

Dr. David Turner, Gospel of John, Session 9, John 7

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This is Dr. David Turner in his teaching on the Gospel of John. This is session 9, Tense Times in Jerusalem, Who is this man? John 7:1-52.

Hello, I'm David Turner. Welcome to our lecture on John chapter seven. We left Jesus in John six in Galilee and he was debating with the crowds and with some of his own disciples who were not accepting his teaching and even calling out the twelve and asking them what their commitment was after feeding the multitudes and getting into a discussion of how God sustains his people, whether by bread or by God's Word, Jesus.

And so, Jesus makes the big analogy there between faith and him, comparing it in a very direct way, a graphic way, to eating his flesh and drinking his blood, leading many people to stop following him. So, the chapter ends on a rather foreboding note where Peter affirms that he, along with the apostles, will stay with Jesus because he has the words of life. Nevertheless, Jesus points out that Judas, one of the twelve, is actually a devil in disguise and so things are not quite as happy amongst the disciples as we would like to think.

Of course, this comes to a head in chapter 13 where Judas departs to betray Jesus and eventually returns in chapter 18 when Jesus is arrested. So, we find Jesus still in Galilee as we begin in John chapter 7. And in John chapter 7, Jesus is speaking with his brothers and they're discussing whether or not he should go to Jerusalem for the feast. So, first of all, a note on chronology.

When we come to John 7, even though we are less than halfway through the story of the gospel as a whole, I think we're already near the end of Jesus' life and ministry, the last several months of his ministry, because this is the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, chapter 7 verse 2, otherwise known as the Feast of Booths or in Hebrew, Sukkot, which is a fall festival. We're going to see Jesus involved with the Feast of Dedication or Hanukkah in John chapter 10. Then the Passover in the spring will be the last Passover mentioned in the Gospel of John.

So, John obviously is not about chronology. John has other things in mind to teach us about Jesus and the exact timing and relative sequence of things in his life. But to the extent that we have chronological references in the book, this would tend to put us in the fall leading up to the spring in which Jesus was crucified in Jerusalem.

So, we have the three different feasts mentioned here that come up in the book, keeping us as a part of the so-called feast cycle in John from chapters 5 through 10.

We keep in mind then, each time we start a new chapter the narrative flow. So just walking through quickly to see what happens in this chapter.

It's a very unsettling chapter, a chapter where it's very clear that there's a great deal of difference of opinion out there about Jesus and much is going on that shows the people are having arguments about him and not believing him. Even his own brothers as the chapter begins are shown to be folks who don't believe in him because they're saying to him the festival is at hand at the beginning of the chapter and they're saying to him he should go down there to the Feast of Tabernacles and do his thing and get people to believe in him. Of course, John the editor comments in verse 5, even his own brothers did not believe in him.

So, they weren't telling him to go to Jerusalem in order to further their faith and his. They were essentially just saying this is your gig, this is your thing, so why don't you go down there and do it, sort of in a scoffing manner evidently. Of course, we've already been told in John 7 in the first couple of verses that Jesus was not really looking to be found in Judea and Jerusalem because the Jewish leaders there were already looking for a way to arrest and execute him.

So, as it turns out Jesus makes one of these rather mysterious statements in verse 6, my time is not yet here you can go anytime your time will do the world can't hate you but it hates me because I testify that its works are evil. You go ahead to the festival I'm not going up to this festival because my time has not yet fully come. After he had said this he stayed in Galilee.

However, as it becomes clear as the narrative unfolds a few days later he actually did go to the festival in Jerusalem. So, we have a little bit of attention there understanding how he told them he wasn't going but later decided to go. So, we can figure out ways to explain that probably won't get into that much here because other more important things will occupy our time.

So, verse 10 tells us that after his brothers had left for the feast Jesus actually did go to Jerusalem and taught eventually. We understand that halfway through the festival in verse 14, he began to teach in the temple. So, he eventually does go to the temple but he goes in a furtive manner so that people are not able to see what he's doing not to stir up the crowds because evidently based on verse 10 the Jewish leaders had lookouts for him to try to nab him and even the crowds were wondering where he was thinking that he would be there and you see in verses 12 and 13 what will play out in the rest of the chapter.

