

Part 9 of the series - Three Years That Changed the World

THE CLAIMS OF CHRIST

Deceiver or Deliverer - John 7

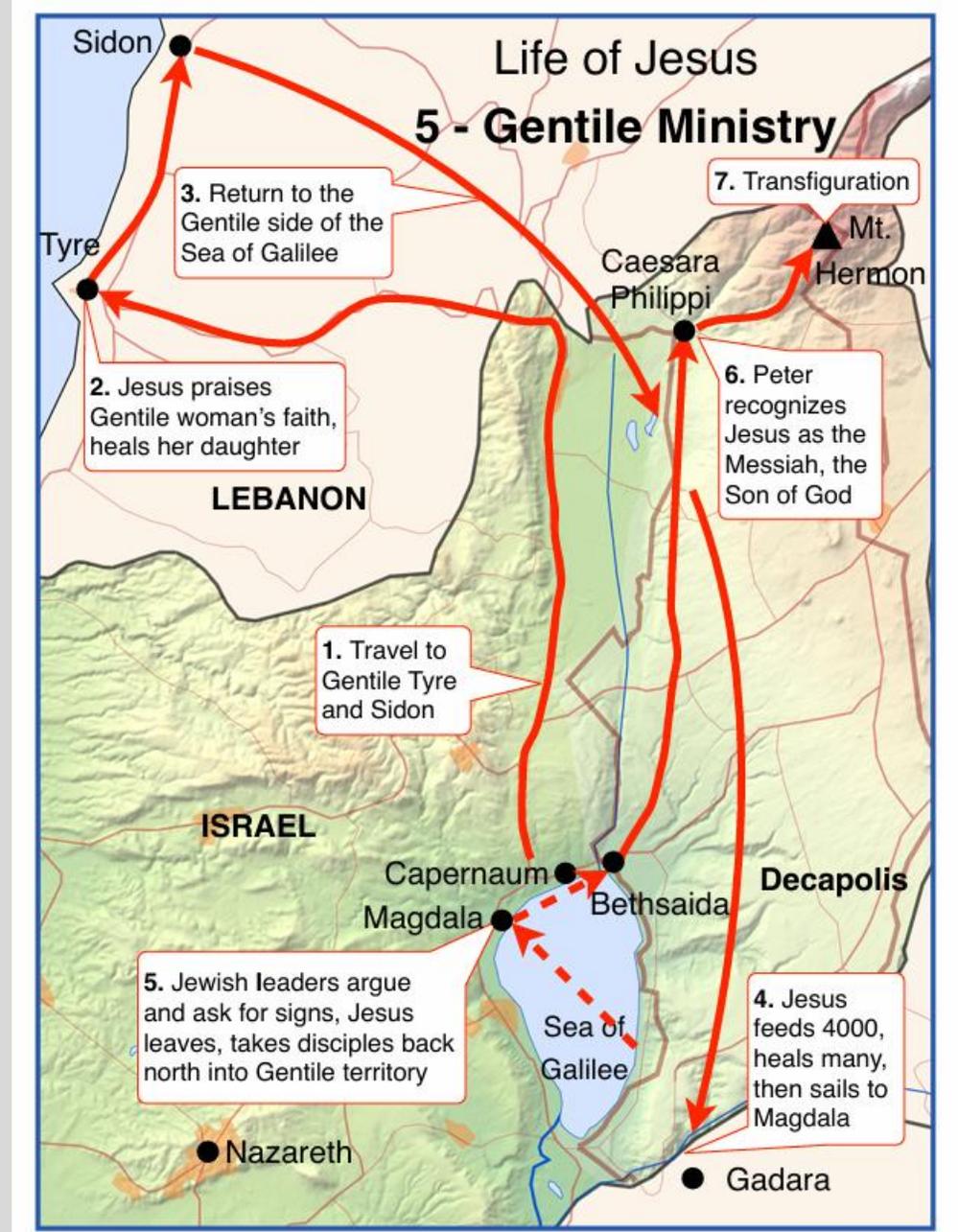
“After this, Jesus went around in Galilee. He did not want to go about in Judea because the Jewish leaders there were looking for a way to kill him. But when the Jewish Festival of Tabernacles was near, Jesus’ brothers said to him, Leave Galilee and go to Judea, so that your disciples there may see the works you do.” (John 7:1-3)

