

He Loved Me...

He Loves Me Lots

The Gospel of John

Text

John 7:37-53

Topic

Jesus promises every believer that
"out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

Title

"A River Runs Through You"

'Misinformation' is the word on everyone's lips.

It is defined as, "incorrect or misleading information presented as fact."

- Misinformation is *unintentional*.
- Disinformation is *intentional*.

In the COVID19 era, social media posts are routinely marked as misinformation, then deleted. Entire profiles disappear in the cloud.

It seems as though any information with which a government or Big Tech disagrees can be labeled misinformation. At some point the Bible is going to be deemed misinformation or disinformation.

Free speech is in jeopardy. Not to worry. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is on the job.

DHS Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas announced during testimony before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security that DHS had created the Disinformation Governance Board.

What could go wrong?

The Jewish authorities constantly waged a misinformation and disinformation campaign against Jesus.

Their tweet might read, "Local Carpenter Continues To Spread Disinformation Deemed Harmful By Religious Experts."

In our text, they misinformed the nation about where the Lord was from. In verse forty-one they said, "Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee" (v41).

Jonah was from the region of Galilee. So were Nahum, Hosea, Elijah, and Elisha.

Jesus did not correct them by pointing out that He was, in fact, born in Bethlehem according to the Scriptures. He used the occasion to discuss spiritual birth. He spoke of "the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive" (v39).

If you are a believer, you have received God the Holy Spirit.

Receiving God the Holy Spirit will be our point of contact with this text. I'll organize my comments around two points, **#1 Believe Who You Have Received**, and **#2 Beware You Are Not Deceived**.

#1 - Believe Who You Have Received (v37-39)

You can't believe everything you hear...unless you 'hear' it from God.

- “God *is* not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?” (Numbers 23:19).
- “For all of God’s promises have been fulfilled in Christ with a resounding “Yes!” And through Christ, our “Amen” (which means “Yes”) ascends to God for his glory” (Second Corinthians 1:20 NLT).

The words of Jesus are altogether true. They are not a metaphor, nor are they mystical. They are not for the monastery, but are for mainstream Christian living. He is talking to you.

Believer, believe Him.

Joh 7:37 On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.

Tabernacles is one of the seven feasts celebrated by the nation of Israel. The pilgrims swelling the population of Jerusalem spent seven nights camping in makeshift booths to commemorate the Exodus generation and God tabernacling with them.

The priests would each morning lead a procession to pour water over the altar that had previously been drawn from the Pool of Siloam. Commentators say it represented the Rock that followed the Israelites, providing abundant water for millions.

Either on the seventh day, right after the water was poured, or on the eighth day when no water was poured, Jesus exclaimed that He was the fulfillment of the ritual. It was a *shadow* for which He was the *substance*. He alone could satisfy spiritual thirst moment-by-moment and forever. The apostle Paul would reveal to the church in Corinth, “they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ” (First Corinthians 10:4).

Joh 7:38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”

Loads of verses compare God the Holy Spirit to water. Scholars agree there is no one particular verse Jesus was quoting. The Lord seems to have been speaking in what we might call 'the volume of the Book.'

The consistent teaching of the Old Testament is that God the Holy Spirit is like a refreshing, inexhaustible torrent of life-giving water.

Without getting bio-mechanical, the believer's "heart" (belly KJV) would be a constantly overflowing reservoir of life-giving, thirst quenching, living water. It is an especially apt illustration to desert living people accustomed to digging wells from which to draw water every few hours.

Where do help and hope come from? The Lord. It is in His life-giving flow into and then through you.

This promise is for anyone and everyone, whoever and whosoever, who "believes in" Jesus.

Joh 7:39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

God the Holy Spirit is *like* "rivers of living water." He constantly refreshes and satisfies the believer. He engages the believer as a conduit to serve others.

If you are saved, God the Holy Spirit **is** present in your heart to maintain and direct this constant source and overflow.

Jesus was "glorified" when He arose from the dead in an eternal body. His resurrection proves that we likewise will be raised (or raptured). Everyone will be raised, but many to face judgment.

The ministry of God the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament did not involve His permanent indwelling.

He was with saints, and came upon saints, filling them for a time, but their bodies were never His Temple as we enjoy today. Jesus said it, not me.

