

“Now the Jews’ Feast of the Tabernacles was at hand.”

John 7:1-53

The Christ came to His own people, the Jews, and for the most part they did not receive Him as the Christ. Jesus worked miracles that could only be done by God and the people asked for more proof of His deity. Jesus preached that He only did what the Father did and the Jewish leaders plotted to kill Him. What will sinful men do with the truth?

So I ask you if you were to hear a message about the Christ what would you think? Would you be able to discern from the message that it was the truth?

What would be the basis for your assessment of the message?

Any criteria other than the Bible, both OT and NT, would lead you to an invalid conclusion.

When Jesus told the crowds the truth about their being in bondage to sin and that only God had the power to grant them freedom they murmured and they quarreled. But worse than that the leaders of the Jews plotted to kill Jesus.

1 After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him.

2 Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand.

“Now the Jews’ Feast of the Tabernacles was at hand.”

The Jewish calendar had several feasts and festivals. A careful study of Leviticus and the New Testament will show that Jesus of Nazareth was the fulfillment of every prescribed religious feast, festival, and sacrifice.

There were three great feasts in each year;
Tabernacles, Passover, and Pentecost.

The Law required all males to travel to Jerusalem three times a year for these feasts. [Exodus 23:14-17]

Let's be reminded of the meaning of Passover and Pentecost before we concentrate on **Tabernacles**, which is the focus of our text.

PASSOVER [passing over/escape from bondage] [Leviticus 23:4-5] was on the 14th day of first month of the Jewish calendar.

Passover celebrates the deliverance of the Hebrews from their bondage in Egypt. However, Passover is much more!

A spotless lamb was examined for three days, then the lamb was roasted whole, and eaten with unleavened (no corruption) bread and bitter herbs which symbolized sin.

In the original Passover only the blood on the doorposts permitted a passing over.

For the Christian, Christ is our Passover. [1 Corinthians 5:7]

1 Corinthians 5:6-8

6 Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? 7 Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. **For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.** 8 Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

ESV

Every law and rule of the Passover was fulfilled in the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ on the 14th day, "between the evenings," [Exodus 12:6] which is 3-5 p.m. by our reckoning and the 9th to the 11th hour in Hebrew reckoning.

PENTECOST / FEAST OF WEEKS [Leviticus 23:15-22]

Pentecost was 7 weeks after Passover on the 50th day.

Two loaves made with leaven symbolized first fruits of the wheat harvest. Much fruit but it is mingled with sin.

For the Christian, in Acts 2:1, **Pentecost** was fully come. Jesus was still on the earth after His Crucifixion / Passover and His bodily resurrection.

Jesus ascended into heaven on the 50th day and sent the Holy Spirit in a new way to indwell the believer and be the Comforter.

In John 12:24, Christ is the corn of wheat that dies and the church is His "much fruit." 3000 souls at one time is much fruit!

John Chapter 7 is focused on the third great feast.

FEAST OF TABERNACLES [booths] Leviticus 23:33-43

On the 15th day of 7th month, the Feast of Tabernacles begins with a Sabbath and lasts for 7 days and ends with a Sabbath.

It is important to know that there were special Sabbaths besides the 7th day Sabbath and a special Sabbath could occur on any day of the week.

Tabernacles is the most joyous of all the feasts. People left their dwellings to live in booths (arbors) and remember all the wonderful things that God had done for them, especially in the 40 years that their fathers lived in tents (booths) in their wandering in the wilderness.

For the Christian, this world is not our home. The Christian has a time between the deliverance from the bondage / slavery of sin until the entrance into final rest. Rejoice that our final rest is in Christ - **REJOICE!**

The commentaries are in agreement that **Passover** was fulfilled in the crucifixion of Jesus and that **Pentecost** was fulfilled when the Holy Spirit came according to the prophet Joel.

But as closely as these three great feasts are connected most of the scholars teach that the Feast of the Tabernacles is yet to be fulfilled in some future millennium. What does John say?

Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand.

