

Glory Revealed

Week 6 – John 7-8

Revealed as The Light of the World

A gap of about six months occurs between the close of John 6 and the opening words of John 7. During these six months Jesus spent this time traveling and ministering in Galilee. John leaves the recording of these events to the other gospel writers. John's purpose was not to write an exhaustive biography of Jesus, but to present Him as "the Christ, the Son of God" (John 20:31) in order that the lost might be saved.

I. The Opposition of Jesus-John 7:1-36, 40-53

The Jews celebrated three major feasts that required all males in Israel to attend: Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles. John tells us the Feast of Booths was near. This was a seven-day commemoration of the exodus from Egypt, their wilderness wanderings, and their entrance into the Promised Land. John uses this event to make note of the growing animosity towards the Lord Jesus and he identifies three sources of it.

A. His brothers-John 7:1-10

Jesus' brothers (really half-brothers to our Lord: James, Joseph, Simon, and Jude-see Matthew 13:55) taunted Him to go to Jerusalem, presumably so He could make a big public announcement among influential people, build a large following, and maybe do a miracle or two to seal the deal. Their mockery was born of skepticism and possibly jealousy. "For not even His brothers were believing in Him" (John 7:5). Early in His ministry, their unbelief led them to the erroneous conclusion that He had lost His mind (Mark 3:21, 31-34). It would take His resurrection from the dead to persuade them He was the Son of God (see Acts 1:14).

Jesus did not travel to the feast with his brothers, knowing His presence would draw a crowd and many Jews were seeking to kill Him. Jesus, knowing His time had not yet come, would go later, "as if in secret" (John 7:10). Jesus was operating on a divine timetable, something his brothers knew nothing about.

B. The Jews-John-7:11-31

The general population of Jews were divided on the issue of Jesus but were wary of drawing undue attention from the Jewish authorities. In the midst of the feast days the Lord appeared in the temple and began to teach, causing astonishment and no small angst among His hearers. While throngs of Jews rejected Jesus, "many of the crowd believed in Him" (John 7:31).

C. The Rulers-John 7:32-36, 40-53

With malice and murder in their hearts toward Jesus, the Pharisees and "the chief priests sent officers to seize Him" (John 7:32). The officers were members of the temple police, retained to keep order within the confines of the temple. The officers heard Him teach in the temple, marveled at His message, and did not lay hands on Him.

II. The Invitation of Jesus-John 7:37-39

On each of the seven days of the feast, the priest and the people joined in a joyful procession. The high priest drew water from the pool of Siloam and carried it back to the temple. Three blasts were sounded on the shofar and Isaiah 12:3 was recited, "Therefore you will joyously draw water from the springs of salvation." The priest poured out the water at the altar as the temple choir burst into songs of psalms of praise (Psalm 113-118). This ceremony was not prescribed in the OT, but had become a tradition. This

celebratory ritual was in remembrance of God's provision of water which flowed from the rock during the wilderness wanderings (see Exodus 17:1-7). It may have also been gratitude for God's provision of rain, a necessary ingredient for the previous harvest and for the one to come. On the seventh day, the priest walked around the altar seven times before pouring out the water in commemoration of the battle of Jericho, the first major conquest in the Promised Land. On the eighth and final day of the celebration, this water ritual was omitted. We cannot be certain "the last day, the great day of the feast" (John 7:37) refers to the seventh day or the eight, but it was against this backdrop that the Lord stood and declared, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink" (John 7:37). Come to Jesus! He alone can satisfy the thirsty soul! The gospel invitation to come to Jesus for salvation remains today. Come to Jesus!

"As Israel in the Old Testament drank from that lifegiving stream flowing from the riven rock, so Christ offers those who believe in him an ever flowing, never failing, soul satisfying, thirst quenching inner supply of living water." (John Phillips, *Exploring the Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary*).

III. The Revelation of Jesus-John 8:1-59

The Feast of Booths was over and weary pilgrims were preparing to return home. Many would have stopped at the temple one last time before beginning their sojourn. There in the temple was Jesus, sitting in their midst teaching.

