

JOHN

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to John chapter 7 as we continue our study through the Word of God. Keep in mind that in John chapter 5, while Jesus was in Jerusalem, the Jewish religious leaders wanted to put Jesus to death because He not only healed a lame man on the Sabbath day but He also claimed to be equal with the Father, making Himself God. Thus, Jesus withdrew to the area of Galilee.

Let me share with you an overview of this chapter. We are told,

Because it was not yet time for Christ to die, He traveled up to Jerusalem for the Feast of Booths without drawing notice of the crowds. At the right moment, the Lord went into the temple to teach. Some of the multitude argued with Him, but others kept quiet. Jesus openly proclaimed that He was sent from God the Father and that soon He would return to Him in heaven. On the last day of the feast, the Lord revealed that those who trust Him will receive the inner witness of the Spirit of God. Though the officials of the Jews wanted to arrest Christ, no one was able to seize Him.

- Elmer Towns, The Gospel of John, p. 69

So, there is a lot going on in this chapter and there is a lot of teasing and tempting going on to get Jesus to do things, but, Jesus did not bow to the pressure. And, as we will see, not even His brothers believed who He was. So, Jesus is going to withdraw to the area of Galilee and that is where He is at as we pick up our study this evening in John chapter 7 beginning in verse 1. Let's see what the Lord has for us tonight as we study through His Word.

JOHN 7**VERSES 1-2**

John opens up by saying, “**After these things . . .**” After what things? After the events of chapter 6. The feeding of the 5,000 men plus women and children with five barely crackers and two small pickled fish. The walking on the water to reach His men who were struggling to get across the Sea of Galilee. The declaration that He is the Bread of Life and if you want that life, that satisfaction, you must partake of Him.

Then John tells us that Jesus “**walked in Galilee**” even though many had rejected Him. The Greek word translated “**walked**” is in the perfect tense, denoting continual action.

Now we might not think much about this but keep in mind that the events of John chapter 6 occurred around the time of Passover in April. Now we have come to the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths, as verse 2 tells us, which took place in October. That means the cross is less than 6 months away now!

What we have is a gap of some six months between chapters 6 and 7 of John. We do not know much about this time period except that Jesus “**walked**” among the people, continuing to show them who He was even though they rejected Him!

Yes, there is a time when Jesus will walk away but the key for us is that we keep walking, we keep sharing and when the door is closed, we move on as Jesus did.

We are also told that He did not go to Jerusalem because the Jews wanted to kill Him, because He, being a man, made Himself equal with God and He was equal with the Father. It almost seems like they prevented Jesus from going to Jerusalem.

Not at all. Jesus remained in Galilee until the appointed time. No one prevented Him from doing the will of the Father. Therefore, He remained in Galilee until His appointed time to go to Jerusalem had come.

Let me share with you regarding what this Feast of Booths or the Feast of Tabernacles is all about, because most people do not know too much about it. We know about Passover and the Feast of Firstfruits, but the Feast of Booths, not too much.

In Leviticus 23:33-44 we are told of this feast and I will try to summarize it for you. This was a harvest feast taking place on the 7th month of the Jewish religious calendar, the month of Tisri or late September or early October.

It was a great time of celebration as the harvest was brought in. It was also a reminder of how God provided for them during their wilderness wanderings those 40 years. And lastly, it spoke of the coming of the Messiah who will sustain them and provide for them, setting up the Kingdom.

The first day of the Feast was a holy day as well as the eighth day. During those first 6 days of the feast the priest would go to the pool of Siloam and gather water into a golden pitcher and then travel back to the Temple and pour the water out over the altar after walking around the altar once.

Then on the seventh day the priest would do the same but instead of circling around the altar just once, he did it seven times and then poured out the water.

Then, on the eighth day no water would be poured out showing that God fulfilled His promise for His people, and it was a holy day.

They also would build these booths or lean-tos with palm branches, placing them in such a way as to get more shade than sun through them. Then, at night you could look up and see the stars in the night. Thus, this would be a time for fathers to tell their children of all God had done for them, provided for their ancestors.