This is a prophetic statement! The kingdom of heaven is at hand!

This is not some mere calendar notation that has no relevance to all that the Christ said and did.

Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand.

John the Baptist had proclaimed it and Jesus had been preparing for it.

Zechariah 14:16

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.

Most commentaries and even the subject heading in my Bible say that Zechariah 14 is about a future millennial reign of Christ. I will not take the time now to establish that in its context, which Zechariah can only be about what the Christ is doing in John Chapter 7.

If your eschatology requires a yet future millennial reign of Christ you will miss the truth and the impact of John Chapter 7.

These three great feasts are so closely linked that it is simply wrong to separate the connection of Christ coming to the temple to fulfill the Feast of the **Tabernacles**; then to go to the cross as our **Passover**; and to send the Holy Spirit at **Pentecost**!

All the feasts and festivals and sacrifices must be observed in their prescribed order; and so they were in Jesus the Christ!

That for which all the world and all creation had awaited ever since the Garden of Eden was about to be verified as the heel of the Seed of the woman is bruised and head of the Serpent is bruised.

The shadow would merge into substance, and type into fulfillment; the Old Covenant would be dismantled and pass into history as the New Covenant is established in the blood of the Lamb.

No longer would it be required to travel to Jerusalem because **“Neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.”** [4:21]

3 His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. 4 For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." 5 For even His brothers did not believe in Him.

His brothers could include disciples as well as His half-brothers.

Matthew 13:55-56 & Acts 1:14 show that Jesus had half-brothers and half-sisters. Those who teach that Mary had no other children are simply wrong.

His brothers could not understand Him and thought that He was inconsistent. They did not know Him as Messiah until after His resurrection.

They challenge Him: "If you are genuine..."

Cf. 6:44 Not even His brothers and sisters were privileged "naturally."

Psalm 69:7-9 is here fulfilled.

Psalm 69:7-9

**7 Because for Your sake I have borne reproach;
Shame has covered my face.**

**8 I have become a stranger to my brothers,
And an alien to my mother's children;**

**9 Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up,
And the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me.**

Jesus will indeed show Himself to the world but the time is not now.

6 Then Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready. 7 The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil. 8 You go up to this feast. I am not yet going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come." 9 When He had said these things to them, He remained in Galilee.

Do you want to be “popular” with the world? Then you are not like Jesus. The world will hate you to the extent that they see Jesus in you.

10 But when His brothers had gone up, then He also went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. 11 Then the Jews sought Him at the feast, and said, "Where is He?" 12 And there was much complaining among the people concerning Him. Some said, "He is good"; others said, "No, on the contrary, He deceives the people." 13 However, no one spoke openly of Him for fear of the Jews.

Jesus will go to the Feast but without show; privately...

His brothers left Christ for “religion.”

He **must** go to the feast to obey the Law:

Galatians 4:4-5

4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

The central incident in John 7 is Christ at the Feast of the Tabernacles.

Jews sought to kill Him; yet He must go.

14 Now about the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught. 15 And the Jews marveled, saying, "How does this Man know letters, having never studied?"

Many people today are impressed with a man’s formal theological training and would not even consider calling a pastor without “doctor” in front of his name to serve their church.

If a man is “born again” then the more education he has the better.

If a man is unregenerate, all the degrees in the world will not help him.

[E.g., Nicodemus, John 3]

16 Jesus answered them and said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. 17 If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority. 18 He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.

What is the difference between “doctrine” and “doctrines?”

A careful study of your Bible will reveal that God’s Doctrine is singular because it is one complete whole truth in the Bible.

Doctrines in the plural have no harmony and they conflict with each other and with the Bible.

Here are some references to **Doctrines** [plural].

Matthew 15:8-9

8 "These people draw near to Me with their mouth,
And honor Me with their lips,
But their heart is far from Me.
9 And in vain they worship Me,
Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."