Amongst the crowds there was widespread whispering about him some said he was a good man others replied no he deceives the people. So, the people who were saying he's a good man what would be the nature of their view of Jesus? Perhaps these would be the kind of people who are alluded to back in chapter 2 who knew

somewhat of Jesus and who saw the wonderful things he was doing and in that sense believed in him. Had faith in him as being a person whom God had sent of some merit of some worth of some value to God and to his kingdom.

Whether that would turn out to be a true saving belief in Jesus as he really existed is something of another question I think. So, this diversion this division amongst the crowd here in verse 12 and 13 is exacerbated by the leaders who are out to get Jesus and who are going to send people to arrest him so that they can do away with him. So, for evidently the first part of the feast Jesus is there in Jerusalem but is not publicly seen yet in the middle of the feast verse 14 says he began to teach there and things begin to as the colloquialism hit the fan.

So, some of the Jews are amazed and ask where did this man get this learning without having been taught. Jesus was not as we might say now a seminary graduate he had not been connected to any of the rabbis so people wondered how he had received the knowledge that he had. So, he explains in verses 16 through 19 that 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.

So, he even accuses the folks there in verse 19 of not keeping the law. Has not Moses given you the law yet not one of you keeps the law why are you trying to kill me? So the crowd says what are you talking about we're not trying to kill you and they say you must be demon possessed why would you have a view like that? Whether these people were saying this knowing full well that the authorities were looking for Jesus and just prevaricating or whether they really were innocent of the plot against Jesus or not you can be the judge of that. So, Jesus continues in so we have another big red letter section from verses 21 to 24 another block of teaching Jesus says I did one miracle and you are all amazed what miracle is that speaking of? Most likely back to chapter 5 the man that he healed at the pool Bethesda the paralyzed man and that of course was the beginning of the conflict beginning of the debate between Jesus and the religious leaders in Jerusalem.

I did one miracle and you're all amazed yet because Moses gave you circumcision though actually it didn't come from Moses but from the patriarchs' interesting point Jesus making that circumcision began in the book of Genesis, not in the book of Exodus. You circumcise a boy on the Sabbath so he's saying to them there's a sense of which you break the Sabbath to keep the circumcision law on the eighth day. So, verse 23 if a boy can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses may not be broken why are you angry with me for taking care of this paralyzed man on the Sabbath? I took care of his whole body you're okay with circumcision but not this.

So, he's saying stop having this superficial judgment verse 24 stop judging by mere appearances instead judge correctly. So, Jesus' way of understanding Sabbath law is explained here and is rather different from the pharisaic tradition. So, in verse 25 the continuing division over Jesus is quite clear this leads us up to the authorities speaking about him.

So during the tumult during all the chaos that's going on all the people there for the feast of booths Jerusalem packed with people Jesus moving in and out of the crowds some liking him not really getting him some perhaps having true faith in him others suspicious of him others trying to kill him all this variety of positive and negative responses to him some of the people of Jerusalem verse 25 began to ask isn't this the man they're trying to kill here he is speaking publicly they're not doing anything about it haven't the authorities concluded really concluded he's the messiah but we know that when the Messiah comes no one will know where he's from. So there was one group of people who thought the origins of the messiah would be very mysterious since they knew the origin of Jesus being a person from Galilee from Nazareth they thought he couldn't be the messiah. So in the midst of all the continuing chaos Jesus is portrayed again in verse 28, it's crying out you know who I am and you know where I'm from I'm not here on my own authority he who sent me is true you don't know him but I know him because I'm from him and he sent me.

This essentially reiterates the gist of what Jesus was telling them as early as chapter 5 after healing the paralytic. So what Jesus is saying here in chapter 7 is basically a reiteration of everything that he's already said in chapter 5 about his identity about his working on the sabbath about him being the agent of the Father and about if you are rejecting me you are rejecting the one who sent me. Verse 30 then speaks of the reaction to this they tried to seize him but no one laid a hand on him because his hour had not yet come that is a bit mysterious some people think that Jesus did something supernatural to avoid arrest here I don't know that we have to conclude that but I think certainly God was providentially ordering the circumstances so that Jesus was not arrested at this point because the time was not yet.