During these Feasts Jerusalem could swell up to more than a million visitors. The three main feasts that were required by every adult male Jew living within a 20-mile radius of Jerusalem to attend were the Feast of Passover, the Feast of Pentecost and Tabernacles or Booths.

If you lived outside of that 20-mile radius of Jerusalem you were required to come as often as you could. And we are going to see Jesus use this Feast of Tabernacles in a way that shows who He is and we will see that as we move on through this chapter!

One other point and then we will move on. Did you know that the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles will be celebrated in the Kingdom Age? It will and it will be celebrated to honor the Messiah and His dwelling with His people!

In Zechariah 14:16-19 we are told, “**And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, on them there will be no rain. If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the Lord strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.**”

VERSES 3-5

Just so you don't miss the point, John reminds us that the brothers of Jesus, or his half-brothers, the sons of Mary and Joseph, were not saying these things because they believed that Jesus was the Messiah, but it was more of a sarcastic remark.

In other words, "You need a bigger platform so all can see and hear what you have to say!" That is what Bruce tells us, "It was widely believed that when the Messiah came he would make himself publicly known in some spectacular way."

I think The Living Bible presents this in the context it is meant. It says, "**and Jesus' brothers urged him to go to Judea for the celebration. 'Go where more people can see your miracles!' they scoffed. 'You can't be famous when you hide like this! If you're so great, prove it to the world!'**" John 7:3-4, TLB.

Sibling rivalry, even in this family. But think about it. Imagine living with Jesus as your brother! "Can't you be more like your brother. Look at how He works. He treats us so nice." That would get old and these guys did not believe, at least not yet!

You see, we know that at least two of His brothers did get saved after the death and resurrection of Jesus. James became the church leader in Jerusalem and wrote the Epistle of James. And there was Jude who also wrote the Epistle of Jude. But again, at this point none of them believed Jesus was the Messiah and it almost seems like they are taunting Him, challenging Him as brothers who are jealous tend to do.

VERSES 6-9

First of all, the word “**time**” here is the Greek word KAIROS and it speaks of a period of time in which something is to be accomplished.

Therefore, there was a time, according to the Father’s will, for Jesus to go up to Jerusalem, but not yet. Jesus was going to remain in Galilee for a time but His brothers went on ahead of Him. Keep in mind that Jesus did not say that He was not going to go up to Jerusalem, just not yet!

What is interesting here is that Jesus said to His brothers and really to all who don’t believe, “**The world cannot hate you . . .**” Why is that? It is as Dods wrote, “There is no danger of your incurring the world’s hatred by anything you do or say; because your wishes and actions are in the world’s own spirit.”

That should just make sense and if that is true, and it is, then what Jesus said next just makes sense. He said of the world or the people of this world, “**. . . but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil.**”

The world is fine when the standards to live by are in accordance with the sin that they are living. But once you set the standard to God’s standard, then they are angry, hateful, intolerant of those who are living accordingly! You see, your light, the way you are living, the Word of God being taught, exposes their darkness and they try to extinguish the light or put out the light so their deeds will not be exposed.

That is what we see here. Jesus exposed the sins of the people and they did not like it, especially the Jewish religious leaders and they are plotting to kill Jesus!

The same is true today. You come against the heresy that is being taught in the church and you get people mad at you, angry at you, they lash out at you! Don't let the fear of man drive you, let the Spirit of God lead you!

Again, Jesus tells His brothers to go up to the Feast and He was going to stay in the Galilee area for a time. And as we will see, at the "time" that God determined, Jesus will go to the Feast!

VERSES 10-13

Keep in mind when the Jews traveled to Jerusalem for a Feast day they did so with others. There was usually a large procession of travelers going to Jerusalem from Galilee and yet, Jesus did not go "openly" or with these large processions of people, but alone.

That is what Alford tells us, "Not in the usual caravan-company, nor probably by the usual way." (Alford)

And another wrote, "That is to say, He went up, but not at His brothers' instigation, nor with the publicity they had recommended." (Dods)

But for the Jewish religious leaders, they knew that Jesus would come to Jerusalem for these Feast days because Deuteronomy 16:16 required Him to. Therefore, they were looking for Him, not to receive Him and His teachings, but looking to capture Him so they might put Him to death. But they did not find Him yet; He did not present Himself openly at this time.

