

“A JOURNEY THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF JOHN” SERIES

#12: “Jesus at the Feast of Booths” (Part 1)

SCRIPTURE: John 7:1-24

INTRO:

Here again John uses the phrase, **“After this.”** What is **“this”**? **“This”** refers to the conversation Jesus had with the grumblers among those following Him and His calling out the one who would betray Him.

Jesus continued His ministry in the area of Galilee and stayed away from Judea because the Jews had essentially put out a contract on Him. They made it known throughout the land that they wanted Him dead.

Eventually, however, at the urging of His brothers and sisters (Mary and Joseph had other children: sons James, Joseph, Judas, and Simon; and daughters as well) [Mark 6:3], Jesus went back to Judea in time to celebrate the Feast of Booths in Jerusalem. What’s the Feast of Booths?

It’s also called the Feast of Tabernacles, and it was observed on the 15th day of the seventh month (our October) to commemorate the wandering of Israel in the wilderness. During this commemoration, the Israelites were to live in booths made of palm and willow trees so that they would remember that their forefathers lived in temporary shelters during their wandering in the wilderness after leaving Egypt.

The Jewish people commemorated their history periodically with various feasts and festivals. God didn’t want them to forget their heritage.

Remembering where we came from and what our forefathers came through is an important thing to any people. Those today who would seek to destroy a nation’s history seek to do a bad thing. We should never forget the price that was paid for what we have. Freedom isn’t free, and we should never forget it. We live in the land of the free because of the brave.

Note the reason his siblings give for urging Him to go to Jerusalem. Verse 4: **“...no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. . . show yourself to the world.”** You see, they were thinking strictly in the flesh, and they didn’t believe He was who He said He was...yet.

He responds to them, **“My time has not yet come, but your time is always here.”** What did He mean by that? He meant simply that it was not the right time or place for him to overtly confirm His identity, but that His brothers could expose themselves any time they wanted.

Then He says, ***“The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil.”*** They were no threat to the world and its ways, but Jesus was. He came with a message about a new way to think and a new way to live, all of which were threats to the way of the world.

Today, we have so-called atheists who want freedom *from* religion. We have atheistic Communists who outlaw religion. We have Muslims who want all Christians dead. So, what Jesus said of His day is very true of our day.

SO, JESUS ATTENDS THE FEAST OF BOOTHES IN JERUSALEM...

In verse 8, Jesus tells his brothers, ***“You go up to the feast. I am not going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come.”*** Then in verse 9 and 10 John tells us, ***“After saying this, he remained in Galilee. But after his brothers had gone up to the feast, then he also went up, not publicly but in private.”***

So, why the secrecy? The answer is in verses 11 and 12: ***The Jews were looking for him at the feast, and saying, “Where is he?”*** So, Jesus is there, but He’s incognito.

Then verse 14 tells us that...

...JESUS WENT TO THE TEMPLE AND TAUGHT.

We aren’t told what He taught, but the Jews there, evidently not some of those who wanted to arrest Him, ***“marveled, saying, ‘How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?’”*** (v. 15).

Jesus responded to their comment by saying, ***“My teaching is not mine but his who sent me”*** (v.16). In other words, He was teaching the words of God. In reality, He was teaching His own words, since He was the Son of God, a member of the godhead. He knew the Scriptures because they were His own words that were given to Moses and the prophets centuries ago. He wasn’t teaching theological interpretations and opinions of some man about the Scriptures; His words were in fact the words of God!

The closest thing to the teaching of Jesus Himself that we can claim today is teaching straight from the Bible. Now, this doesn’t ensure that all those who claim to teach only the Scriptures truthfully do so, but that’s where “truth teaching” must begin. So many teachers of the Word approach the biblical message with preconceived notions to the point that the biblical message is distorted. Such preconceptions are often not true; they wind up taking the student in a different direction than the biblical writer intended. Even if the preconception is correct, it’s better that it be concluded rather than precluded.

For example, a popular preconception is that we are saved by faith alone. Having such a preconception causes the Bible student to have to distort such

things as “works,” “repentance,” “confession,” and “baptism” since the Scriptures tie them to salvation. Then there is the problem of dealing with James 2:24, which says, ***“You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.”***

JESUS ACCUSED THE JEWS OF HYPOCRISY.

He told them, ***“Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why do you seek to kill me?”*** (v. 19).

So, they accused him of having a demon!

He shot back at them: “I heal a man on the Sabbath, and you marvel, yet you want to kill me for it. You circumcise a male on the Sabbath in order to obey Moses, and you think that’s okay. You are judging with wrong judgment.”

There are those among us who are guilty of the same hypocrisy. We will condemn the woman who is divorced and remarried while clearly breaking the law in which Jesus says to ***“...love one another as I have loved you”*** (John 13:34).

And this final thought: It’s okay to judge; just make sure to judge with right judgment.

People frequently quote Matthew 7:1: ***“Judge not, that you be not judged”*** as if Jesus is saying that we aren’t to judge. If the rest of the paragraph is taken into consideration, it becomes clear that Jesus is teaching that we should judge the right way.

We cannot escape making judgments. It’s part of life. A Christian *must* make judgments. The admonition here is to make right judgments.

IN CLOSING...

So, we’ll leave Jesus in Jerusalem at the Feast of Booths where some of the Jews finally realize that He is the man sought by the Jewish authorities...