

In The Beginning Was The Word

John 7:1-13

INTRODUCTION: JESUS ENCOUNTERS CONFLICT WITH THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS.

Matthew Henry's Commentary - Verses 1–13

We have here, I. The reason given why Christ spent more of his time in Galilee than in Judea ([John 7:1](#)): *because the Jews*, the people in Judea and Jerusalem, sought to *kill him*, for curing the impotent man on the sabbath day, [John 5:16](#).

They thought to be the death of him, either by a popular tumult (uproar) or by a legal prosecution, in consideration of which he kept at a distance in another part of the country, very much out of the lines of Jerusalem's communication.

It is not said, *He durst not*, but, *He would not*, walk in Jewry (Judea); it was not through fear and cowardice that he declined it, but in *prudence (caution)*, because his hour was not yet come.

Note, 1. Gospel light is justly *taken away from those that endeavor to extinguish it*. Christ will withdraw from those that drive him from them, will hide his face from those that spit in it, and justly shut up his bowels from those who spurn at them.

2. In times of imminent peril it is not only *allowable*, but *advisable*, to *withdraw* and *abscond* for our own safety and preservation, and to choose the service of those places which are least perilous, [Matt. 10:23](#).

Then, and not till *then*, we are called to expose and lay down our lives, when we cannot save them without sin.

3. If the providence of God casts persons of merit into places of obscurity and little note, it must not be thought strange; it was the lot of our Master himself.

He who was fit to have sat in the highest of Moses's seat willingly walked in Galilee among the ordinary sort of people.

Observe, He did not sit still in Galilee, nor bury himself alive there, but walked; he went about doing good.

When we cannot do *what* and *where we would*, we must do *what* and *where we can*.

1. When we read this passage of scripture of John 7:1-13, we notice that Jesus was still here in Galilee after that he had taught in Capernaum.
2. John 7:1 opens with the reasons why he was still in Galilee.

3. This occurred six months after the feeding of the five thousand, and the great discourse on the "bread of life" that our Lord gave in the synagogue at Capernaum. If you would like to know some of the events that took place in that intervening six months period you can read them in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, because they trace more of the Galilean ministry of Jesus and fill in some of the gaps that the gospel of John leaps over.
4. The closing words of chapter six clearly show that a turning point has occurred in our Lord's ministry. Many of the great multitudes -- even many of his own disciples who followed him everywhere he went -- have now drawn back and ceased to follow him.
5. In the opening words of chapter seven, John declares that there is a hint of murder in the air. Our Lord is aware of growing hostility against him and that the Jews in Judea are seeking a way to kill him.
6. The Feast of Tabernacles was now at hand. This great feast of Israel occurred in early October. It was seven days in length, and the last day was called in this chapter "**the great day of the feast" verse 37**). It was from Sabbath to Sabbath.
7. During this time the inhabitants of Jerusalem built booths out of tree limbs and boughs which they thatched over, and families actually moved out of their houses and lived in them.
8. This was to remind them that for forty years they wandered as pilgrims in the wilderness and lived in tents.

John 7:1-19

¹ After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.

1. This opening verse 1 of John 7, places us in the picture of where the Lord was at this time.
 2. He was still here in Galilee after he had preached to his departing disciples in John 6:59 and John 6:66. In Capernaum.
 3. This was now what the bible refers to as "**after these things**".
 4. These things were the very words that the Lord had preached to the departing unbelieving disciples. The word unbelieving that I refer to is the fact that they walked from the presence of the Lord, never to return. That's unbelief.
 5. Now the second message that the verse gives us is the fact that the Lord "chose" to walk in Galilee. He chose this place above all other places because the people were receptive to hear his message and believe on him, even though it was a very small place compared to the likes of Jerusalem. Even if there was one sinner which would come to repentance would be sufficient for the Lord to preach his word to them.
 6. However, there is light shed also on the other reason why he would stay in Galilee, which was because the Jews sought to kill him.
 7. As the Lord tells us he would "**he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him**".
 8. Jewry also known as Judea, was the place where many unbelieving Jews resided and it was their main place of teaching and learning.
- At this time of the Lords ministry he felt it a great need to teach those who would listen to him and that would embrace his mission.

