

**EVERY DAY WITH JESUS** (December 28-January 3)

Savor a segment of the gospel each day so that you may...

“...grow in the grace and knowledge of our LORD and Savior Jesus Christ.” “II Peter 3:18)

**\*BACKGROUND FOR UNDERSTANDING JOHN CHAPTER 7** The “*Feast of Tabernacles*” was one of three annual religious feasts in which adult Jewish males were commanded by God to take part. You can find more about it in Leviticus 23:33-44. It was a week long festival in the month of October, harvest time. The people constructed temporary shelters (tabernacles) within Jerusalem or outside its walls and lived in them during that week. (It made Jerusalem and its surroundings like a “tent” city.)

The Feast of Tabernacles in this chapter of John took place about six months before the death and resurrection of Jesus. It was His last appearance in Jerusalem prior to His final Passover visit.

“*Jesus brothers*” seems to refer to sons born to Joseph and Mary after the birth of Jesus. The Greek word translated “brothers” can mean cousins. (Many Roman Catholic Christians have been taught that Mary remained a virgin after the conception and birth of Jesus. See the Latin phrase - *semper virgine*. That is not a Biblical truth.)

*Three distinct groups of people* are mentioned in this chapter. It is important that we distinguish them: 1. “*The Jews*” is a way of referring to the leaders of the Jewish people who were opposed to Jesus as the Christ; 2. “*the people of Jerusalem*” the year-around citizens of Jerusalem, who were much influenced by their religious leaders to not believe in Jesus as the Christ; 3. “*the crowd*” included mostly the pilgrims from all over Israel who had come to town for the religious feast. Many of them believed Jesus of Nazareth to be the Christ; although they had many different opinions about what the Christ would do.

**MONDAY, December 28: Please read: John 7:1-13** **Questions:** 1. Why was Jesus avoiding Judea and Jerusalem and not even staying in one place in Galilee at this time? 2. What do you think of the logic of Jesus’ brothers as it is expressed in verses 3,4? 3. According to Jesus’ response to them, how did the unbelief of His brothers show itself? **Possible answers:** 1. The religious leaders were plotting to kill Him. God, not Jesus’ enemies, had determined the place and time of that event. Jesus’ judgment and subsequent action conformed to that will of God. 2. Whatever their motive, their idea is basically correct. However, their timing is not God’s timing. Jesus’ answer does not object to their premise about Him showing Himself publicly. His problem is with their timing. 3. They were not seeking God’s time because they were not in tune with God’s will. **Prayer:** Dear Jesus, as believers in You as our Savior, help us to seek the Father’s will and His timing in all things. AMEN!

**TUESDAY, December 29: Please read: John 7:14-24** **Background:** See \* above for important background. The words translated “*this man*” are actually negative in the original greek language; better translated “*this fellow*”. Remember these are the words of the unbelieving Jews. Also, remember later in the reading that the “*crowd*” are the “out of towners” who didn’t yet know about the Jerusalem leaders’ plot to kill Jesus. The “*one miracle*” to which Jesus refers is the healing of the crippled man referred to in John 5. **Questions:** 1. What are the unbelieving Jews meaning by their question in verse 15? 2. What does Jesus say is the touchstone of truth in a speaker? 3. As we said, the Jews were trying to humiliate Jesus as a teacher and elevate themselves. How does Jesus expose them? **Possible Answers:** 1. They are trying to raise doubt in the mind of the people listening to Jesus by implying He doesn’t know what He is talking about. He has no academic credentials and no authority. 2. The speaker who seeks to honor the one who sent him is telling the truth. 3. Jesus exposes their sinister plan to kill Him and, in so doing, shows that they are not really faithful teachers of Moses as they had claimed. Anyone who plots murder can scarcely be trusted as a faithful teacher of Moses, through whom God said “You shall not kill”. **Prayer:** Jesus, we know You are from God and therefore Your words are all true. Help us to know Your Word better and to believe Your Word more. AMEN!

**WEDNESDAY, December 30; Please read: John 7:25-36** **Background:** See \* above. Verse 27 is what we in our day would call “conventional wisdom”. In this case, it has no truth but it is generally held to be true. **Questions:** 1. “*the people of Jerusalem*” in verse 25 refers to the year-around citizens. What do they know? 2. In verse 28 A, Jesus is quoting these people who think they know all about His origin. What is the straightforward assertion Jesus is making in verses 28 and 29? 3. What amazing double outcome were Jesus words having at this time (really this is the way it always is)? 4. Jesus prophecy in verse 34 is repeated in questioning form by His hearers in verse 36. What awful reality do they portray?! **Possible Answers:** 1. The word has gotten around town; they know their leaders are seeking to kill Jesus of Nazareth. 2. Jesus is plainly telling them that they don’t really know God if they don’t understand that God has sent Jesus

on His mission. 3. Some were incensed by what He said and wanted to seize Him while others were coming to faith in Him through the Words He spoke. 4. Everyone needs the Messiah, the promised Savior. Those who don't recognize that Jesus of Nazareth is that promised Messiah will be vainly looking for a substitute. Their unbelief will shut them out of heaven! **Prayer:** Dear Jesus, we are eternally grateful that You have enabled us with the arms of faith to embrace You as our Savior from sin. Eventhough many will not believe us and even hate us, help us to boldly proclaim Your words to all others so that You can bring them to faith too. AMEN!

