

Sunday, March 30, 2008
John 7:14-53 Notes

Starting with chapter 7 and the Feast of Tabernacles, from this point forward, now more than ever, Jesus would walk under the looming shadow of the cross. John opens this chapter with a somber note that Jesus was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him.

“As the Feast of Tabernacles approached, Jesus’ brothers had urged Him to make a grand entry into the city and thus openly declare Himself to be the Messiah (vv. 3-5). But Jesus declined, choosing instead to go privately to the feast (v. 10), arriving halfway through it (v. 14). When He entered Jerusalem, He immediately went to the temple and began to teach (v. 14), where both His unexpected appearance and unprecedented authority (vv. 45-46) caused a stir. The Jewish leaders responded with predictable hostility (vv. 15-19), even attempting to have Him arrested (v. 32). The people, on the other hand, were deeply divided over Jesus – some violently opposed Him (v. 30), while others enthusiastically believed in Him (v. 31).” [J. MacArthur]

Parties to watch: Jews (leaders), crowd=people (locals and pilgrims from afar), chief priests (Sadducees), Pharisees.

v. 14-15

About half way through the festival, Jesus took the platform in the temple. The crowd was probably at a peak level. His teaching marveled those who heard. Why do you think that was? “How knoweth this man letters?” (Scriptures): Mat 13:54; 22:33; Mark 6:2; Luke 2:46-47. Jesus spoke with authority, personal knowledge, didn’t quote sages or rabbis or tradition or the Mishnah. He was the best story teller and the best at using parables and “similitudes”. He never attended their schools or training.

v.16

Don’t marvel at me, marvel at God. As Messiah the Spirit of wisdom, counsel, understanding, might, and knowledge rested on him (Isa 11:2; 50:4).

v. 17

Ever wonder if Jesus is who He claimed to be? Ever have trouble understanding His words, what He says – even the monosyllable words of John? If so, He says: practice what I say; obey My words; repent of your sins; come to Me; cast yourself on My mercy; believe in My forgiveness; treat people the way I told you to. Then you will know from an inside knowledge that Jesus is truly who He claims. “Understanding is the reward of faith!” [Augustine] (1 Cor 2:14-16 – spiritually discerned) “...and all these things shall be added unto you.”

v. 18

So, Jesus, even in fear for His life, comes to Jerusalem. He risks getting up in the temple to teach. He boldly says things only a “poached egg” [Lewis] would say. He continuously challenges a violent authority structure. Then He says I’m not doing this for me, I don’t speak for myself, I am speaking for God, the words of God who sent me. Would you tend to believe Him?

v. 19-24

Is this reasoning valid? What other lines of defense did Jesus use to justify “works of God” on the Sabbath? John 5:17; Mat 12:3-13; Mark 2:25-28; Mark 3:2-5; Luke 13:14-17; 14:1-6.

v. 25-27

Their reasoning seems sound, like they are really trying to figure this out. Based on tradition, Messiah would just appear in the temple at the appropriate time and none would know His kin (Mal 3:1; Isa 53:8). Legend, misinformation, and emotion still lead us astray do they not?

v. 28-29

Jesus cuts right to the heart of the matter. Some say this is written ironically or as a question. It’s hard to translate irony and sarcasm from one language to another. “Do you really know me and where I come from? Problem is I

was sent by God and you don't know God, but I certainly do because He's the one who sent me." Back to His other statements, "if you really knew the Father, you would know me whom He has sent."

v. 30-31

Like gasoline on fire – boom! they exploded. They were not happy at His words. When the truth about Christ is declared, people either get mad and don't want to hear it and want to put Him away, or they believe – various stages of belief may be confused, contemplative, or convinced.

Jesus creates a rock solid case for belief in Him:

- His teaching is amazing.
- If you do God's will, you will know what He says is absolutely true.
- He didn't come here for His own glory or vanity.
- His arguments are simply logical and reasonable.
- Hard to argue with miracles!

