



Metro Calvary – Roseville CA  
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# The Gospel of John

Is Anyone Thirsty?

John 7: 37-39

**Related Topics:** Holy Convocations; Feast of Tabernacles/Booths; Pool of Siloam; Isaiah 12:6; Water From the Rock; Spiritual Thirst; Broken Cisterns; Coming To Jesus; Come and Drink

## CHAPTER 7

**<sup>37</sup>On the last day of the feast, the great day,**

The Feast is the Feast of Booths (also called Succoth/Tabernacles [Lev.23:33-43](#)) — it takes place in the Fall. The feast LOOKED BACK in the history of Israel to the time following their exodus from slavery in Egypt. The Old Testament tells us that the nation of Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years because of their unbelief. During those 40 years the Israelites lived in tents/booths and God was present with them as a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night; and miraculously sustained them with manna from heaven and water from the rock. (Remember —Jesus has told the people that HE is that true bread that came down from heaven!) To help them remember all of that, the entire nation camped out in booths or tents during the Feast of Booths. Every day during the feast there was a procession of priests, people and musicians from the Temple Mount down to the Pool of Siloam. When the procession arrived at the Pool of Siloam the priest would fill a golden pitcher from the pool. The procession then returned to the Temple by way of the Water Gate. Along the way the people recited [Isaiah 12:3](#) — *“with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.”* The water was carried into the courts of the Temple and **poured out** on the altar as an offering to God. All of that was to remind them of the water that God provided for their fathers in the wilderness —

**especially the water that flowed from the rock in the wilderness.**

*Exodus 17:3-6 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. <sup>2</sup>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?" <sup>3</sup>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?" <sup>4</sup>So Moses cried to the Lord, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." <sup>5</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>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.*

Later in their wilderness wandering the Israelites were in need of water again —

*Numbers 20:2-4 Now there was no water for the congregation. And they assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron. <sup>3</sup>And the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Would that we had perished when our brothers perished before the Lord! <sup>4</sup>Why have you brought the assembly of the Lord into this wilderness, that we should die here, both we and our cattle? <sup>5</sup>And why have you made us come up out of Egypt to bring us to this evil place? It is no place for grain or figs or vines or pomegranates, and there is no water to drink." <sup>6</sup>Then Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the entrance of the tent of meeting and fell on their faces. And the glory of the Lord appeared to them, <sup>7</sup>and the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>8</sup>"Take the staff, and assemble the congregation, you and Aaron your brother, and tell the rock before their eyes to yield its water. So you shall bring water out of the rock for them and give drink to the congregation and their cattle." <sup>9</sup>And Moses took the staff from before the Lord, as he commanded him. <sup>10</sup>Then Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock, and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels: shall we bring water for you out of this rock?" <sup>11</sup>And Moses lifted up his hand and **struck the rock** with his staff twice, and water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their livestock. <sup>12</sup>And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe in me, to uphold me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I*

*have given them.”*

*1 Corinthians 10:1-4 NLT — I don't want you to forget, dear brothers and sisters, about our ancestors in the wilderness long ago. All of them were guided by a cloud that moved ahead of them, and all of them walked through the sea on dry ground. <sup>2</sup>In the cloud and in the sea, all of them were baptized as followers of Moses. <sup>3</sup>All of them ate the same spiritual food, <sup>4</sup>and all of them drank the same spiritual water. For they drank from the spiritual rock that traveled with them, and that rock was Christ.*

## **Jesus stood up and cried out,**

REMEMBER that Jesus would not go up to the feast for the purpose of making a miraculous showing of Himself as his unbelieving brothers suggested. REMEMBER that Jesus had a RIGHT TIME — the FATHER'S TIME for everything in His ministry. REMEMBER THE SETTING — It is the LAST day of the Feast — the GREAT DAY of the feast. The Temple Mount is filled with people watching the final procession, led by the priest; arrive at the Temple to pour out that water.

