

iConnect Sunday School Class Notes

January 16, 2022

Meet in Building B, Room 1

Praises and Concerns

Book of John

Chapter 7

Jesus goes to Jerusalem

Commentary

After the discourse of John 6, delivered just before Passover 28 a.d., Jesus did not go up to Jerusalem (John 7:1), but devoted Himself for five or six months to active work in various parts of Galilee, of which St. John says nothing. At the close of this period, He visited the country of Tyre and Sidon (Mark 7:24), made a tour through Decapolis, where He fed the 4,000 (Mark 8:1), retired to Cæsarea Philippi, where St. Peter made his great confession (Mark 8:27.), and subsequently, at a place not specified, was **transfigured**.

(Matthew Chapter 17

1 And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,

2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

3 And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.)

To this period belong the gradual falling away of the people, the widening of the breach with the Pharisees, the deepening of the faith of the apostles, who are led to acknowledge Him as the Son of God, and the prophecies of Death and Resurrection which followed the Transfiguration. When, in October, Jesus went up to Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles, His Galilean ministry was over, and He knew that His death was impending.

The account of our Lord's teaching at the Feast of Tabernacles is remarkably vivid, and bears all the marks of historic accuracy (see especially the graphic details in John 7:11-15, John 7:25-27, John 7:31-32, John 7:40-52, and in John 9). **He sets His claims before the inhabitants of Jerusalem with great urgency, knowing that His time on earth is short.** His hearers will die in their sins unless they believe that He is the Messiah (John 8:24). He is more than the Messiah; He is the Son of God, self-existent and eternal (John 8:58), the Living Water (John 7:37), the Light of the world (John 8:12; John 9:5), the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for His sheep (John 10:14-15), and the giver of true freedom (John 8:36). He works only one miracle, but it is an important one, enforcing His claim to be the Light of the world (John 9).

The Festival of Booths or Tabernacles mentioned below – This autumn harvest festival in Jerusalem recalled God's provision in the exodus and wilderness and anticipated God's end-time salvation.

- 1 After this, Jesus traveled throughout Galilee. He didn't want to travel in Judea, because the Jewish authorities wanted to kill him.
- 2 When it was almost time for the Jewish Festival of Booths,
- 3 Jesus' brothers said to him, "Leave Galilee. Go to Judea so that your disciples can see the amazing works that you do.
- 4 Those who want to be known publicly don't do things secretly. Since you can do these things, show yourself to the world."
- 5 His brothers said this because even they didn't believe in him.
- 6 Jesus replied, "For you, anytime is fine. But my time hasn't come yet.
- 7 The world can't hate you. It hates me, though, because I testify that its works are evil.
- 8 You go up to the festival. I'm not going to this one because my time hasn't yet come."
- 9 Having said this, he stayed in Galilee.
- 10 However, after his brothers left for the festival, he went too—not openly but in secret.
- 11 The Jewish leaders were looking for Jesus at the festival. They kept asking, "Where is he?"
- 12 The crowds were murmuring about him. "He's a good man," some said, but others were saying, "No, he tricks the people."
- 13 No one spoke about him publicly, though, for fear of the Jewish authorities.

Jesus teaches in the temple

14 Halfway through the festival, Jesus went up to the temple and started to teach.

15 Astonished, the Jewish leaders asked, "He's never been taught! How has he mastered the Law?"

Commentary

...having never been the pupil of a recognised rabbi or scribe.

16 Jesus responded, "My teaching isn't mine but comes from the one who sent me.

17 Whoever wants to do God's will can tell whether my teaching is from God or whether I speak on my own.

Commentary

'My teaching, like that of the prophets of old, is a direct inspiration from God, and not, like that of the scribes, a tradition of men. It appeals to the heart, not to the head. Not the learned, but those who apply themselves earnestly to do God's will, will perceive that it comes from God. Verse 19 below: You are not keeping the Law. Moses commanded you not to shed innocent blood, and yet you seek to slay Me, an innocent man.'

18 Those who speak on their own seek glory for themselves. Those who seek the glory of him who sent me are people of truth; there's no falsehood in them.

19 Didn't Moses give you the Law? Yet none of you keep the Law. Why do you want to kill me?"

20 The crowd answered, "You have a demon. Who wants to kill you?"

21 Jesus replied, "I did one work, and you were all astonished.

22 Because Moses gave you the commandment about circumcision (although it wasn't Moses but the patriarchs), you circumcise a man on the Sabbath.

23 If a man can be circumcised on the Sabbath without breaking Moses' Law, why are you angry with me because I made an entire man well on the Sabbath?

