

- B) Focussing in on the Jewish leadership, Jesus gives a rather mystic explanation for why "the Jews" will not be able to "seize" Christ. While the Jews simply want to get to Christ physically, Jesus Christ speaks of His life in spiritual terms (John 7:33-34).
- C) This explanation of Christ, which brings His death and resurrection into view, represents a shift in how He approaches the Jewish leadership in John's Gospel. From here forward, the cross comes into clearer view.
- D) The Jews, for their part, are totally confused by Jesus' prophecy about Himself (7:35-36). Once again, they attempt to figure it out on their own, rather than inquire of Jesus. In the meantime, it seems Jesus leaves.

5) Christ's Second Cry: Come To Me And Drink!

- A) The last day, the great day, of the Feast of Tabernacles[†] was marked with a dramatic "water sacrifice" of all the people to God. God's provision for rain and physical well-being were in the forefront of each person's mind (7:37).
- B) Jesus cries out, in a reversal of physical/spiritual realities, that He is the fulfillment of their eternal thirst (7:37-38).
- C) John mentions that Christ's ultimate focus is on the Holy Spirit (7:39), who has not yet been completely revealed. This had resonance with the Feast (Isaiah 12:3).

Crying Out

Long Beach Alliance Church • November 21st, 2004 • Pastor Chris Lankford

NOW ON THE LAST DAY, THE GREAT DAY OF THE FEAST, JESUS STOOD AND CRIED OUT, SAYING, "IF ANYONE IS THIRSTY, LET HIM COME TO ME AND DRINK. "HE WHO BELIEVES IN ME, AS THE SCRIPTURE SAID, 'FROM HIS INNERMOST BEING WILL FLOW RIVERS OF LIVING WATER.'"

~JOHN 7:18 (NASB)

1) An Issue Of Origins

- A) The people, showing they have some background of the intent of the Jewish leadership to kill Jesus, realize that Christ is the one who the leadership is seeking (John 7:25).
- B) The people wonder aloud why the Jewish leadership isn't seizing Christ. Perhaps, the people reason, the rulers don't know that the one speaking is Christ (7:26). The comment expects that the leaders are in the dark to Christ's presence.
- C) The people begin to do some reasoning of their own as to the presence this new messianic figure which the leadership is pursuing. The people allude to a common legend which

stated that when the Messiah appeared, no one (perhaps, even the Messiah Himself) would know where He had come from* (7:27).

2) Christ's First Cry: He Who Sent Me Is True!

- A) Christ cries out (ἐκράξεν/ekraxsen -- to loudly cry out, emotional scream), recognizing that the people do know Him, and where He is from (Nazareth, the physical location of where he lived in His early childhood -- John 7:28).
- B) At the same time, the people have missed the far more important issue of where Jesus Christ originates in eternity (from God -- 7:28).
- C) Jesus says He has not come "of Myself," or "of my own will/motivation." The One who has sent Jesus Christ is true!

* The view was propagated through apocryphal books and rabbinical teaching around the time of Jesus Christ. Thus, 4 Ezra 7:28; 13:32; 2 Baruch 29:3 picture the Messiah as (spontaneously) "revealed," and 4 Ezra 13:1ff views him as arising out of the sea (which, of course, implies a sudden appearance). The idea appears amongst the rabbis, Rabbi Zera taught that "Three come unawares: Messiah, a found article and a scorpion" (Sanh. 97a; Soncino edition, page 659). Justin Martyr in his Dialogue reports Trypho as saying, "But Christ -- if He has indeed been born, and exists anywhere -- is unknown, and does not even know Himself, and has no power until Elias (Elijah) come to anoint Him, and make Him manifest to all" (*Dialogue with Trypho* VIII; ANF, I, page 199). While the sudden appearance of the Messiah is the most natural understanding of the apocryphal texts cited, they do not actually say in set terms that the origin of the Messiah is unknown. Not all Jews believed that the legend was true. But, the Jews expected the Messiah's work to begin suddenly when God willed it. Thinking as they did of the Messiah as a man, this involved that he be in the world, a grown man and ready for his task, before anyone knew him for what he was. R. H. Lightfoot (wrote a classic commentary on the Gospel of John) felt that the belief in the sudden appearance of the Messiah gave the Jewish leadership a sense of license to "inspect and dissect" every instance of a person who might have messianic tendencies. This led to a tendency of the Jewish leadership to feel they were superior to others. "They would pick some flaw, and fasten on that and refuse to consider the real and decisive facts, however great and convincing they may be." (Collected from various sources, especially NICNT, Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, Pages 365-366).

Christ claims to know God, be from Him, and be sent by Him (7:28-29). Paraphrase: YOU ARE MISSING IT! You are worried about where I am from, you should be focused on the True One who sent Me!

