

The Gospel of John

What Shall I Do with Jesus? (Part 1)

John 7:37-39

INTRODUCTION:

Regardless of one's current belief in God and Christ, all of mankind faces an **ultimate question that MUST eventually be considered!** If Jesus **is** the prophesied Messiah, **What shall I do with Jesus Christ?** Our eternal destiny is hinged upon how we respond to that question.

John wrote the Gospel of John for one reason "That you may **believe** that Jesus **is the Christ** (the Messiah and), **the Son of God; and that believing** you may have **life** in His **name.**" (John 20:31).

All who are in Jerusalem during this feast of tabernacles are being faced with this question. Whether they be the Jewish Leaders, their followers, one of the dispersed Jews who have traveled for days to attend, Pilate, the Roman guards, the Romans in general, or even the true disciples of Jesus.

Ironically, that very question was asked by the man who sentenced the Lord to death. The Jewish authorities had arrested Jesus and, after a mock trial of their own, brought Him before Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea. Their reason for involving the hated Romans was simple: they wanted Jesus dead and the occupying Romans had not given them the right to enforce capital punishment. Therefore they needed Roman authority to approve the murder.

After examining Jesus, Pilate declared "I find no guilt in this man" and sought to release Him. He was even more determined to release Him when his wife sent him a message saying, "Have nothing to do with that righteous Man; for last night I suffered greatly in a dream because of Him." Since it was customary at Passover for Pilate "to release for them any one prisoner whom they requested," the governor offered the mob a choice between Jesus and the "notorious prisoner" Barabbas. He assumed that they would ask for Jesus to be released. "But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to put Jesus to death." It was then that a frustrated Pilate asked the momentous question, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?"

The frenzied crowd, stirred up by the chief priests cried out in unison, "Crucify Him!" They cried out all together, saying, "Away with this man, and release for us Barabbas!" Fearing a riot, he washed his hands in front of the crowd and said "I am innocent of this Man's blood; see to that yourselves", and "handed Him over to them to be crucified."

Israel was given many opportunities to accept Him as the Messiah. With authority He stated that we must believe in Him by thirsting, coming to Him, and drinking of the living water.

The reactions of the people separated them into four groups: The convinced, the contrary, the confused, and the contemplative.

Those responses encompass the universal pattern of reactions to Jesus Christ from the first century to the present day.

All Stand and Read Scripture.

John 7:37-39 (NASB)

³⁷ Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸ He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’” ³⁹ But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Prayer

“If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.

This is not the first time he has made such an invitation. Remember His conversation with the woman at the well?

John 4:10-14 (NASB)

¹⁰ Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.” ¹¹ She *said to Him, “Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water? ¹² You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself and his sons and his cattle?” ¹³ Jesus answered and said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; ¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.”

Let’s look, first of all, at the invitation itself.

Verse 37 gives us three actions that are require to receive a saving faith: “thirst,” “come,” and “drink.”

- **“Thirst,”** that is the knowledge of the problem of sin, the understanding of its implications, and a knowledge of the source of the living water.
- **“Come,”** that is trust in Him.
- **“Drink,”** that is acceptance of His offer.

Let’s break these down a little bit.

BODY:

I. THIRST.

John 7:37 (NASB)

³⁷ Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone is **thirsty**, let him come to Me and drink.

The first tells of a recognized need: **thirst**. Notice the universal invitation “If anyone is thirsty.” The **invitations** of Jesus were for everyone.

Matthew 11:28 (NASB)

²⁸ “Come to Me, **all who are weary and heavy-laden**, and I will give you **rest**.”

God told the world that he gave his only begotten son that “**whosoever believes shall not perish but have everlasting life**.”

Here again is another one of those invitations. “If you are thirsty.” Thirst is a craving. Thirst is a conscious craving. It’s something we’re fully aware of. We feel it, and the more thirst increases, the more desperate a person becomes to quench his thirst.

What’s he talking about? He’s talking about a thirsty soul. A longing for deliverance from the agonies of sin, longing for hope, longing for peace, longing for forgiveness, for salvation. That is where it all starts.

People come to Christ because they’re thirsty. Do you understand that? Because their souls are empty. That is why, when you do Evangelism, you don’t start with “come to Christ.” You start with the recognition of the desperate situation the sinner is in and try to help him understand that. So that’s where it all begins with: **thirst**. Like the Philippian jailer who said, “What must I do to be saved?” That’s a thirsty soul crying out.

II. COME.

The second verb – the second action is “**come**.” It signifies the approach to him.

Luke 9:23 (NASB)

²³ ...“**If anyone wishes to COME after Me**, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.

Once you understand that He is the only source of soul satisfying, nourishing, living water, then you must “**Come to Christ**”. It means, with all your heart and with all your will, you come to him. If He were here, you would do it with your feet, but he is not physically here so you do it with your heart and your mind.

Spiritually speaking, it is to move toward Jesus Christ as the only source for your need. Turn your back on the world. Abandon your sin. That’s “**come**.”

Acts 4:12 (NASB)

¹² And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”

Let me remind you the only qualification for coming to Christ is **thirst!** Not morality, not good works, not being “a basically good person.” There is no qualification like that. The only qualification is that you are thirsty.

