

CHAPTER SEVEN

Between chapters six and seven of John's Gospel an interval of approximately six months occurs. During this interval of six months Jesus carries on a relatively private ministry in Galilee. In order to give His disciples some much needed personal instruction, He retires into semi-privacy and travels to the north of Galilee. John makes only a brief note of this extended ministry in the first verse of chapter seven. Here are some of the outstanding incidents of this Later Galilean Ministry (see Map #4, page 266, volume 1).

1. Syro-Phoenician woman's demonized daughter is healed.
2. Many are healed in Decapolis and four thousand are miraculously fed.
3. The Pharisees demand a sign from Jesus at Magadan.
4. Peter's great confession and Jesus' first plain prediction of His crucifixion at Caesarea Philippi.
5. The Transfiguration on a high mountain.
6. Peter and the question of the temple tax.
7. The disciples arguing as to who shall be the greatest.
8. The unknown miracle worker is discussed.
9. Jesus discusses stumbling blocks, etc.

Chapter seven opens with Jesus and the Twelve still in Galilee. The Lord's skeptical brothers are chiding Him. Their advice is that He stop hiding in the hills of Galilee, quit beating around the bush about His kingdom and go to Jerusalem and make His Messianic claims public.

In Chapter six we see the attitudes of the people of Galilee toward Jesus. Now John sets out to show, in Chapters seven through ten, the attitudes of the Judean people toward Jesus and His claims.

We now take up our outline of the Fourth Gospel where it was discontinued in Volume I of our commentary, *Gospel of John*.

II The Word Manifested to the Jews and their rejection of Him,

D. Public Ministry, Third Year

2. Later Judean Ministry, 7:1—10:21, The Feast of Tabernacles
 - a. Jesus' unbelieving brethren advise Him, 7:1-9
 - b. The Multitudes in Jerusalem have varying ideas about Him, 7:10-13
 - c. The old Sabbath controversy renewed, 7:14-24

- d. Mixed emotions concerning Jesus at the feast, 7:25-36
- e. Discourse on the Living Water, 7:37-52

ADVICE OF HIS UNBELIEVING BRETHREN

Text 7:1-9

- 1 And after these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill him.
- 2 Now the feast of the Jews, the feast of tabernacles was at hand.
- 3 His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may behold thy works which thou doest
- 4 For no man doeth anything in secret and himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou doest these things, manifest thyself to the world.
- 5 For even his brethren did not believe on him.
- 6 Jesus therefore saith unto them, My time is not yet come; but your time is always ready.
- 7 The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that its works are evil.
- 8 Go ye up unto the feast: I go not up unto this feast: because my time is not yet fulfilled.
- 9 And having said these things unto them, he abode still in Galilee.

Queries

- a. What is the Feast of Tabernacles?
- b. His brethren admit His miracles—why do they not believe Him?
- c. What does Jesus mean, "my time is not yet come?"

Paraphrase

After the miraculous feeding of the five thousand, Jesus taught His disciples semi-privately for about six months in Galilee. He would not travel in Judea, because the Jewish rulers sought to kill Him. Now the feast of the Jews, the feast of tabernacles was at hand. So His brothers said to Him, This is hardly the place for you. Why don't you leave here and go into Judea, where all your disciples are and there your disciples may see the miracles you are doing. As everyone knows, a person does not do something secretly if he is eager to be known publicly. Since you are doing these miracles, show yourself to the world. This was the advice of His brothers because they did not believe in His spiritual kingdom. Jesus said to them, This is not the opportune time for Me, but for you any time is suitable. The world does not hate you but it does hate me, because

I proclaim that the world is evil. You go up to the Feast yourselves. I am not yet going to the Feast because my time has not yet been fulfilled. Having said these things to them, He stayed behind in Galilee.

Summary

The Lord's brethren give Him some worldly advice on how to carry out His divine mission. Jesus answers their advice by informing them that He is acting in accord with the eternal purposes of the Heavenly Father.