So some were trying to arrest him some were skeptical that he was who he said he was yet notice verse 31 many in the crowd believed in him they said when the messiah comes will he perform more signs than this man in other words they were saying what's Jesus got to do to persuade them what more could he do if they're not going to believe in him just let them reject him because he's certainly given them enough evidence that he could show himself to be the messiah. This text here in 7:31 is very much what the blind like what the blind man said in chapter 9 when he was having his dispute with the Pharisees about Jesus' identity they said he couldn't be from God he worked on the sabbath and the blind man said well maybe you're right but I know I was once blind now I can see you can't deny that. So it's a rather pragmatic argument about Jesus' identity amongst the crowd but one that I think was held by many of the people.

So once again we ask ourselves when we see that many in the crowd believed in him is this affirming that these people were possessed with true were true disciples that they had a faith that would persevere and abide in Jesus or these people who were just impressed with the miracles that he did as the folks were back at the end of chapter 2. So, the theme of signs and faith once again becomes a matter of interpretation in John's gospel. So, beginning at 732 then Jesus is not portrayed as much as traveling around and talking to the crowds now the focus is on the leaders in Jerusalem and their attempt to arrest him. So, they're not successful in that and so we have this little debate about his identity with them.

So, with verse 32 then the focus in the rest of chapter is on the religious leaders. So the leaders seek to arrest Jesus so they hear the crowd whispering things about him the chief priests and the Pharisees send guards to arrest him and evidently when the guards who were sent to arrest him confront him they're somewhat mesmerized that I guess is probably too strong of a word they are so in all of his teaching that they are unable to carry out their mission. So, we have another teaching of Jesus here in verses 33-34.

I'm with you for only a short time then I'm going to the one who sent me you'll look for me but you won't find me where I am you cannot come. This passage in 33-34 is reiterated in chapter 13 when Jesus is about to give the new commandment after the departure of Judas. He says you remember how I told the Jews where I'm going you can't come well, I'm repeating that to you now so we'll see this saying again in chapter 13.

So the crowd evidently the Jews were saying to one another when they heard this what's he talking about where does he intend to go that we can't find him so they think he's going to go out and do an itinerant trip out amongst the Jewish dispersion in the Greeks and teach the Greeks probably by Greeks there it doesn't necessarily mean people who are ethnically Greek but more likely Jewish people who are who are a part of the Jewish dispersion and living in the more Grecianized or Hellenized regions of Judaism. So, they're confused by the statement so in verse 37 then we come to what in many ways is the most theologically important part of the chapter because it is another one of these statements where Jesus and the Spirit are mentioned together. So, on the very last day of the feast, you remember that Jesus began teaching in verse 14 midway through the festival so on the last day of the feast here we are in verse 37 the greatest day of the festival Jesus stood and said in a loud voice 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.

An alternate translation of this will be and we'll explain why later let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink but let the one who is who believes in me I'm sorry let anyone who believes let anyone who is thirsty come to me and let anyone drink who

believes in me as the scripture says rivers of living water will flow from within them. So, the question in this verse as we'll see later is whether Jesus is speaking of himself as a source of the Spirit for believers or believers as the source of the Spirit for evidently other people. In any event verse 39 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 another statement which sounds much like the teaching of the upper room of the farewell discourse in chapters 14 through 16 more on that one later.

So, when they heard Jesus say these things about himself in verses 37 to 39 some of the people said surely this man is the prophet so we are back to the illusion to Deuteronomy 18 that we had just seen in the previous chapter in chapter 6. Others said he was the Messiah perhaps being the prophet being the Messiah were one and the same in their thinking or perhaps they had a distinction in their minds between the prophet who was perhaps a military or a civil leader and the Messiah being a spiritual leader. In any event, the type of understanding of the Messiah was quite varied amongst this crowd. Still others asked here's a third opinion in verse 41 how can the Messiah come from Galilee? So they knew Jesus was a Galilean they were thinking about the Micah chapter 5 verse 2 they said does not the scripture say that the Messiah will come from David's descendants and from Bethlehem the town where David lived.

Thus the people were divided because of Jesus verse 43. So, if we've been reading this chapter we say no kidding we finally got this straight now the people were divided sure they were. So, some wanted to seize him but no one laid a hand on him.

