

John 7:37-39

Read the passage: [The Message](#) or [The New Revised Standard Version \(NRSV\)](#).

Click [here](#) for an easy to print or email Adobe PDF version of this note.

Verse 37. "The feast" refers to the last of the three Jewish pilgrimages festivals / feasts, Sukkoth, or festival of Booths / Tabernacles. This text is being read on our Christian Day of Pentecost - which is the second of the pilgrimage festivals, Shavuot, or feast of Weeks. This detail is important simply to avoid confusing the two different festivals, and the time sequence.

Bruce Malina comments that the Festival of Booths included prayers for winter rains and the renewal of sunlight. These two elements are addressed by Jesus:

- Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink.
John 7:37
- I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness.
John 8:12

Thus Jesus presents himself as the answer to the prayers being made.

The reference to "anyone who is thirsty" and "living water" have an interesting precursor in John 3, the encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well. And subsequently, in John 19:28 where Jesus on the cross says, "I am thirsty."

In John, "thirst" has the double meaning of literal thirst for real water and physical life; and "spiritual" thirst for a real relationship with God and eternal life. It is this second sense that Jesus is constantly pointing to, and the emphasis on "living" (or "life giving") water. Water that imparts lasting vigour and vitality.

Thus, those who come to Jesus and trust him will have floods of life flowing out of them.

Verse 39 provides an explanatory aside about the Spirit who is yet to come. "Jesus was not yet glorified." When is Jesus glorified? When he is lifted up. Lifted up on the cross.

David Ewart,
www.davidewart.ca