

Dr. Dave Turner, John, Session 9, Tense Times in Jerusalem: Who is this man? – John 7:1-52 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Turner, John, Session 9, John 7:1-52, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. David Turner's lecture, Session 9 on the Gospel of John chapter 7, titled "Tense Times in Jerusalem, Who is this man?" explores Jesus's interactions and the diverse reactions he provokes during the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem. **The session analyzes the growing opposition from Jewish leaders who sought his arrest, the divided opinions of the crowds regarding his identity (prophet, Messiah, or deceiver), and even the disbelief of his own brothers. Turner highlights Jesus's significant teaching about the Holy Spirit as "rivers of living water," discussing potential interpretations of this metaphor and its connection to Old Testament prophecy and the Feast of Sukkot rituals. The lecture also touches upon historical context, such as the Pool of Siloam and the rabbinic understanding of the law, as well as the significance of Nicodemus's plea for fairness. Ultimately, the session emphasizes the central question of Jesus's identity and the ongoing division he causes, mirroring the debates present in John 7.**

2. 14 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Turner, John, Session 9 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Gospels → John).



3. Briefing Document: Turner, John, Session 9, John 7:1-52

Briefing Document: Gospel of John, Session 9 - John 7: Tense Times in Jerusalem, Who is this man?

Overview:

This session provides a detailed exposition of John chapter 7, focusing on the escalating tensions surrounding Jesus during the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) in Jerusalem. Dr. Turner highlights the chronological placement of this chapter near the end of Jesus' earthly ministry, despite its placement less than halfway through John's Gospel. The primary themes revolve around the divided opinions regarding Jesus' identity, the opposition from Jewish leaders, Jesus' teaching on the Spirit as the "rivers of living water," and the historical and cultural context of the Feast of Tabernacles.

Main Themes and Important Ideas/Facts:

1. Chronological Context and Narrative Flow:

- John's Gospel is not primarily chronological. Chapter 7, occurring during the Feast of Tabernacles (a fall festival), likely places us in the last several months of Jesus' ministry, leading up to the Passover when he was crucified.
- This chapter falls within the "feast cycle" in John (chapters 5-10).
- The narrative structure of chapter 7 can be seen as: introduction of conflict and division (7:1-36), Jesus' central teaching on the Spirit (7:37-39), and the reactions and further division among the people and leaders (7:40-52).

2. Growing Opposition and Divided Opinions:

- Following the events of John 6 where many disciples left Jesus, John 7 opens with Jesus still in Galilee, hesitant to go to Judea where Jewish leaders sought to kill him.
- Even Jesus' own brothers did not believe in him and suggested he go to the feast in a scoffing manner: *"even his own brothers did not believe in him."* (p. 2)
- Upon arriving in Jerusalem during the feast, Jesus taught in the temple midway through. This public appearance ignited significant division among the crowds: *"Amongst the crowds there was widespread whispering about him some said he was a good man others replied no he deceives the people."* (p. 2)

- The authorities, the chief priests and Pharisees, sent guards to arrest Jesus due to the growing unrest and his perceived challenge to their authority.

3. Jesus' Identity and Authority Challenged:

- The crowds and the Jewish leaders questioned Jesus' authority and the origin of his teachings, noting his lack of formal rabbinic training: *"Some of the Jews are amazed and ask where did this man get this learning without having been taught."* (p. 3)
- Jesus asserted that his teaching came from the Father, reiterating his role as the Father's agent, similar to his claims in chapter 5: *"his teaching is from the Father as he taught in chapter 5 as the agent of the Father everything he says and everything that he does is what comes from God the Father whom he describes as his father."* (p. 3)
- He accused the religious leaders of not keeping the law themselves, highlighting their desire to kill him despite their supposed adherence to Mosaic law: *"Has not Moses given you the law yet not one of you keeps the law why are you trying to kill me?"* (p. 3)
- The people were divided over whether Jesus was the Messiah, with some arguing he couldn't be because they knew his Galilean origin, contrary to the belief that the Messiah's origin would be mysterious and from Bethlehem (David's descendant).

4. The Significance of Jesus' Teaching on the Spirit (John 7:37-39):

- On the last and greatest day of the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus proclaimed: *"If anyone is thirsty let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me as the scripture has said rivers of living water will flow from within them."* (p. 5)
- Dr. Turner discusses the ambiguity of the phrase "from within them," suggesting two possible interpretations:
- Believers becoming sources of the Spirit for others (the more common interpretation).
- Jesus himself being the ultimate source of the Spirit for believers.
- Dr. Turner favors the latter interpretation, arguing that it aligns better with the overall Christocentric emphasis of John's Gospel, where Jesus is presented as the

one who baptizes with the Spirit (John 1), the Father gives the Spirit to the Son without measure (John 3), and Jesus sends the Spirit (John 14-16, 20).

