

The Gospel of John

Lesson 6 John 7:14 - John 8

John tells of Jesus' decision to go to Jerusalem and send His half-brothers to the festival, but he fails to speak of three events that occur before Jesus secretly enters Jerusalem.

List of events in the life of Jesus from the other Gospels not included in John's Gospel

EVENT	SCRIPTURE PASSAGE
Jesus sends apostles to prepare the way for Him through Samaria, but they will not accept Jesus.	Luke 9:51-53
Jesus rebukes James and John because they want Him to destroy Samaria with fire.	Luke 9: 54-56
Three unfit followers have other things to do before they can follow the Lord.	Luke 9:57-62

After these events, Jesus slips into Jerusalem where everyone is looking for Him. As the feast begins, Jesus enters the temple and begins to teach the Jews.

Jesus teaches in the temple, October AD 28

John 7:14 But when it was now the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and *began to* teach. ¹⁵ The Jews then were astonished, saying, "How has this man become learned, having never been educated?" ¹⁶ So Jesus answered them and said, "My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. ¹⁷ "If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or *whether* I speak from Myself. ¹⁸ "He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him. ¹⁹ "Did not Moses give you the Law, and yet none of you carries out the Law? Why do you seek to kill Me?" ²⁰ The crowd answered, "You have a demon! Who seeks to kill You?" ²¹ Jesus answered them, "I did one deed, and you all marvel."⁸⁶

After looking intently for Jesus throughout Jerusalem for days, the Jews finally find Him in the temple where He is teaching without interruption. They are astonished that He knows their literature; however, it is not the first time they are astonished by His knowledge. When Jesus was twelve, He was teaching in the same temple. Jesus uses this opportunity to claim that His teaching is so superior to what they had in their library that they could not comprehend its meaning. Jesus is not like the Jewish teachers who want to blow their own horns; He wants to blow the horn of the Father who sent Him to accomplish His planned task. The Jews claim to know their Law, and yet they violate it by not keeping it.⁸⁷

Circumcision can occur on the Sabbath if it is the eighth day

John 7:22 "For this reason Moses has given you circumcision (~~not because it is from Moses, but from the fathers~~), and on *the* Sabbath you circumcise a man. ²³ "If a man receives circumcision on *the* Sabbath so that the Law of Moses will not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made an entire man well on *the* Sabbath? ²⁴ "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

Jesus has not forgotten the severe chastisement the Jews gave Him six months earlier when He healed the sick man at the pool by the Sheep Gate. Their first complaint was that the

⁸⁶ John 5:1-9

⁸⁷ John 5:39, 45-47

man was carrying his pallet on that day and they showed little concern for making the man well after 38 years of sickness. The Jews themselves are particular about their Sabbaths and their circumcision rules; yet when those rulers clash, they abandon the Sabbath rule and circumcise anyway.

He cannot be the Christ

John 7:25 So some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, "Is this not the man whom they are seeking to kill? ²⁶ "Look, He is speaking publicly, and they are saying nothing to Him. The rulers do not really know that this is the Christ, do they? ²⁷ "However, we know where this man is from; but whenever the Christ may come, no one knows where He is from."

Jesus' background is well known in the Jewish community. His birth in Bethlehem and His upbringing in Nazareth are unquestioned. During every festival in his lifetime, Jesus attends the temple and visits with the people and the leaders. In their minds, He cannot be the Christ or Messiah He is claiming to be. In their theology, the Messiah is to appear without beginning or end on earth.

Where Christ is from

John 7:28 Then Jesus cried out in the temple, teaching and saying, "You both know Me and know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. ²⁹ "I know Him, because I am from Him, and He sent Me."

Jesus passes over the common controversy concerning Christ's origin to emphasize on their ignorance of His importance. He is the Father's interpreter of God for them, and they will not accept His words. In short, He is really saying that they do not know God at all and his accusation makes them furious.

Many believe

John 7:30 So they were seeking to seize Him; and no man laid his hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come. ³¹ But many of the crowd believed in Him; and they were saying, "When the Christ comes, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He?"

