

Even Jesus' Brothers Did Not Believe in Him

John 7: 2-9

DIG: Why did the religious leaders want to kill the renegade Rabbi (see John 5:18)? In urging Jesus to attend this feast, are His half-brothers being sincere or sarcastic? What does the Lord say is the difference between Him and His half-brothers? What were they taunting Him to do? Why did **the world hate** Yeshua? When the Meshiach said His **time had not yet come**, what did He mean?

REFLECT: Do you face any family opposition to or ridicule of your faith? How do you deal with it? How does Christ's situation help? Are you more likely to be cautious or daring in sharing your faith with your family? Why?

We have already seen that the Jewish leadership wanted to kill Jesus because He had healed the invalid at Bethesda on the Sabbath and because He had expressed His equality with ADONAI (John 5:16-18). **The hatred** of His opponents meant that **the Lord** could no longer move openly. Now **the festival of Booths** was imminent again, one of the three mandatory feasts for all Jewish men. The Jewish people knew from **Zechariah 14:16-21** that **Sukkot** was to be fulfilled in the messianic Kingdom. So as Jesus prepared to go up to **Jerusalem for the festival of Sukkot**, there was great anticipation on **Messiah's** part, on the part of the Sanhedrin, and also on the part of the minds of the people.

But when the Jewish festival of Sukkot was near, Jesus' brothers (*adelphos*) tried to goad Him into going to Yerushalayim (John 7:2). *Adelphos* means brother, but the context determines if it means from the same womb or a brother in the Lord. There are other verses in the B'rit Chadashah that point to the fact that Yeshua had half-brothers whose mother was also Mary (see **Ey - Jesus' Mother and Brothers** and **Fj - Isn't This The Carpenter's Son? Aren't His Brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Jude**)? The Greek word for cousin (*anepsios*) is not used here, neither is the word for relative (*suggenes*).

Christ's half-brothers said to Him, "Leave Galilee and go to Judea, so that your talmidim there may see the works you do (John 7:3). They wanted Jesus to show off His miraculous power in Jerusalem and taunted Him, suggesting that He should go to the City and perform magic tricks in order to rally the world behind Him. **No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret**, they said; **since You are doing these things, show Yourself to the world** (John 7:4). The Lord had placed Himself under the Torah (**Galatians 4:4; Romans 15:8**) and observed all 613 of the commandments perfectly (see **Dg - The**

Completion of the Torah), even those concerning visiting at the feasts. But **Messiah** committed the exact timing of **His** going up to **Jerusalem** to the guidance of **His Father**. **His** obedience towards **God's** commandments had nothing to do with ambition for popularity, contrary to the suggestion of **His** still unbelieving **half-brothers**.⁹¹⁴

The unbelief that characterized Nazareth where **Jesus** grew up had also permeated the home in which **Yeshua** grew up. **They** had certainly seen **His** miracles and probably stood among those who wanted to make **Him** king for selfish reasons. **Their** taunt suggests that if **their maverick brother** were the genuine article, **He** wouldn't mind calling **their** bluff. **For even His own half-brothers did not believe in Him (John 7:5)**. The imperfect form pictures continual unbelief. **They** believed that **the Lord** might be able to dazzle **Tziyon**, but **they** had not begun to perceive the miracles that **He** had already performed.⁹¹⁵

This insult of **half-brothers** is a painful illustration of the loneliness of **Our Savior** and **His** work at this time. **The Good Shepherd** was **hated** in the **Holy City**, disliked by many in **Galilee**, hunted by **His** enemies, and ridiculed and insulted now by these **half-brothers** who had lost **faith** in **Him** and would attempt to force **Him** out of **His** hiding.⁹¹⁶

Therefore, Jesus answered them by saying: **My** (predestined) **time is not yet here (John 7:6a)**. Several times throughout **John's** gospel, **Yeshua** speaks of **His hour** or **His time**, which refers to the moment **His** glory would be revealed to the world. The means of **His** glory would be suffering, which most of **His** followers did not understand, even on the eve of **His** arrest and crucifixion. In every instance except this one, the term **He** used was (Greek: *hora*) **hour**. In this case, He used the word (Greek: *karios*) **time**. Secular Greek literature and the Septuagint, or the Greek translation of the TaNaKh used this term to indicate a decisive moment in which one ear gives way to another.⁹¹⁷

For you any time will do. The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of its sin, and **that its works are evil (John 7:6b-7)**. **Christ** recognized the nation's hatred of **Him** and explained that it had come from the fact that **He** had exposed their sin. The nation was devoted to the pursuit of pharisaic righteousness and refused to accept **Messiah's** condemnation of it. They rejected **Yeshua's** judgment that they were unrighteous and would not be acceptable to **God** unless they received **His** righteousness. **Jesus** knew that to go to **Jerusalem** was to expose **Himself** to the **hatred** of those whose sin **He** had publicly revealed.⁹¹⁸

The Rabbi from Galilee said to His brothers: **You go to the festival of Sukkot** with the other pilgrims to the **City of David**. **I AM not going because my time has not yet fully come**. Jesus was not saying that He *wouldn't* go there. It means that He would not go right *at that moment*. But more importantly, He would not go in response to **their** challenge. Christ was working out the implications of His messiahship in His own way, not **theirs**. **After He had said this, He stayed in Galilee** a little while longer (**John 7:8-9**). Only in the next file does He **resolutely set out for Jerusalem** more discreetly with His apostles through Samaria. This was a very wise decision to keep down the excitement on the part of the multitudes in the **Daughter of Zion** (**Jeremiah 6:2**). Therefore, He did not **go up to the Temple courts** until halfway through the festival (**John 7:14**).