- ✓ **The events recorded by John in chapter 6** would have taken place shortly before the **Passover** which would have been in our month of **April**
- ✓ The **Feast of Tabernacles** (more on that later) was about to begin and that festival was celebrated in our month of **October**
- ✓ This would mean that Jesus spent “roughly” 6 months ministering in the region of Galilee which would be the **period of time between John 6 and John 7**
- ✓ It seemed safer for Jesus (as it wasn’t his time to face those who hated and opposed him) to **minister in Galilee** and the events during that 6-month period are recorded by the other Gospel writers (Matthew, Mark and Luke).

“Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon.” (Matthew 15:21)

“Then, Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of the Decapolis.” (Mark 7:31)

“After this, Jesus went around in Galilee. He did not want to go about in Judea because the Jewish leaders there were looking for a way to kill him. (John 7:1)



Several Events that took place between John 6 and John 7

“Jesus left that place and went to the vicinity of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it; yet he could not keep his presence secret. In fact, as soon as she heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an impure spirit came and fell at his feet. **The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia.** She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter. First let the children eat all they want,” he told her, “for it is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs. Lord,” she replied, “even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.” Then he told her, **“For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter.” She went home and found her child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.** (Mark 7:24-26)

“Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and into the **region of the Decapolis.** There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged Jesus to place his hand on him. After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man’s ears. Then he spit and touched the man’s tongue. He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, *“Ephphatha!”* (which means “Be opened!”). **At this, the man’s ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly.**” (Mark 7:31-35)

Several other events that took place between John 6 and John 7

- ✓ Jesus feeds the 4000 (Mark 8:1-13)
- ✓ Jesus heals the blind man at Bethsaida (Mark 8:22-26)
- ✓ Peter makes a declaration that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the Living God (Mark 8:27-30, Matthew 16:13-20)
- ✓ Jesus speaks of his imminent death for the first time (Mark 8:31-33)
- ✓ Peter, James and John witness the transfiguration of Jesus (Mark 9:2-13)
- ✓ Jesus heals a boy with an evil spirit (Mark 9:14-29)
- ✓ Jesus speaks of his death for a second time (Mark 9:30-50)

Several Events that took place between John 6 and John 7

- ✓ Jesus travels to Judea and teaches the people while the Pharisees attempt to trap him to say something blasphemous (Mark 10)
- ✓ Jesus and the Rich Man (Mark 10:17-31)
- ✓ Jesus predicts his death (with even more detail) for the third time (Mark 10:32-34)
- ✓ Jesus teaches the lesson to the disciples that in the kingdom; the first shall be last and the last shall be first (Mark 10:35-45)
- ✓ Blind Bartimaeus is healed by Jesus, and he receives his sight (Mark 10:46-52)
- ✓ Jesus teaches in Parables (Matthew 18, Luke 10:25-37)
- ✓ Jesus sends out the 72 to teach, preach, heal the sick and tell the lost that the Kingdom of God is near (Luke 10:1-24)

Several Events that took place between John 6 and John 7

- ✓ Jesus warns his disciples and encourages them to be faithful (Luke 12:1-12)
- ✓ Jesus teaches about the rich fool using a parable to emphasize its importance (Luke 12:13-21)
- ✓ Jesus teaches the disciple to have faith, not worry and be watchful against the evil one (Luke 12:22-59)
- ✓ Jesus teaches on the cost of being his disciple, the parable of the lost sheep, the parable of the shrewd manager, the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the coming kingdom of God, the parable of the persistent widow (Luke 13, 14, 15, 16, 17)
- ✓ Many other events happen during this time that are recorded in the other Gospel accounts of Matthew, Mark and Luke
- ✓ Jesus makes another trip to Jerusalem during his last year of ministry around September, A.D. 32 to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. This is where the story picks up in John 7.