Jesus is protected from the desires of the people to kill Him because He is on a planned schedule designed before the creation of the world; simply put, it isn't time for Him to die. His message in the temple, accompanied by miracles and signs, convinces many people of His Messiahship. These new believers use a reverse tactic to argue their point. To them, it seems impossible that anyone could ever do more than Jesus has already done.

Where Jesus is going

John 7:32 The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about Him, and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to seize Him. ³³ Therefore Jesus said, "For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me. ³⁴ "You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come." ³⁵ The Jews then said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we will not find Him? He is not intending to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks, is He? ³⁶ "What is this statement that He said, 'You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come'?"

By the time of Jesus, the Jews are scattered by force all over the known world. In 722 BC, when the Assyrians captured the Northern Kingdom, the ten tribes were relocated from

Israel to the vast Assyrian Empire. The majority of these Jews never returned to Israel. In 606 BC, when the Babylonians captured the Southern Kingdom, the two tribes were relocated in the heart of the Babylonian Empire. At the end of the exile in 536 BC, only 50,232 people returned to Israel; the majority of the Jews remained in Babylon. During his reign, Alexander the Great moved Jews to populate his kingdom. In North Africa, Alexander moved over one hundred thousand Jews to the area of Cyrene. He also moved an enormous group to Alexandria in Egypt, an act which spurred the Old Testament Scriptures to be translated into Greek from Hebrew beginning in 284 BC. In 280 BC, large contingents of Jews were forced by Seleucus, one of Alexander's generals who took over that portion of his kingdom after his death, to move into Syria and Asia. In 63 BC during the reign of Pompey, Jews were herded into Greece and Macedonia. Even in Jesus' day, and especially during the life of Peter, Babylon is the second greatest concentration of Jewish thought, learning, and population outside Jerusalem. Because Jews are now all over the known world, the Jews of Jerusalem wonder if Jesus is going to expand His ministry past the borders of Judea, Samaria, and Galilee to the places where their relatives live among the Greeks and Gentiles. But Jesus is not speaking of going to the rest of the world, He is speaking of His home with the Father, and they do not understand His intent.

On the last day, Feast of Booths, October AD 28

John 7:37 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.'"⁸⁸

Every day of the festival, water is drawn from the pool of Siloam and taken to the temple to be used by the priest as an offering while the temple singers ring out the words of Isaiah 12:3, "Therefore you will joyously draw water from the springs of salvation." Jesus uses the occasion of the last day of the feast to offer everyone in the temple area the true and everlasting living water that only He can offer. For the last seven days they think they have drawn the water of salvation from the pool, but His water offers the true salvation.

The Spirit will not come until Jesus is glorified

John 7:39 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. ⁴⁰ *Some* of the people therefore, when they heard these words, were saying, "This certainly is the Prophet."⁸⁹

John is writing 60 years after this event and he has the advantage of hindsight because he knows how the story ends. When Jesus offers the living water, it is difficult to understand, but, in retrospect, John explains that Jesus is offering the Holy Spirit who will dwell within them to guarantee their salvation. Some believe and accept the living water; others do not.

Four opinions of who Jesus is

John 7:41 Others were saying, "This is the Christ." Still others were saying, "Surely the Christ is not going to come from Galilee, is He? ⁴² "Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the descendants of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?"⁹⁰ ⁴³ So a division occurred in the crowd because of Him. ⁴⁴ Some of them wanted to seize Him, but no one laid hands on Him. ⁴⁵ The officers

⁸⁸ Isaiah 44:3; 55:1; 58:11

⁸⁹ Deuteronomy 18:18

⁹⁰ Psalm 89:3; Micah 5:2

then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them, "Why did you not bring Him?"

The Jews think they know this Jesus, and yet, they focus on His childhood home rather than His place of birth. Some know that the Christ is to come from Bethlehem, but they fail to remember it was His place of Jesus' birth, so the argument over His being the Christ continues. The Jews expect the temple police to arrest Him because of this argument, but they do not. Thus, the officials of the Sanhedrin are furious with the temple police.

The testimony of the officials

John ^{7:46} The officers answered, "Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks." ⁴⁷ The Pharisees then answered them, "You have not also been led astray, have you?"