Now, as the crowds grew in Jerusalem there was some discussion about Jesus. Some say that He was good and others that He was not good, that He was deceiving the people.

And how true this is. There is no neutrality with Jesus. You are either for Him or against Him!

Even today people have all kinds of opinions about Jesus but that is meaningless without a relationship with Him and by not taking a stand for Jesus, you are really against Him. Jesus put it this way in Matthew 12:30, “**He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.**”

Now verse 13 is interesting as John tells us, “**However, no one spoke openly of Him for fear of the Jews.**” Why were the people nervous about the religious leaders hearing them speak of Jesus?

Because they could be kicked out of the Synagogue, removed from the fellowship! And, if you were accused of deceiving the people, according to the Talmud, you could be put to death by stoning. So, they had good reason to be a little nervous.

Bruce put it like this, “Whether they approved or disapproved of him, they did not voice their opinions too loudly or too publicly. The authorities did not wish him to be discussed at all, and anyone who disregarded their wishes was liable to feel their displeasure.”

VERSES 14-18

When John tells us that Jesus went to the Temple to teach “**about the middle of the feast**” he is not saying that Jesus did not attend the Feast days prior to this fourth day. It is just that He did not make Himself known until this time because now His time had come!

And as He goes into the Temple and teaches the Jewish religious leaders were amazed because He taught with authority, He expounded on what the Scriptures were saying.

You see, for them, they knew He never studied under one of the Jewish religious leaders, the Rabbis. And during the time of Jesus there were some 30 seminaries in and around Jerusalem. But these Jewish religious leaders knew Jesus never attended any of them, He was not taught by their master, Gamaliel, Acts 22:3.

But again, when He did speak He spoke with authority. And for these Rabbis, that troubled them and the reason it did was that the Rabbis of Jesus day would never speak with authority but always quoted other Rabbis as they taught. But not Jesus, He spoke with authority, and what made the difference?

What Jesus spoke were the words that He received from the Father and thus, if they would just listen to what He was saying they would see what He spoke came right out of the Old Testament. It was not contrary to it but it shed light on those Scriptures, it opened them up even more.

And how true that is, even today as the religious establishment loves to come down upon those who are teaching with authority. Not our own authority do we teach, but the authority of God according to His Word!

And the problem is that we often see people negate what we have to say because we don't have all those fancy degrees after our names. Guess what? They said the same thing of the disciples of Jesus back then.

Listen carefully to what the Sanhedrin or the Jewish religious Supreme Court you might say, said regarding Peter and John when they arrested them. Luke tells us, **“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled . . .”** Acts 4:13a.

You see, they did not go to Old Rabbi University but there was something that these religious leaders noticed in Peter and John and their conclusion was that “**... they realized that they had been with Jesus.**” Acts 4:13b.

I love the way The Living Bible puts this verse, it says, “**When the Council saw the boldness of Peter and John and could see that they were obviously uneducated non-professionals, they were amazed and realized what being with Jesus had done for them!**”

You see, spend time with Jesus and you too will be amazed as you spend time with Him and see what He will do for you as He teaches you and speaks to you of the things of God!

What we also see today is that people say that they are speaking with the authority of God and yet, what they say goes contrary to what God’s Word has to say. Let me be clear on this. If that is true, if what they say contradicts God’s Word, they are not speaking with the authority of God, but the lies of the Devil! That is just the reality folks!

VERSES 19-24

I love what Jesus does here. He just said that He was righteous or without sin, “**no unrighteousness is in Him.**” And now he says to these Jewish religious leaders, “**Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keeps the law?**” Busted!

Keep in mind that the Pharisees were proud in that they believed they kept the Law and yet Jesus tells them they are wrong. That had to hurt!

You see, it is not just a matter of an outward action but a matter of the heart. Jesus said if you lust after a woman in your heart you have already committed adultery! If you think evil of a person you have murdered them! Thus, no one can keep the Law perfectly, except Jesus of course!