Commentary

Moses recognized that works of piety and charity may be done on the sabbath day. In fact, he commanded circumcision to be performed on the sabbath day as on other days, and you obey his command.

24 Don't judge according to appearances. Judge with right judgment."

25 Some people from Jerusalem said, "Isn't he the one they want to kill?"

26 Here he is, speaking in public, yet they aren't saying anything to him. Could it be that our leaders actually think he is the Christ?

27 We know where he is from, but when the Christ comes, no one will know where he is from."

Commentary

Jewish ideas as to the Messiah were not very consistent. One view was that His birthplace and lineage would be notorious (cp. Matthew 2); others held that His manifestation would be shrouded in mystery.

28 While Jesus was teaching in the temple, he exclaimed, "You know me and where I am from. I haven't come on my own. The one who sent me is true, and you don't know him.

29 I know him because I am from him and he sent me."

30 So they wanted to seize Jesus, but they couldn't because his time hadn't yet come.

Ron's Comment

Note that human thinking that wanted to seize Jesus is constrained by God because Jesus' time had not yet come.

31 Many from that crowd believed in Jesus. They said, "When the Christ comes, will he do more miraculous signs than this man does?"

32 The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering such things about Jesus, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent guards to arrest him.

33 Therefore, Jesus said, "I'm still with you for a little while before I go to the one who sent me.

34 You will look for me, but you won't find me, and where I am you can't come."

35 The Jewish opposition asked each other, "Where does he intend to go that we can't find him? Surely he doesn't intend to go where our people have been scattered and are living among the Greeks! He isn't going to teach the Greeks, is he?"

36 What does he mean when he says, 'You will look for me, but you won't find me, and where I am you can't come'?"

37 On the last and most important day of the festival, Jesus stood up and shouted, "All who are thirsty should come to me!"

38 All who believe in me should drink! As the scriptures said concerning me, Rivers of living water will flow out from within him."

Commentary

The last day] *The feast proper closed on the seventh day, but the eighth day, which is probably here meant, was kept as a sabbath with a holy convocation to commemorate the entrance into Canaan (Leviticus 23:36).*

If any man thirst] *Here, as to the woman of Samaria, Christ declares Himself the giver of 'the living water.' This declaration is connected with the ritual of the feast. On every day of the feast except the last, a golden pitcher of water was fetched (in literal fulfilment of Isaiah 12:3) from the pool of Siloam by a priest and poured together with wine on the W. side of the altar at the time of the morning sacrifice, amid the singing of psalms and hymns. This water was held to symbolise the miraculous water which supplied the Israelites in the wilderness, and also the outpouring of the Spirit promised in the days of the Messiah. On the eighth day, when the water was not poured out, Jesus came forward declaring Himself the giver of the true water which that water typified, viz. the Holy Spirit.*

As the fountain of Siloam poured forth its waters from the Temple mountain, so a stream of heavenly life issues from the Redeemer, and from all who have become like Him.

39 Jesus said this concerning the Spirit. Those who believed in him would soon receive the Spirit, but they hadn't experienced the Spirit yet since Jesus hadn't yet been glorified.

Commentary

The Holy Spirit, the Comforter, could not be given as the Comforter until Jesus had been glorified (completed his work on earth, arisen and ascended to the Father): cp. John 16:7.

40 When some in the crowd heard these words, they said, "This man is truly the prophet."

Commentary

The Prophet i.e. the prophet of Deuteronomy 18:15, regarded not as the Messiah, but as a forerunner of the Messiah.

41 Others said, "He's the Christ." But others said, "The Christ can't come from Galilee, can he?"

Ron's Comment

Do you think that more people would have believed who Jesus said he was if he had come from another city more acceptable to them?

How might we respond if little Joey who lived next door turned out to be the second coming of the Christ? (Not saying that this is how Christ will come again.)

42 Didn't the scripture say that the Christ comes from David's family and from Bethlehem, David's village?"

43 So the crowd was divided over Jesus.

44 Some wanted to arrest him, but no one grabbed him.

45 The guards returned to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked, "Why didn't you bring him?"

46 The guards answered, "No one has ever spoken the way he does."

47 The Pharisees replied, "Have you too been deceived?"

48 Have any of the leaders believed in him? Has any Pharisee?

49 No, only this crowd, which doesn't know the Law. And they are under God's curse!"

50 Nicodemus, who was one of them and had come to Jesus earlier, said,

51 "Our Law doesn't judge someone without first hearing him and learning what he is doing, does it?"

