

John 7:1-13

After this, Jesus traveled around Galilee. He wanted to stay out of Judea, where the Jewish leaders were plotting his death. ² But soon it was time for the Jewish Festival of Shelters, ³ and Jesus' brothers said to him, "Leave here and go to Judea, where your followers can see your miracles! ⁴ You can't become famous if you hide like this! If you can do such wonderful things, show yourself to the world!" ⁵ For even his brothers didn't believe in him.

⁶ Jesus replied, "Now is not the right time for me to go, but you can go anytime. ⁷ The world can't hate you, but it does hate me because I accuse it of doing evil. ⁸ You go on. I'm not going to this festival, because my time has not yet come." ⁹ After saying these things, Jesus remained in Galilee.

¹⁰ But after his brothers left for the festival, Jesus also went, though secretly, staying out of public view. ¹¹ The Jewish leaders tried to find him at the festival and kept asking if anyone had seen him. ¹² There was a lot of grumbling about him among the crowds. Some argued, "He's a good man," but others said, "He's nothing but a fraud who deceives the people." ¹³ But no one had the courage to speak favorably about him in public, for they were afraid of getting in trouble with the Jewish leaders.

Background

John 7 begins about six months after the events of chapter 6. John 6:4 notes that Passover, a spring feast, was near. By John 7:2, the Feast of Shelters (or Tabernacles, or Sukkot), held in autumn, was approaching. This joyful celebration commemorates God's guidance through the wilderness. For seven days, people lived in temporary huts made of branches to remember their ancestors' temporary dwellings during that journey. This tradition is still observed in various forms by Jews today.

Jesus' earthly half-brothers, mentioned in verses 3–9, urged Him to reveal Himself publicly in Judea, challenging Him to prove His Messianic claims. Though they were skeptics at this point, they later became true believers after His resurrection (Acts 1:14). Two of them, James and Jude, even wrote New Testament letters.

Teaching Points

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

In response to His brothers' challenge, Jesus said His time had not yet come. He was fully aware of the Father's timing and would not go to Jerusalem publicly until the right moment. The fact

that the Lord *did* go up to Jerusalem a little later is not a contradiction. He was not changing His mind. “*Now is not the right time for me to go*” simply meant that He would not yet go to Jerusalem with them in a public way.

Just as there was a plan for Jesus, God has a sovereign plan for each believer’s life. Proverbs 3:5–6 reminds us to trust Him, and He will guide our paths. His plan may differ from the world’s expectations, and it may even involve rejection or hardship. But even difficulties can be part of God’s perfect plan for us.

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

Following God’s plan doesn’t mean ignoring common sense. In John 7:1, Jesus stayed in Galilee because it was unsafe in Judea. He avoided danger with wisdom. When He did go to the Feast, He went in secret (v10), again showing prudence. Likewise, believers should use the common sense God gave them. Trusting God doesn’t mean we should act recklessly. Using wisdom and caution is often part of faithfully following His plan.

Application

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

In verse 12, people were divided over Jesus. Some said He was good, others accused Him of deception. This opposition wasn’t due to His teaching on kindness, but to His claim to be God. Similarly, when you witness today, some will accept the truth, but others may accuse you of spreading falsehood, especially when you stand up for controversial biblical truths. Expect a mixed response.

2. Family ties will not save you.

Verse 5 notes that even Jesus’ own brothers didn’t believe in Him at first. Being related to Jesus wasn’t enough. They needed personal faith just like everyone else. The same is true today. Growing up in a Christian home or having godly parents won’t save you. Salvation is personal. You must believe in Jesus for yourself.