And that is the point; the Law points us to our Savior because of our failure. In fact, in the first church meeting in Jerusalem that was the issue, Gentiles keeping the Law after they got saved or not, and Peter spoke up and said **“Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.”** Acts 15:10-11.

And the Bible tells us that if you are going to live by the Law, seek a salvation by keeping the Law, then you will die by the Law, for the Law does not give life, only the Spirit does!

Now when Jesus said that they are seeking to kill Him, the multitudes, for the most part, did not know what the Jewish religious leaders were planning to do. Some did as we see in verse 25 of John chapter 7, but I think many were unaware of what they were planning to do with Jesus. Probably the crowds coming to Jerusalem did not know what the Jewish religious leaders plotted to do but the ones in Jerusalem were very aware. And Jesus did know. That is why they are surprised here and I am sure the Jewish religious leaders did not give away their intentions!

Isn't it interesting that when they rejected what Jesus said, when He did miracles that went against what they believed, they said He had a demon in him.

Many do the same today as we share with them the love of Jesus, they think we are nuts! Now the reason these religious leaders wanted Jesus dead was because He healed a man on the Sabbath day back in John chapter 5!

And Jesus nails them here. He said that they are upset because He did one good deed on the Sabbath, healing this man. And yet they circumcise on the Sabbath all the time and it is not an issue for them!

Like many today, if they would have only heard the words of Jesus instead of closing Him out. You see, first of all Moses did not institute circumcision but it was given to Abraham. And we are told that on the eighth day the male child was to be circumcised and that could fall on the Sabbath day, Leviticus 12:3.

Thus, in their minds, it was okay to mutilate the flesh but not to heal on the Sabbath day. Jesus kept trying to get them to think through what they believed, the traditions that they had adopted as Gospel truth!

And we deal with that today. “You have to go to church to be saved!” “You must go through Mary to be saved!” “Jesus paid for certain sins but you must atone for your own sins by doing the sacraments and going to Purgatory!” And we can go on but you get the point. It is a works salvation and not a salvation that is based upon the completed work of Jesus on the cross of Calvary!

In I Timothy 2:5-6 we are told, “**For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.**” From the cross of Calvary Jesus cried out, “**It is finished!**” or “*Paid in full!*” (John 19:30) All our sins were paid for by Jesus!

And how many people will negate the Scriptures and believe the traditions of men? Many people today are really no different than these Jewish religious leaders were.

And listen again to what Jesus said in verse 24, “**Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.**” Wow, that is so important!

Now when people judge they mostly judge by appearance, how a situation looks, and how they feel about it.

I learned this lesson a few years back. In 2012 Trayvon Martin was killed by a man who said he was protecting the neighborhood. That his shooting of this teen was in self-defense. And the picture they showed of Trayvon Martin was this young boy, not even 100 pounds. The guy who did the killing said it was in self-defense and he outweighed this kid by probably more than 75 pounds, according to the picture of Trayvon.

And my wife said that this teenager was at fault. And I argued that there is no way that he could have overpowered this other guy, look at the picture! And I was shocked by her lack of compassion and unchristian attitude!

Okay, you know where this is going. She was right. The picture that they showed over and over again on television, the newspapers and other news sources, was not recent. In fact, they would not even tell you how far back this picture went, all it said was “An undated family photo of Trayvon Martin.” And from what I can find out, the picture they showed was when he was 12 and not 17!

What I learned! Don't argue with your wife. Well, that was secondary. I learned not to judge by appearance because appearances can be deceiving and that is exactly what Jesus is saying here!

And for the most part, that is not a righteous judgment. When we judge things, it must not be according to how we feel or what we think, not by appearance you might say, but what God's Word says.

These religious leaders were judging Jesus by their standards and what Jesus did went against what they believed. What is interesting is what they believed went against the Word of God and thus, they were in error, not Jesus.

If they would have looked at the Scriptures and looked at what Jesus did, they would have embraced Jesus for the Scriptures testify of Him. But instead they rejected Him by an unrighteous judgment!