Something we often overlook is that before the Day of Pentecost, Jesus was offering national Israel this promised gift. It was part of the Kingdom:

- "I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken *it* and performed *it*," says the LORD' " (Ezekiel 37:14).
- "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do *them*" (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

On the Day of Pentecost, after Jesus had risen from the dead and ascended, the promised gift, the indwelling, came upon the disciples. We call it the birthday of the church. It was, but Jesus was not done offering Israel its Kingdom.

It was a watershed moment for Israel.

- For quite a while, maybe a decade, the Gospel was preached predominately to Jews. We interpret this as the Lord continuing to reach out to Israel.
- God eventually sent Peter to the household of Cornelius, a Gentile convert to Judaism. A kind of second, 'Gentile Pentecost' occurred as God the Holy Spirit came upon them.
- Later still the apostle Paul proclaimed that God was postponing His plan for Israel for an unspecified period of time, called 'the fullness of the Gentiles,' while the Gospel went out to the Gentile world.

Don't too quickly criticize Israel. Anyone who hears the Gospel and refuses Jesus Christ is making the same choice the Jews did. They are rejecting citizenship in His Kingdom, and God the Holy Spirit.

God the Holy Spirit is a person. You “receive” Him as a Person, not as a power.

Let’s say there is a knock on your door. You open the door, no one is there, but someone has left a plate of delicious snickerdoodle cookies, because they know those are your favorite. The large, soft, more ‘cake’ kind, not the hard, crispy ones.

You thereby enjoy a gift from the person, but not the person himself.

When God the Holy Spirit comes into your life, it isn’t just to leave snickerdoodle’s on your doorstep. He comes *in* as a person with the gifts. He lives with you.

Put simply, if you are a believer, Believe you have received God the Holy Spirit in all His fullness; *because you have*.

#2 - Beware You Are Not Deceived (v40-53)

It was called the Birther Movement.

Its adherents asserted Barack Obama was ineligible to be President of the United States because he was not a natural-born citizen of the United States as required by Article Two of the Constitution.

His birth certificate ought to have solved the problem. It was alleged, however, that it was a forgery.

Jesus had no certified copy of His birth certificate. It wasn’t easy to prove where you were born and where you were from.

It relied largely on word-of-mouth. The rulers would spread misinformation about Jesus’ back story.

Joh 7:40 Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, “Truly this is the Prophet.”

Moses predicted that a (capitol 'P') Prophet would come to Israel. Some thought he would be the Messiah.

I want to pause and point out that the people were *futurists*. They understood that Moses was predicting the coming of a person in the future.

This wasn't an ideology, or an allegory. A real person, the "Prophet," would come.

Non-futurists want to argue that, in the New Testament, antichrist is an ideology or an allegory - *not* a person who is coming. There is a so-called "spirit of antichrist," but there is **the** antichrist.

Joh 7:41 Others said, "This is the Christ..."

"Christ" is not a secondary name for Jesus; He would have been known as "Jesus Bar-Joseph," meaning "Jesus, son of Joseph."

"Christ" means *Anointed One* and is a title for the Messiah.

Joh 7:41 ... But some said, "Will the Christ come out of Galilee?"

Joh 7:42 Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?"

Joh 7:43 So there was a division among the people because of Him.

"Yes" to the Messiah being a descendent of David and being born in Bethlehem. Jesus can check those boxes. Why emphasize Galilee?

Jesus never lived in Bethlehem. He may have been there for as little as ten days up to a few years after being born. His family fled to Egypt when Herod started killing babies. Upon their return to Israel, His family settled in Nazareth of Galilee.

I was born in 1955 in Stamford, Connecticut. I lived in San Bernardino for 27yrs, from 1958 until 1985. I've lived in Hanford the last 37yrs. Where am I from?

Jesus *could* be considered to be "from" Galilee. That was the narrative spread by the rulers to discredit Him as the Christ.

Joh 7:44 Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him.

This is the bad kind of the laying on of hands.

In the earlier part of this chapter we saw that at least two groups in authority wanted to take Jesus into custody. Both were thwarted supernaturally. It was not God's time for Him to be arrested.