It was AT THAT MOMENT that Jesus chose to STAND UP and at THAT MOMENT Jesus ***CRIED OUT***. Thayer's Dictionary defines ***Cried out*** as

*To croak; of the cry of a raven; hence, to cry out, cry aloud; speak with a loud voice*

Jesus; who is God Incarnate — God with us — waited until the Feast of Booths had reached it's crescendo — and at that moment He **STOOD UP** and **CRIED OUT**

**“If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.**

**Water** is the most important liquid in the world. Without water, there would be no life. We now have over **3,200 brands** of bottled water, from more than 130 countries. The aisles in our grocery stores are filled with the most trendy “imported, glacial, steam-distilled, and filter-pure waters” — yet most North American go around in a constant state of **dehydration**. Our massive consumption of alcohol, caffeinated and sugared drinks, along with enormous quantities of salted and processed foods, all suck the

moisture right out of our eyeballs, brains, and bones. We're standing up to our waist in soft drink cans and we are dying of thirst.

The audience of Jesus at this feast lived in a very arid spot on the planet. The people of the Bible are essentially a **desert people** —and they were hyper-aware of their need for **life-giving, life-sustaining** water. But Jesus wanted these people to know that the cells of their bodies weren't the things that were parched! **Jesus used** their great PHYSICAL need to speak to their great SPIRITUAL need — to speak of the **thirst for God!**

God created man for Fellowship with God. Man was created to derive life from God.

***Genesis 2:16-17** And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, <sup>17</sup>but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."*

Spiritual death immediately — separation from God, who is life; eventually; physical death. The New Testament makes the same declaration — *the wages of sin is death* (**Romans 6:23**). Since the first sin of mankind, every man and woman comes into this world physically alive but spiritually dead — dead to God and the things of God. Just as a man living in the desert needs and craves water to sustain physical life — every man and woman needs God and longs for God. The Psalmist David put it like this —

***Psalm 42:1-2** As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. <sup>2</sup> My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.*

HAVING THIS THIRST — but not knowing the nature of it — Fallen man tries to satisfy it with anything and everything other than God. He tries to satisfy that thirst with physical and emotional things. Madison Avenue says, *You need THIS thing or that thing.* And when you come up thirsty they — *Oh, THIS will really satisfy you.*

Here's how God — by way of the prophet Jeremiah — describes man's attempts to quench this thirst

***Jeremiah 2:12-13** Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the Lord,<sup>13</sup> for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, **broken cisterns** that can hold no water.*

**LIVING WATER** was a running source of water. Water from a river or spring was always preferable to standing water. Since the land did not have abundant sources of **LIVING** water — they would depend primarily upon rainfall that would be collected in cisterns. A cistern was carved out of solid rock to collect rain.

**Imagine a man saying** — *I don't want to walk the mile or two to get fresh spring water from the well. **Forget the LIVING WATER** — I'm going to **carve** me out a **cistern** to hold rain water. I know that after a while it will start to grow stuff because it isn't moving — But I'll settle for that over the effort it takes to get **LIVING WATER**.*

A man could spend years carving out a large cistern (Herod the Great – cisterns on Masada).



Imagine this man finally completing his cistern —and there finally comes that night as he lies in bed and hears the rain begin to fall. As he's nodding off he thinks — *“All of that hard work is finally going to pay off— Tomorrow I can walk outside and drop my bucket into my cistern and draw water for myself.”* Morning comes and he walks out — drops his bucket into the cistern he had labored so long and hard to build. BUT — Instead of hearing a

SPLASH he hears an echoing THUD! The cistern he had carved out **would at best** never be as good as living water — But this was the WORST. His cistern was BROKEN — it couldn't hold water — it ran out into the subterranean space under the cistern. The man poured himself into the making of his cistern only to find all his efforts were in vain!

**THAT is what happens** when you make ANYTHING other than Jesus the master passion of your life. You POUR IN all your efforts and you're left EMPTY.

**There is NO-THING in this world** that can quench your thirst. Your **boyfriend** won't quench your thirst. **Travel** won't quench your thirst. **fine food** won't quench your thirst. **Prestige** won't quench your thirst. A **new car** won't quench your thirst. **Moving in** with some girl won't quench your thirst. **Pornography** won't quench your thirst. **Leaving your husband** won't quench your thirst. No amount of **money** will quench your thirst. No amount of **emotional or sensual experiences** will quench your thirst. No **achieved goals** will quench your thirst.