Comment

After the miraculous feeding of the multitudes (Jn. 6) the crowds would all depart toward Jerusalem, for the Passover "was at hand" (Jn. 6:4). But why would Jesus refuse to go to Jerusalem and avail Himself of the opportunity to teach the great throngs of Jews gathered there for the Passover? Was He afraid? Yes and no. He was no coward, but He was fearful that the Jews might force the issue of His death before the divinely appointed time. When that time should come He would courageously and steadfastly "set his face to go to Jerusalem." No one could take His life from Him, He would lay it down willingly—but at the appointed time within the Father's Will. Another reason He might wish to remain in Galilee is privacy. When these great throngs of people left Galilee to go to the Passover, their absence would give Jesus much more privacy and freedom of movement to teach not only His disciples, but people in the borders of Gentile territory (the Syro-Phoenician woman).

During the six-month ministry in Galilee the open hostility of the Jews in Jerusalem might lose some of its fervor; especially if Jesus should make His ministry as private as possible. He recognized this and "charged his disciples" to refrain from spreading abroad the news of the miracles and teachings of this six-month Galilean ministry (cf. Mk. 9:9; Lk. 9:36).

Please notice that the plain inference of verse 1 of this seventh chapter is that Jesus did not attend the Passover mentioned in John 6:4. It is not wise to dogmatically assert that Jesus must of necessity keep every ritual and attend every feast commanded in the Law of Moses. After all, He is the Law-Giver. He taught Peter the same lesson in regard to the Temple tax (cf. Mt. 17:24-27).

The Feast of Tabernacles was to be celebrated by every grown Israelite male in Jerusalem on the fifteenth day of the seventh month (our October). The feast was to last eight days and the people were to dwell in tabernacles (booths) made entirely of fresh branches of

fruit and palm trees. This was to commemorate their fathers dwelling in booths (tents, temporary dwelling places) after their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. It was to be a joyful festival, reminding them of the fatherly care and protection of Jehovah in the wilderness journeys of their forefathers. It was also the festival at which they celebrated the ingathering of the labor of the field. It is called The Feast of Tabernacles, The Feast of Tents, The Feast of Ingathering, The Festival of Jehovah, or simply the festival (cf. Ex. 23:16; Lev. 23:33-44; Num. 29). There was much expression of joy in the ritual of the Feast. The trumpets were blown each day of the feast; there was the ceremony of the outpouring of water drawn from the pool of Siloam to commemorate the miraculous water from the rock at Meribah and to look forward to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit by Jehovah; the great candelabras (four of them so large that ladders were used to light them) were lighted and the light from these lamps illuminated the whole city at night. It is probable that Jesus referred to some of these rituals as He taught during the feast concerning the Holy Spirit, the Water of Life and the Light of the World. What a sight it must have been to enter the city at this period of the year and see over a million Jews living in these booths. They would be crowded into the courts, streets, public squares and on housetops. Then to see the smoke from the great altar in the Temple as hundreds of animals were sacrificed in burnt offerings. There would be the trumpets, harps, psalteries, cymbals and other musical instruments, the singing of the Great Hallel and the dancing before the Lord to behold.

In view of the tremendous throngs of people and the holiday excitement about to ensue in Jerusalem, the brothers of the Lord, James, Joseph, Simon and Judas (the Mother of Jesus had other children (cf. Mt. 13:55-56, 12:46-50; Mk. 3:31, 6:3; Lk. 8:19; Jn. 2:12; Acts 1:14), advise Jesus to go to the Feast and do His miraculous works there in public. Our text says of these brethren that they "did not believe on him." How, then, do they admit His miracles and disbelieve? They did not believe or place their trust in Him as a spiritual King over their wills and hearts (see Expository Sermons Seven and Eight).

The time for Him to drink His bitter cup was not yet come and this was His answer in verse 6. He knew the moment the proper time had come (cf. Jn. 17:1). Jesus' answer also has some definite inferences as to the attitudes of His half-brothers. Their godly wit-

ness was weak. They were "friends of the world" for the world did not hate them (cf. Jas. 4:4).