- Verse 39 clarifies that this refers to the Spirit, who was not yet given because Jesus had not yet been glorified. This statement echoes themes found in the farewell discourse (John 14-16).

5. The Failed Attempt to Arrest Jesus and Internal Conflict Among Leaders:

- The guards sent by the chief priests and Pharisees to arrest Jesus returned empty-handed, explaining: *"No one ever spoke the way this man does."* (p. 6) This suggests they were either awestruck by his teaching or feared the reaction of the crowds who supported him.
- The religious leaders rebuked the guards and the common people, whom they considered ignorant of the law (Am-harets) and under a curse.
- Nicodemus, who had previously met with Jesus in John 3, spoke up for Jesus within the council, advocating for due process: *"does our law condemn a person without first hearing him to find out what he's been doing."* (p. 7)
- The other leaders responded with scorn, questioning Nicodemus's Galilean association and asserting that no prophet comes from Galilee (a statement Dr. Turner suggests is not strictly accurate).

6. Historical and Cultural Context of the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot):

- Sukkot was a fall festival with potential dual significance: remembering Israel's wandering in the wilderness and celebrating the harvest.
- The Mishnah tractate Sukkah provides insights into the observance of Sukkot in the centuries following Jesus, potentially reflecting earlier traditions.
- A significant ritual during Sukkot involved priests drawing water from the Pool of Siloam and bringing it to the temple for a water libation. Dr. Turner suggests Jesus' words about "rivers of living water" might have been spoken in the context of this ritual.
- The Pool of Siloam, a key location mentioned in John 9, has been recently re-identified through archaeological discoveries.

7. The Enduring Question: "Who is this man?"

- Dr. Turner concludes by emphasizing the central question of John 7: the identity of Jesus.
- The chapter presents a spectrum of opinions: a wanted man, misunderstood by his own brothers, hated by the world, considered either good or a deceiver, surprisingly knowledgeable, possibly demon-possessed, the Messiah, a prophet, or merely an obscure Galilean.
- Dr. Turner draws a parallel to today, where diverse opinions about Jesus still exist. He expresses hope that those engaging with the Gospel of John will come to believe that Jesus is indeed the Messiah and find life through his name.

Quotes:

- *"even his own brothers did not believe in him."* (p. 2)
- *"Amongst the crowds there was widespread whispering about him some said he was a good man others replied no he deceives the people."* (p. 2)
- *"his teaching is from the Father as he taught in chapter 5 as the agent of the Father everything he says and everything that he does is what comes from God the Father whom he describes as his father."* (p. 3)
- *"Has not Moses given you the law yet not one of you keeps the law why are you trying to kill me?"* (p. 3)
- *"If anyone is thirsty let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me as the scripture has said rivers of living water will flow from within them."* (p. 5)
- *"By this he meant the Spirit for those who believed in him were later to receive up to that point the Spirit had not been given for Jesus had not yet been glorified..."* (p. 6)
- *"No one ever spoke the way this man does."* (p. 6)
- *"does our law condemn a person without first hearing him to find out what he's been doing."* (p. 7)

Conclusion:

John chapter 7 vividly portrays a period of intense debate and growing opposition surrounding Jesus. The Feast of Tabernacles serves as a backdrop for the unfolding drama, where diverse opinions clash regarding Jesus' identity and authority. His powerful teaching on the Spirit as "rivers of living water" offers a crucial insight into his role as the source of spiritual life. The chapter concludes with a snapshot of the deep divisions among the people and the initial attempts by the religious leaders to silence Jesus, setting the stage for further conflict in the subsequent chapters.

4. Study Guide: Turner, John, Session 9, John 7:1-52

Study Guide: John 7 - Tense Times in Jerusalem, Who is this man?

Key Themes and Concepts

- **Increasing Opposition to Jesus:** Note how the chapter highlights the growing hostility and division surrounding Jesus, particularly from the Jewish leaders.
- **Jesus' Authority and Identity:** Examine Jesus' claims about the source of his teaching and his relationship with the Father, and the varied reactions to these claims.
- **The Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot):** Understand the historical and religious significance of this feast as the backdrop for the events in John 7. Pay attention to the potential connection between the feast rituals and Jesus' teachings.
- **The Holy Spirit:** Focus on Jesus' promise of "living water" in verses 37-39 and its interpretation in relation to the Holy Spirit. Consider the debate about whether this refers to the Spirit flowing from Jesus or from believers.
- **Belief and Unbelief:** Observe the spectrum of responses to Jesus, from outright rejection to tentative belief based on signs, and the question of true saving faith.
- **Chronology in John:** Recall the earlier discussion about John's Gospel not being strictly chronological and how the mention of the Feast of Tabernacles places these events relatively late in Jesus' ministry.
- **Internal Divisions Among Leaders:** Note the dissenting voice of Nicodemus and the implications of not all Jewish leaders being unified in their opposition to Jesus.