- It did not mean that he would forever stay here in Galilee teaching. But would at a later date turn to Jerusalem and Jewry (Judea) when the time was right. This was what happened later on in His ministry as we see in Luke 23:5.

Luke 23:5⁵ And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.

9. The term used in verse 1 of our text this morning is the word **“walked”**. This word is a direct reference to the fact that His ministry was not a stand still ministry but one that took him all over the entire region of Galilee, doing the work that God the Father had sent Him to do as we see in John 5:16-18.

John 5:16-18¹⁶ And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.¹⁷ But Jesus answered them, **My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.**¹⁸ Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

² Now the Jew's feast of tabernacles was at hand.

1. It was at this time, the time of the feast of tabernacles, which came several months after the Passover feast.
2. The Feast of Tabernacles is described in Leviticus 23:33ff. This event occurred in several months after the Passover celebration mentioned in John 6:2-5.
3. The feast commemorated the days when the Israelites wandered in the wilderness and lived in tents. (Leviticus 23:43).

Leviticus 23:43⁴³ That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

4. This required feast of Tabernacles was a feast that was held in Judea (Jewry) in Jerusalem. (see verse 25 for confirmation of this).
5. It was going to be attended by many of those unbelieving Jews that Jesus had already witnessed to, and they were the ones of John 5:16 that would be there and would want to kill him.
6. The feast of tabernacles was a feast that God the Father had told the Israelites through Moses that they had to keep in remembrance of Gods deliverance of them in the wilderness. Its intent was to keep the Israelites faithful as we see in Deuteronomy 16:16.

Deuteronomy 16:16¹⁶ Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty:

³ His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest.

1. His “brethren”, which is Jesus brothers knew that the feast would be a busy place. And place where they thought that Jesus could “show off” his miracles to people so that they could admire him and acknowledge his capabilities. But their intentions were that of self gain not of who Jesus was.
2. You see his brothers (brethren), wanted Jesus to demonstrate his “works”.
3. They did not see it as preaching or portraying Jesus as the “Christ” or the “Messiah”.
4. They wanted Jesus to go into the “big city” and boast. They in fact wanted him to boast to his disciples there.
5. This was nothing short of them wanting Jesus to “show off”.
6. His brethren wanted “works” to be displayed instead of righteousness. At this point they had not believed in Him either.

⁴ For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world.

1. As if this statement was going to persuade the Lord to selfish pride.
2. By them saying that “**there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly**”, they were trying to persuade Jesus to go to Judea. (Jewry).
3. In other words saying that a man cannot be known of anything if he does not show it openly to others. They were in effect saying if you want to be famous show what you are capable of doing.
4. They said if he went he would become famous.

⁵ For neither did his brethren believe in him.

1. We can clearly see why we see that statement was made in verse 4.
2. It was made because they themselves did not believe in Jesus.
3. They had failed to see him as the messiah, the Christ and not just their half brother.
4. This reminds us today, that just because others live in our same household or under our roof, does not mean that they believe in Jesus. We should never assume that.
5. Jesus said this of people who were to familiar of Him.

John 4:43-45 ⁴³ Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee. ⁴⁴ For Jesus himself testified, **that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.** ⁴⁵ **Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galilaeans received him,** having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.

6. The Galileans who never knew Jesus received him openly as a result of what they saw him do earlier in Jerusalem. Yet His own people rejected Him.

⁶ Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready.