The world hated Jesus for testifying of its evil works just as it hated and killed the prophets of the Old Testament, John the Baptist and the Apostles of the New Testament, and all the righteous saints of God in all subsequent ages (cf. Jn. 15:18-24, 3:19, 18:37).

Then Jesus dismisses His caviling brothers to go up to the feast. He will not yet go up to Jerusalem. The K.J.V. supplies "yet" which seems to be the best reading. The statement "I go not *yet* up to the feast" agrees with the context and is further substantiated by the Bodmer Papyrus (P66) which places the Greek word *bupo* in place of *ouk* in verse 8. Because of the apparent contradiction between Jesus' statement, "I go not up to the feast," (A.S.V.) and His subsequent action of actually going up to the feast, one German liberal is quoted as saying "Jesus Christ did of set purpose utter a falsehood." But now the ancient manuscripts verify what the context demands.

Therefore, having vindicated His actions to His doubting brethren, He remains behind in Galilee until the proper time affords itself and then He takes His disciples and goes to the feast.

Quiz

1. How much time transpires between chapters 6 and 7 of John's Gospel?
2. Why did Jesus not go to the Passover which was "nigh" in John 6?
3. Was it necessary for Jesus to go to every Feast? Why?
4. Describe as nearly as you can the festivities and rites of the Feast of Tabernacles.
5. How could the Lord's brethren admit that He worked miracles and still disbelieve in Him?
6. What is inferred about His brothers in that the world did not hate them?
7. How may we reconcile Jesus' statement "I go not up to the feast" and His subsequent appearance at the feast?

VARIING IDEAS OF THE MULTITUDES

Text 7:10-13

10 But when his brethren were gone up unto the feast, then went he also up, not publicly, but as it were in secret.

11 The Jews therefore sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he

12 And there was much murmuring among the multitudes con-

cerning him: some said, He is a good man; others said, Not so, but he leadeth the multitude astray.

13 Yet no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.

Queries

- a. Why did Jesus go up to the feast in secret?
- b. What is the significance of the varying opinions concerning Him?

Paraphrase

But after His brothers had gone up to the feast in Jerusalem, then Jesus went up to Jerusalem and the feast also, but Jesus traveled in secret and not openly with the crowds going to the city. Consequently, the Jewish rulers kept searching for him at the feast, asking, Where is that fellow? There was much whispering and guarded murmuring among the multitudes of people concerning Him: some whispered, He is a good man, while others said, No, He is not good for He deceives and misleads the people. But none of the people dared speak with boldness their convictions concerning Him on account of their fear of the Jewish rulers.

Comment

It should be plain from John 5:18 and 7:25 the reason for Jesus' secrecy. The Jewish rulers were constantly dispatching officers to search Him out to arrest Him. Therefore, He waited until His brothers had departed and then, beckoning His twelve disciples to follow, He took a road through Samaria that would not be traveled by Jews on their way to the feast. Luke 9:51 ff. informs us that Jesus went through Samaria on His way to Jerusalem at this particular time. It also shows the hostility of the Samaritans toward the Jewish worshippers. Jesus and His disciples could travel here without being discovered by the Jewish rulers. He probably did not let anyone know of His departure from Galilee or His arrival in Jerusalem. The word *secret* is *krupto* in the Greek and our English word *crypt* is derived from it—hence *cryptograph* means "secret writing."

We will soon find Jesus teaching publicly and boldly in the Temple at the feast. Why does He not remain incognito? It is relatively safe for Him to reveal His identity as He is surrounded by the great throngs of well-wishers, for some believe Him to be a prophet. The rulers of the Jews are themselves afraid of being stoned should they harm Jesus in public.

The sullen contempt of the rulers is brought out vividly in the Greek as it reads literally, "Where is that one?" They will not so much as do Him the honor of mentioning His name. The imperfect

tense of *asking* indicates that these rulers were continually questioning the multitudes as to His whereabouts. They seemed to have been expecting Him.

The hundreds of thousands of worshippers were also on the tip-toes of expectancy concerning the man of Galilee. They were probably gathering in small groups whispering their opinions and discussing Him and His teachings and works.