Meanwhile back in the headquarters of the religious leaders while all this turmoil is going on out in the streets we have the chief priests and the Pharisees who asked the people they sent to arrest Jesus why didn't you bring him in? Their response is quite interesting and somewhat puzzling they say no one ever spoke the way this man does. So, we get the opportunity you get the impression that they were there with Jesus perhaps had the opportunity to arrest him but were so impressed with the way he spoke and what he was saying so puzzled and mesmerized whatever word you want to put there that they were having a hard time figuring out whether they ought to arrest him or not. Another possibility would be that they were afraid if they tried to arrest him there were so many people there who were supporting Jesus that they would have started a riot and would have been beaten up by the crowd who knows no one ever spoke the way this man speaks they said.

So, the next part of the chapter is quite interesting where we have a debate over the identity of Jesus not so much in the crowd but with the religious leaders themselves. They say to the folks they had sent to arrest Jesus you mean he's deceived you also? Have any of the rulers of the Pharisees believed in him? No, but this mob who knows nothing of the law there is a curse on them. So, there is an expression in rabbinic

Judaism in the Mishnah and in other rabbinic sources about the people of the land who knew not the law they're called the Am-harez.

The Am-harez the people of the land are in distinction from the Talmudim the students of the Torah and so they are sometimes looked down upon they're not members of the Khabarim the colleagues who are involved in the study of the Torah. So perhaps this is what we're seeing here a view of pharisaic and priestly people who are representing the upper crust of the educational side of the society as well as the temple establishment and they're looking down on the common people saying they're basically a mob what do they know there's a curse on them. There is however a minority report on the Sanhedrin on the council amongst the chief priests and the Pharisees.

So, our friend Nicodemus from chapter three again is coming to the fore, and in verse 50 Nicodemus who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their own number asked does our law condemn a person without first hearing him to find out what he's been doing. Nicodemus then just asks them to have a moment of fairness and by the way, if you look at the Mishnah and the tractate that speaks about the Sanhedrin the Mishnah has very scrupulous rules about how the Sanhedrin is to operate particularly in a case of capital crimes so that miscarriage of justice would never occur. And so, when we read in the gospels the way that the Sanhedrin treated Jesus unjustly it's quite clear from reading the Mishnah that they not only were doing it unjustly from the standpoint of the synoptics but they were doing it unjustly from the standpoint of their own guidelines.

So, Nicodemus asked what seems to be a rather important question one that is just asking for a little bit of basic fairness for Jesus and so the reply to him is to insult them insult Nicodemus much the way they insulted the people they sent to arrest Jesus in verse 47. 47 they said to the arrest party you mean he's deceived you too? 52 they say to Nicodemus you are you from Galilee too? This basically is a slur against Galileans as being country bumpkins ignorant people who perhaps are not as scrupulous in their observance of the Torah. Just think of any ethnic or societal slurs that you're familiar with and that's basically where they were going.

So, they had nothing to really say to Nicodemus of substance so they relied on an epithet. They called him a name and that was their way of getting into it. However, they did make the point look into it you'll find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee.

I think if you study into that you'll find out that that statement is not strictly true but it's not as important to us as other things in the chapter so we'll just leave that as it stands. So, when we find Jesus here again in Jerusalem we take just a moment to refresh ourselves on the place where he was evidently somewhere in and around the temple mount. The pilgrims would have been flowing into the city.

It turns out that in the time of the Feast of Sukkot according to the Mishnah, there was an emphasis on the priest drawing water from the pool of Siloam. The pool of Siloam is going to come up specifically in John chapter 9 where Jesus told the blind man that he healed to go wash in the pool of Siloam. So, we'll be coming back to that in chapter 9 talking about it some more.

In any event in the around the temple where Jesus was going we just look at these pictures and try to remind ourselves of the fact that where the Dome of the Rock stands now in the Al-Aqsa Mosque in the days of the temple these steps right here would have been steps that entered into the temple. Double gate and a triple gate underground steps coming up into an area here which is the court of the Gentiles all around leading you then into the court of Israel and eventually somewhere in this area evidently where the mosque stands here now where the Holy of Holies would have been near here. If you're wondering where the Wailing Wall is and all that in this picture this big plaza right here is the plaza leading up to it and the Wailing Wall the retaining wall the western wall I believe it's called the Kotel in Hebrew is somewhere in this bad perspective can't really see it but this area right in here that helps.

