

Sunday Morning Message

July 14, 2022

Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles – Part Two (vs 32 – 53)

The Gospel According to John

Text – John 7:37 - 53

Congregational Reading – John 7:37 - 39

Introduction – Review from last week

We are going to quickly read and review what we covered in the last message (vs. 1 – 36), and then we will find out what happens in the last seventeen verses of the chapter.

I. Jesus Disputes with His Unbelieving Brothers (vs. 1 – 9)

In the last message from our series of studies in John's gospel we looked in the first part of chapter seven and saw Jesus disputing with his unbelieving brothers about going to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles (vs. 1 – 9). They were trying to get Him to prove to the world that He was the Christ. They wanted Him to go on their schedule. What they really wanted was for Him to set up the Kingdom if He was who He claimed to be. They really didn't believe in Him; they weren't trusting in Him. They were still trusting in themselves; they were leaning onto their own understanding of the way things should be.

II. Jesus Delays His Appearance at the Feast (vs. 10 – 13)

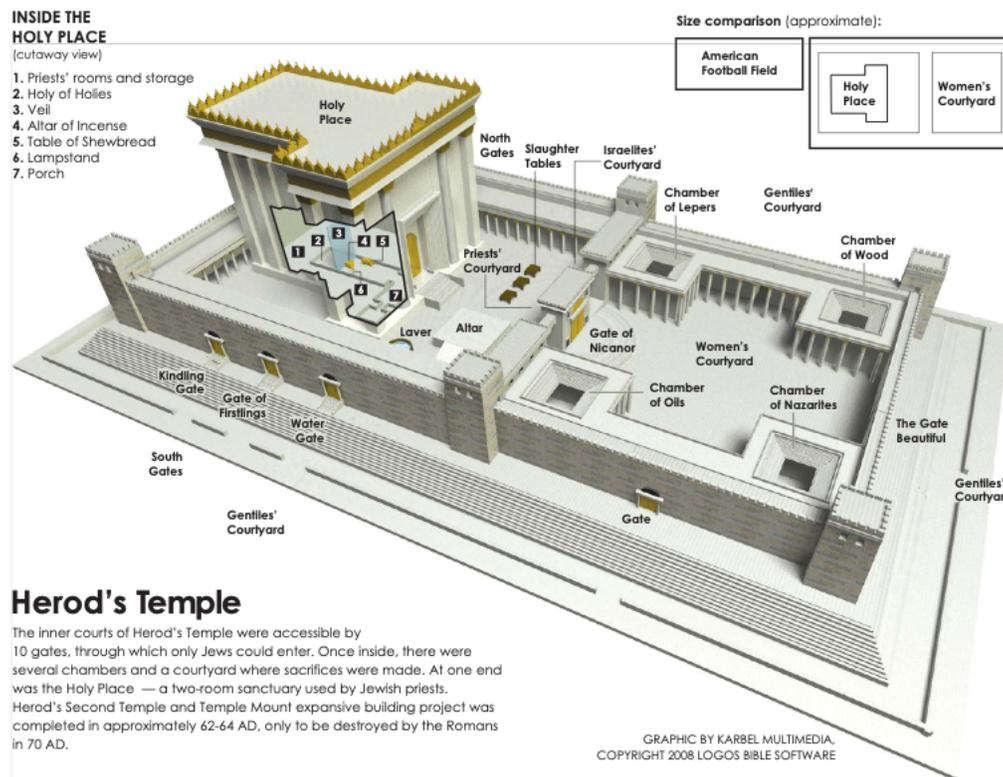
Jesus does go to the feast in Jerusalem, but he does not go with his brothers and initially keeps a low profile. Everybody is looking for Him. There is a sense of expectancy from everybody. People are expecting something is going to happen.

III. Jesus Dodges the Attempts by the Religious Leaders to Apprehend Him (vs. 14 – 36)

When He does reveal Himself around the third or fourth day of the eight-day feast, He is in the Temple teaching. Again, Jesus delayed His public appearance at the Feast to slow things down. He was not ready for the final showdown with the religious leaders. However, once they discover that He is there, they immediately begin the process of trying to arrest Him.

In the graphic below, we can get an idea of what the Temple grounds looked like. There were various places surrounding the Temple itself that were referred to as courts. Jesus

would have taught in these outer areas. There is no evidence in the Scripture that Jesus ever entered into the Temple proper.



A. They are Amazed (vs. 14 – 15)

When the people hear Jesus preach they are amazed at His knowledge because He has never been formally trained by the rabbis.

B. They are Admonished (vs. 16 – 29)

Jesus rebukes them because if they had truly known and loved God as they claimed, they would have recognized and received Him as their Messiah. He also clearly reveals that the religious leadership were plotting to kill Him, which they deny.

C. They are Averted (vs. 30 – 36)

They are unable to take Him and crucify Him at this time because He wasn't ready – His hour at not yet come. Jesus was going to go to the Cross at a time of His own choosing. He told them that He would someday go, but where He was going, they could not follow. He was speaking of His ascension into Heaven, but they had no clue what He was talking about. They thought Jesus was talking about escaping to Gentile territory, out of their grasp.

IV. Jesus Delivers a Passionate Plea to the People – An Invitation (vs. 37 – 39)

We are now fast forwarded to the last day of the eight-day feast, and Jesus gives a passionate invitation for the people to receive Him.

According to MacArthur:

A tradition grew up in the few centuries before Jesus that on the 7 days of the Feast of Tabernacles, a golden container filled with water from the pool of Siloam was carried in procession by the High-Priest back to the temple. As the procession came to the Watergate on the S side of the inner temple court, 3 trumpet blasts were made to mark the joy of the occasion and the people recited Isaiah 12:3:

"Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation" (Isaiah 12:3).