1. Having understood the dangers of the intentions of the Jews who would be at the Feast of Tabernacles he said that he would not go just yet.
2. Jesus had much yet to do in His ministry, but also knew when to react to situations that would be out of hand. Timing is always a big thing in any event, and Jesus tells us that in the scriptures.
3. His response to His brethren was one of “you need to go and be faithful”. Because that was required of them by God the Father in Leviticus 23.
4. It also meant that they had the time still to show themselves to be faithful if they wanted to by going to the feast.
5. In fact Jesus instructs them to go to the feast in verse 8.

⁷ The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

1. Evil never hates evil.
2. The reason Jesus says the world will not hate you is because you have not set the standard of righteousness.
3. God has set the standard and that standard is called sin.
4. The world is in evil because it is continuously in sin.
5. When people judge they judge you because **they** are evil.
6. Evil does not judge evil because **they are both in sin.**
7. Although the world here is used in the context of sin, people may judge you because you stand for righteousness. But they really are not judging you, they are actually judging the Lord because He is the one who has set the standard which they do not like.
8. They rebel and hate the Lord because he is the righteous judge, and they want to get rid of him. Thus the Lord said “**because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.**”

⁸ Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast: for my time is not yet full come.

1. The response the Lord gave to His brethren was this. “**Go ye up unto this feast**”.
2. They needed to go, because it was necessary for them to remain faithful.
3. In the response the Lord said. I will go but not just yet.
4. The Lord needed to wait for the right time, in order to carry out His mission of the Gospel.

⁹ When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee.

1. The conformation of the Lords statement was fulfilled in Him still staying in Galilee whilst the others left for the feast.
2. The Lord was still waiting for the right time to go.

¹⁰ But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.

1. The Lord had His purpose for waiting.
2. One of those purposes we see now from this verse 10.

3. The Lord did not want to follow with a crowd to announce His arrival. For they already were worked up in wanting to show Him off to others.
4. Also the Lord wanted to go by Himself because the word that He had to do did not require an arrival party.
5. Instead the reason that he would go up to the feast would not to be to participate in the feast, but instead he would go so that he could teach in the temple.
6. He did not want anyone as it were at the feast to notice that he was there and that why he went in secretly, because they were expecting Him to come because his brethren were there already.

11 Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he?

1. The Jews had made a point of looking for Him.
2. They were adamant that he was there only because they had seen His brethren.
3. Their focus was not that he was not at the feast, but where at the feast was He?
4. When the word Jews is mentioned, it is mentioned in the plural which means that they were all looking for Him.
5. The reason they were looking for Him was because they wanted to lay hold of Him as we saw earlier in John 5:16-18. They wanted to kill Him and were working a way of how to do it.
6. Rather than the place of the feast being a place to worship God, it had now become a place of head hunting.
7. Their primary focus was not on worship but on arresting Jesus.
8. Jesus being a Jew, meant that the others Jews were expecting Him to come to the feast. That's another reason why they said **"Where is He"?**

12 And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people.

1. Murmuring in the context of the bible scriptures is always a case where people are against God.
2. The action of murmuring is an act of sin.
3. In this case it was openly evident that the bible says **"there was much murmuring among the people concerning him"**.
4. In this case it was so blatant that they did not even try to hide the fact that they were murmuring against the Lord.
5. Not every Jew or person present was against Him. Some really thought that He is a really good man. Not God, but a really good man. (sin of unbelief again).
6. But there were those who hated him for sure, because his doctrine was not what they believed. They had strayed so far from Moses writings that they did not even believe everything that Moses said of the Lord. That's what happens when you start adding mans views instead of Gods views. (scripture).

➤ Remember as Jesus reprimanded the Jews earlier on in John 5:45-47.

John 5:45-47 ⁴⁵ Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even **Moses, in whom ye trust.** ⁴⁶ **For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me.** ⁴⁷ **But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?**

- By calling Jesus a deceiver, they were calling Moses a liar also.

13 Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.