So, here's a perspective from the south from the Jerusalem model near the Israel Museum showing you the gates that would have gotten you in from the south into the temple grounds, and down here in the lower part is where probably the Pool of Siloam was. So, in relation to the Feast of Sukkot priests came down here drawing water and taking it back up to the temple as part of the ritual there for the water libation and again we'll see more about the Pool of Siloam later on in chapter 9. It's believed that Jesus' imagery in John chapter 7 when he speaks of rivers of living water flowing out of my view him to believers that he was speaking of this perhaps a Feast of Sukkot ritual involving taking water from the Pool of Siloam. So, in the midst of the chapter, we're trying just to get a handle on what's going on there amidst all the tumult.

Jesus is publicly teaching from the middle of the week on and there are all this speculation about him even before he begins to teach and as he teaches all these different reactions to him. So how does this chapter work as literature? How are we to receive it? It seems to me that what we have here is a text leading up to the teaching of Jesus in 7:37 to 7:39 and then a text moving away from that. So, from the sections that basically culminate in the plan of leaders to arrest Jesus.

So, from 7 up to 7:32 to 7:36 you learn about all the different views and the plan of the leaders to arrest him. Then you have chapter 7 verses 37 through 7:39 which is Jesus' central teaching in the chapter. The new teaching doesn't reiterate what he'd already said in chapter 5. Then you have the inside council meeting discussion in verses 40 through 7:52.

So, the leaders send their officers to arrest Jesus 7:32 to 36. Jesus teaches about the spirit and his teaching is so impressive or mesmerizing that the officers return without arresting Jesus and so we have this fighting amongst themselves on the council. One wonders whether Nicodemus was joined by anyone else on the council.

In chapter 19 his companion in burying the body of Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea, is also described as a member of the Jewish council. So, we wonder whether Nicodemus was joined in private sentiment at least by Joseph of Arimathea at this time or there may have been even other people who believed in Jesus. We mistake ourselves if we think that all of the Jewish leaders are enemies of Jesus.

Not all of them were. Obviously, most were but early on in the book of Acts we see the gospel in Jerusalem proceeding and we're told there that many of the priestly people, many of the leaders of Israel became believers in Jesus during these days. Comparatively speaking few obviously but it's not like none of the Jewish people rejected Jesus.

We need to be careful when we study the gospel of John that we don't elapse into a sort of implicit anti-Semitism. There are texts in John 1 for example where it says he came into his own, his own didn't receive him. That's a general statement but obviously many of his own did receive him as the text says as many as received him he authorized them to become the children of God.

So, we stand up and cheer for Nicodemus here in John 7 at the end of the chapter for at least getting a word of sanity, a word of caution, a word of justice into the lynch mentality that is already confronting Jesus. So, as we think about what goes on from this time on in this section of material in John chapter 7 and following we're reminded of the fact that the divisions, the arguments, the conflicts amongst the crowd about Jesus' identity and mission that we've already seen portrayed in chapter 7, all these passages we've already looked at briefly, this can be repeated again and again as we look further into this section of time where Jesus is in Jerusalem teaching the crowds. We have several passages in chapter 8 that show how we have growing intensity in the debate about Jesus.

We have in chapter 9 the story of the blind man who is healed, with similar growing intensity opposition to Jesus. Chapter 10 as well which we tend to think of as a warm fuzzy chapter. We call it the good shepherd discourse and we feel so fortunate to be blessed by a loving shepherd Jesus.

Unfortunately, that's true but in the context, the story is not so much about the positive aspects of Jesus being the good shepherd but about how Jesus is not with the other shepherds of Israel who turn out to be miserable shepherds who are just in it for themselves. The overall mood of John chapter 10 in the context, I'm sorry is a

very negative one and it just shows how the opposition to Jesus is getting worse and worse, coming to more and more of a head in chapter 10 at the end as you may already know they're ready to stone Jesus one more time because of his associating himself with the father. So as chapter 10 ends, Jesus takes a little time off, and goes to Transjordan, the text says where things began where John was first baptizing.

So, chapter 10 at the end takes us all the way back to chapter 1 and so there's sort of like a brief respite there that Jesus has in that area before he hears about his friend Lazarus being ill. So this is just to show us that as we see this conflict and all these divisions going on in chapter 7 this is pretty much business as usual for the next few chapters. This is the type of material we're going to be encountering and it's not really a fun time to be reading John because there's a lot of chaos, there's a lot of negativity and things are going from bad to worse as it were.