Colossians 2:20-23

20 Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations — 21 "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," 22 which all concern things which perish with the using — according to the commandments and doctrines of men? 23 These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

1 Timothy 4:1-2

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy,

Hebrews 13:7-9

Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct. 8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. 9 Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them.

Christ gives the criteria for Bible teachers in verse 17-18.

- a) Proper disposition [17] desire and obedience.
- b) Proper motive [18]

Many books have been written on how to determine the will of God for your life. As helpful as these human writings may be they cannot improve on what our Lord teaches in two verses, 17-18!

The way to discern God's will is to **desire** it enough to yield your will to the will of God as it is revealed in His word?

And in the second place our **motive** must be for the glory of God and not to feed some selfish desire.

19 Did not Moses give you the law, yet none of you keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill Me?"

20 The people answered and said, "You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You?"

21 Jesus answered and said to them, "I did one work, and you all marvel. 22 Moses therefore gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. 23 If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath? 24 Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

19 **Hypocrisy** is exposed. Jesus read their thoughts. They talked about letters, learning, and the Law while plotting to murder Him at the same time.

Most of those present will call for His crucifixion in six months.

20 Anyone ever tell you that you were "crazy as the devil"?

"You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You?"

21 Jesus proves His charge [Cf. 5:18] to those who were offended.

He refers to 5:1-18 as “one deed”. There were, of course, many works, but He uses this one where He healed on the Sabbath and the healed man had done “work” [carried his mat]. It was after this miracle that Jesus preached His sermon on His deity.

There is a lesson for us here:

Don't defend yourself when you are doing the will of God.

- a) You won't convince your enemies.
- b) They don't care anyway.
- c) You don't answer to men.

22-23 While boasting of Moses, they forget that much of what Moses was given in the Law was already in practice long before God spoke to him.

E.g., Circumcision was given to Abraham [Genesis 17:9-14; 23-27; 21:4]. Jesus stresses their inconsistency and their legalism.

24 Stop making superficial judgments, i.e., according to appearance, but render just judgment:

1 Samuel 16:7

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

We all at times fail in two directions:

- a) We are deceived by appearance of “piety”; anyone that claims to be a “preacher.”
- b) We are too harsh and fail to see our own faults while judging others.

Ecclesiastes 7:20-22

**20 For there is not a just man on earth who does good
And does not sin.**

**21 Also do not take to heart everything people say,
Lest you hear your servant cursing you.**

**22 For many times, also, your own heart has known
That even you have cursed others.**

* * *

25 Now some of them from Jerusalem said, "Is this not He whom they seek to kill? 26 But look! He speaks boldly, and they say nothing to Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is truly the Christ? 27 However, we know where this Man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from."

25-27 The reaction of the Sanhedrin and Pharisees [Cf. 15]

The crowd of people [20]

The citizens of Jerusalem [25]

There is a moment of doubt. Could this be Messiah?

The opinion of the rulers is all-important.

The question is quickly settled - we know where this man is from. But when Christ comes....

Cf. 6:42 and 7:41-42

Two opinions among the Jews concerning Messiah:

- a) No one would know His origin;
- b) He would be from Bethlehem.

28 Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple, saying, "You both know Me, and you know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. 29 But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me."

28-29 Jesus employs **irony** {the use of words to convey the opposite meaning; incongruity between what might be expected and what actually happens} - you think you know; but you do not know.

"I know Him [the Father] and I am from Him."

30 Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come. 31 And many of the people believed in Him, and said, "When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this Man has done?"

30 "His Hour" was six months from now [the cross]. God is in control. Proverbs 21:30; 19:21; Job 14:5, 14; Acts 17:26

31 This is the question for anyone who says Jesus is not Messiah.

"When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this Man has done?"

32 The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things concerning Him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him. 33 Then Jesus said to them, "I shall be with you a little while longer, and then I go to Him who sent Me. 34 You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come."

32 Cf. 26 People are beginning to believe in Him so the Pharisees take action on what they started in 5:18.

33 Cf. John 16:16-19

34 Cf. John 8:21-24 and 13:33-36

Deity of Jesus Christ as the Son of Man, Cf. John 3:13.
Where I AM right now, not where I will be.