Quiz: Short Answer Questions

1. According to John 7:5, what was the attitude of Jesus' own brothers towards him at the beginning of the chapter, and what did they suggest he do?
2. Why was Jesus initially hesitant to go to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles, as stated in the early verses of John 7?
3. Describe the division among the crowds in Jerusalem regarding Jesus, as mentioned in John 7:12-13. What were some of the opinions being whispered about him?

4. When Jesus began teaching in the temple, some Jews were amazed by his learning. Why did they find this surprising?
5. What miracle did Jesus refer to in John 7:21, and how did he use it to challenge the religious leaders' understanding of the Sabbath?
6. What were some of the reasons why certain people in Jerusalem questioned whether Jesus could be the Messiah, as indicated in John 7:27 and 7:41-42?
7. Describe the reaction of the guards who were sent by the chief priests and Pharisees to arrest Jesus, and what explanation did they give for not bringing him in?
8. What was Nicodemus' intervention during the discussion among the religious leaders about Jesus, and what was the response he received?
9. Explain the significance of Jesus' statement in John 7:37-39 about "rivers of living water" in the context of the Feast of Tabernacles and the Holy Spirit.
10. According to the lecture, what does the Gospel of John emphasize regarding Jesus and the Holy Spirit in relation to the "rivers of living water" teaching?

Quiz: Answer Key

1. Jesus' own brothers did not believe in him and suggested he go to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles to display his works and gain more followers, seemingly in a mocking or skeptical way.
2. Jesus was hesitant to go to Jerusalem because the Jewish leaders there were already seeking to arrest and execute him.
3. The crowds were divided, with some saying he was a good man who had been sent by God, while others claimed he was deceiving the people.
4. They were surprised because Jesus had not received formal rabbinic training or been connected to known religious teachers, yet he displayed significant knowledge.
5. Jesus referred to the healing of the paralyzed man at the pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath in chapter 5, arguing that if they circumcised on the Sabbath to uphold the law, his healing of a whole person was even more justifiable.

6. Some questioned his Messiahship because they knew his Galilean origins in Nazareth, believing the Messiah would come from David's lineage in Bethlehem and that his origins would be mysterious.
7. The guards returned without arresting Jesus, explaining that "no one ever spoke the way this man does," implying they were deeply impressed by his teaching.
8. Nicodemus, who was a member of the council, asked if their law condemned a person without first hearing them and finding out what they had done, advocating for fairness towards Jesus. He was met with a dismissive and insulting question about his own Galilean origin.
9. During the Feast of Tabernacles, possibly coinciding with the ritual of drawing water from the Pool of Siloam, Jesus offered "living water" to those who were thirsty and believed in him, which John interprets as a reference to the Holy Spirit that believers would later receive after Jesus' glorification.
10. The lecture suggests that the Gospel of John primarily emphasizes Jesus himself as the source from whom the Holy Spirit flows to believers, rather than the Spirit primarily flowing from individual believers.

Essay Format Questions

1. Analyze the escalating tension and diverse reactions to Jesus presented in John chapter 7. How does this chapter contribute to the overall portrayal of Jesus' ministry and the opposition he faced?
2. Discuss the significance of the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) as the setting for the events in John 7. How might the rituals and themes of this feast illuminate Jesus' teachings, particularly his offer of "living water"?
3. Explore the debate surrounding the interpretation of Jesus' statement about "rivers of living water" in John 7:37-39. What are the different perspectives on whether this refers to the Spirit flowing from Jesus or from believers, and what textual and theological arguments support each view within the context of John's Gospel?
4. Examine the roles and motivations of different groups in John 7: Jesus' brothers, the crowds in Jerusalem, and the Jewish religious leaders. How do their perspectives and actions contribute to the central question of Jesus' identity raised in the chapter?

