

The Gospel of John

The Time Table of God (Part 1)

John 7:1-9

INTRODUCTION:

Well, we finished the sixth chapter of John. Hate to see it go. It passes on now into history, and I hope it will find a permanent place in your memory, and the Lord will use it to serve you well in the future.

From the unbelieving world's point of view, history is an unexplained succession of seemingly random events. A meaningless changing of causes and effects. In contrast, the Bible portrays history as the very opposite, the purposeful and perfect working of God's eternal plan.

Jesus said over and over again that He was here to do His Father's will. He did everything according to God's timing.

Now arrive at chapter 7 of the Gospel of John, and we really step into a new section of John's Gospel. We move at this point from Galilee where our Lord has been ministering for over a year and back into Judea where he originally started his ministry.

We're back in Judea, and the picture is not good. What we're going to see in chapter 7 and then in chapter 8 is an escalating hatred of Jesus from the Jewish leaders. Jesus has been in Galilee for a year ministering, preaching, teaching concerning the kingdom, healing people, casting out demons, and doing miracles. He's been away from Judea and Jerusalem as far as His ministry is concerned, but the hatred has been smoldering and seething there, and it isn't diminished. It's even worse now because reports have been coming back from spies in Galilee to the leaders of Judea about the impact of His ministry there.

John 7:1-9 (NASB)

7 After these things Jesus was walking in Galilee, for He was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him. **2** Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths, was near. **3** Therefore His brothers said to Him, "Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing. **4** For no one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be *known* publicly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." **5** For not even His brothers were believing in Him. **6** So Jesus *said* to them, "My time is not yet here, but your time is always opportune. **7** The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil. **8** Go up to the feast yourselves; I do not go up to this feast because My time has not yet fully come." **9** Having said these things to them, He stayed in Galilee.

I want to just remind you that in chapter 6 there were many people following Jesus. Then

there was a clear division at the end of the chapter. There were some His disciples who left and didn't walk with Him anymore. We called those the **false disciples**.

And then there were the **true disciples** who stayed. Jesus said to them, “**You do not want to go away also, do you?**” and they said, “No.” And we mark the difference. The difference is those who **LEFT did not like the words of Jesus**. Those who **STAYED embraced the words of Jesus**. The distinguishing identification of Jesus is not his works. The false disciples embraced his works, they followed the crowd, they loved the supernatural, they wanted to cash in on it. They were attracted by the miracles. They even made demands on Jesus' miraculous power.

But when He began to speak, He immediately offended them, and they were alienated. Many tried to patronize Jesus as if he were some kind of good man, some kind of man better than other men, some kind of noble, religious leader, some kind of heroic, righteous moralist, some kind of merciful, compassionate person.

None of that matters! That's all irrelevant. To say that Jesus is a good man and to throw those kinds of accolades at Him falls infinitely short of the truth. You can make that assessment based upon what you want to see in his life in ministry, but sooner or later, the decision is going to have to be rendered on His **words**.

It comes back to words, **John 8:47**. “**⁴⁷ He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear *them*, because you are not of God.**”

BODY:

I. Remaining in Galilee.

John 7:1 (NASB)

7 After these things Jesus was walking in Galilee, for He was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him.

Verses 1 to 13 points out that Jesus was operating on a divine timetable. Because one of the things that you have to understand about Jesus is that He is the son of God. He is God in the flesh. He is the **bread of life** who came down from heaven. Right?

That's part of what you have to believe. This is not just a man kind of working his thing out, trying to get where he wants to go, trying to accomplish what he wants to accomplish. This is the son of God on a divine mission. We see the sovereignty of God operating in every aspect of His life from a time standpoint. We know that He leaned back hard on the sovereignty of God when people didn't believe and said, “But no man can come to me unless the Father draws him.” Right? He said that.

He said, “You can't come unless it's the Father's will.” So He leaned hard on the sovereignty of God in terms of the responses He was getting, but **He also completely leaned on the sovereignty of God in terms of the timing of everything He did**. Everything in His life was on schedule. Everything.

Everything that Jesus did while He was on this earth, from His virgin birth to His ascension back into heaven, was done entirely based upon God's schedule.

Galatians 4:4 (NASB)

⁴ But when the **fullness of the time came**, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,

Even His second coming will happen upon God's command.