ALL of that is like carving out a cistern that can't hold water! All of that is like trying to quench your physical thirst with **crackers**. It's like saying — *I'm so thirsty* — and someone says — *Oh here, have a box of crackers!* How many **crackers** will it take quench your physical thirst? The answer is obvious — no amount! **In a spiritual sense** — Trying to satisfy this thirst with the things of this world is like trying to quench your thirst with crackers! **No amount of those things** will quench your spiritual thirst or fully satisfy you.

So — this THIRST that Jesus speaks of is a THIRST FOR GOD

**QUOTE: J.C. Ryle** — *And yet the many thirst after everything almost except salvation. Money, pleasure, honor, rank, self-indulgence--these are the things which they desire.*

There are some this morning who are still eating crackers — still carving out cisterns — that can never satisfy your thirst for God.

But there are others that have discovered that none of that can satisfy. You might not know at this moment that the **ONLY** answer to your thirst lies in Jesus — but you do know that **NOTHING** in this world can satisfy that

thirst. God has used circumstances and individuals to bring you to this place to hear about Jesus.

**PERSONAL EXAMPLE:** Until I was 22 years old I never knew that my desire for success and popularity — my desire for sensual pleasure — my desire to have things — were really futile attempts to satisfy a spiritual thirst. But on the night of December 30 into the early hours of December 31, 1973, I heard a young man tell me about Jesus — and saw in him the life of Jesus. **FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER** — I understood what I was really longing for. I looked at that guy and said in my heart — *THAT is what I'm longing for!* **FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER** I knew that Jesus was the answer.

**“If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.**

**NOTICE** — Jesus does not deliver some lengthy theological or philosophical treatise. He simply says that **HE** is the **ANSWER** to man's **THIRST** for God.

**QUOTE: J.C. Ryle** — *He declares that He is the true fountain of life, the supplier of all spiritual necessities, the reliever of all spiritual needs. He invites all who feel the burden of sin heavy, to apply to Him, and proclaims Himself their helper.*

These very **SIMPLE** and very **SELECT** words of Jesus settle **THE** question which all the wisdom of the Greek and Roman philosophers could never settle.

**Come to Me** — We need to come to Jesus because Jesus is the **REMEDY** for the very **CAUSE** of this thirst. We have this spiritual thirst because of **SIN**. There is **NO** amount of religious effort that can remedy the problem of our sin. There is no amount of “spirituality” that we can attain to that can remedy the problem of sin. It is **ONLY** the death of Jesus on the cross, in our place, that can reconcile us to God — bring us into fellowship with God, who alone can finally satisfy that thirst.

***Romans 5:10-11** For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. **“More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.***

*2 Corinthians 5:18-21 All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup>that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup>Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup>For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

What does it mean to **"come"** to Jesus ?

**QUOTE: J.C. Ryle** put it like this — *to "come" to Jesus is to believe on Jesus, and to "believe" on Jesus is to come.*

It means that instead of looking to any of your own religious efforts as the way to God — you will look to Jesus. It means that instead of trusting in any other philosophy or religious system as the way to God — you will trust in the PERSON of Jesus Christ — His Cross and Resurrection — as God's remedy for your sins.

**Christianity really is ALL ABOUT JESUS. Even the world's most famous atheist recognizes this!**

**QUOTE: Interview between Marilyn Sewell and Christopher Hitchens**  
Most people recognize Hitchens as the author of the bestselling book *God Is Not Great: Why Religion Poisons Everything*....In Portland he was interviewed by Unitarian minister Marilyn Sewell....The following exchange took place near the start of the interview:

Sewell: The religion you cite in your book is generally the fundamentalist faith of various kinds. I'm a liberal Christian, and I don't take the stories from the Scripture literally. I don't believe in the doctrine of atonement (that Jesus died for our sins, for example). Do you make any distinction between fundamentalist faith and liberal religion?

Hitchens: I would say that if you don't believe that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ and Messiah, and that he rose again from the dead and by his sacrifice our sins are forgiven, you're really not in any meaningful sense a Christian.

**NOTICE** — The offer is to **ANYONE** who recognizes his/her thirst for

God. Jesus invites **ANYONE** to come to Him! From the 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD forward genuine Christianity has been made up of those men and women who have come to Jesus. They believed the good news and acted upon it — and in coming to Jesus their thirst was satisfied.

