

Yochanan ~ Part 15

The Unbelief of Yeshua's Brothers ¹

7¹ After this, Yeshua traveled around in the Galil, intentionally avoiding Y'hudah because the Judeans were out to kill him.

Avoiding **Y'hudah** because the **Judeans** (not "the Jews") were out to kill Him. **Y'hudah** is mentioned three times in vv. 1–3; this is overwhelming evidence in favor of translating "**Ioudaioi**" here as **Judeans** and not "**Jews.**" And if this is the case here, there is no good reason to translate differently in many other places where **Judea** is not explicitly mentioned.

2 But the festival of Sukkot in Y'hudah was near;

Judean festival of Sukkot, that is, the **Feast of Tabernacles** (temporary dwellings), when **Jewish** males were required to go to **Yerushalayim**. Leviticus 23:33–43, Numbers 29:12–39, and Deuteronomy 16:13–16 prescribe details of **Sukkot**. It commences on the 15th day of **Tishri**, five days after **Yom-Kippur (the Day of Atonement)**, and lasts seven days, with an eighth day, **Shemini Atzeret**, an additional day of rest; this means it falls in late September or October. Families build booths of palm branches, partly open to the sky, to recall **God's** providence toward **Isra'el** during the forty years of wandering in the desert and living in tents. The festival also celebrates the harvest, coming as it does at summer's end, making it a time of thanksgiving. (The Puritans, who took the Old Testament more seriously than most Christians, modeled the American holiday of Thanksgiving after Sukkot.) To observe the festival, people brought to the **Temple** an etrog ("citron"), a citrus fruit representing the fruit of the **Promised Land**, and waved a **lulav**, which is a palm branch, a myrtle, and a willow bound together; today, the same is done in the synagogues. (When I was the pastor of **Lev L'Isra'el** (Heart for Israel), we used to observe this festival.)

3 so His brothers said to him, "Leave here and go into Y'hudah, so that your talmidim can see the miracles you do; 4 for no one who wants to become known acts in secret. If you're doing these things, show yourself to the world!"5 (His brothers spoke this way because they had not put their trust in him.) 6 Yeshua said to them, "My time has not yet come; but for you, any time is right. 7 The world can't hate you, but it does hate me, because I keep telling it how wicked its ways are. 8 You, go on up to the festival; as for me, I am not going up to this festival now, because the right time for me has not yet come."9 Having said this, he stayed on in the Galil.

Yeshua's brothers ... had not put their trust in him (v. 5). It is sometimes argued that if His brothers did not believe Him, why should we? But one of them, **Ya'akov**, not only came to trust in Him later but became leader of the **Messianic Jewish** community in **Yerushalayim** (Acts 2:17; 15:13; 21:18; Galatians 1:19; 2:9, 12); and he is usually credited with authorship of the book of **Ya'akov**. Likewise, another brother, **Y'hudah**, is thought to be the author of the **New Testament** book bearing his name. **Yeshua** was not swayed by his brothers' challenge, which seems to have stemmed from a reasonable and friendly - yet entirely human - motive, the desire to see their brother succeed and become famous. **Yeshua** had performed miracles in the **Galil**; His brothers apparently felt He should not delay in developing His reputation in **Judea** as well and even offered a

¹ I must confess!!! I usually use the headings from my Holman Christian Standard Bible, as David Sterns does not in the Complete Jewish Bible. When I copied the HCSB heading, it called His Half-Brothers as His Brothers. But they did not have the same biological father. Should I have used the phrase "half-brothers" in the first passage?

plausible argument (v. 4). But **Yeshua** had another agenda. *My time has not yet come* (v. 6), either to go to the festival or to do miracles in **Judea**. Underlying the repeated mention of **Yeshua's** "time" is the theme of His basic mission: to die for the sins of mankind. This was to take place exactly at **God's** right moment and was not to be precipitated by any human challenge.

Yeshua at the Festival of Tabernacles

¹⁰ But after His brothers had gone up to the festival, He too went up, not publicly but in secret. ¹¹ At the festival, the Judeans were looking for Him. "Where is He?" they asked. ¹² And among the crowds, there was much whispering about Him. Some said, "He's a good man," but others said, "No, He is deceiving the masses." ¹³ However, no one spoke about him openly, for fear of the Judeans.

Particularly those who hadn't seen **Yeshua** were eager to find Him at the festival. The charge that **Yeshua** was deceiving the people may hark back to Deuteronomy 13:1–11. Later **Jewish** literature referred to **Yeshua** as a deceiver. The phrase "they feared the Jews" refers to the **Yerushalayim** authorities, represented by the **Sanhedrin**.

¹⁴ Not until the festival was half over did Yeshua go up to the Temple courts and begin to teach. ¹⁵ The Judeans were surprised: "How does this man know so much without having studied?" they asked. ¹⁶ So Yeshua gave them an answer: "My teaching is not My own, it comes from the One who sent Me. ¹⁷ If anyone wants to do His will, he will know whether My teaching is from God or I speak on My own.

If anyone wants to do his will. This refers not merely to feelings, attitudes, or mental assent but to having decided to obey **God**. Such a person will come to know whether **Yeshua** is the **Messiah**, the **Son of God**, as He himself teaches.

¹⁸ A person who speaks on his own is trying to win praise for himself; but a person who tries to win praise for the one who sent him is honest, there is nothing false about him. ¹⁹ Didn't Moshe give you the Torah? Yet not one of you obeys the Torah! Why are you out to kill me?"

Yeshua, as an authoritative source, contrasted Himself with vain, false prophets (Deuteronomy 18:9–22). The **Jews** were proud that **Moshe** had given them the law.

²⁰ "You have a demon!" the crowd answered. "Who's out to kill you?"

You have a demon!, essentially saying, "**You're crazy!**" to **Yeshua**. Insane raving was one of the symptoms of demon possession (compare Mark 5:5; Luke 9:39).

²¹ Yeshua answered them, "I did one thing; and because of this, all of you are amazed. ²² Moshe gave you b'rit-milah - not that it came from Moshe but from the Patriarchs - and you do a boy's b'rit-milah on Shabbat. ²³ If a boy is circumcised on Shabbat so that the Torah of Moshe will not be broken, why are you angry with Me because I made a man's whole body well on Shabbat?"

The **Jews** allowed circumcision on the eighth day even when that day was a **Sabbath**. **Yeshua** argued that all the more should a man be healed on the **Sabbath**.

⁵²⁴ Stop judging by surface appearances and judge the right way!" ²

In a work environment, just like in John 7, you might experience pressure to conform to the prevailing culture that often dismisses faith-based morals. You may wonder if it's worth standing out when colleagues discourage discussions about faith. This week, identify a coworker who seems open to deeper conversations and invite them for coffee. Share how your faith influences your work ethic and decisions. This is a way to sow seeds of faith and might encourage them to explore the subject more, fostering a safe dialogue.

In our next post, we will continue to explore the **Gospel of Yochanan**.

² Yochanan 7:1-24