

## Gamma – Gospel of John

Book	Gospel of John
Topic	
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### **A. FEAST OF THE TABERNACLES**

**Background:** In the first four chapters of Gospel of John Jesus faced no opposition. In chapter 5 Jesus heals a man who was lying at the Pool of Siloam for many-many years. Jesus was accused by religious leaders and then there was wide scale abandonment after the biggest miracle ever performed, the feeding of the 20,000 people there and after he provided that a lot of people left. Chapter 7 is when there is basically intense opposition, it gets worse

John 7:1-5 (ESV) After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill him. **2** Now the Jews' Feast of Booths was at hand. **3** So his brothers said to him, "Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you are doing. **4** For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world." **5** For not even his brothers believed in him.

The feasts are very-very important. When God started the Old Testament, wrote it out, many of the figures in the Old Testament actually point to the New Testament. So it is like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle that come together, if you are really paying attention, you would be able to know that when the Messiah comes he will fulfill all those prophecies and they are basically seven feasts which the Jews will actually celebrate and each one of these feast actually have a fulfillment part which Jesus will actually fulfill, which then basically verifies his authenticity. So today, we are going to look at the last feast which is the Feast of Tabernacles.

This occurs at about September to October and it occurs six months after the feeding of the 5000. The feeding of 5000 will be in April and May kind of time when there is the Passover and this is September and October and this is a festival where there is also harvest of grapes and olives. So there are basically three discourses which is John 7, 8 and 10 where he actually teaches. So John's Gospel is actually quite unique in the sense it has got a lot of in-depth teaching. You don't see that in Mark, which is very fast moving like an action movie.

It is the feast that celebrates dependence on God and basically three times a year everybody will come and meet in Jerusalem for at least three of the seven feasts and this is one of them. What they do is that when they come, everybody sets up a booth. The reason behind is this because they want to go back to memory lane and replicate what happened to them in the wilderness, when they escaped from Egypt. When they were wandering 40 years in the desert, they didn't live in mansions, they lived in tents, so now they setup tents, which remind them of the wilderness. The booths also remind them that their time on earth is also limited. You shouldn't get too comfortable. Because your true house or your true home is actually in heaven.

Then every day there would be sacrifices. There will be sacrifice of total of 70 bulls. So it talks about atonement. There will be a trumpet every day and then everyday they will go the pool of Siloam, they will take a golden pitcher, they will scoop this up and then the chief priest will then pour a pitcher of water on the rock, as well as, a pitcher of wine on the rock. Then after at night there will be a torch parade and with a big candle, called candelabra, will be lit up so the whole temple could be seen and this symbolizes God's leading of the people as light in the wilderness. So this reenacts the entire salvation seen and this water looks forward to the time that one day when God will pour his spirit upon the world and they will then reign with the Messiah. So this is very important Feast of Tabernacles.

[John 7:6-9 \(ESV\) Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. 7 The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil. 8 You go up to the feast. I am not going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come." 9 After saying this, he remained in Galilee.](#)

Whenever Jesus says my time has not come, my hour has not come, it always refers to crucifixion. So he is not going to go publically there to the festival because his time for crucifixion has not yet come, so therefore he won't do things publically. He will do things privately as it were. He didn't want to trigger off a sequence of events where he will be prematurely crucified.

## **B. WHO IS JESUS?**

[John 7:11-12 \(ESV\) The Jews were looking for him at the feast, and saying, "Where is he?" 12 And there was much muttering about him among the people. While some said, "He is a good man," others said, "No, he is leading the people astray."](#)

So the question today that we are going to ask is, who is Jesus Christ. Same question that the people asked at that time? Is he a good man or is he is a conman?

[John 7:20 \(ESV\) The crowd answered, "You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill you?"](#)

So you can have a good man, a conman or a mad man or actually he is Messiah. There are only four choices in life. So we are going to examine the four choices which we see here in John.

### ***Is Jesus a Good Man?***

Let's say Jesus is a good man. I think it is impossible that Jesus is a good man. He cannot be a good man.

- John 5:17 (ESV) But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working."

This is basically God working, so Jesus must be God.