Revelation 6:11 (NASB)

¹¹ And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should **rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also.**

Many times, He says, "My time has not come. My time has not come. My time has not come." He operated on this sovereign schedule. That comes out so powerfully here.

Paul in Romans 5 says,

Romans 5:6 (NASB)

⁶ For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

Now as we come to chapter 7, Jesus is walking in Galilee. This is **seven months** after chapter six. How do we know that? Because in **John 6:4**, there was a **Passover**.

The Passover was the event that triggered everything in chapter 6. In **John 7:2**, you have another feast, which is the Feast of Tabernacles or the Feast of Booths, Which occurs about seven months later. **Passover is a spring event**, and **Feast of Tabernacles is an October event**. For seven months then, Jesus has been walking in Galilee. As we pick the story up, those seven months have now passed.

During the seven months that He has been in Galilee, He has **not** been in Judea. But the attitude of the people in Judea that wanted to kill Him has continued to seethe and smolder and escalate because it says at the second part of verse 1, "**He was unwilling to walk**", (meaning to go there and to conduct His life in Judea) **because the Jews were seeking to kill Him**. In His absence, the fury continued to escalate. The hostility had continued to grow, so much so that He wouldn't go back **because He had to wait until it was the right time in God's perfect plan.**"

So as we look at these verses, we'll first of all look at the opening nine verses, and we'll see something about the **wrong time**, and then next week, Lord willing, we will look at verse 10-13 and see something about the **right time**.

We get information from the other gospel writers about those seven months which we will cover next week. From **Mark 7** we learn that He for the most part disappeared from the public areas. Instead of remaining in the populace centers, during that period of time, He goes off to Tyre and Sidon, which is north and west over Phoenician area over towards the Mediterranean. Then He goes to the east side of the Sea of Galilee, south down into the area of Decapolis, which were ten Gentile cities.

Matthew 15 tells us about Him going into the area on the Phoenician border. He also went into the extreme north. Many things happen during that time. There are records of miracles, but primarily he's teaching and instructing.

II. The Request.

John 7:2-5 (NASB)

² Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths, was near. ³ Therefore His brothers said to Him, “Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing. ⁴ For no one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be *known* publicly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world.” ⁵ For not even His brothers were believing in Him.

He stays in Galilee. Then it's time, verse 2, for the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles because it comes near.

His brothers come to Him. This would be His actual brothers who are named in [Matthew 13:55](#) as James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas.. His brothers come to Him, and they say, “Leave here, and go into Judea so that your disciples also may see your works which you're doing. For no one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be known publicly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world.”

It is time for the Feast of Tabernacles. What was it? Well, you can go to [Leviticus 23](#). God instituted a feast which biannually they would remember their time in the wilderness, when they lived in tents, booths, shelters, and celebrated between the 15th and 22nd of Tishri, which puts it in October. They had a weeklong celebration commemorating the provision of God. Josephus says it was the most celebratory of all Jewish feasts and festivals. It was the happiest occasion. It was a couple of weeks after the day of atonement.

They would erect booths all over the place, in the little villages in the streets. Some of them put booths on the roofs of their houses when they were in crowded city quarters, but it was all to remind them of living in temporary shelters in the wilderness, and how God protected them and brought them through to the promised land.

You say, “Well why did they want Him to go?” They didn't believe in Him, but they were aware, of course, of His miracles. They were very aware of that. They were close to Him in Galilee the whole time.

Maybe He could be the political messiah. Maybe the power was there. Maybe He could provide food. Maybe He could overthrow Rome. Maybe He might be the guy. But their conclusion was it's never going to happen in Galilee. Seven months of hiding on the fringes of Galilee is not going to do it.

So they get a little proverbial on Him in **verse 4**. A proverb or axiom is a self-evident statement. No one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be known publicly. That's obvious. Right? Everybody would understand that. Then they say, If you do these things, show yourself to the world. I mean come on, if you are who you say you are, then go down to Jerusalem. That's the theological world. That's the decision will be made. Jerusalem is the acid test. You can't be up here on the fringe if you want to be realized and recognized. You've got to go to Jerusalem. And there, they say, “**Your disciples,**” which means they knew He had gained followers in Judea from the early months when He was there at the beginning of his ministry. So go to Jerusalem. Let them settle it.

