

Gospel of John Sunday School Notes
John 7:1-13
February 24, 2008

Let's look at some of the "mechanics" of these verses first, and then look at some of the overall messages.

Chapter 7 and 8 usher in a new section of John's gospel, where the smoldering resentment of Christ seen in chapters 1-6 burst forth into outright opposition: the beginning of the road to crucifixion.

{1} After these things Jesus was walking in Galilee, for He was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him.

v.1 "After these things" (His teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum at the time of the Passover – which is when? March/April), Jesus remained and confined His ministry to Galilee because why? (v.1) If Jesus was on God's time, doing God's will, sent by God, why would He be or act so cautiously like this? (Mat 4:5-7)

{2} Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths, was near.

v.2 Feast of Tabernacles is also known as Feast of Booths. What's that all about and when is it? The Feast of Tabernacles is an 8-day (7 days followed by a 1-day festival assembly wrapping up) celebration of the Fall harvest and a commemoration of God's goodness to His people during their desert wanderings after leaving Egypt. Celebrated in Sept/Oct (15th of Tisri), it was a *very* popular ingathering: lots of festivities. One of the major 3 feasts requiring males to travel to Jerusalem. The people built booths or shelters made of sticks/limbs and boughs as their ancestors did, and live in them for 7 days – the precursor to camping out. They built these things on roof tops, in streets, wherever space was available and literally moved into them.

So Mar/Apr to Sept/Oct – What's Jesus been up to for 6 months? The other gospels record that Jesus covered Galilee extensively ("gone over 4 or 5 times") during this time teaching, healing, performing miracles, and even feeding another 4,000-sized group. But most of this time was spent developing His disciples – the 12. He taught them considerably. His plan was to build up this core group to carry on after He was gone – plan A, B, and C.

{3} Therefore His brothers said to Him, "Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing. {4} "For no one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be known publicly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." {5} For not even His brothers were believing in Him.

v.3-5 Brothers? Who were Jesus' brothers? Mat 13:55-56 – James, Joseph, Simon, Judas (Jude). Half brothers. Evidently Jesus had sisters as well (v.56). The brothers comments seem to be motivated by the fact that they were expecting a political Messiah (hence the political advice) and that they had not believed in Jesus yet and wanted to see more proof.

Look at the challenge they extend and the advice they give:

- You need to get out of this country town and into the real world of the big city before real crowds and credentialed peoples.
- Your people down there need to see you again and witness all these miracles too.
- You need to be out in the limelight, not working in secret.
- If you are whom you say, get out there and blow your own trumpet.

Seems like maybe some sound advice, which we'll discuss later.

Jesus' brothers are an interesting study. Often it is harder for those who are closest to someone to receive a message from them than it is to hear from a total stranger. Acts 1:14 tells us something about Jesus' brothers later. And we know that James and Jude write epistles and James is later the head of the church in Jerusalem. So, somewhere they got the message.

{6} So Jesus said to them, “My time is not yet here, but your time is always opportune. {7} “The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil. {8} “Go up to the feast yourselves; I do not go up to this feast because My time has not yet fully come.” {9} Having said these things to them, He stayed in Galilee. {10} But when His brothers had gone up to the feast, then He Himself also went up, not publicly, but as if, in secret.

Jesus is on a diving time table/schedule. Any time was ok for them because they didn't face hostility in Judea and they were expected to be there. The Feast of Tabernacles was the wrong feast to make Himself known and give His life. What feast would be more appropriate of the big 3? God's sovereignty, man's responsibility. Jesus knew (even if He didn't know the time precisely) the Scriptures. John the Baptist said, “behold the Lamb that takes away the sin of the world.” The lamb sacrifice, applying its blood to the door post, and the passing over of the Angel of Death is a picture of what? Jesus' family didn't even understand.

