



LET'S BEGIN HERE

Have you ever been unjustly accused? Perhaps someone charged you for a wrong when you did right or pronounced you guilty when you were innocent. Maybe it was a group of people who plotted against you, determining to destroy your reputation and bring you down.

If anyone knows what it's like to be torn apart by enemies, it's Jesus. In today's passage, His attackers come in three groups: the Jewish leaders, the crowd, and—the first and most hurtful group—His own brothers.

They swipe at Jesus and roar their threats like lions on the prowl encircling their prey. But Jesus shuts His attackers' mouths with His calm, truthful words. Let's look closer at Jesus' responses and draw strength from Him when we're cornered by enemies.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

If you've ever been attacked by "lions," you know the heartache and fear of being a victim. Take a few moments to draw near to our Savior who also suffered at the hands of evil people. We share a special bond with Jesus through the "fellowship of His sufferings" (Philippians 3:10 NASB). Write down your need for His supportive presence, and ask Him for wisdom through this study.

Quotable

*I invite you who are
given to rebellion,
stop your running.
And those who
are given to fear,
rest your fear in
God's hands.*

— Charles R. Swindoll





Observation: Where, When, Why, and Who?

In his book, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs*, Chuck Swindoll explains his approach to Bible study, which includes four essential methods: observation, interpretation, correlation, and application. You can purchase a copy at Insight for Living Ministries' [online store](#). Also, we recommend that you add to your study library Chuck's [commentary](#) on John's gospel.

According to the *Searching the Scriptures* method, a crucial first step is observing the text closely through the magnifying glass of key questions. Answering questions enhances understanding and helps you reach the goal of a closer walk with Christ. Take a few moments to read John 7, and look for where, when, why, and who!

Where?

Where was Jesus at the beginning of the chapter (John 7:1)? Where did He go from there in secret (7:10)? Finally, where did He make His public appearance (7:14)?

When?

When was the trip to Jerusalem (John 7:2)? Look up background information about this festival on page 162 in Chuck's commentary, *Insights on John*. You can find additional information at [biblegateway.com](#) in the [article](#) "The Conflict Intensifies at the Feast of Tabernacles." Write down any interesting facts you uncover.



Jewish festivals presented ideal backdrops for Jesus to step on the national stage and declare His true nature. Here's a list of the festivals in John and the traits of Jesus' identity.

Jewish Festival	Passage	Trait of Jesus' Identity
First Passover	John 2:13	Jesus cleansed His "Father's house," the temple (2:16).
Unnamed "Jewish holy day"	John 5:1	Jesus claimed to be "the Son of God" (5:25).
Second Passover	John 6:4	Jesus announced, "I am the bread of life" (6:35).
Festival of Shelters (Booths or Tabernacles)	John 7:2	Jesus declared, "Anyone who is thirsty may come to me!" (7:37).
Festival of Dedication (Hanukkah)	John 10:22	Jesus proclaimed, "I am the good shepherd" and claimed to be God (10:14, 33–38).
Final Passover	John 12:1	Jesus entered Jerusalem as Messiah and King (12:12–19).

Why?

Jesus told His brothers, "You go on. I'm not going to this festival" (John 7:8). Why did Jesus not go to Jerusalem with His brothers and, despite the death threats from the Jews, come later in secret (7:1, 8–10)? Check out Chuck's commentary on page 163 for help with this answer. Also, the Greek word for *time* gives a clue to the reason for Jesus' secretiveness.



Getting to the Root

The word *time* in verse 8 is *kairos* in Greek and refers to the epochal moment when Jesus would present Himself as the Messiah, the promised King of Israel—a time set by Jesus' heavenly Father, not His cynical brothers or even His devoted mother (at the wedding in Cana, John 2:4).

What conclusion do you draw from Jesus' statement "my time has not yet come" (7:8)?



Who?

Throughout chapter 7, John beamed the spotlight on Jesus who stood on center stage. But John also highlighted three groups: Jesus' brothers, the Jewish leaders, and the people. Write down the attitude or reactions that characterized each group.