VERSES 25-29

Remember what I said as we looked at John 7:20, that some of the people did not know what the Jewish religious leaders wanted to do with Jesus, kill Him! And those people were probably those who came from outside of Jerusalem.

But here, in verse 25 of John chapter 7 we are told that “**. . . some of them from Jerusalem said, ‘Is this not He whom they seek to kill?’**” In other words, the Jewish religious leaders in Jerusalem made it well known that they wanted Jesus dead and the people from Jerusalem were well aware of their intentions.

And these Jews from Jerusalem were confused by what they saw. They saw Jesus teaching boldly and they saw the Jewish religious leaders who wanted Jesus dead, and they did nothing. They did not arrest Him!

And they are wondering if they are missing something, maybe He is the Christ, the Messiah? But then they say, “**However, we know where this Man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from.**” John 7:27.

You see, some may have saw Him grow-up, knew Him as a boy, and it conflicted with their idea of the Messiah who in their mind, would appear suddenly on the scene.

Where did they come up with this idea of not knowing where the Messiah came from, that He was just going to appear? First, from Isaiah 53:8, where they misinterpret what Isaiah is saying, **“He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.”**

Please understand that when it says, **“who will declare His generation?”** it is speaking of the fact that the Messiah died childless. There was no one to declare His generation. Not that He was to come suddenly in His First Coming.

Also, in Malachi 3:1 we are told, **“Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming,’ Says the Lord of hosts.”**

Trypho, the Jewish opponent of the second-century Christian apologist Justin Martyr, said to Justin, “But Christ - if He has indeed been born, and exists anywhere - is unknown, and does not even know Himself, and has no power until Elias come to anoint Him, and make Him manifest to all.” (Dialogue with Trypho 8)

Because of those misinterpretations, they came to the wrong conclusion. You see, in Micah 5:2 we are told, **“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting.”**

Micah is telling us that Almighty God, the Eternal God, was going to be born in Bethlehem and specifically the one in Judah! So, born in Bethlehem, of the tribe of Judah, through the lineage of David, that was the Messiah. They knew much about the Messiah but tradition clouded their view of the Messiah and many have that same problem today!

Now the crowds may have been confused but Jesus wasn't. He knew where He came from and He knew the mission He was on, to save man from his sin and to reconcile man to God. And this is truly a radical statement by Jesus, telling them that they may know He was from Nazareth but He actually came from above, from the Father, making Him more than just a man, but God!

How in the world did these Jews respond to that statement by Jesus? Let's read on and see.

VERSES 30-31

Why were they so upset? Because Jesus, being a man claimed to be God and it short-circuited their hard drive, it fried the mother board of their minds, it was too much for them to handle. And yet, if they only looked carefully at the Scriptures they would have seen that the Messiah was God Himself indwelling a human body, the Incarnation!

Remember in Matthew 22:41-46 where we are told, **“While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, ‘What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?’ They said to Him, ‘The Son of David.’ He said to them, ‘How then does David in the Spirit call Him “Lord,” saying: “The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool’”? If David then calls Him “Lord,” how is He his Son?’ And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.”**

Keep in mind that the questions Jesus is asking these Pharisees was not to put them down but to draw out their faith. To help them to see that He is the Messiah and to do that the question He asks them has to do with what David said about the Messiah.

He asks them regarding the Messiah, **“Whose Son is He?”** These religious leaders, these Pharisees did not even have to use a lifeline to get help with this one, that is how easy it was. They tell Jesus, **“The Son of David.”**

Don't miss the point that was being made here. This was the title for the Messiah. You see, they felt the Messiah was going to be just a man, like Moses, not God. They understood that the Christ was going to be **“The Son of David.”** But Jesus is going to show them their error because the Christ is not going to be just from the seed of David but He is also going to be the Son of God!

