

# BRMC Small Group Study: John 7:25-52

## Leaders' Guide

Please note that the suggestions below are not model answers but to help guide your study. Feel free to adapt the questions for your group.

### Leader's Notes:

#### Context:

We are now in the midst of the Feast of Booths (or Feast of Tabernacles). This is a festival which commemorates the time where the Israelites lived in temporary shelters in the wilderness. The Jews would spend a week living in booths (or tents) across the city. This would also be a time of harvest and the festival also served to celebrate this time.

In the previous study (John 7:1-24), we had seen Jesus' interaction with his brothers. We also saw how he defended his alleged crime of healing a man on the Sabbath by pointing out the Jews' hypocrisy as they also perform certain works on the Sabbath.

#### Introduction:

In this passage, Jesus continues to astonish the people with his wisdom and proclamations. Even the officers sent to arrest Jesus were in awe of him and did not arrest him. Jesus' hard teachings continue to divide people and he was seen as either a lunatic or a divine man.

#### Lesson Objectives:

- Show that the people were beginning to consider Jesus' divinity.
- Study the significance of living water in this context.
- See the Pharisees' hypocrisy through their exchange with Nicodemus.

### Observation

1. What was the setting of this passage?

- *Jesus was in Judea for the Feast of Booths (Feast of Tabernacles). He was teaching at the temple with great wisdom, defending himself from the accusations of the Jewish leaders by pointing out their hypocrisy.*

- *Here, the people were discussing who Jesus is and whether he is the Christ. Meanwhile, the Pharisees continue to doubt his divinity.*

2. What were the people saying about Jesus?

- *There are several different opinions that the people had of Jesus.*

- *Some were convinced that Jesus is the messiah from his works and words (v. 31 and v. 40) and also because Jesus was allowed to preach openly without being arrested.*

- *Some challenged his messiahship as they knew where Jesus came from (v. 27). This was probably due to some rabbinic sources which suggested that the origins of the Messiah would be obscured and hidden.*

- *Another group also doubted his messiahship but on a different basis, that Jesus came from Galilee and not Bethlehem where the Messiah was supposed to come from (v. 41-42).*

- *Some were confused by his teachings (v. 35-36).*

- *Some, like the officers, were impressed by his teachings (v. 46).*

## **Interpretation**

3. What did Jesus mean when he said that the people would not be able to find him (John 7:33-36)?
- *The Jews had assumed that Jesus would be going into the Greek Diaspora to preach to them. This would actually happen in the future but it was not what Jesus was referring to. Jesus was referring to entering heaven where the Jews, who did not believe in him, could enter.*
  - *The irony here is that with Jesus' death and resurrection, the Gospel would indeed travel to the Greeks. It was a foreshadowing of what was to come.*
4. What was the significance of Jesus talking about living water in John 7:37-39?
- *We see another reference to living water akin to what we have read earlier in John 4 where Jesus offered living water to the Samaritan woman and her townsfolk.*
  - *The following passage is taken from John 1–11, vol. 25A, The New American Commentary, by Gerald L. Borchert:*
    - *“The next three verses of the Gospel draw our attention to one of the most memorable parts of the Festival of Tabernacles, the seven-day water ceremony and the prayers for rain. On each of the seven days prior to the final day (the [eighth] day), priests drew water from the Pool of Siloam and carried a golden pitcher full of the water to the temple and then around the altar with the high priest leading the way. As the priests neared the water gate, the shofar was blown, and then the psalms of praise and thanksgiving were sung to God for the harvest (Psalm 113–118).”*
  - *Jesus declaring that anyone can come to him to drink is a very significant moment in this festival. He implied that accepting his truth and believing in him would provide life that this festival celebrating God's providence in the wilderness and his deliverance from it could not.*
  - *Jesus would provide the Holy Spirit (living water) that would flow from their hearts if they chose to believe.*
5. What was the intention behind Nicodemus' question (John 7:51)?
- *Nicodemus was a character we have already read about in John 3. He was a Pharisee who had a debate with Jesus which was not concluded in that chapter. However, we read now in John 7 that Nicodemus had tried to defend Jesus by reasoning with the other Pharisees. This shows that he did in fact become convinced of Jesus' truth and teachings.*
  - *Note that Nicodemus did not openly declare (remember in John 3 when he came to Jesus at night) his support for Jesus but that he tactfully tried to convince them through the law. The Pharisees must put Jesus on trial before they could convict him.*
  - *However, the Pharisees, instead of listening to the reasoning of the law, chose to ridicule Nicodemus instead. This proves their hypocrisy and ignorance, highlighting their own selfish motives without regard for the law.*

## **Application**

6. What does it mean for you to drink the living water of Jesus? How would your life be changed?
7. Today, there is still dispute over Jesus' divinity. In your own words, explain Jesus' divinity to one another.