- John 5:22-23 (ESV) For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, 23 that all may honour the Son, just as they honour the Father. Whoever does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent him

If Jesus is just a good man, he is claiming the same status as God. Would that be called a good man, cannot be a good man.

- John 6:54 (ESV) Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

Now he is promising to raise people from the dead. Can he just be a good man? You must be crazy; he cannot be a good man. He must be intensely evil man. It cannot be possible.

- John 14:2 (ESV) In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?

He is saying, you don't worry about your life on earth. When you go to heaven, I have a place for you. So how can Jesus be a good man when he teaches all these things.

- John 14:6 (ESV) Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

So if you are a good man, you wouldn't be telling lies. Every year 90,000 Christians die for him and if he is just telling good things, but he can't really raise you from the dead, it cannot be true. ***So he cannot be a good man.*** The last time somebody said that he was God is Jim Jones and he actually had 900 people take poison and kill themselves. So every dictator/person who calls himself as a God like figure always brings his nation to disaster.

### ***Is Jesus a Conman or a Mad Man?***

Conman and madman are not very much different; it is either you tell the falsehood intentionally or unintentionally.

John 7:14-18 (ESV) About the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and began teaching. **15** The Jews therefore marveled, saying, "How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?" **16** So Jesus answered them, "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me. **17** If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority. **18** The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood.

How can this man has learning when he never studied? So therefore when he went there and started teaching in the temple, there was resonance in his teaching.

John 7:40 (ESV) When they heard these words, some of the people said, "This really is the Prophet."

So must have spoken so well and so in line with the Old Testament that the people didn't think he was madman. When you fact check someone, if you quote something from Old Testament the other guy will just look and he can check you back and they basically found that this is a prophet, because the words were true.

John 7:45-49 (ESV) The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why did you not bring him?" **46** The officers answered, "No one ever spoke like this man!" **47** The Pharisees answered them, "Have you also been deceived? **48** Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him? **49** But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed."

So they are very upset, even the very officer who were supposed to catch Jesus Christ, the word of Jesus Christ resonated in their hearts. So He cannot be a conman and he cannot be a madman. A madman wouldn't impress people like that. GK Chesterton said to know whether something is true or not is like a lock and key. When you tell something, if it has resonance in our souls then it is probably true. If we look at the world, Christianity has taken roots in majority of areas. If Jesus was a madman or conman, the ideology that you talk about will never take root to a significant extent and yet Christianity is the major religion in the world. Even Mahatma Gandhi said, "*if Christians would really live according to the teaching of Christ, as found in the Bible, all of India would be Christian today.*" Mahatma Gandhi had a problem with Christians but he never had a problem with Jesus Christ, because the teaching of Jesus Christ resonated with Mahatma Gandhi and he used the teaching of Jesus Christ to gain independence for India.

Jesus has changed the world. Children in the old days were never considered as people. They were left running around, especially the orphans who were left to fend for themselves. Christians were the first ones to look after them. In the Roman world you kill girl children easily, many children were left exposed. There was abortion, infanticide, the exposition of

children, and sexual relations between adults and children, all these were very-very common in the pagan times. When the teachings of Christ took root within the next three to six hundred years, all these things changed if you look at the world today.

Major universities like Harvard, Princeton, Cambridge, all of them were setup by Christians. They all were setup by Christians and their first purpose was to teach the Bible actually when they first started. Most of the major hospitals were started by Christians, who went out there and believe in the dignity of man, so they started tending to their wounds.

The other thing is that if you actually have some sort of religion or some sort of ideology, somehow if it is not right, some people will come up and start poking holes. Scientology is a sect, even some of the people like Leah Remini now comes out and tells you all the nasty things that actually happen, but if you look in Jesus Christ disciples themselves, no dirt comes out. You don't actually see somebody from first century come out and say, actually Jesus was a child molester or Jesus was like Harvey Weinstein, you don't have that. It is amazing, everybody else has got some underside, some dirty underside, this one doesn't come up from Jesus, in fact Tim Keller describes Jesus in this way,

- Tenderness without any weakness
- Strength without any harshness
- Humility without any lack of confidence
- Holiness and unbending conviction without any lack of approachability
- Unhesitating authority yet no self-assertion
- Tremendous courage and yet with tenderness and utmost sensitivity and tenderness of spirit
- He abrids the self-important ones and yet so winsome and solicitous towards the broken

That's what Jesus is like when you read the passages in the Bible. PT Forsyth, the great Scottish theologian actually said, *"If God be not thus then this is less than the God we crave for"*.