“After this, Jesus went around in Galilee. He did not want to go about in Judea because the Jewish leaders there were looking for a way to kill him. **But when the Jewish Festival of Tabernacles was near**, Jesus’ brothers said to him, Leave Galilee and go to Judea, so that your disciples there may see the works you do.” (John 7:1-3)

- ✓ John writes that the “**Feast of Tabernacles was near**” which would place the timing of events in this chapter to be in our month of October
- ✓ The three **main** feasts celebrated by the Jews were:
 1. Passover – celebrating their deliverance from Egyptian bondage
 2. Feast of Weeks – celebrating the first fruits of harvest and the giving of the Law
 3. **Feast of Tabernacles** – celebrating the end of harvest season and God’s provision during their 40 years of wilderness wanderings (also known as the Feast of Booths)

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✓ These would be the half brothers of Jesus (children of both Mary and Joseph). Their names are listed in Matthew 13:55

1. **James**

2. Joseph

3. Simon

4. **Judas (Jude)**

✓ His brothers did not believe that Jesus is the Messiah at this time (John 7:5) but would later come to believe in Jesus. (Acts 1:14)

✓ James would later become the head of the Jerusalem church and write an epistle (letter), and Jude would also write an epistle. Both epistles are in the New Testament

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- ✓ The motivation of Jesus’ brothers encouraging Jesus to openly perform his miracles could have been for the purpose of:
 1. Determining for themselves whether his works were genuine and from God
 2. Encouraging Jesus to establish some sort of “political” authority to win over the Jewish religious leaders that he was the promised Messiah
- ✓ This was not the plan of God at all and the timing for Jesus to declare who he was to his enemies was not yet in God’s plan which we will see in the following verses. To those who believed it was obvious but to those who didn’t they remained skeptical

“No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world. For even his own brothers did not believe in him. Therefore, Jesus told them, **My time is not yet here**; for you any time will do. The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that its works are evil. **You go to the festival**. I am not going up to this festival, because my time has not yet fully come. **After he had said this, he stayed in Galilee**. (John 7:4-9)

- ✓ The plans of man were not driving the actions of Jesus but instead it was the sovereign plan of God that determined how and when Jesus would reveal himself
- ✓ No matter how skeptical his own family were of him – Jesus would not allow that to deter him from the timetable that His Father had already set in motion.
- ✓ It was not yet time for Jesus to face his full public opposition when he declares himself to be the Messiah – not that he feared them but because there was work yet to do before he willingly submits himself to the cross to die for the sins of the world. That day would come the following spring at the Passover celebration

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- ✓ Jesus’ brothers would not face the same hostile opposition from the Jewish religious leaders at the Festival because they didn’t stand in their way
- ✓ The unbelieving world is controlled by Satan; ***“We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one” (1 John 5:19)*** and Jesus mere presence exposes the sinful pursuits of unbelievers.
- ✓ Jesus will eventually go to the Festival but to his brothers he is saying that he is not going there in the way that they expected and given that it was not his time he would not place himself in a position for the Jewish leaders to take his life.

“However, after his brothers had left for the festival, he went also, not publicly, but in secret. **Now at the festival the Jewish leaders were watching for Jesus** and asking, “Where is he?” Among the crowds there was widespread whispering about him. Some said, “He is a good man.” Others replied, “No, he deceives the people.” But no one would say anything publicly about him for fear of the leaders” (John 7:10-13)

- ✓ Some scholars conclude that the route Jesus took from Galilee to Jerusalem (where the Festival was being celebrated) took him through Samaria. (Luke 9:51-56)
- ✓ This delay allowed what might have been an open confrontation between the Jewish leaders and Jesus to soften as some people were favorable to Jesus (saying he was a good man) while others were not (claiming he was a deceiver)
- ✓ Although these views about Jesus were incorrect (Jesus was more than a “good man” and he was not a deceiver) they do show how far the religious leaders had fallen away from the very God they once worshipped. Very sad!