Some were whispering that they thought Him to be a good man. He had healed lepers, made the lame to walk and had even raised the dead in Nain; He had just miraculously fed multitudes in Galilee. Others, however, murmured that He was a false prophet and was leading the people astray. They could remember Theudas and Judas of Galilee (Acts 5:36-37) and other false Christs who deceived the people and brought Roman retaliation and punishment upon the whole Jewish nation.

Whatever their attitude, not one of the multitude was willing to declare openly and boldly just what he thought of Jesus. It is plain from the text that their secrecy was due to fear. Everyone preferred to remain in the good graces of the hierarchy. To say the wrong thing would mean excommunication from the synagogue which would in turn ostracize one from all other social contacts. Barnes has a comment worthy of repetition here: "There are always many such friends of Jesus in the world who are desirous of saying something good about Him, but who, from fear or shame, refuse to make a full acknowledgment of Him. Many will praise His morals, His precepts, and His holy life, while they are ashamed to speak of His divinity or His atonement, and still more to acknowledge that they are dependent upon Him for salvation."

Quiz

1. What route did Jesus take on His way up to the feast?
2. Why would He be relatively safe from discovery on this route?
3. How could Jesus drop His secrecy and teach publicly in the midst of the feast?
4. Why would some of the multitude say that Jesus was leading people astray?
5. What kept the people from speaking openly and boldly of Jesus?

THE OLD SABBATH CONTROVERSY RENEWED

Text 7:14-24

14 But when it was now the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.

15 The Jews therefore marveled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?

16 Jesus therefore answered them, and said, My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me.

17 If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself.

18 He that speaketh from himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh the glory of him that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

19 Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you doeth the law? Why seek ye to kill me?

20 The multitude answered, Thou hast a demon: who seeketh to kill thee?

21 Jesus answered and said unto them, I did one work, and ye all marvel because thereof.

22 Moses hath given you circumcision (not that it is of Moses, but of the fathers); and on the sabbath ye circumcise a man.

23 If a man receiveth circumcision on the sabbath, that the law of Moses may not be broken; are ye wroth with me, because I made a man every whit whole on the sabbath?

24 Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

Queries

- a. What is the test Jesus proposes for His teaching in verse 17?
- b. How does Jesus interpret the law of Moses here?
- c. What is "righteous judgment"?

Paraphrase

But when the feast was already half over, Jesus went up to the temple and began to teach. The Jewish rulers were filled with incredulity, saying, How can this man know anything about literature or the Scriptures, never having been a scholar in our schools? Jesus answered the rulers and said, My teaching is not the philosophy of mere mortal men, but comes from Jehovah God who sent Me. If any man is willing to surrender his will to God's will and do the will of the Father, he will be able to discern whether I teach the doctrines of God or whether I speak philosophies of men. Anyone who teaches on his own authority is seeking honor for himself. The teacher who seeks only to honor and glorify the one who sent him, this one is trustworthy, and there is nothing false in him. Moses gave you the law, did he not? Yet none of you are keeping the law for you are

seeking to kill me—and why do you seek to kill me? The multitude cried in astonishment, You are demon possessed. Who is trying to kill you? Jesus answered, One deed I did, and you are all taken aback and want to kill me. And for this reason I now say to you, Moses gave you the rite of circumcision (not that it originated with Moses but with the fathers) and on the sabbath you perform the work of circumcising a man. Why then, if you go to work and circumcise a man on the sabbath to avoid breaking the law of Moses, are you seeking to kill me for healing a man's body on the sabbath? Do not judge by superficial appearances, but judge justly, fairly and according to reality.