The mood of this text sort of reminds me of the mood in Jerusalem when we're reading the synoptic gospels of the time after Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem where he is hanging out and teaching around the temple in the area and one person after another comes to him and tries to trick him or say something to him that will get him in trouble. It's just a tumultuous time and lots of conflict and just keeps coming over and over again and that's what we have in John all the way from chapters 7 through 10. Thinking about it from the standpoint of the background, remember Jesus is in Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles often called.

Some translations call it booths, the Hebrew word being a sukkot. So what do we know about the sukkot from the Hebrew Bible? We have lots of texts that describe it in Exodus 23, Leviticus 23, Deuteronomy, and later references to how it was observed from Nehemiah and in Zechariah as well. Zechariah's text is particularly interesting because it speaks of Gentiles coming to Jerusalem to observe the Feast of Booths.

Mishnah tractate sukkot tells you and gives you some insight into how the sukkot was understood and practiced by the end of the 2nd century, the common era. Many of those oral traditions that were eventually written down around 200 in the Mishnah perhaps were already in effect and already carried out during the days of Jesus 150-200 years before the Mishnah was actually redacted and written down. So this is a fall festival and it involves people living outside in temporary dwellings probably to remember two different things.

Number one, the way in which Israel wandered in the wilderness and the way in which they could celebrate the harvest and grow the grain. So, this is a feast that probably is a memorial of God's faithfulness in both senses. That God has been faithful in providing the crops and God has been faithful to his people in preserving them through the time of wandering in the wilderness.

So, it would be wonderful if we were to be able to take the time to look more deeply into sukkot in the Torah and see how it was laid out to be observed and then some of the later references to it. But other things are on our mind as well here today so we just have to leave this material as it is. If you have interest, hopefully, you'll be able to look at it some more later.

We have a couple of images here about how Sukkot is observed today in a typical American place. Here in Grand Rapids, we have Jewish communities and you see these types of places in their side yard or perhaps in their backyards in the fall around the Feast of Sukkot. Here they're using lattice work that you could probably go and buy at Lowe's or Builders Depot or whatever they call that lumber yard.

So, they're just setting that up and using various types of branches. Looks like they have some corn stalks here decorating it or making the roof covering it in a little bit. Here's a picture from Jerusalem itself about how they're using plywood sheets with sort of lattice work or some sort of temporary branches not only on the street level but also up on this apartment balcony area.

So, sukkot is still observed all over the world by the Jewish people. It seems like it's just a beautiful festival. Who doesn't like to be outside in the fall when the air is crisp and the leaves are falling it's just a nice time to be alive.

But when we look at John chapter 7 perhaps the most important thing theologically about it is the statement of Jesus in verse 38 about the rivers of living water. So, we are reminded again in John 7 37 39 about the way water has been used symbolically throughout John's gospel going all the way back in chapter 1 to John the Baptist where he acknowledges that his baptism is a water baptism preparing people for the spirit baptism of Jesus. Additional references to water in chapters 2 and 3 perhaps a very important one in chapter 4 where Jesus tells the woman at the well in Samaria about the living water.

That text is probably a direct connection here with John chapter 7 how Jesus describes the water here. Thinking back to the Old Testament there is of course a lot of water symbolism and water use there as well. Texts such as Deuteronomy 28 Isaiah 44 and all these texts and even the book of Revelation chapter 22 verse 1 speak of the river harking back to the river of the garden of Eden.

So, water symbolizes not only God's care for his people because in ancient times, of course, they didn't have the type of modern conveniences we have. You just need water you're thirsty you turn on the spigot not so in ancient times and living in a climate where you have dry seasons and rainy seasons, water is not always available. So, you have to have systems where you have cisterns and everything else to make sure you're able to just survive let alone use water for cooking let alone use water for religious purposes for religious purification in Judaism.

So, water becomes a big symbol in the biblical prophets for the blessing of God in the future upon Israel. And so, rivers of living water the expression Jesus has is something that perhaps doesn't speak to us that much, but rivers of living water is sort of a seasonal thing in Israel would be more of something you would see more in the spring. You would think, finally God has provided water for the land and God is faithful. And so, water symbolism is important for us to think about.