The temple police are astounded by the words of Jesus and fail to arrest Him, believing that He is speaking the truth. The power of the Pharisees is slipping away because of the ministry of the Lord.

Pharisee to Pharisee, one is Nicodemus

John ^{7:48} "No one of the rulers or Pharisees has believed in Him, has he? ⁴⁹ "But this crowd which does not know the Law is accursed." ⁵⁰ Nicodemus (he who came to Him before, being one of them) said to them, ⁵¹ "Our Law does not judge a man unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?" ⁵² They answered him, "You are not also from Galilee, are you? Search, and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee." ⁵³ ~~Everyone went to his home.~~

The Christ is to come from Bethlehem, and the Pharisees should know that Jesus has fulfilled that Scripture at His birth, yet they continue to focus on the place of His upbringing. At this point, the Pharisees assume that they all are rejecting Jesus as the Christ. When the blanket statement is made, Nicodemus speaks up. They ask Nicodemus to search the Scriptures to find where it says the Christ will come from Galilee.

The earliest and most reliable copies of the Scripture do not include John 7:53 through John 8:11. It is the story of the woman caught in the act of adultery. As powerful as it may be, and as popular as it is among preachers, it has no foundation in the Scripture as a genuine occurrence. However, the message is found in Old Testament Law. In the Old Testament, adultery was punished by death, not divorce. Both the woman and the man caught in the act of adultery were to be stoned. A divorce was granted when one partner did not find favor in the other partner. The divorce decree was an announcement to the world that the one being divorced was pure and undefiled and available for marriage to someone else. Divorce was not God's desire, but He allowed Moses to permit divorce decrees because the hearts of some people were shriveled up towards Him, and they would not change their minds. The decree allowed the broken-hearted party to go on with his or her life free of the stigma and assumption of a sinful past.

John ^{8:1} ~~But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. ²Early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people were coming to Him; and He sat down and began to teach them. ³The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery, and having set her in the center of the court, ⁴they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery, in the very act. ⁵"Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say?" ⁹¹ ⁶They were saying this, testing Him, so that they might have grounds for accusing Him. But Jesus stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground. ⁷But when they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." ⁸Again He stooped down and wrote~~

⁹¹ Deuteronomy 22:22-24

on the ground.⁹ When they heard it, they *began* to go out one by one, beginning with the older ones, and He was left alone, and the woman, where she was, in the center *of the court*.¹⁰ Straightening up, Jesus said to her, "Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?"¹¹ She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more."

The Light of the world

John 8:12 Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

Still in the temple, Jesus expands His message of being the living water to being the Light to lead them out of darkness. At the Feast of Booths, large candelabras are lit to represent the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, both of which had led the people in the wilderness. Once again, it is a wonderful time for Christ to show the people who He really is. Knowing this history, we can understand why the Pharisees are stunned that Jesus is claiming to be the only Light of the world when they were thinking of the light that led their ancestors in the wilderness.

Pharisees do not know the Father

John 8:13 So the Pharisees said to Him, "You are testifying about Yourself; Your testimony is not true."¹⁴ Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from or where I am going."¹⁵ "You judge according to the flesh; I am not judging anyone."¹⁶ "But even if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone *in it*, but I and the Father who sent Me."¹⁷ "Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true."⁹² ¹⁸ "I am He who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me."¹⁹ So they were saying to Him, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also."²⁰ These words He spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one seized Him, because His hour had not yet come.

The Pharisees are referring to a specific point of their law concerning witnesses. Jesus, knowing the law, indicates that He and the Father are His witnesses. Without two agreeing witnesses, an accusation is not true according to Moses.⁹³ In addition, if the two witnesses do not agree, the accusation is assumed to be false. Here, the Father affirms and confirms the witness of the Son which Jesus has already demonstrated in John 5:37.⁹⁴

Pharisees wonder

John 8:21 Then He said again to them, "I go away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come."²² So the Jews were saying, "Surely He will not kill Himself, will He, since He says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come'?"²³ And He was saying to them, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world."

