

Light In The Darkness
“Perfect Timing, Perfect Truth”

John 7:1-13

The unbelieving world sees events that occur daily as simply life with no rhyme, reason, or purpose. From their point of view, history is an unexplained succession of seemingly random events — a meaningless chain of causes and effects. In contrast to that view is the one found in the Scriptures. The Bible portrays history as the purposeful and perfect outworking of God’s eternal plan. For Jesus’ time on the earth, everything He did and said was precise and perfect in its place and time. The Lord Jesus always had perfect timing in everything He did.

John 7 opens with an interesting conversation Jesus has with His half-brothers about attending a Jewish feast in Jerusalem, but it also says something about how the unbelieving Jewish world perceived Jesus. The attitudes reflected by unbelievers in John 7:1-13 are alive and well among unbelievers today. This section of Scripture teaches a very basic principle: ***God’s purposes run contrary to man’s expectations.***

John’s gospel makes a distinction between true and false disciples, as we learned in chapter 6. Now as we enter chapter 7, we get a clear view on the escalating hatred toward Jesus. The hatred and opposition of Jesus did not come as a result of His miracles but without question because of the words He spoke. This section reveals much to us about the human condition of unbelief and the perfect timing of God’s purposes.

The wrong request and the wrong time (John 7:1-5)

“After these things...” refers to the events described in chapter 6, which took place around the time of Passover in April. Since chapter 7 opens at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles in October, there is a gap of about six months between chapters 6 and 7. John doesn’t tell us anything about what took place during the time Jesus spent ***“...walking...”*** (doing ministry) in Galilee.

The overwhelming majority of Jesus’ ministry during this time was specifically for the disciples and to the disciples. The masses had rejected Him and He was intentionally pouring into a small number of true disciples.

John tells us Jesus remained in Galilee and ***“...was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews seeking to kill Him.”*** Feeling of hostility toward the Lord, at least in Judea, had reached a point where the Jewish leaders had made a decision about Jesus. They had determined that, in spite of all He did, He was a false messiah and should be put to death.

Jesus' half-brothers challenged Him to perform miracles openly in Jerusalem during the feast. That would make sense if Jesus were the political messiah so many people expected, but this was not His mission. He would not do any public ministry in Jerusalem until six months later when He celebrated the final Passover with His disciples before His crucifixion.

Verse 5 explains why they spoke to Jesus the way they did. Earlier in His ministry, their unbelief had caused them to conclude Jesus had lost His mind. Nothing the Lord did from that point had changed their hearts. They would not come to believe until after His resurrection. His brothers were James, Simon, Joseph, and Judas (Jude).

The right response and the right time (John 7:6-13)

In reply to His brothers' misguided attempt to force His hand, Jesus plainly told them, **"...My time is not yet here..."** He would not allow their skepticism to dictate His actions. His timing was in the Father's sovereign control, and He would do nothing out of time. His timing for all that He did was perfect.

As part of the unbelieving world, His half-brothers were not concerned with operating on God's timetable — nor are any unbelievers concerned about that. They knew nothing of the purpose of His current ministry and unlike Jesus, they would face no hostility from the world as Jesus tells them in **v.7, "The world cannot hate you..."** The world cannot hate His brothers because they are of the world and are in a place of unbelief.

Jesus made it clear why the world hates Him, **"...but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil."** The intentions, activities, and priorities of the world are inherently sinful. They operate on their own timetable, waking every day to satisfy their own sinful desires. They are void of the Spirit and are antagonistic toward the truth because it is a reminder of how far they are from God. When believers live in obedience to the Word, living and speaking truth will, like Jesus, provoke hostility and opposition.

The things going on in Jerusalem confirmed the wisdom of God's divine timing **vv.11-13**. The religious leaders were not alone in noticing Jesus' absence. The people were looking for Him and discussing their opinions of Him.

Notice what was being said about Him **v.12**. On one hand, some were saying, **"...He is a good man..."** and on the other, **"...No, on the contrary, He leads the people astray..."** Actually both views of Jesus were incorrect. He was not merely a good man since good men don't claim to be God. Neither was He leading the people astray because deceivers do not perform the supernatural and authenticating miracles that Jesus performed.

To say Jesus was a good man falls woefully short of the truth. There is a lot of patronizing of Jesus as if He were some kind of good guy, some kind of man better than anyone else, some kind of noble religious leader, some kind of heroic righteous moralist, or some kind of compassionate, merciful person. None of that matters. It is irrelevant. You can make that assessment based upon what you want to see in His life and ministry, but sooner or later, the decision is going to have to be made on His words. Good man? He far surpasses a good man. Deceiver? That is demonic accusation. Incarnate God, the Second Person of the Trinity who paid the sin penalty and provided salvation for all the Father draws to Him? Correct. You must accept the true gospel, which Jesus made abundantly clear (**cf. 6:35-40; 44**).

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Application Questions

What does John 7:1-13 tell you about Jesus that you may not have understood about Him before?

What does John 7:1-13 say to you personally about how you think of Jesus?

In the opinionated and entitled culture that we live in, how can John 7:1-13 better prepare you to face the increasing hostility toward Christ and the Church?