



TALKS FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS TRANSCRIPT

John 7:1-13: A Discussion Between the Lord and His Earthly Brothers

“After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him. 2 Now the Jews’ Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. 3 His brothers therefore said to Him, “Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. 4 For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world.” 5 For even His brothers did not believe in Him. 6 Then Jesus said to them, “My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready. 7 The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil. 8 You go up to this feast. I am not yet going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come.” 9 When He had said these things to them, He remained in Galilee. 10 But when His brothers had gone up, then He also went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. 11 Then the Jews sought Him at the feast, and said, “Where is He?” 12 And there was much complaining among the people concerning Him. Some said, “He is good”; others said, “No, on the contrary, He deceives the people.” 13 However, no one spoke openly of Him for fear of the Jews.”

Background Notes

“After these things, Jesus walked in Galilee”(v1). After what things? After the events of chapter 6: the miracles of the feeding of the five thousand and Jesus’ walking on water, and the Bread of Life discourse. Verse 2 tells us that about six months had gone by since the events of chapter 6. Back in John 6:4 we read, *“Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near.”* Passover is in the spring of the year, so here in John 7:2, the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. The Feast of Tabernacles, or Succot, takes place in the autumn. The Feast of Tabernacles was (and still is) a joyous occasion, a little bit like our Thanksgiving. At the Feast of Tabernacles the people remembered how God had led them through the wilderness and into the Promised Land. For seven days the people lived in little huts made out of tree branches they had cut down; this was to remind them of their wilderness wanderings. Jewish people still celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles today with little huts, booths, or tents in their yards, on their patios or balconies.

Our next-door neighbors are orthodox Jews, and they celebrate Succot. They don’t have a hut made of tree branches; they have a screened tent. They set it up on their patio, and during Succot they sit out there for part of every day, and they eat a meal and read Scripture together. It’s a great opportunity for us to talk with our neighbors about the Scriptures, and we have been able to do that.

The brothers who are mentioned in John 7:3-9 were the earthly half-brothers of Jesus Christ. They were born to Mary and Joseph after the virgin birth of our Lord. The names of four of these earthly brothers are given in Mark 6:3: *"Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?"* So they were offended at Him." Our Lord had earthly half-sisters as well.

At this point the Lord's earthly brothers didn't believe in Him (v5). We know that they did become believers, however, after the Lord's resurrection. Acts 1:14 says, *"These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers."* This took place in the upper room, after the resurrection and ascension of our Lord. So the earthly brothers of Christ became believers after the resurrection. Furthermore, we know that the Epistle of James and the Epistle of Jude were written by two of the earthly brothers of our Lord.

In the verses before us, the Lord's earthly brothers, as unbelievers, were challenging the Lord to "go public" with His Messianic claims. Look at verses 3-4 again: *"His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. 4 For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world."* In other words, they were advising Him to leave the "backwoods" area of Galilee, and prove Himself in Judea and in Jerusalem, where the sophisticated religious world could pass judgment on His claims. Our Lord's answer to this challenge brings us to the doctrinal points.

1. God has a plan for the believer's life.

Look at our Lord's response to His brothers' challenge: *"My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready. 7 The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil. 8 You go up to this feast. I am not yet going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come"*(v6-8). The Lord was saying that there was a pre-programmed plan for His life. However, that was not true of his brother's lives: *"your time is always ready."* In other words, Jesus was saying, "For you, one time is as good as another, because you are not in tune for God's plan for your lives."

The Lord Jesus was conscious of the Father's plan for His life, and the time to go up to Jerusalem in a public way, had not yet come. That's what the Lord meant here. It was really the idea that He would not go up in a public way at that point. The fact that the Lord did go up quietly a little later is not a contradiction. He was not changing His mind. No, when He said, *"I will not yet go up,"* was that He would not yet go to Jerusalem in a public way. His time had not yet come. That "time" would come, and it would result in His death on the cross. But right now the plan for the Lord was to remain in Galilee, and then go up quietly to the Feast of Tabernacles.