Jesus' Brothers	
John 7:2–5	

The Jewish Leaders	
John 7:11, 30	
7:35–36	
7:47–48	

The People	
John 7:12–15	
7:20, 25–27, 31–32	
7:40–46	

Answering where, when, why, and who helps us uncover the *background* and *setting* as well as the *people* and *their reactions*. Now let's take a closer look at the *what*. What is the meaning of Jesus' teaching on His relationship with the *Father* and the *Spirit*?





Interpretation: What Is the Meaning?

As Jesus taught, the people marveled at His understanding of Scripture, particularly since He had attended no school and studied under no famous rabbi. Jesus identified the source of His knowledge and authority as God Himself, Jesus' Father.

The Father Gave Jesus His Authority

The people wondered about Jesus' source of knowledge: "How does he know so much when he hasn't been trained?" (John 7:15). What was Jesus' answer (7:16–19)?

The people also questioned Jesus' claim to be the Messiah, saying, "For we know where this man comes from. When the Messiah comes, he will simply appear; no one will know where he comes from" (7:27).

How did Jesus correct their misunderstanding by pointing to His relationship with the Father (7:28–29)?

Why do you think Jesus' relationship with His Father is so central to Jesus' ministry?



Jesus Will Give the Holy Spirit to All Believers

Jesus also taught about His relationship with the third member of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. Understanding the ceremonial backdrop to Jesus' words helps us appreciate the impact of Jesus' words. In his commentary on John, scholar William Barclay explains:

Each day of the festival the people came with their palms and their willows to the Temple; with them they formed a kind of screen or roof and marched round the great altar. At the same time a priest took a golden pitcher . . . and went down to the Pool of Siloam and filled it with water. It was carried back through the Water Gate while the people recited Isaiah 12:3: "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation" [NIV]. The water was carried up to the Temple altar and poured out as an offering to God. . . . The whole dramatic ceremony was a vivid thanksgiving for God's good gift of water and an acted prayer for rain, and a memory of the water which sprang from the rock when they travelled through the wilderness.¹

Against this background, the time was ripe for Jesus to reveal His messianic identity as the One who would fulfill the spiritual hopes of the nation for salvation and inner transformation. What did Jesus proclaim in John 7:37–38?



Correlation: The Promised Spirit

The "living water" was the Holy Spirit whom Jesus would pour into the hearts of believers after His ascension (John 7:39; Acts 1:5–8; 2:1–4). Read the following verses and write down what the prophecies foretold about the Spirit's filling and when Jesus fulfilled them.

Ezekiel 36:25–27



Acts 2:1–4, 14–21



Application: What Do We Learn?

Jesus entered the lions' den knowing He was opening Himself to attack. Jesus' brothers were sarcastic, skeptical, and unbelieving. Some in the crowd considered Jesus demon possessed, and they mocked Him. And the Jewish officials? They had only murder on their minds.

Instead of fighting back, Jesus showed concern for His attackers. He extended His hand of grace to the ruthless "lions" who were crouching in the shadows and offered to all people, even those who hated Him, the refreshing water of life in the Spirit.

Imagine Jesus in this hostile setting as He offered living water to His enemies. What impresses you about our Savior?

In what ways can you draw from Jesus' strength and love as you face the lions in your life?

Let's close our time in the Word today by dipping our hands into the refreshing water of the Holy Spirit and drinking deeply from the source of all life as we give thanks to our heavenly Father.





A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I come to You thankful for Your Son and the life He offers. As I drink from His love and grace, Your Spirit flows like rivers of living water within my soul, refreshing me with the truth of Your presence and encouraging me to face my trials. Help me to speak with grace and to see my lions as You see them—thirsty people in need of the water only Jesus can give. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. William Barclay, "The Fountain of Living Water (John 7:37–44)," in Bible Commentaries: *William Barclay's Daily Study Bible*, John 7, StudyLight.org, <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dsb/john-7.html>, accessed Apr. 17, 2018.



FOLLOWING CHRIST . . . THE MAN OF GOD

Jesus in the Lions' Den

John 7

SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES

STUDY



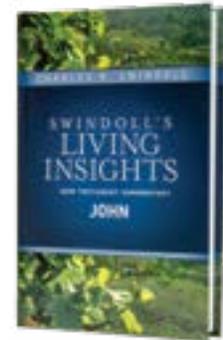
Tools for Digging Deeper



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For the 2018 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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