

## The Beginning of the Feast

<sup>1</sup> After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill him. <sup>2</sup> Now the Jews' Feast of Booths was at hand. <sup>3</sup> So his brothers said to him, "Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you are doing." <sup>4</sup> For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world." <sup>5</sup> For not even his brothers believed in him. <sup>6</sup> Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. <sup>7</sup> The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil. <sup>8</sup> You go up to the feast. I am not going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come." <sup>9</sup> After saying this, he remained in Galilee. <sup>10</sup> But after his brothers had gone up to the feast, then he also went up, not publicly but in private.

- His brothers want him to show his signs to the world. **Why does John see this as resulting from their unbelief?** Like those in the previous chapter, they had a deficient view of Jesus - they saw the miracles, and expected a very fleshly Messiah. Jesus tells them that his time has not yet come for his grand entrance into Jerusalem, which he knows will result in his "going up" in a different sense. The festival is the Feast of Tabernacles in the Autumn and Passover is not until spring - his time is Passover and until that time comes.
- Jesus is not going up to the feast in the sense that they are asking, he is going to privately on his own. Similar to the Wedding at Cana, where Jesus' response to Mary's request is, "my time has not yet come" but he proceeds to work the miracle in private. He does not go up with his brothers to be heralded - I am not going up to the festival yet, not with you..
- **What does he mean, "your time is always here" and "the world cannot hate you?"**
- Why does the world hate Jesus? Because he testifies about it that its works are evil.

## The Feast of Booths or Tabernacles

- Celebrated the Autumn harvest, and remembered the lesson the desert wanderings
  - Autumn equinox - "Dying of the sun" and rituals of light
  - Summer draught and dry land - rituals and prayer for water
- **Institution:** (Leviticus 23:33–43, ESV)
  - <sup>42</sup> You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All native Israelites shall dwell in booths, <sup>43</sup> that your generations may know that I made the people of Israel dwell in boo<sup>1</sup>ths
- **Dedication of Solomon's Temple** (1 Kings 8:1–11, ESV)
- **Haggai - Rebuilding the Temple** (Haggai 2:1–9, ESV)

## The Middle of the Feast

<sup>11</sup> The Jews were looking for him at the feast, and saying, “Where is he?” <sup>12</sup> And there was much muttering about him among the people. While some said, “He is a good man,” others said, “No, he is leading the people astray.” <sup>13</sup> Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of him. <sup>14</sup> About the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and began teaching. <sup>15</sup> The Jews therefore marveled, saying, “How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?” <sup>16</sup> So Jesus answered them, “My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me. <sup>17</sup> If anyone’s will is to do God’s will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority. <sup>18</sup> The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood. <sup>19</sup> Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why do you seek to kill me?” <sup>20</sup> The crowd answered, “You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill you?” <sup>21</sup> Jesus answered them, “I did one work, and you all marvel at it. <sup>22</sup> Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. <sup>23</sup> If on the

Sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man's whole body well? <sup>24</sup> Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment." <sup>25</sup> Some of the people of Jerusalem therefore said, "Is not this the man whom they seek to kill? <sup>26</sup> And here he is, speaking openly, and they say nothing to him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Christ? <sup>27</sup> But we know where this man comes from, and when the Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from." <sup>28</sup> So Jesus proclaimed, as he taught in the temple, "You know me, and you know where I come from. But I have not come of my own accord. He who sent me is true, and him you do not know. <sup>29</sup> I know him, for I come from him, and he sent me." <sup>30</sup> So they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come. <sup>31</sup> Yet many of the people believed in him. They said, "When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done?" <sup>32</sup> The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to arrest him. <sup>33</sup> Jesus then said, "I will be with you a little longer, and then I am going to him who sent me. <sup>34</sup> You will seek me and you will not find me. Where I am you cannot come." <sup>35</sup> The Jews said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him? Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? <sup>36</sup> What does he mean by saying, 'You will seek me and you will not find me,' and, 'Where I am you cannot come'?"

- There is clearly a mix of hostility and excitement with those in Jerusalem and the buzz surrounding Jesus. Some see him as a good man, others see him as trouble. Both groups feared the authorities who were seeking to kill him, so they spoke privately just as Jesus went up privately.
- The people were uncertain what to make of him. **What do people make of him today? What fear keeps people from speaking openly today?**

This section progresses around a series of questions, and a series of misunderstandings about Jesus' message.

1. Where were you educated?
2. Where did you come from?
3. Where are you going?

Where did you go to school?

- Jesus teaches, marvelling them since he is uneducated. Every Rabbi had to have received his teaching from somewhere, and the way you became a trusted teacher is that you carried on the teachings of your predecessor, who carried on the teachings of his predecessor, etc. This ordination is the basis of Jewish religious authority.
- His response is, I was taught by God. He is the source of my authority.
- **What does this mean - "if anyone's will is to do God's will..."?** Just as in Chapter 5, where he says "you do not have the love of God abiding in you" which is why you don't believe my teaching. Those whose hearts have been changed and who desire to walk in the light, will know that the teaching of Christ is that light of God.
- The argument about the Sabbath is still fresh from Chapter 5. Jesus says that if it is ok to circumcise someone on the sabbath, which wounds, why would it not be ok to completely heal a person, bringing life. He condemns their poor judgment for condemning his healing on the Sabbath.
- Jesus is speaking openly and no one does anything - do they believe too?

Where did you come from?

- They argue amongst themselves: could this be the Messiah? It couldn't be because nobody will know where the Messiah comes from and we know he comes from Nazareth in Galilee.
- **"No one will know where he comes from" - why not?** There was a tradition among the Jews that the Messiah, when he comes, would suddenly appear with no one knowing his origins.
- Jesus takes this as another opportunity to make a bold claim: He comes from his Father in heaven. With that he is claiming divine origin, an equality of being with God.