As there was a plan for Jesus' life, so there is a plan for your life as a believer. God is sovereign! He knows everything! Certainly He knows what plan is best for your life, and He has the power to work it out if you follow Him. There are many passages in the Bible that teach us that God can direct us in our decision-making process so that we follow His plan for our lives. Proverbs 3: 5-6, a well known promise, says: *"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and don't depend on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."*

God certainly knows what job is best for you. God certainly knows what location is best for you. Young people, God certainly knows what college is best for you to attend (it's Emmaus Bible College, of course!) Those of you who are unmarried -- God certainly knows what Christian spouse is best for you. God has a plan for the believer's life.

But I want you to notice from these verses that God's plan is not in line with the world's way of thinking. The natural way for the Lord to prove His Messiahship would have been to go up to Jerusalem, enter Jerusalem as a king and do a major miracle -- like blow away the Roman occupation forces! That is the natural way, that is man's way -- but this was not God's way of carrying out His plan.

And notice that God's plan may involve the hatred of this world: "*The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil*"(v7). Don't be surprised if God's plan for your life involves hatred from this world. In fact, we read in 1 John 3:13, "*Do not marvel [don't be surprised], my brethren, if the world hates you.*" It's to be expected. In John 15:18, the Lord said: "*If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.*" You may experience the loss of a promotion on a job, or the loss of a better grade in high school or college because the world hates you -- but even this may be part of God's plan for your life. God does have a plan for the believer's life.

2. Common sense is a part of God's plan for the believer's life.

When following God's plan for your life, you don't "kiss your brain's goodbye"! You don't throw caution into the wind. Look at verse 1: "*After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him.*" This is common sense! Why put yourself in danger? The Lord was not going to put His life at risk at this point. When the Lord did go up to the Feast of Tabernacles, He did it in secret (v10). Again, this was common sense. The point is that the Lord Jesus, as the perfect Man, was certainly following God's plan for His life -- but that plan involved common sense.

The same is true in our lives. We shouldn't throw caution to the wind or do stupid things, and we should try to use our God-given common sense. Common sense is not normally opposed to God's plan for your life. Missionaries in other lands need to keep this in mind when they find themselves in hostile situations.

When Emmaus Bible College students go out to witness as part of our Christian service program, we don't purposely send them into dangerous situations. Even though we know that God has promised that He'll protect us; we use common sense. Common sense is a part of God's plan for the believer's life.

Practical Applications

1. When you witness, you will be accused of deceiving people.

"*And there was much complaining among the people concerning Him. Some said, "He is good"; others said, "No, on the contrary, He deceives the people"*(v12). This was a mixed response. This, by the way, is evidence of our Lord's claim to deity. You don't get accused of deceiving people by saying, "Love your neighbor"! He was accused of

deceiving people because of His claim to be God. A mixed response is what you will get when you witness. Some people will accept your witness, but others will accuse you of leading people astray.

I have been accused of leading people astray because I teach creation, not evolution. My wife Margie teaches a women's Bible study, and one woman left the Bible study because she felt she was being deceived when Margie said that the Bible teaches that Satan and demons are real entities. The same will happen to you. When you witness, you will be accused of deceiving people.

2. Family ties will not save you.

"For even His brothers did not believe in Him"(v5). These men were the flesh-and-blood relatives of the Lord Jesus, but this was **not** enough to save them – it was not enough to get them into heaven! They had to **become believers** in Jesus as the Son of God, just like everyone else -- and praise the Lord, they did!

Is it possible that you think family ties will save you? Let's say your parents are (or were) godly Christians, and you were raised in a Christ-centered home. That is wonderful -- but it will not save you! You must become a believer yourself.

Recently an Emmaus Bible College student became a Christian. This student had come from a Christian home and thought he was a Christian, but when he began to study at Emmaus he realized that he wasn't really a believer. He realized that he had been depending on family ties – but family ties will not save you!