Commentary

Nicodemus was certainly right on the point of law: see Exodus 23:1; Deuteronomy 1:16; Deuteronomy 19:15. The Pharisees were wrong not only in their law, but in their facts.

52 They answered him, "You are not from Galilee too, are you? Look it up and you will see that the prophet doesn't come from Galilee."

53 They each went to their own homes,

Chapter 8

Pharisees test Jesus

1 And Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

2 Early in the morning, he returned to the temple. All the people gathered around him, and he sat down and taught them.

3 The legal experts and Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery. Placing her in the center of the group,

4 they said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of committing adultery.

Commentary

The woman taken in adultery. All modern critics agree that this section is not an original part of the Fourth Gospel. It is not in the author's style; it is omitted by most of the ancient authorities. Probably it is an authentic apostolic tradition inserted here to illustrate the principle of John 8:15. ("You judge according to human standards, but I judge no one.") The incident probably took place in Holy Week.

The woman was only betrothed, not married, otherwise her punishment would not have been stoning, but strangulation, for so the rabbis interpreted Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22. But inasmuch as among the Jews betrothal was almost equivalent to marriage (see on Matthew 1:18), the sin of a betrothed woman was regarded as a species of adultery.

5 In the Law, Moses commanded us to stone women like this. What do you say?"

6 They said this to test him, because they wanted a reason to bring an accusation against him. Jesus bent down and wrote on the ground with his finger.

Commentary

Punishment of death for this offence was obsolescent, and some think that they wished to make Jesus unpopular with the people by inducing Him to advocate its revival. More probably they wished to embroil Him with the

Roman authorities, who would not allow a death-sentence to be executed without their permission. The displeasure of Jesus was largely due to the officiousness of the accusers. It was not their business to accuse and judge the woman, but that of the husband and the judges. They had neither a legal nor a moral right to interfere. Christ was always reluctant to interfere in civil disputes: see Matthew 22:21; Luke 12:13-15; John 18:36. Writing on the ground was a symbolical action well known in antiquity, signifying unwillingness to deal with the matter in hand.

7 They continued to question him, so he stood up and replied, "Whoever hasn't sinned should throw the first stone."

8 Bending down again, he wrote on the ground.

9 Those who heard him went away, one by one, beginning with the elders. Finally, only Jesus and the woman were left in the middle of the crowd.

10 Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Is there no one to condemn you?"

11 She said, "No one, sir." Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on, don't sin anymore."

Jesus continues to teach in the temple

12 Jesus spoke to the people again, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me won't walk in darkness but will have the light of life."

Commentary

The idea of the Messiah as 'the Light' was familiar to the Jews (see Luke 1:78-79; Luke 2:32), and was especially appropriate at the Feast of Tabernacles, during which (or perhaps on the first day only) the two colossal golden candlesticks in the Court of the Women were lighted. Christ as 'the Light of the world' dissipates the darkness of ignorance and sin. The light of life.

13 Then the Pharisees said to him, "Because you are testifying about yourself, your testimony isn't valid."

Ron's Comment

Remember that the Jewish authorities believed it takes two people to testify for it to be valid.

14 Jesus replied, "Even if I testify about myself, my testimony is true, since I know where I came from and where I'm going. You don't know where I come from or where I'm going.

15 You judge according to human standards, but I judge no one.

16 Even if I do judge, my judgment is truthful, because I'm not alone. My judgments come from me and from the Father who sent me.

17 In your Law, it is written that the witness of two people is true.

18 I am one witness concerning myself, and the Father who sent me is the other."

19 They asked him, "Where is your Father?" Jesus answered, "You don't know me and you don't know my Father. If you knew me, you would also know my Father."

20 He spoke these words while he was teaching in the temple area known as the treasury. No one arrested him, because his time hadn't yet come.

21 Jesus continued, "I'm going away. You will look for me, and you will die in your sin. Where I'm going, you can't come."

22 The Jewish leaders said, "He isn't going to kill himself, is he? Is that why he said, 'Where I'm going, you can't come'?"

23 He said to them, "You are from below; I'm from above. You are from this world; I'm not from this world.

24 This is why I told you that you would die in your sins. If you don't believe that I Am, you will die in your sins."

25 "Who are you?" they asked. Jesus replied, "I'm exactly who I have claimed to be from the beginning.

26 I have many things to say in judgment concerning you. The one who sent me is true, and what I have heard from him I tell the world."

27 They didn't know he was speaking about his Father.

28 So Jesus said to them, "When the Human One is lifted up, then you will know that I Am. Then you will know that I do nothing on my own, but I say just what the Father has taught me.