***So therefore if he is not a good man, he is not a conman, he is not a mad man, he must be God the Messiah.***

John 7:16-17 (ESV) So Jesus answered them, "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me. **17** If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority.

So Jesus is saying, if you want to know Jesus personally and who he is, you actually have to desire to do God's will. If you don't desire to do God's will, you will never know that Jesus is Messiah.

John 6:44-45 (ESV) No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. **45** It is written in the Prophets, And they will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me—

So whoever comes to Jesus Christ in the end is actually drawn by God and also himself must have a desire to want to know God, otherwise this is not possible.

So you can't look at Jesus Christ under a magnifying glass as if you dispassionately evaluate a butterfly. You actually have to make a commitment to want to know the truth, to want to know God before you actually examine the claims of Jesus Christ. That is what he is saying.

18 The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood.

So when Jesus Christ comes, he doesn't seek his own selfish gain, he seeks that of the father.

John 7:21-24 (ESV) Jesus answered them, "I did one work, and you all marvel at it. **22** Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. **23** If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man's whole body well? **24** Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment."

Here he is answering his critics. The critics were very upset because he healed somebody on a Sabbath Day. Are you allowed to work on a Sabbath Day, No? So Jesus broke the law, but here is Jesus very cleverly telling them, there is another law and it is circumcision. So the law of circumcision means you have to circumcise on the eighth day. So Sabbath day, you cannot work. What if the eighth day is Sunday or Sabbath day, can you circumcise? So you have got law of circumcision and you got law of the Sabbath, which one takes precedence. So circumcision takes precedence because this is the sign of the covenant that makes man whole. Jesus says, yes it is the same thing. If you can circumcise someone and break the Sabbath, because the precedence of making someone whole by being part of the covenant is more important than the other law. So therefore there is a precedence. So therefore you can't fault Jesus. Jesus healed the whole body, you only cut off one little part.

Later theologians on the Talmud, Rabi Eleazar says, *"If circumcision, which attaches to one only of the 248 members of the human body, suspends the Sabbath, how much more shall the saving of the whole body suspend the Sabbath?"* R. Eleazar ben Azariah (ca. a.d. 100)

John 7:28-29 (ESV) So Jesus proclaimed, as he taught in the temple, "You know me, and you know where I come from. But I have not come of my own accord. He who sent me is true, and him you do not know. **29** I know him, for I come from him, and he sent me."

What he is saying is that, when you look at God, you got to look through glasses, it is like Jesus is the filter. When you look at the sun you have to wear glasses. The only way you can see God is to wear the Jesus glasses and see God through the filter of Jesus.

John 7:31 (ESV) Yet many of the people believed in him. They said, "When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done?"

This type of believers are not true believers. That's the problem when you go to miracle rallies, the people there don't really have any faith. They are always asking for more signs. It is called superficial belief. Time Keller says, "*poor evidence destroys faith but strong evidence does not make faith.*"

Which means even you show the best evidence someone may not necessarily believe. Jesus is like, you either hate him or you love him. There is no halfway and he demands that kind of devotion as you would devote yourself to him. Jesus ask you to take up your cross and die for him. When Jesus Christ comes into your life, there is no half measure, it is all the way.