“Not until halfway through the festival did Jesus go up to the temple courts and begin to teach. The Jews there were amazed and asked, “**How did this man get such learning without having been taught?**” Jesus answered, “My teaching is not my own. It comes from the one who sent me.” (John 7:14-16)

- ✓ The first 3 days of the festival had passed before Jesus decided to enter the temple courts and begins to teach
- ✓ The crowds and the religious leaders were amazed at the teachings of Jesus
- ✓ The religious leaders couldn't grasp the vast knowledge that Jesus was able to illustrate since (to their understanding) Jesus had no formal religious training. To them Jesus was merely the son of a Jewish carpenter.
- ✓ The response of Jesus was both profound and at the same time troubling to the religious leaders for Jesus was declaring his knowledge didn't come from any human institution but instead came directly from God because God was in their midst.

“Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. Whoever speaks on their own does so to gain personal glory, but he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him. Has not Moses given you the law? Yet not one of you keeps the law. Why are you trying to kill me?” (John 7:17-19)

- ✓ It’s amazing to think of the vast number of miracles that Jesus has already performed and yet (even if they witnessed the miracle personally) many refuse to believe that Jesus is the Messiah sent from God.
- ✓ What is the key here – **“Anyone who chooses to do the will of God”** would come to realize that Jesus is the promised Messiah and rather than seek to kill him they should instead follow him and then they would know his words are true!
- ✓ **Ignorance** is not a get of hell card that you can play

“Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. **Whoever speaks on their own** does so **to gain personal glory**, but he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him. Has not Moses given you the law? Yet not one of you keeps the law. Why are you trying to kill me?” (John 7:17-19)

- ✓ If you want to know what a false teacher looks like here are two characteristics:
 1. They speak from themselves (their own authority)
 2. They seek their own glory

- ✓ Jesus does just the opposite
 1. He spoke the words of his Father
 2. “He did not come to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28)

“Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. Whoever speaks on their own does so to gain personal glory, but he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him. **Has not Moses given you the law? Yet not one of you keeps the law. Why are you trying to kill me?**” (John 7:17-19)

- ✓ The Jewish leaders would have known that Moses gave them the Law – this was a rhetorical question, but it wasn’t stated on accident.
- ✓ Jesus knew it and so did the religious leaders, but the question led to the most damaging statement of all “**Yet none of you keep the law**”.
- ✓ Had they have truly known and kept the Law – they would have known they had no authority to kill a completely innocent man, and that same Law would have led them to the knowledge that Jesus was its fulfillment. “***Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes***” (Romans 10:4)
See also - Romans 3:9-20, Galatians 3:10-11, 21-24

“You are demon-possessed,” the crowd answered. “Who is trying to kill you?” Jesus said to them, “I did one miracle, and you are all amazed. Yet, because Moses gave you circumcision (though actually it did not come from Moses, but from the patriarchs), you circumcise a boy on the Sabbath. Now if a boy can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses may not be broken, why are you angry with me for healing a man’s whole body on the Sabbath? Stop judging by mere appearances, but instead judge correctly” (John 7:20-24)

- ✓ This claim that **Jesus was demon possessed** was a reaction to the convicting statement by Jesus earlier that they (the religious leaders) of all people were not keeping and obeying the very Law of Moses that they claim Jesus was violating.
- ✓ When confronted with truth the most common human response is to deflect and attack the very one who speaks the truth with a false accusation (ad hominem)
- ✓ This utter disdain and hatred of Jesus by the religious leaders will see its fulfillment during the trial and crucifixion of Jesus who they refused to acknowledge as God.

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- ✓ The miracle that Jesus is referring to was the **healing of the severely disabled man at the Pool of Bethesda**
- ✓ That one miracle (all by itself) should have been enough evidence for the religious leaders to accept that Jesus was the promised Messiah, but they didn’t
- ✓ Let’s refresh our minds on that exchange between Jesus and the religious leaders

Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals. Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. **One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he **asked him, “Do you want to get well?”** “Sir,” the invalid replied, “I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.” Then **Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.”** At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked. The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, and so the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, “**It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat.**” But he replied, “The man who made me well said to me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’ So, they asked him, “**Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?**” The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there. (John 5:1-13)**

What good
is “Religion”
if it teaches
the wrong
thing

When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to get well?” “Sir,” the invalid replied, “I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.” (John 5:6-7)