Possibly a historical background to this text in John 7:37-39 particularly chapter 7 verse 38 as a text in the Mishnah again this is a document explaining early Jewish interpretation of the Torah dating to around 200 AD. When it was written down it contains traditions of earlier rabbis perhaps back to the time of Jesus. So, we think of it as a document that may help us understand not the foreground but the background of the Gospels.

In the tractate dealing with the Sukkot M-Suk stands for Mishnah tractate the Sukkot chapter 4 verses 8-10 the priestly functionaries would draw water from the feast, excuse me, from the pool of Siloam on the last day of the feast and return it then back to the temple for the libation in certain of the sacrifices that were being done there. So, people wonder whether when Jesus was there on the last day of the feast.

Verse 37 says that he stood and said in a loud voice let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. The question is whether this was done as the priest was taking the water from the temple and perhaps you taking the water from the pool to use in the temple. It's a possibility. I don't know that it's absolutely certain that this is going on but it certainly helps us understand a possible reason for it.

Another thing about John 7 that is quite interesting is not so much whether there's background in the Mishnah but what Jesus has in mind in verse 38 when he says whoever believes in me as the scripture says rivers of living water will flow from within literally him. The NIV has turned that into a plural them because they want to be gender-neutral and that is usually a good thing I think.

So, where does the Bible say rivers of living water will flow I don't think there is a specific text in mind for this anywhere that we're able to find. It's the general prophetic use of water flowing water being a blessing of God and the way in which texts like Isaiah 55, Zechariah 14, and Ezekiel 47 perhaps speak about the way in which God will bless Israel with an abundance of water. Blessings will come down like a flood and everybody will be inundated with the goodness of God.

I think there is the idea of that one other question about John 7 verse 38 is the way in which Jesus speaks of the rivers of living water. You'll notice if you have a study Bible or a Bible with references or notes in it an ESV and NIV one of the more recent translations perhaps the NLT as well although I haven't checked the NLT on this.

Often they translate the text something like we're used to hearing it, if anyone thirst let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me as the scripture has said out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. What does that text mean? Well, it pretty clearly means that those who believe in Jesus will themselves become reservoirs from whom water flows. In other words, the Spirit will flow out of their lives evidently to other people and bless them from individual believers.

Another way of looking at the text would be to translate it in a slightly different way the italicized portion here on the slide shows you the difference. It could be translated instead of, if everyone thirst let him come to me and drink whoever believes in me out of his heart will flow rivers of living water, could be translated instead, if anyone thirst let him come to me comma, and let him who believes in me drink as the scripture has said out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. In this case the person from whose heart the Spirit flows is not the individual believer but it is Jesus himself.

So, which of these two ways of looking at it makes best sense when you think about the teaching of the Gospel of John as a whole.

On the role of the comforter, the helper, the Holy Spirit is, Jesus is speaking of himself here as the soul maybe we would use the term objective source of the Spirit the ultimate source of the Spirit for other people. Or is this text speaking of the way in which Jesus gives the Spirit to believers and it is from them that they are the Spirit is flowing out to others. So is this something that's about the internalization of the Spirit in the followers of Jesus, or is this saying that Jesus himself is the source of the Spirit for all believers?

I tend to think that given the overall teaching of the Gospel of John we should go with the alternate translation of the passage here, not the one that we're more used to because I don't think the Gospel of John is saying so much about the abundant flowing of the Spirit from individual believers, although we believe that to be possible, and the later teaching of Paul perhaps is more akin to that emphasis. But I think from what this text is telling us it's more likely in light of John overall that Jesus is the true source and reservoir from whom the Spirit flows. Isn't that what John the Baptist said back in chapter 1? Jesus is the one who baptizes with the Spirit isn't that really what chapter 3 is about? The Father gives the Spirit to the Son without measure. Isn't that what we're told in the upper room where we have additional texts in chapters 14, 15, and 16 that speak of Jesus and in some cases Jesus and his Father sending the Spirit to the believers?