“The world cannot hate you,” because they were part of it and the world loves its own. You fit in. You live like them. You don't challenge them. Are we guilty here too? They hated Jesus because He told them the truth and exposed them. We hate the truth about ourselves so much that we change our own speech to make it soft and fuzzy. We call it an “affair” instead of adultery. We call them “less fortunate” instead of poor or homeless or sometimes bums. We call them “vertically challenged” instead of short. PC is sometimes the enemy of the truth. Like a tourist brochure for San Francisco, what do you think it will contain, the seedy truth? The truth causes a response! We kid ourselves so much. Jesus would not do that. The world *hated* Him. It's vile.

Some accuse Jesus of lying here. “I'm not going.” Then He goes. Some translations have the word “yet” after the “not” in v.8a. The manuscripts are split about 50/50 on that. It is unlikely that “not yet” was replaced by “not.” But... it's irrelevant; between v.8 and v.10, Jesus' time came. His meaning is clear, He didn't want to go with them and the caravan of attention, nor would He play into the hands of the Jewish leaders and let them take His life yet. “be shrewd as a serpents, and innocent as doves.” (Mat 10:16)

Jesus headed to Jerusalem secretly, probably through Samaria. And as we will see later (v.14), He probably didn't arrive until the middle of the feast. He probably traveled with His disciples because they show up later too. Some say Luke 9:51-56 describes His trip through Samaria.

{11} So the Jews were seeking Him at the feast and were saying, “Where is He?” {12} There was much grumbling among the crowds concerning Him; some were saying, “He is a good man”; others were saying, “No, on the contrary, He leads the people astray.” {13} Yet no one was speaking openly of Him for fear of the Jews.

Jesus found the place abuzz with talk of and interest in Him. The Jews (Jewish leaders) were looking for Him. And the crowd (common folks) were all grumbling, muttering, murmuring, whispering about Him, trying to decide if He was a good guy or bad guy: a great “happening” with juicy talk and events and intrigue. Was Jesus a *good* man? Did He teach men to violate the Sabbath and lead them astray of the Law? Good men don't claim to be God!

But can't you see the Gestapo (secret German police) lurking about and listening, ready to pounce? So everyone kept it hush hush. As we will see later, the Jewish leaders hated and rejected Jesus, but no official judgment or statement had been made regarding Him. The people were on guard. They couldn't afford (due to excommunication being a big deal) to publicly contradict their leaders in those days and in that culture and there generally wasn't a mechanism for properly voicing opposition – too much corruption and power at stake. Sound familiar?

Some discussion and overview thoughts.

Divine Timing:

God is sovereign and in complete control of every situation and is working it all out for His glory and our (His children) good. His timing is perfect:

- Gal 4:4 But in the fullness of time
- Rom 5:6 at the right time
- 1 Tim 2:6 at the proper time

- 1 Tim 6:14-15 at the proper time
- Tit 1:3 at the proper time
- Acts 1:6-7 times or epochs... fixed by His own authority

Everything God ordains for us is perfectly planned and timed. “The unbelieving world sees history as an unexplained succession of almost random events – look at the determinist philosophy. But, in contrast, the Bible portrays history as a purposeful and perfect outworking of God’s eternal plan.” J. MacArthur.

Political advice for the church:

The advice Jesus’ brothers give him seems natural and reasonable: practical, worldly advice. But there was one key element missing, they didn’t believe in Him.

We often take the world’s patterns and advice and schemes and map them as wisdom into the church. We need to take care at this. As we can see, the world’s advice with Jesus was to make Him a political Messiah-King. God’s plan here at this time was for Messiah to be the suffering servant.

God has plans for us His church also, and we need to plug in to those plans and not the world’s. Forget the great programs of man and stick with the “how to” that God has given in His Word. Kind of like The Way of the Master theme, “What Did Jesus Do?” Discover and utilize our spiritual gifts in what is right before us: family, neighbors, friends wherever we are. We are trying to do and see this with our new direction of leadership and philosophy of ministry here at Immanuel. If we understand the plan and purpose, we can know exactly what to do on God’s timetable.