The Pharisees wonder if Jesus is going to commit suicide, but He is not speaking about killing Himself. The religious leaders do not understand the intent of His words even though He has already covered it in John 3:31.⁹⁵

⁹² Deuteronomy 19:15

⁹³ Deuteronomy 17:6; Deuteronomy 19:15

⁹⁴ John 5:37 - "And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form."

⁹⁵ John 3:31 "He who comes from above is above all, he who is of the earth is from the earth and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all."

Believe in Jesus or die in sin

John 8:24 "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins." ²⁵ So they were saying to Him, "Who are You?" Jesus said to them, "What have I been saying to you *from* the beginning? ²⁶ "I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world." ²⁷ They did not realize that He had been speaking to them about the Father.

Jesus has said enough about His claim of authority, so He turns to focus on their attitude in response to His message. To Jesus, it doesn't matter what they think about Him. He is sent from the Father, and they are responsible for receiving the message as it is being delivered or they will die in their sin. His message to them is entirely about the Father.

Belief in Jesus among the Pharisees

John 8:28 So Jesus said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am *He*, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. ²⁹ "And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him." ³⁰ As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him. ³¹ So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

Jesus is testing the Pharisees because there are believers in their midst, Nicodemus for one. As He speaks to them on the last day of the Feast of Booths, He has successfully evoked division in their ranks. Whether they believe or not, Jesus' purpose is to do the Father's will, their responsibility is to believe in Him and the message which He has delivered them since the start of His ministry. Their response begins with a false statement.

False statement by the Pharisees

John 8:33 They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You will become free'?"

The Pharisees have forgotten the 400 years of slavery in Egypt, the 116 years of slavery in Assyria, the 70 years of slavery in Babylon, and the domination of the Greek and Roman Empires. These Jews are not truly free when they say these words, and Jesus does not pass up the opportunity to remind them of their error.

The slave free indeed

John 8:34 Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. ³⁵ "The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. ³⁶ "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. ³⁷ "I know that you are Abraham's descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. ³⁸ "I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from *your* father."

Sin is addictive. Those who are addicted return to their sins because they are slaves to them. Jesus uses the lie of the Pharisees as a springboard to show that they were in physical slavery at one time and now they are in spiritual slavery. The slave will not live forever, and Jesus will not be with them forever. They will not have eternity to change their minds and believe in Him as their Savior. Enslaved by their sin of pitting rules and regulations against the Lord's will, they can be set free only by Jesus. Religious as they are, they are ungodly as they seek the death penalty for Jesus because He is teaching the good

message of salvation. Because they are against the words of Jesus, they no longer know the heavenly Father.

Believe in Me

John 8:39 They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham. ⁴⁰ "But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. ⁴¹ "You are doing the deeds of your father." They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God." ⁴² Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. ⁴³ "Why do you not understand what I am saying? *It is* because you cannot hear My word. ⁴⁴ "You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar and the father of lies. ⁴⁵ "But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. ⁴⁶ "Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? 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." ⁴⁸ The Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?" ⁴⁹ Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. ⁵⁰ "But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges. ⁵¹ "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death." ⁵² The Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets *also*; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death.' ⁵³ "Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out to be?" ⁵⁴ Jesus answered, "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, 'He is our God'; ⁵⁵ and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word. ⁵⁶ "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad." ⁵⁷ So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" ⁵⁸ Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." ⁵⁹ Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

Because the Jews do not know the true Father, Jesus explains that their true father is the devil. Not to be outdone, the Jews reply that Jesus is filled with a demon. Jesus is not possessed by a demon, and He is definitely not a Samaritan as they claim. When He says, "Before Abraham was born, I am," He has committed the greatest form of blasphemy to the Pharisees because He is using the same words spoken by the Lord to Moses at the burning bush. Only a demon possessed man would claim to be God by using these words. Because they believe He has blasphemed, they pick up stones to kill Him, but His time to die is not at hand; Jesus is able to leave the temple and go back to Galilee for the last full year of His ministry. It will be a relatively quiet year with many wonderful miracles and a few harsh interactions with these same Pharisees who will remain embittered and want Him dead.

⁹⁶ Hebrews 11:13

⁹⁷ Exodus 3:14