A. The Righteous Judge-John 8:1-11

In order to test Jesus, the scribes and Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery while allowing her partner to escape the humiliation and potential judgment. The law of Moses condemned adulterers to be stoned publicly (see Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22-24). Adultery was a serious breach of the law given to safeguard the sanctity of sex, the holiness of marriage, and the moral purity of the nation.

The Jews did not have the authority to stone the woman without Roman permission. To honor God's law, Jesus would violate Roman law which reserved execution for Roman courts. To submit to Roman law, Jesus would be guilty of ignoring God's law. The Pharisees felt they had the perfect setup and pressed on Him "so that they might have grounds to accuse Him" (John 8:6). Jesus responded by stooping to write in the dirt with His finger. What He wrote, we are left to speculate. The Pharisees persisted.

"Eventually, Jesus stood to His feet and issued a challenge. He said, in effect, 'The only worthy judge is one who cannot be condemned by the law he supposedly upholds; therefore, let the perfectly qualified judge among you be the first to execute justice.' Then He resumed His writing." (John Phillips, *Exploring the Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary*). "Again He stooped down and wrote on the ground" (John 8:8).

One by one the Pharisees slithered away leaving the woman alone with Jesus who said, "'Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?' She said, 'No one, Lord,' And Jesus said, 'I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more.'"

Chuck Swindoll observes, "The worthless judges could not condemn, and the sovereign Judge refused to condemn. He has that prerogative. True to His word, Jesus did not come to condemn the lost, but to save us." (*Insights on John*, p. 164).

Because of the extent of God's forgiveness to us, we ought to be the least judgmental people in the world (*Holman New Testament Commentary: John*, p. 160).

B. The Light of the World-John 8:12-30

According to some historians, the temple treasury was located in the Court of Women. Thirteen trumpet-shaped bronze receptacles were displayed to receive offerings. The small mouth of each trumpet indicated the purpose for the money collected. Each evening during the Festival of Booths, following the evening sacrifice and before sunset, the priests entered the Court of Women to light giant lampstands, placed there for the festival. It is quite probable that at the time the priests were lighting the lampstands Jesus declared with a loud voice, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life" (John 8:12 underline mine). This is His second "I Am" statement.

C. The Truth-John 8:31-59

As Jesus spoke, many believed. To them He said, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:31-32).

Belief is a beginning, a birth after which growth must follow. Believers are to continue in obedience. As believers order their lives after His truth, they will "know" the truth. The Greek word is *ginōskō*, one of at least four terms John could have chosen to mean "know." Unlike the others, *ginōskō* stresses understanding rather than mere sensory observation. It is closely related to the Hebrew verb *yada*, which Jesus likely used, and describes the most intimate kind of knowledge (Genesis 3:5; 4:1).

Swindoll explains,

Moreover, as one "knows" the truth, he or she is "made free." The Greek term suggests release from indentured servanthood. When someone in the ancient world became indebted beyond his or her means of paying, one solution was to exchange a term of slavery for relief from the debt. Sometimes the length of service could be the rest of one's natural life. The indebtedness Jesus spoke of here, of course, is the penalty for sin; the freedom is spiritual release from judgment and the free gift of eternal life. (*Insights on John*, p. 170)

"If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:36). Free. Free from the penalty of sin (salvation). Free from the power of sin (sanctification). And one day free from the presence of sin (glorification). Beloved, in Christ we are free!

This freedom comes with a caveat. We *are* free, but as a blood bought servant of the Most High, we *are not* free to do as we please. Paul wrote, "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything" (1 Corinthians 6:12). The freedom Christ provides is not freedom to do as we like, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). We are not free to live as we please; we are free to live as we ought. Free to operate in kingdom authority, free to live in the fulness of Christ, free to walk worthy of the high calling of Jesus, free to view the world through Spirit-eyes. In Christ we have been set free. Free indeed!