I think in the back of their minds, they were open to the fact that maybe if He went, they'd get a final verdict. And they rationalized it by saying it's only obvious. If you want to be known publicly, you can't be in secret. Look at this statement. If you do these things, show yourself to the world. If you are who you say you are. That's what that is. If you

are for real, if the works that you do are really the evidence of your divinity, if, if, if. Sound familiar to you? Who said that to Jesus three times early in His ministry? **Who? Satan.**

If you're the son of God, do this. **If** you're the son of God, do that. **If** you're the son of God, do this. That was said to Him at the end of His ministry all the way into Matthew 27. He's hanging on the cross, and they say, "**If** you are the son of God," what? "Come down." If you are – and what they're doing is shoving his claims into His face and telling Him to prove it. So we kind of know whose side they're on. He who is not for me is against me.

So they want to press the issue. See what happens. But **Verse 5**, "**Not for any noble reason, for not even His brothers were believing in Him.**" They didn't believe. That shows the power of unbelief. Doesn't it? They've seen Him since they were born in the house. But still were not believers. They wouldn't believe. I simply remind you what Jesus said in chapter 6. "You can't believe unless the Father draws you."

At this point, the Father had not drawn them. They did not believe. So they say, "Go down. Prove yourself." **Verse 8**. "**Go up to the feast yourselves,**" He says. "**I do not go up to this feast because my time has not yet fully come.**" Having said these things to them, He stayed in Galilee a little longer. "You go. I'm not coming." So He stayed in Galilee. No one forces Jesus' hand. He's not going with them.

If He had gone with them, He would have been a part of a huge caravan, the caravan that would go down from Galilee were His relatives and friends and family and extended family. It was huge. How do I know that? Because in **Luke 2:44**, when they had come down for the Passover when He was 12 years old, the whole caravan was one day's journey. They were all the way back toward Galilee before they realized He wasn't there. Remember that?

So this is a large, large caravan. He's not going to be part of that. Everybody knows who is coming. They know the groups. He doesn't want that exposure. He's not going because it's not His time to go. It's not His time to die. It's not His time for that public exposure. "**My time has not yet fully come.**"

III. The Response.

John 7:6-9 (NASB)

6 So Jesus *said to them, "My time is not yet here, but your time is always opportune.
7 The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I **testify** of it, that its deeds are evil.
8 Go up to the feast yourselves; I do not go up to this feast because My time has not yet fully come."
9 Having said these things to them, He stayed in Galilee.

"**The world hates me because I testify of it that its deeds are evil.**" Again, it is his words that are unacceptable. You see that in the popular world today in which we live. People like the idea of a benevolent, kind, merciful, compassionate Jesus, but they want to gag him as soon as they are asked to believe His words. Down in **verse 14**, when He did arrive at this Feast of Tabernacles, He began immediately to teach and that generated hatred toward Him.

Jesus said to them, "My time is not yet here." When was His time? Six months later at the next Passover. That would be His time to become the Passover lamb. His hour was

coming.

Verse 6. “My time is not yet here.” Then He says this. “Your time is always opportune.” What a statement! Every day matters in my life. Every hour is determined by God. You have one appointment with God. That appointment is physical death.

Verse 7. “The world cannot hate you.” You’re part of it.” So you’re safe. I mean you fit into this world, but it hates me. And why does it hate me? Not because of my works, but because I testify of it that its deeds are evil.

So He’s not going with them. In **verse 9**, it says He stayed in Galilee. He stayed there. He didn’t stay long. But He stayed because it was the wrong time to leave.. We’re talking probably days.

So it’s again the words of Jesus that are the issue. So here we begin entering into this amazing time of confrontation that leads to the cross.

CONCLUSION:

As this account in John's gospel illustrates, Jesus followed God's timetable perfectly. He always performed God's will exactly as the Father wished. Those who are true followers of Christ also have the ability to follow God's revealed will because they have been given His Word and His Spirit empowers them to obey the Word which reflects His will with gladness.

Unbelievers do not have the capacity to understand God's Word or the ability to obey His Spirit.

Nonetheless, for those who have not yet come to Him, the time is right to do so.

2 Corinthians 6:2 (NASB)

² for He says,

“At the acceptable time I listened to you, And on the day of salvation I helped you.”

Behold, now is “the acceptable time,” behold, now is “the day of salvation”.

The Family of God.