### **C. GIFT OF THE SPIRIT**

John 7:37-39 (ESV) On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. **38** Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." **39** Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Now every day they would come to Pool of Siloam and they will then use the golden flask and they will march with palm branches and read from scripture and the chief priest will then pour these into a rock or whatever and to symbolize the giving of the spirit. Now this process comes from Exodus 17:

All the congregation of the people of Israel moved on from the wilderness of Sin by stages, according to the commandment of the Lord, and camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. **2** Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?" **3** But the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" **4** So Moses cried to the Lord, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." **5** And the Lord said to Moses, "Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. **6** Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink." And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. **7** And he called the name of the place



Massah and Meribah, because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the Lord by saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

So this is the miraculous time when people were dying of the thirst and Moses comes before the rock and he hits it and water comes out, you don't ever see water come out a rock, it is a miraculous time and when they actually celebrate the Feast of the Tabernacle they actually reenact this scene, when actually they pour wine and water onto the rock or a bowl, it symbolizes God giving of water, God providing and this actually foretells that in the last time when Messiah comes back to rule in the Messianic Age there will be provision of the spirit.

So at this stage Jesus stands up, at this last day where the priest is pouring this water out on the rock and he says, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." Now he is saying, you don't have to pour this on the rock anymore, you don't have to go and collect it from the pool of Siloam, on the last day I am the one, come to me, I will give you this water, I am the rock. That's what he is saying, that's what you can see the symbolism. Giving of the spirit is actually the presence of God. If you look at Psalm 51. David says,

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.<sup>11</sup> Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.<sup>12</sup> Restore to me the joy of your salvation and uphold me with a willing spirit.

In Hebrew literature, words are usually in parallel, which means they have similar meaning. So 'cast me not away from your presence' and 'take not your Holy Spirit from me' is the same thing. So when God gives you his spirit, He gives you his presence.

Luke 7:28 (ESV) I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

What Jesus is saying that there are lot of heroes in the Bible. Didn't they all have the Holy Spirit. They have got Samson, Moses, Gideon, Daniel, they had the Holy Spirit, they had the presence of God but Jesus is saying, all of them is not as good as John and John is not as good as all of us. The least of the kingdom is even greater than John, because the Holy Spirit fills every single Christian today.

Water renews and revives it quenches thirst. It is a beautiful metaphor. In Acts 17, Paul says

Acts 17:26-27 (ESV) And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, **27** that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him.



We are created to find God, all our desires; desire for sexual pleasure, desire for happiness, all those things cannot be completely fulfilled. It is like a thirst, we drink and then we need more, we want happiness, we gain certain things to fill our emptiness of our life and yet we want more, it is like that. Jesus is saying that he is the one who will actually quench all your thirst. Tim Keller describes it as, *Turns ideas into thirst quenching realities*

John 16:14-15 (ESV) **14** He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. **15** All that the Father has is mine; therefore, I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you

What this has to do with quenching of your thirst? What he does is that he takes a concept like the love of God and he makes this concept so real in your life that it overwhelms your feeling of rejection or your poverty or your difficulty. The Holy Spirit makes it real.

- If you take the concept of the Glory of God, it is so overwhelming and so real that it will overcome materialism, greed and selfishness, that's what the spirit does.
- It will concept that the power of God and it becomes so real in your life, it overwhelms fear, anxiety and weakness.
- It will take concept of grace of God, is so overwhelm your feelings of condemnation, low self-esteem, grace of God just overwhelms you, it works at the level of your heart, it takes what is Jesus and it shines a spotlight on Jesus and makes it so glorious.
- It takes the wisdom of god and it makes it so beautiful that you don't want to go and do your Ph.D. anymore, you want to come and sit and look at the Word of God.
- It takes the joy of the Lord, so real that instead of drinking and boozing all the way up, you are filled with the other kind of spirit.

So the function of the Holy spirit is to take concepts; love of God, grace of god, wisdom of god, power of God into heart-felt realities.

Ezekiel 36:26-27 (ESV) And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. **27** And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

If you are under the Old Covenant, you are thinking if I want to do something for God, no, maybe, yes, maybe I will obey God, because I fear God, maybe God will reward me or may be a very fine leader, so therefore I am expected to do these things. These are all human efforts.

In the New Covenant with the Holy Spirit, you actually do things for God, why, because you are convinced of the value.

