

# THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

## Encounter Jesus – The Son of the Living God

### *Man's Time vs. God's Time*

**Those living by man's time are not living under the lordship of Christ.** It is often said, "Timing is everything" meaning the success of something is often related to when it happens. It should be the heart's desire of every believer to live our lives within God's timing. Be assured that God's timing is perfect, just as all of God's ways are perfect. *Psalm 18:30 (ESV)*<sup>30</sup> *This God—his way is perfect; the word of the LORD proves true; he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him.* I love the song that we learned in the prison ministry – On Time God that says, "He may not come when you want him! But he'll be there right on time!" God's timing is never early, and it will never be late. In fact, from before our birth until the moment we take our last earthly breath, our sovereign God is accomplishing His divine purposes in our lifetimes. We see in the life of Jesus how He depended totally on God's time in our study today.

In chapter 6, the larger group following Jesus turned back after He told them He was the Bread from Heaven but a 'core group' remained even though the atmosphere in Israel was growing hostile towards Jesus. Today's study picks up at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles or the Feast of Booths.

The law required that all male Jews of mature age go to Jerusalem three times a year to present themselves before the Lord at the festivals of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. The Feast of Tabernacles was a feast of ingathering. During the eight days of the feast, the Israelites would dwell in booths or tabernacles that were made from the branches of trees. Some believe that Jesus was born during the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. The exact day of Jesus' birth is unknown. The Roman Catholic Church began the tradition of celebrating His birth on December 25. The Feast of Tabernacles was in our September/October.

In English, the word tabernacle describes something that is far more elaborate than the simple temporary structures that were built for this festival. If we were to really describe what was actually built, we might call it the Feast of Huts. But, remember the "booth" in Scripture is not an image of deprivation and misery, like we might think of a hut. Instead the idea of the booth is a reminder of God's protection and preservation. The idea is similar to the shade that a vine provided for Jonah – but it was only temporary. *Psalm 27:5 (ESV)*<sup>5</sup> *For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock.* When we draw close to God, we are reminded of how temporary our existence is.

John wrote of Jesus, the Eternal One in *John 1:14 (ESV)*<sup>14</sup> *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.* The word for *dwelt* literally means 'pitched a tent' or 'tabernacled' among us. Like the flimsy booth made from tree branches, Jesus came to dwell or tabernacle on earth in a body of flesh for the purpose of bringing us eternal life.

*Read John 7:1-5 (ESV)*<sup>1</sup> *After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill him.*<sup>2</sup> *Now the Jews' Feast of Booths was at hand.*<sup>3</sup> *So his brothers said to him,*

*“Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you are doing.”<sup>4</sup> For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world.”<sup>5</sup> For not even his brothers believed in him.*

*After this* is a common expression with John as he relates his story in chronological order even though he does not include every event of Jesus’ ministry. The events of chapter 6 took place in Galilee at the Sea of Galilee; but before that, Jesus had been in Jerusalem where there had been controversy concerning Him at the pool of Bethesda. It seems that the events of chapter 6 transpired about one year before the cross in April while the events in chapter 7 occur about six months later, in October.

Jesus’ brothers urged Him to go to the feast so that people could see the works that He had been doing. These ‘half’ brothers are named in **Matthew 13:55 (ESV)**<sup>55</sup> *Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?* They are giving Him advice that He could not use. They suggested for Jesus to put on a public display and make ‘front-page headlines’. Even though they had grown up with Jesus, they really did not know or understand Him. Not one of Jesus’ brothers is mentioned as a disciple during his pre-crucifixion ministry.

Jon Bloom on DesiringGod.org offers comfort to those who may be distressed by not being able to reach the people in their own households. He says, “So as we assess the role our weak, stumbling witness plays in our family members’ unbelief, let’s remember Jesus—not even a perfect witness guarantees that loved ones will see and embrace the gospel.”

They urged Him to *show yourself ‘to the world’*. Their ‘world’ consisted of the Jewish crowds in Jerusalem for the Festival. Jesus had come to a much larger world than they could imagine. John adds an explanatory comment: *For not even his brothers believed in him*. Why, if they did not believe in Him, would they want him to do something in Jerusalem where His works could be seen? Ironside suggests the brothers were sneering at Him trying to ‘put Him on the spot’. Not so different from the sneers that were hurled upon Jesus as He hung on the cross. **Luke 23:36-37 (ESV)**<sup>36</sup> *The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine<sup>37</sup> and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!”*

These brothers would eventually understand after Jesus’ resurrection and ascension. We read in **Acts 1:14 (ESV)**<sup>14</sup> *All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers*. Most believe His half-brother, James, wrote the Epistle of **James** and was the pastor of the church in Jerusalem and His half-brother, Judas, probably wrote the Epistle of **Jude**.

### **Timing is Everything!**

**Read John 7:6-7 (ESV)**<sup>6</sup> *Jesus said to them, “My time has not yet come, but your time is always here.”<sup>7</sup> The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil.*

They are advising Jesus out of their unbelief, but Jesus does not take their advice. He is moving according to schedule, but it is His Heavenly Father's schedule. He is not following the wisdom of this world.