1. When we look at this verse it reminds us of people today.
2. When people are in a crowd it offers protection for themselves and they are inclined to voice their opinions.
3. But when they are tackled one by one they tend to stay quiet and in the background.
4. That's a mob mentality and it happens even today. A people's true heart is often shared in a mob mentality as they are partakers of that mob.
5. If you support the mob, then you support their mentality.
6. Whether this verse talks of non Jews or Jews, it certainly speaks of a Mob mentality. I am inclined to think that these were Jews anyway, but just to scared to speak their mind individually, but collectively they thought the same thing.
7. Certainly Jewish leaders were present and they would have loved to hear those for Jesus, so that they could persecute them to for disobedience.
8. Being disobedience as a Jew meant that often the punishment they received was being excommunicated from the temple.

14 Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.

1. The feast of Tabernacles lasted for 7 days.

Leviticus 23:34 ³⁴ Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month **shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the LORD.**

2. This meant that it was probably on the 4th day about noon that Jesus went up to the temple.
3. The verse 14 says Jesus went up "**about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught**".
4. The timing was chosen by Jesus, which was after 3½ days, when he went to the temple to teach.
5. Why he waited this long it does not say, but it does say in his time. It is mostly likely to defeat the attention that would have been attracted to Him if he had gone there earlier.

15 And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?

1. In a sense they had actually answered their own question?
2. It is evident from this verse that they did eventually find Jesus. And where else did they find Him, but in the temple going about His Father's business.
3. How could Jesus have known all what they said he was doing if He was not God?
4. Fooled by their own question the Jews marveled. This word is a very descriptive word because it is a word that is used to describe something that is not normal.
5. They followed up with more questions as to **How knoweth this man letters?**

6. This is a direct reference to the OT, and a direct reference to things that only a learned person can know?, and they knew that Jesus had never studied, so this is why they marveled.
7. The Jews did not just sit and listen to what Jesus was saying, but they were quite vocal about what he did say?
8. Collectively the Jews spoke out from their silence to each other and asked these destructive questions which would destroy their opinion of Him.
9. They certainly did not have to wait long for their answer.

16 Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

1. As Jesus answered their question, He kept God the Father in mind. He knew that they could relate to God the Father, far better than they could relate to Him.
2. So Jesus answered this way.
3. **My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.**
4. This carried more weight with the Jews because it meant that the words that Jesus was speaking were the very words that they had heard from God the Father through the OT and it was what Moses had taught them. So how could they refute that?
5. Stung by their own letters of the Law.
6. And finishing up to tell them that these were the words of God the Father **that sent me.**
7. This answer must have cut them badly. Again they refer to Jesus as being with the Father. Him as who sent Him.

17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

1. The answer was not hard to understand.
2. It was only hard for those Jews to embrace.
3. It is easy to know God's words when you know God, is what it is saying.
4. **If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.**
5. God's will is that we follow His word. If we follow His word we are following and will know His doctrine.
6. Jesus was saying if you know God's word then you will know it to be doctrine and not just a person's instruction for gain.
7. Jesus spoke in this way to convince them that He was of God.

18 He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

1. A man who speaks of Himself is looking for self-satisfaction and trying to push his agenda.
2. But a man that seeks the glory of God, is not looking for an agenda.

19 Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?

1. The Lord leaves them with one reminder and one question.

2. **Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?**
3. They were not capable to keep the Law.
4. They were about to break the 6th commandment.

Exodus 20:13 ¹³ Thou shalt not kill.

1. They were just about the break the Law again, as Jesus said to them **Why go ye about to kill me?**
 - The Law is hard to keep, that is why Jesus came.

Galatians 3:10-13

¹⁰ For as many as are of the **works of the law are under the curse**: for it is written, **Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.**

¹¹ **But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God,** it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

¹² And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.

¹³ **Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us:** for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

- They had not seen the Law as a curse
- They had seen the law as salvation.
- But Jesus came to prove them wrong.
- That's why they sought to kill him.

PRAYER.....CLOSE