Matthew 13:45-46 (ESV) Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, **46** who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

The Holy Spirit takes what you have and compares it to Jesus and what He does is make Jesus shine bigger and bigger and bigger and everything else looks smaller and smaller and smaller in your life. That's exactly what Jesus does? The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus, every day put more and more spotlight until gradually your heart actually changes that's what the Holy Spirit does. The Holy Spirit just subtly changes your value system, so the things of God become to look more valuable and things of the world become less valuable and then when you look at yourself 5-10 years from now, your value system has completely changed, because you realize new value and you actually obey God not because you have to, not because of the reward, not because you fear God but your value system just changed.

When you do things as of the perceived change in your value that's how you live a spirit filled powerful life. You will wait for Holy Spirit to make Jesus Christ so beautiful that you would sell everything you have and go for the diamond and that's really how Jesus has said, come to me and you will never thirst because every time you thirst that means you desire something, there is something missing in your life, God will so fill your life that you don't have any more desire, you are absolutely full. Out of your heart will flow rivers of living water, which means you are so full that you could actually be blessing other people as well. The hunger for more and more for materialism, means that there is something missing in your soul, that's mean you must be very poor. They are still desiring; they don't have the water of life.

The word of God comes into your heart and it slowly change your values, you will change not overnight but you will change after couple of years, going through the word, it will touch your life if you desire to know God's will. If you don't desire to know God's will it will not change your life. The Holy Spirit only works through the Word of God. Through the word of God, you change your value system.

#### **D. THE IRONY OF UNBELIEF**

Irony means *"the expression of one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite, typically for humorous or emphatic effect."* A literary technique, originally used in Greek tragedy, by which the full significance of a character's words or actions is clear to the audience or reader although unknown to the character.

So here you actually have John using a literary technique called irony. Irony is saying something the opposite of what it is. For example, your son or daughter insist on doing something and you know it is very stupid, he does and suddenly the whole cupboard crash down and you go say, 'very clever'. It is very not clever but you are being ironic.

*The school of Rabbi Meir says, 'If anyone has learned the Scripture and the Mishnah [a large corpus of Jewish tradition] but has not served as a student of the Learned he is one of the people of the land. If he has learned the Scripture but not the Mishnah, he is an uneducated man; if he has learned neither the Scripture nor the Mishnah the Scripture says of him: "I sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with seed of men and seed of cattle [i.e. he is indistinguishable from an animal]"*

So if you know scripture and Mishnah, but you haven't served as a student, you are just a people of the land. If you learned scripture but doesn't have Mishnah, it is an uneducated man. So this is how they value learning.

John 7:40-52 (ESV) When they heard these words, some of the people said, "This really is the Prophet." **41** Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Is the Christ to come from Galilee? **42** Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" **43** So there was a division among the people over him. **44** Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him. **45** The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why did you not bring him?" **46** The officers answered, "No one ever spoke like this man!" **47** The Pharisees answered them, "Have you also been deceived? **48** Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him? **49** But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed." **50** Nicodemus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them, **51** "Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?" **52** They replied, "Are you from Galilee too? Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee."

Here is the irony. On one hand we have the crowd, normal people and on the other hand we have the Pharisees and the Elites.

"This really is the Prophet." **41** Others said, "This is the Christ." The Elite says, how can Christ come from Galilee? Galilee is like no place. **42** Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?"

The irony is, Jesus was born in Bethlehem, he is descendant from David and it is very ironic. The people who were very clever become very stupid. The people who were very stupid become very clever. This is John playing with language, so that people will see how stupid you are to have unbelieve.

**46** The officers answered, "No one ever spoke like this man!" **47** The Pharisees answered them, "Have you also been deceived? **48** Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him? **49** But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed."

So therefore they look down on the crowd, they believed in him but Pharisees says, if the authority will believe in him then you can believe in him.

Nicodemus "Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does. They say, see no prophet arises from Galilee. That's not true, Jonah, Nahum, Obadiah, quite a few actually come. So they were actually mistaken. The irony is that they are taking rubbish. That tells you, why don't they believe because they don't want to believe.

Anyone who will to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority.

So when you actually encounter people, if you bring this argument that Jesus is a good man, Jesus is a conman, Jesus is a madman, if you start to eliminate all of that the only conclusion left is that Jesus is the Messiah and even in that they don't believe usually often there is not a lot of logical reasons not to believe, it is just that they don't want to believe.