Nowhere in the Old Testament does it teach this

Then Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked. The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, and so the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, “It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat. (John 5:8-10)

Nowhere in the Old Testament does it teach this

“Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, “See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.” The man went away and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had made him well. So, **because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to persecute him**. In his defense Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working.” For this reason, they tried all the more to kill him; **not only was he breaking the Sabbath**, but he was even calling God his own Father, **making himself equal with God**. (John 5:14-18)

These 2 issues were the core of the self-righteous religious leader’s opposition to Jesus:

1. Jesus violated their **Jewish traditions/regulations** especially their **man-made laws** related to the Sabbath itself
2. Jesus made himself equal with God

“You are demon-possessed,” the crowd answered. “Who is trying to kill you?” Jesus said to them, “I did one miracle, and you are all amazed. **Yet, because Moses gave you circumcision** (though actually it did not come from Moses, but from the patriarchs), **you circumcise a boy on the Sabbath**. Now if a boy can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses may not be broken, why are you angry with me for healing a man’s whole body on the Sabbath? Stop judging by mere appearances, but instead judge correctly” (John 7:20-24)

- ✓ Every Jewish male child was to be circumcised on the 8th day but if the 8th day fell on the Sabbath, they would still perform the circumcision on the child anyway.
- ✓ If that doesn’t break the Law of Moses (even though it was introduced during the time of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) then Jesus asks them why do they object to him healing an entire man’s body on the Sabbath?
- ✓ Jesus exposed their hypocrisy and lack of spiritual discernment – “judge correctly”

“At that point some of the people of Jerusalem began to ask, “**Isn’t this the man they are trying to kill?** Here he is, speaking publicly, and **they are not saying a word to him.** **Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Messiah?** But we know where this man is from; when the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from.” (John 7:25-27)

- ✓ By now it was obvious to the common people in Jerusalem that the religious leaders wanted to silence Jesus (he was interfering with their control of the people) by having him killed – and the plot was already in its development stages.
- ✓ The source of the hostility toward Jesus was unbelief that he was the Messiah
- ✓ The crowd was confused as to why the religious leaders were not saying or doing anything to stop him.
- ✓ They didn’t even know this is the same Jesus who was born (not in Nazareth) but miraculously to a virgin named Mary in the town of Bethlehem.

“Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, **“Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from.** I am not here on my own authority, but he who sent me is true. **You do not know him, but I know him because I am from him and he sent me.**” (John 7:28-29)

- ✓ This phrase **“you know me and you know where I am from”** was probably intended as irony for Jesus will declare later in John 8:19; **“You do not know me or my Father,” Jesus replied. “If you knew me, you would know my Father also”**
- ✓ The focus of the religious leaders was more on **“rabbinical traditions”** and a **“self righteous legalism”** which blinded them to the truth – they were unbelieving hypocrites and blind guides to the blind. (Matthew 15:7, 14)
- ✓ The one who will later make this claim to Thomas; **“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”** was standing right in their midst!

“At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come. Still, many in the crowd believed in him. They said, “When the Messiah comes, will he perform more signs than this man?” The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering such things about him. **Then the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple guards to arrest him.**” (John 7:30-32)

- ✓ This first effort to attempt to seize Jesus seemed a little more spontaneous and its not clear why they tried to seize Jesus. Perhaps, the claim by Jesus that he was sent by God was considered blasphemous to them
- ✓ Regardless – they had no power to seize him because God was not ready to allow it, and Jesus was operating on God’s timetable (“**his hour had not yet come**”)
- ✓ Many in the crowd **believed in Jesus** (to what extent we aren’t told) and this increased following must have concerned the chief priests and Pharisees enough so they sent their temple guards to arrest Jesus – they too will have no success!