III. DRINK.

John 7:37 (NASB)

³⁷ Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and **drink**.”

Drink means to accept His offer of living water. A river flowing through the parched valley does not do any good unless you drink. Drinking means to take him, receive him, make him your own, and embrace him.

As he said to the woman at the well...

John 4:14 (NASB)

¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him **shall never thirst**; but the water that I **will give him** will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.”

Those three steps (Thirst, Come, and Drink) are the means by which we believe. In fact, in the next verse, that is what he says, “**He who believes in me.**”

John 7:38a (NASB)

³⁸ He who believes in Me,...

Well, what does it mean to **believe** in him? It means to thirst and come and drink, and then you can be identified as one who **believes** in me.

What does it mean to believe in Christ? To come out of your sinful thirst to him and embrace him, confess him as God and Savior and Lord. That’s what it means to believe.

This was Jesus giving a gospel invitation. This was a daily routine for Christ to make these kinds of golden invitations to a nation that kept rejecting Him and making the wrong choice. He will pour into your soul-satisfying, living water.

But it doesn’t end there, and this may be the most remarkable part about this invitation.

John 7:38b (NASB)

... as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’”

Jesus is making a composite statement from several verses in Isaiah and Ezekiel.

What does it mean that ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’”?

Let me give you a simple analogy. The water that flows to you, when you come to Christ, comes into your life but does not stay in you. You’re not a bucket. You’re not a reservoir. **It goes through you.** You are a fountain that becomes a river. Not only do we drink and have our "soul thirst" forever quenched, but we become the fountain and the river of living water to others as it flows from us.

This is the **impact** of a believer on the world. **It’s thrilling!** We receive spiritual water, which is really an analogy for spiritual life (eternal life). This comes with all of its elements including conversion, redemption, justification, sanctification, and adoption as a child of God. We receive all that – a constant spring of pure, cleansing water of life in us, sanctifying us, **making us more like Christ!**

But at the same time, and the real key here is, we become a **fountain that turns into a**

river for the world. The blessed one becomes the blesser. The recipient of grace becomes the channel for more grace. And in not a trickle, but a gushing river. Oh, I understand that some of you may have become stagnant ponds. You might need a dose of spiritual Drano **[Laughter]** to get the flow going. But this is how a believer is defined here. The water is ours. It is in us. It is springing up in us and gushing out of us for thirsty souls all over the world.

This is just an amazing statement about how much your life matters. You must seek for your life to matter! If you are not a Christian, then your life does not really matter. It all disappears into eternal judgment in the end when you die. You don't have an eternally positive effect. What really matters in society are Christians because they are a savor of life unto life. They are the fountain and river of living water that flows to the world.

So Jesus is saying, "You not only receive the water, but you channel the water to the world." How can that be?

John 7:39a (NASB)

³⁹ But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive;...

This happens because of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit lives in every believer, right?

Romans 8:9 (NASB)

⁹ However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. **HE LIVES IN YOU!** God, the Spirit, takes up residence in you. He is the river of life that flows through you.

Have you ever considered the magnitude of that statement. **The Holy Spirit, the third part of the Godhead, LIVES IN YOU!** This is by **grace and grace alone** that we should have God living within us and be so useful to the world.

Have you ever considered what grace and mercy mean?

Grace is receiving things that we **do not deserve.**

- We are freed from our sins.
- All things work together for good to those who love the Lord.
- We receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
- We are adopted as children of God.
- We inherit the Kingdom of God.
- Our names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.
- We will be found righteous before God at judgment.
- We are promised eternal life in heaven in the presence of God.

Mercy is **not** receiving things that we **do deserve.**

- God's wrath.
- Spiritual death.
- Being found guilty before God on judgment day.
- Eternal separation from God.

But for them on that occasion, the Spirit had not yet come in his fullness. The Spirit was with them. Jesus told them in John 14.

John 14:16-17 (NASB)

¹⁶I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; ¹⁷that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you **and will be in you.**

He abides with you, (but he **will** be where?) – **in** you, in your innermost being, the source of this river, but that was yet future.

CONCLUSION:

John 7:39b (NASB)

... for the Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

This is a prophecy. The Holy Spirit couldn't come until Jesus was glorified. When He ascended into Heaven.

John 4:14 (NASB)

¹⁴but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.”

He sent the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost and launched the church. And then the river on the inside began to flow to the world. And it happened instantaneously because immediately on the day of Pentecost, all those Galileans who didn't know those multiple languages began to speak the wonderful works of God in all kinds of gentile languages as the river began to flow.

Rivers of blessing begin to pour out of those believers early in Pentecost. Peter preaches, the river starts, and 3000 people are saved. They preach again and another 4000 are saved. Tens of thousands are being saved. In Jerusalem, it extends to Samaria, and we are still living the history today as it goes to the uttermost parts of the world. The river is unleashed on the world through the indwelling Holy Spirit.

That's why I say this is the golden invitation of the Gospel of John. Rivers of water belonging to all believers. What an invitation.

What have you done with Christ?

God Be With You.