What did Jesus do? What should we do as well? (next verses)

v. 32-36

Incredible boldness and confidence – Jesus just kept right on teaching and preaching even in the face of all this deadly opposition! Not presumptuously or tempting God, He just kept being bold. We need a dose of this boldness today, don't you think? Are we as bold as we should be as Christians? (Isa 50:7-9; Acts 4:13; 4:31; 9:27-28; 13:46; 14:3; 18:26; 19:8; 28:31; Eph 6:19-20; Phil 1:20; 1 Th 2:2) Be bold!

Jesus again speaks about spiritual things and the crowd/listeners confuse His words with physical, earthly things. The truth is plain before them, but they have not minds and eyes [hearts] to see: like destroying the temple, being born again, bread of life.

v. 37-38

"Each day during the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles, one of the chief priests would lead a procession down through the Kidron Valley to the pool of Siloam (which, by the way, means "sent", "the one sent"). Out of the waters of the pool he would fill a golden pitcher and carry it back to the temple and pour it over the altar to remind the people of the days in the barren wilderness when God gave them water out of a rock [remember the Feast of Tabernacles was to commemorate the Israelites' wilderness journey]. Then the people would shout and wave palm branches, rejoicing and praising God. But on "the great day," the last day, there was not such ceremony because this day had been added to the feast. It was on this day that Jesus seized the opportunity to cry aloud, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink." By that, he means, of course, "I am the Rock. I am the very Rock that those in the wilderness drank from." These words are confirmed by Paul in First Corinthians 10:4: "They all drank of the Spiritual Rock which followed them, and that Rock was Christ," {cf, 1 Cor 10:4 KJV}. So there in the wilderness God was teaching the same truth that he is teaching us today: Jesus is the Rock from which men can drink and satisfy the thirst of their hearts." [R. Stedman]

What a beautiful symbol, water: precious, life-giving, cleansing! (BBC's *Planet Earth* really points this out!)

Note the 3 key words in the verses:

Thirst – Strong desire for something you need to live. Spiritual deepest desire: salvation.

Come – Acknowledge need, go to Jesus the source.

Drink – Believe in faith! Jesus must be received.

The focus was shifted from the need of parched mouths in the wilderness to the spiritual need of the thirsty soul for the water of life. What happens if we thirst, come, and drink? Does Jesus meet our needs? Yes! but oh so much more than that! We often stop there. This is a big misconception in the church today: Jesus is here to fix my problems. What does Jesus say He will do if we come to Him? We are not *ponds* but *rivers*! Rivers! the Nile, Mississippi, Missouri, Colorado, Amazon, etc. combined! We will bless others. Not only is our thirst slaked, but we will reach out to others and minister to them: evangelize, love, edify.

v. 39

We could spend a couple of lessons here easily. John is writing to us on our side of the great day of Pentecost. The Pentecost right after Jesus' ascension when God the Holy Spirit was poured into believers giving unique and great power to work "... greater works than these." (John 14:12) John was not saying that the Holy Spirit was not present and active at this point. John 13-16 would be a good study on this. John 14:16-17 says it quite well. On Pentecost, right after Jesus' ascension, God the Holy Spirit was given to all believers in a *new fullness*. (Rom 8:9-11; 1 Cor 12:13)

v. 40-53

In these verses we see all manner of men's responses to Christ and His message: convinced, unbelieving, confused, contemplative, bitter opposed, and some mixtures thereof.

Even with facts, logic, iron clad arguments, powerful teaching, and miracles right before their [our] eyes, the response of the human heart is amazingly varied (unpredictable to us). Where are you? Under threat of death, Jesus came. He came for you wherever you are in your thinking. And He will not be contained! Jesus invites you to come to Him for spiritual, eternal, life-giving water, instead of physical, temporal water.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Behold, I freely give
The living water; thirsty one
Stoop down and drink and live."
I came to Jesus and I drank
Of that life-giving stream;
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
An now I live in Him.
[I Hear the Voice of Jesus Say, *Horatio Bonar*]