“Jesus said, “**I am with you for only a short time**, and **then I am going to the one who sent me**. You will look for me, but you will not find me; and **where I am, you cannot come**.” The Jews said to one another, “Where does this man intend to go that we cannot find him? Will he go where our people live scattered among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks? **What did he mean** when he said, ‘**You will look for me, but you will not find me,**’ and ‘**Where I am, you cannot come?**” (John 7:33-36)

- ✓ Jesus is speaking of what is going to happen in the near future (just a few months from this exchange) when he will be crucified, rise from the dead and ascend into heaven to be with his Father who sent him.
- ✓ This statement; “where I am you cannot come” is **the harsh reality that all who reject Jesus will face one day - eternally separated from God**

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. (John 3:16-18)

“On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “**Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me,** as Scripture has said, **rivers of living water will flow from within them.**” **By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive.** Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.” (John 7:37-39)

- ✓ This reference to Jesus providing “**living water**” (a reference to salvation) was not a new teaching for he had stated this before in his conversation with the woman at the well (John 4). Jesus was the only source where such “**living water**” could be found.
- ✓ This “**living water**” didn’t just stay isolated to an individual believer but it was intended to “flow out” of the believer toward others through the Spirit
- ✓ This teaching on the **indwelling of the Spirit** in each believer (John 14) was unfamiliar to the hearers but in time would be fully understood after Jesus dies, raises from the dead and ascends to heaven – witnessed on the Day of Pentecost. (See Acts 1-2)

“On hearing his words, some of the people said, “Surely this man is the Prophet.” Others said, “He is the Messiah.” Still others asked, “How can the Messiah come from Galilee? Does not Scripture say that the Messiah will come from David’s descendants and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?” Thus the people were divided because of Jesus. **Some wanted to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him.**” (John 7:40-44)

- ✓ Some in the crowd were convinced that Jesus was the prophet that Moses wrote about in Deuteronomy 18:15-18, or perhaps the forerunner to the Messiah
- ✓ Some (correctly so) recognized Jesus as the Messiah
- ✓ Others (the skeptical ones) wanted more proof for they understood that the promised Messiah would be a descendant of David and come from Bethlehem (not Nazareth – Jesus’ hometown)
- ✓ Had they investigated the matter further they would find both to be true (Jesus was born in Bethlehem and he was a descendant of David)

“Finally, the temple guards went back to the chief priests and the Pharisees, who asked them, “Why didn’t you bring him in?” “No one ever spoke the way this man does,” the guards replied. “You mean he has deceived you also?” the Pharisees retorted. “Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him? No! But this mob that knows nothing of the law—there is a curse on them.” (John 7:45-49)

- ✓ The temple guards were astonished at the words of Jesus and although they do not seem to embrace Jesus as the Messiah, they just didn’t know what to do with him
- ✓ To that the Pharisees (the self proclaimed “spiritual elite”) arrogantly responded with the notion that perhaps Jesus was able to deceive the guards who should have known better (though uneducated) since they would have been Levites themselves.
- ✓ John never records whether any of these temple guards decided to follow Jesus, but it is entirely possible that some did.

“Nicodemus, who had **gone to Jesus earlier** and who was one of their own number, asked, “Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing?” They replied, “**Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee.**” (John 7:50-52)

- ✓ This is the same Nicodemus that John writes about in John 3
 - He was a prominent Rabbi and well thought of
 - Nicodemus carried quite a lot of respect as a well-known teacher himself
 - He is probably not a fully devoted disciple of Jesus (at least at this point) but we know he becomes one later (John 19:38-42)
- ✓ Nicodemus doesn't openly come to Jesus' defense, but he does raise a valid point that he should be heard before being condemned.
- ✓ The statement that “no prophet comes from Galilee” is simply not true, but it does expose the lack of knowledge the Pharisees had about who Jesus really is

Concluding Thoughts

- ✓ Ever since Jesus healed the severely disabled man at the Pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath, it put him on a collision course with the Pharisees
- ✓ For starters they couldn't reconcile the power and authority for such a healing to occur in the first place – this was no ordinary healing, and they knew it.
 - The fact that Jesus performed this healing on the Sabbath compounded the problem for the actions of Jesus violated their man-made regulations and traditions
 - In addition, Jesus was declaring himself to be equal with God and this was something they weren't willing to accept
- ✓ Nicodemus will embark on a journey to investigate the truth of who Jesus really is, where he was born and determine if the Claims of Christ are true. He will conclude for himself that Jesus is not a deceiver but instead **He is their Deliverer!**