**THURSDAY, December 31: Please Read: John 7:37-52 Background:** See \* above. Every day of the festival week of the Feast of the Tabernacles, a priest would solemnly draw water from the pool of Siloam, take it to the temple and pour it out with the morning sacrifice. This reminded the people of the time when God gave them water out of the rock during their wilderness wandering in Moses' time; and, of the spiritual refreshment that He would provide their souls.

**Questions:** 1. What Jesus did in verse 37 was very unusual for a teacher. Teachers in their day taught sitting down. Here He stood up and shouted in a loud voice. Why? 2. Of what are the people ignorant of in their questioning? 3. Praise God for the temple guards and Nicodemus! What's happening in their minds and hearts? **Possible Answers:** 1. Jesus is not just a teacher at this moment – He is a Herald of an eternally important message! He, and He alone, has and is life. He calls all people to Himself alone! 2. The people are ignorant of the fact that more than 30 years prior to this day Jesus had been born in Bethlehem. 3. They are being positively affected by the words of Jesus. They are open to hearing Him. Can faith be far behind?! **Prayer:** Savior, “no one has ever spoken the way You do”! Keep our ears open to what you have to say or minds able to grasp it and our heart to believe and respond to it! AMEN!

**FRIDAY, January 1, Please read: John 8:1-11 Background:** This story has very ancient testimony. It is probably a true incident from the life of Jesus; but, the most ancient and accurate texts seem to make it almost certain that it wasn't included by John at this point in his Gospel. **Questions:** 1. What is the dilemma in which they seek to trap Jesus? 2. What judgment does Jesus pass on her behavior? 3. What consequence does Jesus deliver for her sin? **Possible Answers:** 1. Death by stoning was the Old Testament punishment for adultery; but only in the case of a virgin engaged to be married. If Jesus doesn't recommend such punishment, He would seem to be in violation of God's law. On the other hand, the Jews didn't have the freedom to exact such punishment. Seeking that would put Him in violation of Roman law. 2. He calls upon her to repent, that is, to leave her life of sin. 3. Jesus bestows His mercy. He Himself would take her guilt (and ours!) to the cross. **Prayer:** Dear Savior, You are our merciful Judge who has accepted our sentence of guilt and punishment. While calling others to repentance, may we too be quick to show Your mercy. AMEN!

**SATURDAY, January 2; Please read: John 8:12-20 Background:** Like the previous chapter and the next, chapter 8 contains some of the most direct confronting of His enemies by Jesus. The words are a powerful assertion of His deity while at the same time a clear condemnation of the unbelief of His enemies. **Questions:** 1. Jesus IS the LIGHT that triumphs over darkness – can you think of some ways in which this is true? 2. His enemies ignorantly and arrogantly call Him a liar; yet, two witnesses are all God's law required to prove the truth. Who are the two witnesses that Jesus puts forth? 3. According to Jesus testimony, why do these two witnesses pose a problem for His enemies? **Possible answers:** S. Goebel give us an answer: “.divine truth, clear as light, over against human falsehood and ignorance; divined holiness, pure as light, over against human sin and impurity; divine blessedness and glory, radiant as light, over against the night of human woe and death.” 2. Jesus' Himself and His Father are the authentic witnesses Jesus needs. 3. His enemies have a problem with His witnesses because although they consider themselves very religious (today we would say “spiritual”), the plain fact is they don't know God, therefore they don't recognize or accept His Son. **Prayer:** Light of the World, illumine my heart and life and shine through me to glorify You and grace others. AMEN!

**SUNDAY, January 3; Please read: John 8:21-30 Questions:** 1. Here Jesus says “*where I go you cannot come*” later He would say to others “*I AM going to prepare a place for you...that where I am there you may be also*” why the difference? 2. When and through what action will Jesus prove that He has been sent from God the Father? **Possible answers:** 1. The answer is given by Jesus in verses 23 & 24. Here Jesus is warning people who don't believe in Him; later He was comforting those who do believe in Him. 2. Jesus will prove He is the One sent from the Father when He is “*lifted up*”, that is crucified. By accepting the destination of the cross for Himself, Jesus opens up the destination of heaven for sinners who believe in Him thus showing Himself to be the promised Savior sent from heaven. What awesome love! What a profound plan of salvation! **Prayer:** Dear Jesus, You are our God and Savior! We worship You and praise You. We want to serve You and finally live with You in heaven. AMEN!