35 Then the Jews said among themselves, "Where does He intend to go that we shall not find Him? Does He intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? 36 What is this thing that He said, 'You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come'?"

The Jewish dispersion among the Greeks beyond the limits of Palestine.

35-36 The Jews are mocking Him and missing the truth by trying to interpret everything literally. They had no thought of Him returning to heaven although He repeatedly told them He came down from heaven.

This is it! This is what John 7 is about!

37 On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." 39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

37-39 Last day of the feast was the “great day”.

For seven days of the feast they had water-pouring ceremonies, hundreds of gallons of ceremonial water, but not on the last day, which is the eighth day, and furnishes a fitting reason for what Christ said. Fulfillment of Haggai 2:

6 "For thus says the LORD of hosts: ' Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; 7 and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,' says the LORD of hosts. 8'The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,' says the LORD of hosts. 9'The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,' says the LORD of hosts. 'And in this place I will give peace,' says the LORD of hosts."

Jesus cries out! “Don’t you realize that all the water points to Me!”

Are you thirsty? Then come to Christ and drink!

Believe in the Christ who is the fulfillment of the OT Scriptures; believe in the Christ who is the fulfillment of Ezekiel's clean water, and the rivers of water in Ezekiel's spiritual temple! [Ez. 47]

Believe in the Christ who is the fulfillment of Zechariah 14:8-9 [living waters flow from Jerusalem] and Haggai 2 [the temple is filled with His glory] and Psalm 46:4, which speaks of the city of God!

**There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God,
The holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High.**

The rivers of Ezekiel 47 and Zechariah 14 represent the Holy Spirit or Christ's words in John 7 are meaningless.

Jesus was at the most religious place on the face of the earth and it was dead without Him!

**There was much ceremony and great fun and plenty of food and
No Christ!**

Revelation 22:17

**And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say,
"Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the
water of life freely.**

The one who is truly blessed will be a blessing to others; out of his **innermost being** will flow rivers of living water.

The Holy Spirit was present in Creation and afterward in the OT. [Genesis 1:2; Luke 2:25-26; Psalm 110:1-3 with Matthew 22:43]

But the Holy Spirit was not given to indwell the believer until after Christ's ascension [John 16:7; Acts 1:8; Isaiah 44:3]

40 Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, "Truly this is the Prophet." 41 Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Will the Christ come out of Galilee? 42 Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" 43 So there was a division among the people because of Him. 44 Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him.

40-44 The Prophet they referred to is the One in Deuteronomy 18:15-18. Same rejection as in 6:42 and 7:27.

Why didn't they ask Him? They quoted Scripture while rejecting Him!

Christ always causes **division** [Matthew 10:34]. Some wanted to take Him but did not; the officers were already on the way [32].

45 Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why have you not brought Him?" 46 The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!" 47 Then the Pharisees answered them, "Are you also deceived? 48 Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? 49 But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed."

45-49 The officers came back without Jesus." Are you crazy also; nobody important believes this man. The rabble who do believe him are cursed"

50 Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, 51 "Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?" 52 They answered and said to him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee."

50-52 Nicodemus [3:1-21]; one of their own number, speaks up for Him.

The Sanhedrin show their ignorance and their unwillingness to believe.

Nicodemus reminds them of basic law [Exodus 23:1; Deuteronomy 1:16-17].

The rulers turn on Nicodemus because they had no defense against what Nicodemus charged. Instead of admitting their error, they accuse him of being insincere.

The Jews were almost as prejudiced against Galilean Jews as they were the Samaritans.

They had forgotten about Jonah! [Jonah 1:1 Amittai; 2 Kings 14:25; Matthew 12:39]

Jonah was from Gath Hopher; 3 miles Northeast of Nazareth.

Also, the Scripture does not give birthplace of every prophet.

The Jewish leaders were desperate.

Verse 53 is part of Chapter 8.

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