Perhaps Jesus knew that in the first few days of the feast His Jewish enemies would be expecting Him and plotting to kill Him. He did come to die but that would happen in God's time – not His brothers and not the Jewish leaders. Jesus says: *The world cannot hate you, but it hates me.* Because 'the world' (here meaning the Jews hostile to Jesus) had no reason to hate His brothers. It was different for Jesus. He had to choose His time carefully. Jesus said the reason the world hated Him was *because I testify about it that its works are evil.* Jesus came as Light to the world, and in both His person and teaching He exposed its evil and the religious leaders did not like it.

**Read John 7:8-10 (ESV)** <sup>8</sup> *You go up to the feast. I am not going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come.* <sup>9</sup> *After saying this, he remained in Galilee.* <sup>10</sup> *But after his brothers had gone up to the feast, then he also went up, not publicly but in private.*

Some early manuscripts to alleviate the difficulty of Jesus saying that He wasn't going and then actually going, translate *I am not going up to this feast* to read : *I go not up yet unto this feast.* Don't worry! Jesus is not lying to his brothers about going to the feast whether the word *yet* is added or not! Jesus was not going publicly to the feast with them – when they wanted Him to go. He was going alone. Jesus was determined to do the Father's will, not the will of His unbelieving brothers by going with them to the beginning of the feast.

**Read John 7:11-13 (ESV)** <sup>11</sup> *The Jews were looking for him at the feast, and saying, "Where is he?"* <sup>12</sup> *And there was much muttering about him among the people. While some said, "He is a good man," others said, "No, he is leading the people astray."* <sup>13</sup> *Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of him.*

The Jewish leaders who were antagonistic towards Jesus were on the lookout for His arrival. Can you imagine the tizzy they were in when Jesus' brothers showed up and He was not among them?

The ordinary people were divided in their opinions: Among the crowds there was widespread whispering about him. Some said, 'He is a good man.' Others said, 'No, he deceives the people.' Those who had witnessed His miracles, especially His healing of the sick, would undoubtedly say 'He is a good man'. Others, probably influenced by their leaders, made a very serious charge saying 'He deceives the people'. They were all whispering for fear of the Jews. They had good reason to be afraid, because 'the Jews' had decided to put anyone who acknowledged Jesus as Messiah out of the synagogue. **John 9:22 (ESV)** <sup>22</sup> *... for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.* The crowds who feared 'the Jews' were Jews themselves, another reminder that not all Jews were antagonistic towards Jesus.

Everyone was talking about Jesus! But when it came time to speak up for him in public, no one said a word. All were afraid. Fear can stifle our witness. Although many people talk about Christ in church, when it comes to making a public statement about our faith, we often remain silent. **Matthew 10:32-33 (ESV)** <sup>32</sup> *So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven,* <sup>33</sup> *but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.*

**Read John 7:14-15 (ESV)** <sup>14</sup> *About the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and began teaching.* <sup>15</sup>  
*The Jews therefore marveled, saying, "How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?"*

After describing the differences of opinion concerning Jesus, the evangelist picks up his account of Jesus' movements again. The Feast of Tabernacles begins and ends with a special Sabbath day of rest. Jesus would have gone to the Jerusalem Temple around the middle of the week of feasting.

When Jesus did show up at the temple, He had no fear of His opponents, He began to teach in the temple courts, the most public area in Jerusalem. As they listened, *the Jews therefore marveled, saying, "How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?"* Jesus was not known to have been a disciple of any of the leading rabbis, yet His teaching reflected extraordinary learning and this made a huge impression upon the hearers. While the crowds were impressed by Jesus' teaching, religious leaders were not.

**Read John 7:16 (ESV)** <sup>16</sup> *So Jesus answered them, "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me.*

To teach without first studying under 'learned' rabbis would have been considered arrogant. It was like setting one's own self up as an authority. However, Jesus made it clear that He was not teaching on His own authority. His teaching came from the One who sent Him, God the Father. This is an encouragement to Christians today when we share God's Word with others. Our teaching or speaking out for God is not dependent upon our intellectual ability or formal learning. Our work for Jesus is done under the leadership and power of the Holy Spirit based firmly on the Word of God as we live under the Lordship of Christ.

As we conclude this study on the importance of God's timing in our lives, I want to remind you of some familiar scriptures concerning the timing of God. I will start with the most important.

**2 Corinthians 6:2 (ESV)** <sup>2</sup> *... Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.* If you have never accepted Christ, there is no better time than **now**.

**Isaiah 40:31 (ESV)** <sup>31</sup> *but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.* Waiting on the LORD is sometimes difficult but the waiting is part of God's timetable that actually renews our strength!

**Jeremiah 29:11 (ESV)** <sup>11</sup> *For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.* It is wisest thing to depend on the Lord's plans. Remember this:

**Proverbs 19:21 (ESV)** <sup>21</sup> *Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand.*

**Proverbs 3:5-6 (ESV)** <sup>5</sup> *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.* <sup>6</sup>  
*In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.* Forget man's timetable and trust in the LORD and His excellent ways!