Now, since they got this part of the question right it should be obvious how to answer the next one. Jesus asks them, “**. . . How then does David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord,’ saying ‘The LORD said to my Lord’ ‘Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’” If David then calls Him ‘Lord,’ how is He his Son?”** Matthew 22:43-44

Make no mistake about it, this is also a very simple question to answer. Jesus was saying, *“You boys are right, the Christ is to be the Son of David. Good answer. But if He is the Son of David then how can David call Him ‘Lord’?”*

And Jesus quotes out of Psalm 110:1, a Psalm of David who wrote by the power, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Mark 12:36 tells us that very fact, “**For David himself said by the Holy Spirit . . .**” And in that Psalm David calls his Son, “**Lord**” which is not kosher! You see, a father would never call his son lord, but a son would call his father lord or Adonai.

Now here’s the thing. Jesus is stretching them, getting them to think about what they just said and what the Scriptures are saying. Again, the religious leaders knew that in the patriarchal society that they were living in a father would always be treated with respect and honor, no matter how old the son was. The father would never, ever call the son lord or Adonai. Thus, as they listened, Jesus asked them, *“How can this be? How can David call his son Lord?”*

What a great question that is and what Jesus wanted them to see is that the Messiah, the Son of David was to be much more than just the Son of David, He was to be the Son of God. Remember what Paul said in Romans 1:3-4, “**concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.**”

The Amplified Bible puts these verses like this, “**[The Gospel] regarding His Son, Who as to the flesh (His human nature) was descended from David, And [as to His divine nature] according to the Spirit of holiness was openly designated the Son of God in power [in a striking, triumphant and miraculous manner] by His resurrection from the dead, even Jesus Christ our Lord (the Messiah, the Anointed One).**”

You see, not only the Son of David but the Son of God and thus, David rightly called Him Lord, called the Messiah Lord because He was more than just his son, He is Almighty God! There are the facts, the truth is right before them and all they have to do is look at what their own Scriptures had said and they would see this truth about the Messiah, about Jesus.

Keep in mind that this information about the Messiah was in their Scriptures. So how did they miss this for all those years? Because of their religious traditions that kept them from the truth. Be careful with religious traditions that are not anchored in the Word of God for they will not draw you closer to God but they will move you farther away from Him!

Again, listen to the response they gave to Jesus regarding this easy question that He asked them. “**And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.**” Matthew 22:46.

How sad, instead of hearing and thinking about what Jesus had said to them, they were silent! Why were they silent? Because it went against what they believed to be true, even though their own Scriptures clearly spoke this truth. What they held onto was challenged and instead of investigating further, they were silent. They were not interested in the truth.

And I always find it amazing and sad that when people are confronted with the truth, when they are being challenged to examine what they believe, they become silent and negate what has been said. They are no longer interested because it goes against what they have believed to be true, even though the evidence for what they believe has been shown as wrong to them.

And that is what we see here in John chapter 7, some refused to believe, they wanted Jesus dead. But others did hear what Jesus said and they believed what He was saying, who He is!

And it is always exciting to see those who believe. Listen to how The Living Bible puts John 7:31, **“Many among the crowds at the Temple believed on him. ‘After all,’ they said, ‘what miracles do you expect the Messiah to do that this man hasn’t done?’”** The people were wondering if Jesus could be the Messiah after all He has done. The crowds were turning.

One writer gives of the perspective of all they saw and heard. He wrote,

If Jesus isn’t the Messiah, then when Messiah comes, will he . . .

Do more miracles than Jesus?

Teach with more insight and authority than Jesus?

Love more remarkably than Jesus?

Suffer with more courage than Jesus?

Atone for more sinners than Jesus?

Raise from the dead with more triumph than Jesus?

Ascend to heaven in greater glory than Jesus?

Present a greater Gospel than Jesus?

Change more lives than Jesus?

Free more addictions than Jesus?

Comfort more grief-stricken hearts than Jesus?

Heal more broken hearts than Jesus?

Restore more marriages than Jesus?

Triumph over more tyrants than Jesus?

Gain more followers than Jesus?

- David Guzik

And yet, for some, they were still wondering? I guess if you don't want to believe, then it doesn't matter what you are told, what you see, you will reject it or come up with some reason not to believe!

We have seen the response of the common people, some rejecting and some receiving what Jesus was saying. Now what do you think the religious leaders did when they heard these things? Let's read on and I am sure you already know.

