

John 7:1-36

II. Jesus Reveals Himself to the World (1:19-12:50)

K. The Fourth & Fifth Signs – Feeding the Multitude & Walking on Water (6:1-21)

L. The Fourth Discourse – The Bread of Life (6:22-71)

M. Trouble at Tabernacles (7:1-36)

Moving on from John 6 – the “bread chapter” – we begin in chapter seven by reading that Jesus determined to remain in Galilee *because the Jews sought to kill Him* (v. 1). This is the second time the Jews’ intention has come up in the Gospel of John; the first time was in 5:16, 18 after Jesus healed the man by the Pool of Bethesda. Keep that in mind as we move forward.

John further sets the stage by noting that *the . . . Feast of the Tabernacles was at hand* (v. 2). Six months have passed since the events of chapter six (cf. 6:4). It’s now time for another feast in Jerusalem, and this was one of three that required a mandatory trip to the city. The city would be full of people! Jesus’ brothers encourage Him to go to Jerusalem. After all, if Jesus is who He says He is, why wouldn’t He want a larger audience to communicate His message? Nevertheless, Jesus responds in vv. 6, 8 that His *time has not yet come*. Thus, *He remained in Galilee* (v. 9)

As Solomon writes in Ecclesiastes, *to everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven* (v. 1). We may have our own timetables and schedules on when we want to accomplish a particular purpose, or by what stage of life we want to have completed another. For some reason, we think that God is obliged to work on our timeline. God has *a time for every purpose under heaven*, we can’t hasten or delay it. Jesus had the benefit of omniscience; we have the duty of faith.

After *His brothers had gone up, then He also went up to the feast* (John 7:10). While it hadn’t been time before, it was now time. Even still, while His brothers suggested He attend publicly, Jesus went up *in secret* (v. 10). Also done in secret were all the whispers and rumors and low-level grumbling about where Jesus was (vv. 11-13). “Is He here? Where is He? He’s the Messiah! He’s of the devil!” It seems Jesus was the talk of the town, though He hadn’t even made a public appearance.

On the third or fourth day (*about the middle of the feast*, v. 14), *Jesus went up into the temple and taught* (v. 14). We might think that this is an odd sequence of events. After all, just a few days prior, it sounded like He wasn’t going to go at all because the Jews were trying to kill Him! Again, we must remember that the will and plan of God doesn’t consist of broad generalities, it extends down to the minutiae of everyday life. There’s no “margin of error” of even a day or two! Such is the extraordinary sovereignty of God!

The Jews once again marvel as His teaching: *How does this Man know letters,¹ having never studied?* (v. 15). “This is a Galilean carpenter! How does He teach with such authority, knowledge, and insight?” Evidently, they refused to acknowledge the source. Jesus answers, *My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me* (v. 16). Even Jesus acknowledges that He doesn’t speak in and of Himself, but of the Father who sent Him. If He were to *speak from himself*, He’d be *seeking his own glory* (v. 18). May this be true of us as believers today. As we speak – especially as we speak the things of God – may we not speak for ourselves, may we not speak our own words, but the words of Scripture. May we not rest in our own wisdom (which is foolishness, anyway) or in our own cleverness of speech, but in the wisdom that is found solely in the Word of God (cf. 1 Cor 2:1-5).

¹*so learned* (CSB, NASB); *has learning* (ESV, NIV); *know the Scriptures* (HCSB); *know so much* (NLT)

Jesus then asks them outright: *Why do you seek to kill Me?* (v. 19). He returns to the concern He had in v. 1, which was a well-founded concern based on 5:16, 18. In response, we have a documented case of gaslighting in the first-century: *You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You?* (v. 20). The people deny Jesus' question, even though (a) it's well-documented, and (b) others in Jerusalem openly recognize it (v. 25). Jesus returns to that well-documented occasion in vv. 22-24, referring back to the healing of the lame man of John 5 that He performed a year-and-a-half ago! He tells them not to judge based on the action itself, but to judge with a discerning (or in this case, *righteous*) eye (v. 24). May we do well to see a situation for what it is before we rush to judgment based upon our existing worldview!

In vv. 25-27, we have a bit of crosstalk from the Jews. They're trying to make heads or tails of the situation. They were always taught (though not from Scripture) that the Messiah would come mysteriously. His origins would be unknown until He appeared triumphantly on the scene. But concerning Jesus, *we know where this Man is from* (v. 27)! Thus Jesus responds in vv. 28-29 to correct their misperception. They may know where He is from as far as earthly circumstances, but He did not come of Himself. Jesus said, *I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me* (v. 29).

This sends the Jews back into riot mode. Nevertheless, *no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come*. Again, we see the precise sovereign will of God. No matter the circumstances, nothing happens before God's timing, and His timing is never delayed!

As a result of His teaching, *many of the people believed in Him* (v. 31). They reasoned that there couldn't possibly be another one to follow that would present *more signs* and more indications than Jesus already has (v. 31).

For pretending that no one was out to kill him, the Pharisees sure didn't act like it. *The Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him* (v. 32). Nevertheless, Jesus escapes, essentially saying it's not yet His time. When it is His time, He will leave, and He will *go to Him who sent Him* (v. 33). This causes even more discussion and confusion among the Jews (vv. 35-36). Lord willing, next week we will see what happened a couple of days later on *the last day* of the Feast (v. 37).