certainly does all trying to get to work all stuff we're dealing with day in and day out he's working in those tiniest of details for the glory of his name and for the good of his people you know what we call that we call it providence we call it providence let's pray together as