29 He who sent me is with me. He doesn't leave me by myself, because I always do what makes him happy."

30 While Jesus was saying these things, many people came to believe in him.

Children of Abraham

Commentary

Verses 31-59

John 8:31 begins another speech, delivered on the same day to those Jews who were inclined to regard Him as the Messiah.

When these half-believers find that Jesus demands an entire change of heart, a breach with orthodox Judaism, and faith in Himself as the eternal Son of God, their feeling towards Him is changed to violent hatred.

31 Jesus said to the Jews who believed in him, "You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teaching.

32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Commentary

Christ's words exasperated these Pharisaic believers, because He implied

(1) that they would have to amend their lives in order to abide in His word, whereas they considered their conduct perfect;

(2) that they were ignorant of saving truth, whereas they regarded themselves in complete possession of it;

(3) that they were not spiritually free, because superstitiously attached to the letter of the imperfect Mosaic Law.

33 They responded, "We are Abraham's children; we've never been anyone's slaves. How can you say that we will be set free?"

34 Jesus answered, "I assure you that everyone who sins is a slave to sin.

35 A slave isn't a permanent member of the household, but a son is.

36 Therefore, if the Son makes you free, you really will be free.

37 I know that you are Abraham's children, yet you want to kill me because you don't welcome my teaching.

38 I'm telling you what I've seen when I am with the Father, but you are doing what you've heard from your father."

39 They replied, "Our father is Abraham." Jesus responded, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do Abraham's works.

40 Instead, you want to kill me, though I am the one who has spoken the truth I heard from God. Abraham didn't do this.

41 You are doing your father's works." They said, "Our ancestry isn't in question! The only Father we have is God!"

42 Jesus replied, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God. Here I am. I haven't come on my own. God sent me.

43 Why don't you understand what I'm saying? It's because you can't really hear my words.

44 Your father is the devil. You are his children, and you want to do what your father wants. He was a murderer from the beginning. He has never stood for the truth, because there's no truth in him. Whenever that liar speaks, he speaks according to his own nature, because he's a liar and the father of liars.

Commentary

He was a murderer from the beginning] viz. of the human race, when he sought to destroy our first parents, (Adam and Eve) and abode (RV 'stood') not in the truth, i.e., in that state of innocence in which he was created. This is the only certain allusion in the Gospels to the fall of Satan.

Ron's Comment

The crowd probably thought that Jesus was condemning their human fathers.

45 Because I speak the truth, you don't believe me.

46 Who among you can show I'm guilty of sin? Since I speak the truth, why don't you believe me?

47 God's children listen to God's words. You don't listen to me because you aren't God's children."

48 The Jewish opposition answered, "We were right to say that you are a Samaritan and have a demon, weren't we?"

49 "I don't have a demon," Jesus replied. "But I honor my Father and you dishonor me.

50 I'm not trying to bring glory to myself. There's one who is seeking to glorify me, and he's the judge.

51 I assure you that whoever keeps my word will never die."

Commentary

By dishonouring Jesus, the Jews have incurred the judgment of the Father (John 8:50), i. e. the penalty of eternal death. But this judgment is not irrevocable. If even now they will obey Christ's word, they may escape eternal death.

The Jews understand our Lord to speak of natural death, and so to claim to be immortal, and the giver of immortality. Such a claim, implying superiority to all the prophets of the OT., seems to them the effect of frenzy or diabolical possession.

Abraham and Jesus

52 The Jewish opposition said to Jesus, "Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham and the prophets died, yet you say, 'Whoever keeps my word will never die.'

53 Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died and the prophets died, so who do you make yourself out to be?"

54 Jesus answered, "If I glorify myself, my glory is meaningless. My Father, who you say is your God, is the one who glorifies me.

55 You don't know him, but I do. If I said I didn't know him, I would be like you, a liar. But I do know him, and I keep his word.

56 Your father Abraham was overjoyed that he would see my day. He saw it and was happy."

Commentary

...either in prophetic vision, or, as some think, from Paradise.

57 "You aren't even 50 years old!" the Jewish opposition replied. "How can you say that you have seen Abraham?"

58 "I assure you," Jesus replied, "before Abraham was, I Am."

Commentary

Christ seems here to declare Himself to be the Jehovah, or I AM of the OT., the eternal, self-existent Creator: cp. Exodus 3:14.

59 So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and left the temple.

The Lord bless us and keep us;

the Lord make his face to shine upon us and be gracious to us;

the Lord lift up his countenance upon us and give us peace.