5. Consider the ways in which John chapter 7 foreshadows future events and themes in the Gospel of John, such as the glorification of Jesus, the giving of the Holy Spirit, and the continued division and conflict surrounding his identity and mission.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Galilee:** The northern region of ancient Palestine where Jesus grew up and began much of his public ministry. Galileans were sometimes looked down upon by Judeans.
- **Jerusalem:** The central religious and political city of Judea, home to the Temple and the Sanhedrin.
- **Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot/Booths):** A major fall festival in Judaism commemorating the Israelites' wandering in the wilderness and celebrating the harvest. It involved living in temporary shelters (booths) and specific Temple rituals, including water libation.
- **Feast Cycle in John:** The series of Jewish festivals mentioned in John's Gospel (chapters 5-10), which serve as significant settings for Jesus' teachings and actions.
- **Sanhedrin:** The Jewish high council in Jerusalem, composed of chief priests, Pharisees, and elders, which had judicial and legislative responsibilities.
- **Rabbi:** A Jewish religious teacher or scholar, particularly one skilled in interpreting Jewish law.
- **Messiah:** The promised deliverer of the Jewish people, often associated with kingship in the line of David. Expectations about the Messiah varied.
- **The Prophet (Deuteronomy 18):** A figure prophesied in Deuteronomy who would be like Moses, speaking God's words. Some in Jesus' time wondered if he was this prophet.
- **Pool of Siloam:** A significant water source in Jerusalem with historical and symbolic importance, particularly connected to Temple rituals during Sukkot and later in John's narrative (chapter 9).
- **Am-harez:** A Hebrew term used in rabbinic Judaism to refer to the "people of the land" who were considered ignorant of Jewish law and tradition.

5. FAQs on Turner, John, Session 9, John 7:1-52, Biblelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions: John Chapter 7

1. What is the chronological significance of John chapter 7 in the Gospel of John? While John's Gospel isn't strictly chronological, chapter 7 marks a significant point, likely placing Jesus in the final months of his ministry. The mention of the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot), a fall festival, suggests that the events in the subsequent chapters (including the Feast of Dedication/Hanukkah in chapter 10 and the final Passover) lead directly to Jesus' crucifixion in the spring. John uses these feasts as thematic anchors rather than precise timeline markers.

2. What was the initial reaction of Jesus' own brothers to his ministry and the upcoming Feast of Tabernacles? Jesus' brothers did not believe in him (John 7:5). Their suggestion for him to go to Jerusalem for the feast was not rooted in faith but seemed to be a cynical challenge for him to publicly display his supposed abilities and gain followers. They did not share his Messianic claims or understand his mission.

3. Why did Jesus initially tell his brothers he would not go to the Feast of Tabernacles, and why did he eventually go? Jesus initially stated that his "time had not yet fully come" (John 7:6-8) and that the world hated him because he testified that its works were evil. This suggests he was aware of the increasing danger in Jerusalem, where the Jewish leaders sought to kill him. However, he did eventually go to the festival, albeit "privately, not publicly" (John 7:10), likely because his divine mission required him to be present and teach at this significant time, but in a way that avoided premature arrest.

4. What were the differing opinions among the crowds in Jerusalem regarding Jesus? The crowds were deeply divided about Jesus (John 7:12-13, 40-43). Some believed he was a good man, possibly based on the miracles they had witnessed. Others claimed he was deceiving the people, influenced by the negative views of the religious authorities. Still others speculated about his Messianic identity, with some questioning how the Messiah could come from Galilee (knowing Jesus' origins) while others thought he might be the Prophet foretold in Deuteronomy.

5. What was the reaction of the Jewish religious leaders to Jesus' presence and teaching during the Feast of Tabernacles? The religious leaders were actively seeking to arrest and kill Jesus due to his teachings and perceived violation of the Sabbath (referencing the healing at the pool of Bethesda in chapter 5). They sent guards to arrest him, but the guards were so astounded by his teaching that they returned without him, leading to further conflict and disdain from the leaders towards those who were swayed by Jesus.

6. What is the significance of Jesus' teaching in John 7:37-39 about "rivers of living water"? On the last and greatest day of the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus proclaimed that anyone who is thirsty should come to him and drink, and that whoever believes in him, "rivers of living water will flow from within them." John clarifies that this was speaking about the Holy Spirit, who would be given to those who believed in Jesus after his glorification. This statement connects Jesus to the provision of spiritual life and positions him as the ultimate source of the Spirit for believers.

7. How did the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) provide a potential background or context for Jesus' teaching about "living water"? The Feast of Tabernacles involved specific rituals, including the drawing of water from the Pool of Siloam and its procession to the temple for a water libation ceremony. This ritual may have served as a visual backdrop for Jesus' declaration about spiritual thirst and the flow of "living water," symbolically linking the physical act of drawing water with the spiritual reception of the Holy Spirit through faith in him.

8. What does John chapter 7 reveal about the growing opposition to Jesus and the diversity of responses to his identity and claims? Chapter 7 vividly portrays the escalating tension and division surrounding Jesus. It highlights the hostility of the religious leaders, the skepticism of his own family, and the wide spectrum of opinions among the সাধারণ people, ranging from belief (often based on signs) to doubt, confusion, and outright rejection. This chapter sets the stage for the increasing conflict that will characterize the subsequent narrative leading to Jesus' crucifixion.