At the temple, while onlookers watched, the priests would march around the altar with the water container while the temple choir sang the Hallel (Psalms 113–118). The water was offered in sacrifice to God at the time of the morning sacrifice. The use of the water symbolized the blessing of adequate rainfall for crops. Jesus used this event as an object lesson and opportunity to make a very public invitation on the last day of the feast for His people to accept Him as the living water. His words recall Isaiah 55:1:

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isaiah 55:1).

The 3 words – **“thirsts ... come ... drink”** summarize the gospel invitation. A recognition of need leads to an approach to the source of provision, followed by receiving what is needed. The thirsty, needy soul feels the craving to come to the Savior and drink, i.e., receive the salvation that He offers.¹

He alludes to the fact that people who receive Him as Saviour will receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. He first referred of this to the woman at the well:

"Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water

¹ John MacArthur Jr., ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1596.

that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." (John 4:13-14)

The "living water" that Jesus promised the woman at the well was the Holy Spirit, which would enter into believers and seal them and fill them. This would happen after Jesus ascended into Heaven on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit would come.

Jesus prophesied again about the coming of the Holy Spirit later on in John's Gospel:

"If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." (John 14:15-18)

"These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:25-26)

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." (John 15:26-27)

"But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." (John 16:5-11)

The Holy Spirit came after Jesus ascended up into Heaven:

"And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." (Luke 24:49)

"And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have

heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." (Acts 1:4-5)

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2:1-4)

Today, the Spirit of God enters into every believer at the moment He receives Christ as Saviour:

"That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." (Ephesians 1:12-14)

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

If you are a believer today, you have the Holy Spirit's presence within you. He desires to fill you with His presence, which happens when you are totally yielded to Him. The work of the Spirit is just getting started when someone gets saved.² Salvation happens instantaneously when a believer trusts Christ as his Savior, but sanctification through the work of the Holy Spirit is a lifelong process. Sanctification has to do with the Holy Spirit's work of separating the believer from the influences of the world, seducing him from the lusts of the flesh, and transforming him into the image of Christ (1Peter 1:2). Millard Erickson states: "By sanctification is meant the continued transformation of moral and spiritual character so that the believer's life actually comes to mirror the standing he or she already has in God's sight."³ Romans 8:29 states that Christians are predestinated "to be conformed to the image of his Son." The Spirit works in and through believers, causing them "both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Ephesians 3:20; Philippians 2:13). The Spirit adds good things to our life through the Word of God and the fellowship of other

² Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1998), p. 888.

³ Ibid, p 890.

Spirit-filled believers, but He also purges some things that are detrimental to our growth and usefulness as Christians (2 Timothy 2:20 – 21).

However, you can resist the Spirit's working in your life by not following His leading, and you can grieve Him by. You can also quench the Spirit by not allowing Him to work through you. He desires to flow out of you to influence others.

V. The People Divide Over Whether Jesus is the Messiah (vs. 40 – 44)

Jesus invitation was very powerful.

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." (Hebrews 4:12-13)

Some of the people who were listening to Jesus that day accepted the invitation and received Him as their Saviour. Some however debated about whether Jesus could be the Christ, because He was apparently from Galilee.

It is the same way today. People hear the Word of God preached. Some listen and receive it as the Word of God. Others reject it and look for reasons why they should not receive it. They reject it really because they love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil (John 3:19).

VI. The Officers Fail to Deliver Jesus (vs. 45 – 49)

The officers who were sent by the Sanhedrin to arrest Jesus failed to do their job because they recognized that Jesus was not the criminal that the religious leaders were making Him out to be. I am not saying that all of them became believers after hearing Jesus, but no doubt, some of them did or eventually would get saved. However, they did know that their boss's, the Sanhedrin, were corrupt, and what they were asking them to do was immoral.

We are commanded by God to obey the authorities in our lives, the police and the government (see Romans 13:1 – 7). However, when the authorities in our lives are trying to make us do something that is not right in the sight of God, we are commanded by God to obey Him. He is the highest authority. Peter said, "we ought to obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29)."

Practical Note – People do not always get saved the first time they hear the Word of God. The seed of the Word sometimes has to lay dormant for a little while before it germinates, blossoms, and bears fruit. Some of the people who heard Jesus that day, including some of the officers, and even some of the religious leaders would later become true followers of Christ, but the words that they heard Jesus say this day would have a profound effect on what they would come to believe later. Be patient with people. Give them some time to process what you tell them about God. Let God do His work in their heart.

VII. An Old Friend Defends Jesus and Delays His Arrest (vs. 50 – 53)

Here in these final verses, we are introduced to an old friend – Nicodemus. I believe that Nicodemus becomes a believer. He is at first a secret admirer, a searcher (John 3). Here, he is definitely sticking his neck out a little by defending Jesus, and getting the leaders to leave Jesus alone, at least for a while. We will meet Nicodemus again at the end of this gospel account. He came with another secret follower to help bury the Lord after His crucifixion.

"And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight." (John 19:38-39)

If you are a believer, don't be a secret follower.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." (Romans 1:16-17)

"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." (Mark 8:38)

Conclusion

1. Jesus was in complete control of His own destiny. He was not going to die before His hour had come, and His hour would come on His timetable, after He had done and said all that He planned to do.
2. Jesus is always inviting people to receive Him, to receive His gift of salvation.

If you are not yet saved, Jesus is inviting you.

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Revelation 22:17)

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Romans 10:13)

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:" (John 1:12)

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." (Revelation 3:20)

3. If you are saved, don't be a closet follower of the Lord. Come out of the closet and declare Him openly and boldly. Don't be arrogant or obnoxious, but be firm in what you believe and why you believe it.