- Many began to believe in him, and this prompted the Jewish leaders to attempt to arrest him. This prompts Jesus final statement that he is going away, not yet because his hour has not yet come, but when it does he will return the Father in heaven by means of the cross and resurrection. Once again the crowd misunderstands.
- Where is he going that we would never go? To the Gentiles? But Jesus says, he's going where they cannot come - that is, heaven.

## The Last Day of the Feast

**37** On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. **38** Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ ” **39** 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. **40** When they heard these words, some of the people said, “This really is the Prophet.” **41** Others said, “This is the Christ.” But some said, “Is the Christ to come from Galilee? **42** Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?” **43** So there was a division among the people over him. **44** Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.

- "On the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, a priest would draw water from the pool of Siloam and carry it in a solemn procession to the altar where, it is suggested, he poured it out.<sup>2</sup> "
- "commemorated Israel’s wilderness experience (Num 20:2–13) and included a reenactment of the miraculous provision of water at Meribah.<sup>3</sup> "
- One writer explains it this way: "Judaism saw this water ceremony on multiple levels. On the one hand, it was a plea to God for rain since the autumn is a time of threatened drought in Israel. On the other hand, it was a source of rich symbolism. In the desert, God brought

water from a rock (Num. 20: 8, 10), and here water was flowing from the sacrificial rock altar of the temple. Zechariah and Ezekiel had visions of rivers flowing from the temple in a miraculous display of God's blessing (Ezek. 47: 1; Zech. 14: 8). In a drought-stricken land, it was a spectacular vision of water, life-giving water flowing from God's life-giving temple.<sup>4"</sup>

- Jesus uses this opportunity to stand and teach that he is that source of life-giving water. He is the rock in the wilderness, the temple from which the waters flow, the Messiah who has come to bring life through the Holy Spirit. Those who come to him and believe will receive this promised Spirit.
- "Out of his heart will flow living water." Depending on the punctuation that the translator gives in these verses, this can be taken in two ways:
  - The first, using the punctuation of the ESV, is that "his" speaks of the believer and this is talking of the believer becoming a vessel for the Spirit to flow out of.
  - The second puts the period in the middle of verse 38 and would read: "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me— and if he believes, let him drink. As the Scripture has said, 'Streams of living water will flow from his belly.'" In this case, 'his' is speaking of Jesus as the source of the water.
- The second view is to be preferred and fits the best with the literary context. In John 6, the festival of Passover harks back to the giving of Manna in Exodus 16, with Jesus fulfilling the role of the true bread from heaven. Now in John the feast of Tabernacles discussion recalls the water at Meribah in Exodus 17, with Jesus fulfilling the role of the rock from which living water flows. This water will flow out of his belly, (which incidentally should bring to mind for John 19:34 where out of the spear wound in his belly flowed blood and water). (C.f. Also 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10:4 and one commentators observation that the most frequently painted early Christian catacomb Old Testament scene was the Rock in the wilderness.)
- This is part of the continuing pattern of fulfillment, with Jesus already positioning himself as the new Temple. The expectation of this festival is the great end times renewal where living water would flow out of the Temple as in Zechariah and Ezekiel. Jesus steps in again and

puts himself in the position of fulfilling that Temple (Just as Revelation 22:1 does).

- John's comment in v.39 is that he spoke concerning the Spirit, who had not yet been given because Jesus had not yet been glorified. The purpose of the Feast of Tabernacles, in addition to a plea for rain, was a plea for the blessing of the Spirit to be poured out, and that is how the water in Zechariah 14 was interpreted in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. The Spirit had not yet been given, because this gift depended upon Christ's glorification through his death and resurrection.
- The crowd not surprisingly misunderstands, but this crowd's misunderstanding is ironically the opposite of the last - **What is so ironic about it?** previously they said he couldn't be the Messiah no one knew where the Messiah was from. This crowd says the Messiah should come from Bethlehem but Jesus comes from Galilee. The people doubt because they think they know where Jesus comes from, but ironically they don't - John shares a little humor with his readers, who undoubtedly know that Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

**45** The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why did you not bring him?" **46** The officers answered, "No one ever spoke like this man!" **47** The Pharisees answered them, "Have you also been deceived?" **48** Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him? **49** But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed." **50** Nicodemus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them, **51** "Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?" **52** They replied, "Are you from Galilee too? Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee."

- The Pharisees are upset
- Nicodemus, who has already had his own encounter with Jesus, begins to defend Jesus against their unjust accusations.
- This is heavy irony in verse 52. In chapter 5, Jesus accused them of searching the scriptures in vain, thinking they would find life but

refusing to come to him. Now here they're challenging Nicodemus to search the Scriptures and see that no prophet arises from Galilee - like the crowd they don't know that Jesus was from Galilee, but even more ironically, they were two well-known prophets who came from Galilee - Jonah, Hosea, and Nahum all come from Galilee.

### **A Clear Divide**

As this story progresses, you go from some wondering if it could be the Messiah and some doubting, to some saying he is the Christ and others saying he is not. This is the effect of the truth about Jesus. It will divide any audience into those who believe and those who do not. **Where do we stand?**

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<sup>1</sup> *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2001). (Le 23:42–43). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

<sup>2</sup> Alexander, T. D., & Rosner, B. S. (Eds.). (2000). In *New dictionary of biblical theology*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

<sup>3</sup> Ryken, L., Wilhoit, J., Longman, T., Duriez, C., Penney, D., & Reid, D. G. (2000). In *Dictionary of biblical imagery*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

<sup>4</sup> Burge, Gary M. (2009-08-22). John (NIV Application Commentary, The) (p. 185). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.