Servants of God can be supernaturally protected so that no one so much as touches a hair on their head. They may be taken hold of. James, the brother of John, is arrested in the Book of Acts. Herod kills him with the sword. Seeing it pleased the Jews, Herod arrested Peter. God freed Peter from prison.

Seriously - Who would you rather be - James or Peter? Be *you* and face each day with the overflow of God the Holy Spirit.

Joh 7:45 Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why have you not brought Him?"

Joh 7:46 The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!"

Joh 7:47 Then the Pharisees answered them, "Are you also deceived?"

Joh 7:48 Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him?

At *CinemaCon* in Las Vegas, Olivia Wilde was handed an envelope marked "Personal and Confidential" while she was on stage. It was given to her by a woman in the front row. *She was served legal papers during her presentation.*

"Officers" of the Temple Police made a decision in the field to not interrupt Jesus mid-talk. As they listened, they must have understood that the Lord was a higher authority than their rulers.

I would venture to say that every Christian will one day face a situation in which they must choose to obey God rather than earthly authorities. Don't go out

looking for a fight; it will come to you. Whether or not the authorities lay hands on you, God overrules for your good and His glory.

Did you see the drawing on social media of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace with a fourth Person, Jesus? It was a new take on, "May the Fourth Be With You."

Joh 7:49 But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed."

"This rabble," it could read. The rulers held the people in contempt. They contended that the "crowd" was ignorant of "the law."

Jesus held the people in compassion. Samuel Chadwick writes, "Compassion costs. It is easy enough to argue, criticize, and condemn, but redemption is costly, and comfort draws from the deep. Brains can argue, but it takes heart to comfort."

Joh 7:50 Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them,

Joh 7:51 "Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?"

A lot is made of Nicodemus being cowardly, since he visited the Lord "by night." *Of course he visited by night.* Both he and the Lord would have been busy all day.

It took courage to open his mouth to this group. The majority wanted to kill Jesus. Nicodemus could have convinced himself that saying something wouldn't do any good. He rose above fear to rebuke his peers.

The apostle John's mention of Nicodemus, whom Jesus told he must be born-again, re-emphasizes the theme of the indwelling of God the Holy Spirit.

Joh 7:52 They answered and said to him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee."

These guys were masters of biting sarcasm.

They ridiculed Nicodemus' defense of Jesus by suggesting he was acting like an ignorant Galilean rooting for a local boy to become the Christ.

They portrayed themselves as grounded in the Scriptures. "Scripture Alone," was their defense. Had they been relying on Scripture Alone, *they would have received the Lord.*

The book of Second Kings indicates that Jonah was from Gath-Hepher, a small border town in Galilee (14:25).

Were they ignorant? Doubtful. Jonah and the other prophets I earlier mentioned were well-known to even unlearned Israelites. This was disinformation. They were intentionally misleading.

I can see them dropping this line, then walking off. Think of a Press Secretary making a claim that turns out to be false, walking away without answering any follow-up.

Joh 7:53 And everyone went to his *own* house.

The Feast of Tabernacles ended. Everyone went home. How many realized they had been tabernacling with God? Most had been deceived by their leaders.

We can, and we must, believe Jesus - believe God Who cannot lie.
Let's answer a series of questions:

1. Has Jesus been glorified?
2. Has God the Holy Spirit been given by Jesus?
3. Do you believe in Jesus?

If you answered "Yes" to all three, you have received the promised gift of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said, "out of [your] heart will flow rivers of living water." It is your birthright as a born-again believer.

There are many reasons why believers do not experience this refreshing flow:

- God the Holy Spirit can be grieved (Acts 7:51).
- He can be quenched (First Thessalonians 5:19).
- He can be neglected as we attempt to be Christ-like in our own energy (Galatians 3:3).

John Calvin is quoted, "There is no worse screen to block out the Spirit than confidence in our own intelligence."

An anonymous writer said, "How little chance the Holy Spirit has nowadays. The churches and missionary societies have so bound Him in red tape that they practically ask Him to sit in a corner while they do the work themselves."

One thing is clear: If you have believed the Lord, you have received God the Holy Spirit as a river of living water.

If you are not experiencing a refreshing, empowering relationship with God the Holy Spirit, "how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" (Luke 11:13).

Believer, believe Him.