Even John chapter 20 verse 22 the last reference to the Spirit in John. Jesus says to receive the Spirit as he breathes on the disciples. So, he is the source of the spirit so the overall teaching of John I would think is focusing more on the Lord Jesus Christ as

the one who brings the Spirit to the church. There are far-reaching perhaps implications of this for our understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit. There are those of us in the evangelical Christian community who have paid far too little attention to the work of the Spirit. There are those perhaps who pay a lot of attention to the work of the Spirit and do so in a way that doesn't necessarily honor the Lord Jesus.

So, it's very clear in the Gospel of John that the Spirit is Christocentric. What we're going to be reading about the Spirit particularly in chapters 14 through 16 is that the Spirit is all about Jesus. So, the Spirit comes to remind people what Jesus taught and to give them new teachings from Jesus. But it's all about Jesus. The Spirit will not speak about himself but will speak about Jesus so Jesus I think here in John 7 is the source of the Spirit not vice versa.

Similarly, perhaps in the teaching of Paul 1 Corinthians 12, it is Jesus who is the head of the church. He is the head of the body. He sends the Spirit to the church to equip his body to do its work in various ways in the world. So keep that in mind and think about that possible little wrinkle in the translation of the passage that it's really saying that the one who comes to Jesus and the one who believes in him, it is out of the heart of Jesus it is the one who is coming to Jesus that's emphasized in this passage. And the Spirit comes from Jesus to us.

Speaking of the Pool of Siloam a couple more images here those of you perhaps who have been to Israel in the past have visited one place where they told you it was the Pool of Siloam. However, another site has been identified more recently as the place. So this is a very bad picture when you blow it up not a not enough pixels here, but you can see the outline of the temple mount and down here below the lower Jerusalem in the lowest area perhaps is where the temple excuse me, the Pool of Siloam was previously identified. Later it was shown to be actually in a different place. Here's a more blown-up picture of that.

So, in the old days if you visited Jerusalem they would show you this pool as being Pool of Siloam and tied into the Old Testament site called the Hezekiah's tunnel as well. However, more recently by accident in doing some excavations for a modern building project another huge pool was discovered nearby. In a way that is probably now viewed as the actual Pool of Siloam here is an early picture of it as it was first being uncovered. A little bit later they filled in some boards here where the stones were actually missing, and so you can see the steps down into the pool. The pool level the corner here at more than a 90-degree angle so we have sort of a trapezoidal form. So, when I was in Israel in 2014 I was able to take this picture and a picture of the placard here that describes it.

Here's one artist who thought of it looking in this way when it was originally done. Pool of Siloam was tied to the way in which king Hezekiah built the tunnel and made the pool in the conduct. So, however it was done back then tying back to 2 King's chapter 20 for the historical origins of this pool.

Another artist's rendition of it makes it look something like this. I'm not so sure that there was ever quite the cutaway down to Jordan Valley there. I'm not sure what the angle would be on that perhaps that would be the picture that we have from recent times would have been this corner. And if you were looking the other direction you'd be looking perhaps over that way another way of looking at it is this beautiful picture of a couple of boys playing a game there around the edge of that very beautiful pool.

So, as we look back now on what we have seen in John's chapter 7 it is a chapter full of tumult and disagreement and chaos about who Jesus really is. So perhaps the real question as we look at John 7 is who is this man who is this who is this fellow Jesus? Well, based on the chapter we could make a list of opinions about him and viewpoints. So, he's a wanted man the leaders are looking for him they've sent out an arrest party. He's a man whom his own brothers have some problems with they don't really get him. He is a man who is hated by the world. There are people in John 7 in verse 7 especially who hate Jesus by his own testimony.

So, the question is amongst the crowd is he a good man or is he a deceiver and, by the way, how does he appear to be so smart because he doesn't seem to have much of an education? We can't tie him to any of the known rabbinical sources some would even say he's a demon- possessed man.

Others at the opposite end would say he is the Messiah or yet is he an obscure Galilean person. Others said he's the prophet. So the people were divided because of Jesus. Is it not the same way today are we not still divided today over who Jesus is?

Hopefully, all of us who are making and watching the video here and thinking about the Gospel of John will be those who are of the opinion that he is indeed the Messiah and that we'll take the information that John gives us and be people who believe in Jesus and who receive life through his name.

This is Dr. David Turner in his teaching on the Gospel of John. This is session 9, Tense Times in Jerusalem, Who is this man? John 7:1-52.