VERSES 32-36

These Pharisees, the guardians of the Jewish traditions, did not like the attention that Jesus was getting so they sent out the guards to arrest Him.

How sad. Instead of bringing people to God they drove people away from God and now when God is in their midst, they want to arrest Him, remove Him from the people He came to help.

And many religious leaders do the same today. Instead of bringing people to God they have them jumping through all kinds of hoops instead of giving the invitation that Jesus gave, to ***“COME!”***

When Jesus speaks of Him going back to the Father He is speaking of His death, resurrection and ascension back to the place of glory in heaven with the Father.

An interesting verse regarding this is given to us in Hosea 5:15, **“I will return again to My place Till they acknowledge their offense. Then they will seek My face; In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me.”**

Jesus became flesh, dwelt among us, but then He returned to heaven. Why? How long? Until the Jewish people acknowledge their offense, singular, which is their rejection of Jesus. It is then, when they call upon Him as a nation that Jesus will return at the end of the Tribulation Period, His Second Coming.

We see this in Zechariah 12:10 **“And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.”**

And in Revelation 1:7 we are told, **“Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.”**

As Jesus speaks to these religious leaders He tells them, **“You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come.”** John 7:34.

Why did Jesus say that? Because they refused to receive Him. When Jesus spoke to His disciples He told them, **“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know.”** John 14:1-4.

Do you see the difference between the heart of unbelief that can’t see and the heart of belief that can? The heart of unbelief will keep you out of heaven but the heart of belief will usher you in!

Now they tried to figure out what Jesus was saying and they just didn’t get it. They thought Jesus was going to flee the area, save Himself, go into hiding. Not at all. He came to do the will of the Father and He will complete the work that is before Him.

VERSES 37-39

This feast began on the 15th day of the month of Tisri and ran for seven days. Each day, as I have said, the priest would go down to the pool of Siloam and fill a golden pitcher with water and then travel back to the Temple and circle around the altar once before pouring out the water over the altar.

On the seventh day, they would circle the altar seven times before pouring out the water. And all this showed how God provided for them during their wilderness wanderings and it looked forward to the coming Messiah and His Kingdom.

I believe when John tells us that it was “**the last day**” that he is speaking of the eighth day, a holy convocation. And on this day no water was poured out. And at this point, as the people are all around, Jesus stands up and says “**If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.**” John 7:37-38.

Think about this for a minute. No more water is being poured out and yet the people are still thirsty and Jesus is telling them that if they want to satisfy that thirst in their souls, they need to take Him into their lives!

Even today people have thirsty souls and they try to find temporary respites to quench this thirst with all kinds of emotional and material things, but they never satisfy, they never fill a thirsty soul like Jesus does.

It is as Isaiah 44:3 says, “**For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, And floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, And My blessing on your offspring.**”

Or in Isaiah 55:1-3 we read, “**Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you - The sure mercies of David.**”

Today we turn on the television and we hear all kinds of commercials telling us what we need. I wish they would come out with a commercial that says, ***“GOT JESUS?”*** or ***“JESUS, IT DOESN'T GET ANY BETTER THAN THIS!”*** You see, in the heart of every person is a god-shaped void that man tries to fill with all kinds of things and Jesus is the only thing that fits, He alone can satisfy!

Now John, writing this Gospel some 50 years or so after this event, tells us Jesus was speaking of the Holy Spirit that was to be given on the day of Pentecost. Could it be speaking of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit or the empowering of the Holy Spirit.

Well, before you can be empowered by the Spirit of God you have to be saved, the Spirit of God must indwell you. It is then that we see this empowerment to bring the Gospel message forward, this empowering! Both probably apply here.

Now I do realize that some deny this empowering with the Spirit of God but let's just look at what the Scriptures say.

We have dealt with this before but just to re-cap, after the resurrection of Jesus we see Jesus appear to His men and in John 20:22 we are told, **“He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’”** At this point they are New Testament saints as the Holy Spirit has come inside them.

Then in Luke Jesus tells us **“Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”** Luke 24:49.