3) Responses To Jesus: Fight & Faith

- A) John 7:30-31 should be taken as a whole, contrasting how the people want to "seize" (πιάσαι/piasai, to arrest/hold) Christ. The first want to apprehend Him for spontaneous arrest (unlike 7:32, formal arrest).
- B) This first group is unable to seize Christ, because it is not "his hour" (7:30). The time for Christ's death has not yet come, and no matter what people want to do, Christ marches to the Father's clock.
- C) The second group want to apprehend Christ in belief because of His signs. While belief based on signs is not encouraged in John's Gospel (2:11, 23; 4:48, etc.) it is better than nothing (10:38). They cannot imagine "more signs" than Christ has provided (7:31).

4) The Plot To Kill Jesus: Part #1

- A) The "Pharisees and chief priests"*** finally hear about Christ teaching and send officers to seize (arrest) Him (7:32).

*** There was, of course, only one "Chief Priest." But, since the Romans had taken to deposing and appointing the principal ecclesiastic there were quite a few ex-chief priests who apparently retained the courtesy title. The title seems to have extended to others in the chief-priestly families, so that it came to denote quite a party (see J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, pp. 160ff.)

† The Feast of Tabernacles was a festival rich in symbolism and popular appeal. This symbolism forms the background to Jesus Christ's saying in John 7:37-39. The principle features of the Feast were the erection of the leafy bowers, or booths (in which the people camped out) and the offering of sacrifices.

In addition to these basics of the Feast, there were also ceremonies through the week which were highly symbolic and rich with tradition. The people carried with them bunches of leaves called lulabs (willow and myrtle twigs tied together with a palm branch). The lulab symbolized the stages of the wilderness journey (marked by the different vegetation). As certain Psalms were read, the male pilgrims would shake their lulabs. The pilgrims also carried a citron (citrus fruit) in their other hand, representing the fruit of the land that God had given to His people. The rejoicing of the feast was also accented by flute playing and dancing, which went on for most of the 7-8 day Feast of Tabernacles.

On the last day of the Feast, a golden flagon was filled with water from the pool of Siloam and was carried in a procession led by the High Priest to the temple. As the procession approached the watergate on the south side of the inner court, three blasts from the shofar (a trumpet connected with joyful occasions) were sounded. While the pilgrims watched, the priests processed around the altar with the flagon while the temple choir sang *Hallel* (Psalm 113-118, *Mishnah Sukkah* 4:9). When the choir reached Psalm 118, every male pilgrim shook his lulab in his right hand and raised the citron fruit with his left hand while crying out, "Give thanks to the Lord!" three times. The water was offered to God at the time of the morning sacrifice, along with the daily drink offering of wine. The wine and water were poured into their respective silver bowls, and then poured out before the Lord. These symbols were related in the Jewish mind to the Lord's provision of water in the desert and to the Lord's pouring out of the Spirit in the last days. Pouring at the Feast of Tabernacles refers symbolically to the messianic age in which a stream from the sacred rock would flow over the whole earth (cf. J. Jeremias, TDNT, 4.277f). The water-pouring ceremony is interpreted in these traditions as a foretaste of the eschatological rivers of living water foreseen by Ezekiel (47:1-9) and Zechariah (13:1). In these traditions the water miracle in the wilderness (Exodus 17:1-7; Numbers 20:8-13; cf. Psalm 78:16-20) is in turn the forerunner of the water rite of the Feast of Tabernacles.

Now, read John 7:37-39 with this in mind...

(Various sources, especially D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According To John*, Pages 321-322. Also Leon Morris, *The Gospel According To John*, Pages 371-373.)

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Small Group Bible Study Questions

- A) Jesus makes clear that He is the only thing that can satisfy our spiritual thirst. Yet, for many of us, we continue to drink from “other sources.” Read Jeremiah 2:13. In what ways do you feel you have been “digging your own well” to “satisfy your own thirst?”
- B) Jesus cries out twice in the passage we studied on Sunday. The first time, Christ cries out that we would not be distracted by the messenger, and that we would keep our eyes on the Lord. The Pharisees and religious leaders had a very difficult time with this kind of thinking. They were in the business of “crucifying” the messenger when He didn’t fit their description or definition. Do you ever feel that sometimes you get distracted by the messenger, and miss the message? What can cause you to miss the Message?
- C) The second cry of Christ is that we must drink from Him, if we are going to have our thirst satisfied. This “taking in” of Christ is clearly contrasted against the attempts earlier in the chapter to “apprehend” Christ on our own. In what way is Christ asking you to drink Him in, despite your attempts to “domesticate” Christ and apprehend Him in your own way?
- D) Jesus clearly lived His life with “the hour” of His death in mind. He lived with intense and passionate purpose. Do you find that you are “imitating” this aspect of Christ in your life? In what way are you living with “your hour” in mind?
- E) Jesus’ teaching about Himself is nothing short of revolutionary. At every moment He shows His incredible relationship with God the Father. Share with your group at least one prayer request which would allow for you to be vulnerable about an area of your life which needs total dependence on your relationship with God, but maybe is being controlled by you, instead of Him.

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