**QUOTE: J.C. Ryle** — *To feel the sinfulness of sin and to thirst, and really to come to Christ and believe, are the two steps which lead to heaven. But they are mighty steps. Thousands are too proud and careless to take them. Few, alas! think, and still fewer believe.*

*Matthew 5:6* “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

**Jesus has STATED the NEED. He has OFFERED the REMEDY.**

**THEN JESUS MAKES THIS PROMISE**

**<sup>38</sup>Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’”**

Perhaps Jesus was referring to *Isaiah 44:3*, *For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.*

Or perhaps *Isaiah 58:11*, *And the Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.*

**WHAT A PROMISE!** God will not only satisfy that thirst; not only fill that emptiness — but He’ll overflow it. Life in the Spirit is an overflowing life. The man or woman who comes to Jesus finds not only full satisfaction — but finds a surplus. It overflows. It’s like a well of living water. Back in **John 4** Jesus told the woman of Samaria, that is it is a fountain springing up within.

**<sup>39</sup>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.**

John is writing this account some 60 years AFTER that day — the last day, the great day of the Feast of Booths. John adds this commentary on that promise — **this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive.** God the Holy Spirit is that **life water!** When a man or woman receives forgiveness of sins through faith in Jesus, the Holy Spirit takes up residence within them. The Holy Spirit IS that living water.

## **CLOSING**

**Before coming to Jesus we thought that we could quench that thirst by gratifying our every desire — so lived for ourselves.** The LAST thing we would ever wanted to do was to give ourselves to God. We always tried to fill our lives, satisfy that thirst — **and we were forever EMPTY.**

**But when we came to Jesus, He filled us.** Now we want to live for the One who loved us and died for us — restored us back to God and gave to us the Holy Spirit. **Now** — because of His great love for us we want to **POUR OUT** our lives TO Jesus and FOR His glory. **THAT is worship!** People that have never come to Jesus cannot understand WORSHIP. WORSHIP is RESPONDING to Jesus. **We have discovered that as we POUR OUT we get FILLED!** The Person and Power of the Holy Spirit continues to spring up from the depths of who we are!

*Rev.22:17 The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.*

The Water of Life — Its **source** is in God. Its **flow** is from Christ. Its **receivers** are simply thirsty and need only to come to Jesus.

**COME TO JESUS** — Coming is believing; believing is coming — Believe that Jesus is the Son of God who died in your place from your sins and that by faith in Jesus alone you can be reconciled to God.

Will you **come** and **drink**?

**FOR THE CHRISTIAN** — Are you thirsty? From what wells have you been drinking? Have you in any way gone back to trying to satisfy your

thirst for God with the worlds Saltine Crackers again? Are you trying to live out the Christian life on your own resources? Have you forgotten what it is like to be COMING to Jesus and RECEIVING from Jesus that overflowing experience of the Holy Spirit. Jesus did NOT hang on the cross so that we could be born again into a relationship with God only to live on drips and drops of the Holy Spirit. When is the last time that an unbeliever looked at you and said — *I want some of that?* When is the last time that you could say — *My cup runneth over?*

**Your adversary the devil wars against that overflowing experience of the Holy Spirit in your life.**

*Genesis 26:15* And Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold. The Lord blessed him, <sup>13</sup>and the man became rich, and gained more and more until he became very wealthy. <sup>14</sup>He had possessions of flocks and herds and many servants, so that the Philistines envied him. <sup>15</sup>(Now the Philistines had stopped and filled with earth all the wells that his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father.)

The Philistines were the nemesis of God's people. They historically were used by Satan to stand against the people of God and the plans of God.

*Genesis 26:18-19* <sup>18</sup>And Isaac dug again the wells of water that had been dug in the days of Abraham his father, which the Philistines had stopped after the death of Abraham. . . . <sup>19</sup>But when Isaac's servants dug in the valley and found there a well of spring water,

This morning the Lord might be pointing out to you the rubbish that is blocking up that flow of living water.

Very simple diagnostic — If not overflowing you are living your Christian life with Jesus as an OPTION rather than Jesus as the OBJECT! COME TO JESUS!

*Is.55:1* “Come, **everyone** who thirsts, come to the waters;

*Rev.22:17* The Spirit and the Bride say, “**Come.**” And let the one who hears say, “**Come.**” And let the one who is thirsty **come**; let **the one who desires** take the water of life without price.