And in Acts 1:8 we read **“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”**

And then in Acts chapter 2, on the day of Pentecost we see the fulfillment of this promise as the believers are empowered to be witnesses of Jesus. It is the Holy Spirit coming upon a believer in power and thus, we are not just to be vessels to contain God, but channels from which God can flow through and touch the lives of others, living water not stagnant ponds!

Temple put it this way, “No one can be indwelt by the Spirit of God and keep that Spirit to himself. Where the Spirit is, He flows forth; if there is no flowing forth, He is not there.”

And I believe the Scriptures clearly show us that this empowering spoken of in Acts is for us as it was for the early church. We need the power of God in our lives!

VERSES 40-43

I know that this sounds strange, but Jesus does bring division. And Alford points out, “The word rendered **division** implies a *violent dissension* – some taking up His cause, some wishing to lay hands on Him.”

Jesus said in Matthew 10:34-37, **“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law’; and ‘a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.’ He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.”**

He is saying that by coming to Him it may cause divisions between family members and friends. Even today, in the Orthodox Jewish homes, if one of their children comes to Jesus, Jesus is his Lord and Savior, they will have a funeral for him for in their minds, he is dead to them!

VERSES 44-49

Once again we see that they wanted to get Jesus but it was not time yet.

What I find interesting is that these guards were taken in by the words of Jesus as He spoke with authority. “‘Never did any *man* talk in this fashion.’ In the Greek the word ‘man’ (*anthropos*) occurs in the emphatic position at the end of the sentence and implies by contrast that he must be more than an ordinary human being.” (Tenney)

How do you think this made the Jewish religious leaders feel? We don’t to guess because we see their response in verses 47, 48 and 49 of John chapter 7.

And they basically are saying that none of the religious leaders believe what Jesus is saying, how could these guards? But they too are mistaken for Nicodemus believed, and we will see that as we read on! Yes, at this point Nicodemus was kind of a secret believer, but after the death of Jesus he does step forward and takes a stand for Jesus.

And verse 49 we see them degrading those who would follow Jesus. Listen to how The Living Bible puts it, “**These stupid crowds do, yes; but what do they know about it? A curse upon them anyway!**” That is how they felt! They looked down upon the people; saw them as cursed because they did not keep the Law like they did! Pride caused them to feel too educated to be taken in by Jesus.

Isn’t it amazing how many educated people reject Jesus today and believe all kinds of foolish things! Isn’t it amazing how many religious leaders deny the Deity of Jesus, His virgin birth, His miracles, His resurrection and yet the simple faith of a child can proclaim “Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so!” Pride and hardness of heart kept them from seeing and receiving Jesus!

VERSES 50-52

Nicodemus tries to stand up for Jesus, in a weak way, and he tells them that the law says it is not legal to convict a man before he could defend himself. They were violating their own law!

It is as Jesus said in John 7:24, “**Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.**” They were not doing that!

And then in verse 52 we see this condemning of Nicodemus for standing up for Jesus. And they say that no prophet has come from Galilee!

Make no mistake about it. The Jewish leaders looked down upon the Galileans with scorn. They were the butt of their jokes. They could not see anything good coming from Galilee, even saying that no prophet came from there. But they were wrong!

In II Kings 14:25 we are told that the prophet Jonah came from Gath Hopher which was 3 miles north of Nazareth in Lower Galilee. There was also the prophet Elijah who was from Thisbe. And it is possible that Nahum and Hosea came from Galilee.

So much for these prideful religious leaders who thought they knew the Scriptures so well and now were not judging with righteous judgment but according to their own standards, their own will!

VERSE 53

The feast is over, the lean-tos have been taken down and the people are returning to their homes. Some have been touched by the Savior, by Jesus, others have not, they just observed a religious practice.

The same happens today in churches across America. As the Word of God is taught some receive what God has for them, they are touched by Jesus, while others leave as they came in, unchanged!

As I close let me leave you with this to think about. Everyone went to their homes and families, but not Jesus; He had no place to go. So where did He go? John 8:1 tells us “**But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.**” That is where we will pick-up next time as we continue our study through the Word of God!