

Summary Sheet for John 7 vs 1-52

...to accompany Notes 15



GOAL of these 1-2-1 studies

Expect and don't be unnerved by rejection of Jesus

Context – how does this chapter fit in?

After showing that he is the long-promised Rescuer from God, Jesus has met with grumbling and desertion by the very people who had been expecting him. They didn't like the kind of rescue he was bringing. (A rescue based on him dying to provide eternal life rather than a political, material rescue based on their terms and efforts – 6.63)

The questions left by this rejection by God's historic people are: is Jesus really God's rescuer? And, are the Jewish people really in need of his sort of rescue? This is the background to the hostility, confusion and division that runs right through ch 7 and into ch 8, as the confrontation continues between God's historic people and God's Son.

Impact on us

Don't be put off by the fact many Jews and people today react negatively to Jesus Christ. Instead expect these responses and be assured as you see both Jesus' credentials to be the life giving rescuer and the underlying reasons that mean even the most religious people make to wrong judgements about Jesus. They are 'of the world' - against God by nature - whereas Jesus is from God, exposing their sin..

How John writes to make his point

We see in ch7 & 8 a downward spiral among the Jews as Jesus exposes the true state of even the most religious. In Ch 7 Jesus returns to Jerusalem and holds out his offer of rescue to all who will come to him. John draws us into the scene as we hear the range of reactions Jesus provokes and exposes how Jesus' opponents come to wrong, illogical, ungodly and shallow conclusions about him summed up by v24 and proving Jesus' point in v7; showing us that even the religious leaders of God's special people are actually 'of the world'. The problem is not with Jesus and his rescue but the way his critics are forming their opinions.

Structure

7:1-10 *Setting the scene:* Jesus is hated by the Jews, prompting doubts about him even amongst his brothers. But Jesus is operating to God's timescale/agenda not the world's, which hates him because he exposes sin.

7:11-52 *Jesus provokes division, confusion & hostility in Jerusalem:*

11-31 Jesus is from above but his opponents don't see it because they are making ungodly, hypocritical, illogical, superficial judgements based on a wrong understanding of scripture.

32-36 Jesus is going to the Father but his opponents cannot and cannot understand

37-52 Jesus promises to fulfill what the Feast of Booths promised by providing the life giving Spirit but his opponents are blinkered by their ill-informed, arrogant, unjust, lazy disregard for the facts.

Avoiding red herrings and bear traps – *Does Jesus change his mind or lie in v8 & 10?*

No, Jesus' response to his brothers is not that he is planning to stay in Galilee indefinitely but because he is working to his Father's agenda not theirs and the world's he doesn't go with them.

John's references to the Old Testament and why they matter

- The Feast of Booths

This popular celebration dominates chs 7-8. During the eight day feast many from all Israel came to Jerusalem and camped in 'booths' or 'tabernacles' made from branches. This was to remind the people that they had lived in tents in the wilderness after God rescued them from Egypt.

- Water

During the feast the two themes of water and light were key - the people looked back to the past, remembering God's provision of water from the rock in the desert, and also his presence in the pillar of cloud or light that went ahead of them to lead them. At the same time the water and light themes pointed forward to the future, to the time when God's Spirit would be poured out, as promised, in the last days. (See Isaiah 48-49)

The Old Testament prophet Zechariah used the images as he urged God's people to look forward to a future great Feast of Booths when all God's promises to his people would be fulfilled, through an act of cleansing, restoration and judgment. (Zechariah 14:6-9, 16-21).

The feast culminated in a large gathering on the last day, an opportunity that Jesus uses to maximum effect. When he offers people 'living water', he is claiming to fulfil all that the Feast pointed to, the one who truly rescues God's people, and providing the life giving Spirit of God.

Some questions to consider - 7vs 1-52

Opener: Think of some of the different negative assessments of Jesus that you've heard friends, colleagues, or the media express. How might these, and the fact that many of God's historic people the Jews reject Jesus, cause you to doubt Jesus?

Considering the text1: vs 1-10 set the scene for the rest of chs 7 and 8 and remind us of the big issues we saw in chapters 5 & 6 (ie questions about Jesus' identity and mission; the reaction of the Jews and reason for it.) What is prompting Jesus' brothers to give the advice they do?

Considering the text2: Skim over the whole of chapter 7 and notice the atmosphere and list the different responses Jesus provokes (eg vs 12, 15, 20, 26-17, 40-52). How are people forming their opinions? How do verses 7 and 24 explain how Jesus thinks they are coming to their opinions?

Considering the text3: Work through the different responses throughout the passage and note how the underlying reasons for his opponents' unbelief is exposed. What do we discover about the real reasons for unbelief in Jesus?

Considering the text4: What is so amazing about Jesus' promise in vs 37 - 39? How does this give us extra reason to keep listening to Jesus?

Ones to keep chewing on: How do we see the mixed response of vs 40 - 52 today? How has this chapter encouraged us to respond when we hear people around us deny Jesus' identity and the need to be rescued by him?