Comment

In verse 14 we are told that Jesus did not appear at the feast until it was about half over. Evidently He spent two or three days in Samaria (Lk. 9:51ff). The priests and rulers would be occupied with services in the temple and the crowd would be concerned with the observances of the many rites midway in the feast. This diversion afforded Jesus a certain degree of safety, momentarily, from the anger of the rulers who were seeking to kill Him (cf. Jn. 5:18). A part of the great multitude was sympathetic to Jesus (7:12) and so He was able to go on with His teaching. Jesus went boldly into the very courts of the temple and began to teach. As He began to "speak as never man so spake," the crowd around Him grew larger. Soon many of the rulers would join the listeners. The incredulity of the rulers (7:15) is to be found in their amazement at the liberties this Galilean is taking. The audacity of someone like this Nazarene teaching publicly, a prerogative reserved only for those Rabbis with "accredited degrees," is causing them no small amount of amazement.

According to their records the Nazarene had never attended any of their official theological schools. They derisively scorned, "How can this fellow know theology, having never attended our accredited schools?" To "know letters" was to be trained by Rabbinical schools in the science of interpreting the law and the prophets. In other words, Jesus was not expounding the accepted and orthodox interpretations of the Rabbinical schools.

Jesus answers the amazement of the Jewish Rabbis. His wisdom is divine—it comes from God the Father. Jesus, Himself a member of

the Godhead, knew the Scriptures because the Scriptures were His words given centuries ago by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to Moses and the prophets. What Jesus was teaching, therefore, was not the theological interpretations and opinions of a man *about* the Scriptures, but His words were in fact the words of God. This is another of Jesus' many claims to equality with God.

Verse 17 is one of the many plain, yet profound, utterances of the Saviour. Being a follower of God is more than mere knowledge of what the Scriptures say. There must be that surrender of one's stubborn will to the point where we *desire* to do God's will. It is a *disposition* to do God's will. The man who "willeth to do His will" is the man of a "good and honest heart" (Lk. 8:15).

The New Testament teaches that, fundamentally, doing God's will is a result of knowing Christ. In other words, as Hendriksen says, "The fundamental relationship . . . is therefore, (a.) knowledge, (b.) love, (c.) obedience, (cf. Jn. 14:15, 17:26)." (The N.T. Commentary, Gospel of John, Vol. II, p. 11, pub. Baker Book House.) Yet each of these three principles complement one another so that there is always an interaction between them. Knowledge of Jesus leads to love and obedience, while on the other hand, obedience leads to a full-grown knowledge and love (cf. Eph. 4:11-16). We never quite grasp the full significance and import of some of the more profound passages of Scripture until we have obeyed them or experienced them.

A lifetime of studying the Bible is of no avail if a man's will and desire is out of harmony with God's will. Paul said the same thing in I Corinthians 2:6 through 3:9. The rebellious, carnal-minded man cannot discern the things of the Spirit, because the worldly-minded man has no desire to *do* God's will. These Jewish rulers, to whom Jesus spoke, had studied the Old Testament from their youth up—hour upon hour, year after year—but they did not comprehend that Jesus spoke God's word for they had no desire to *do* God's word.

It is the man who humbles himself and has, as it were, the mind of a child (receptive, willing, pure) that understands the wisdom of an Omniscient God—while the prideful, rebellious man who is puffed up with his worldly knowledge can never understand God (cf. Matt. 11:25-30; also Isa. 1:18-20).

As one writer has expressed it, verse 17 is the "proper disposition" for man and verse 18 is the follow-up of that, or the "proper ideal."

If Jesus was only expressing His own views He would be sure to "toot His own horn" like other self-appointed wisemen and prophets. But to the contrary, Jesus always sought to give the glory unto His Father, the One Who sent Him (cf. Jn. 5:41-44). These Jewish rulers, who were supposed to "sit in Moses' seat" and teach the Word of God so that God might be glorified, rather taught and practiced religion in such a manner that they might be glorified. It was, in fact, their envy of the honor the people paid to Jesus that drove them to crucify Him (Matt. 27:18; Jn. 11:47-50, 12:17-19).

Verses 19-23 are still part of Jesus' efforts to get these Jews to receive His word as that which comes from God. They are judging His teaching superficially. Their judgment is prejudiced and Jesus continues by showing just how unrighteous their judgment is. They were supposed to be upholders of the Law of Moses. They pretended great reverence for the Law. Yet, in their hearts they were plotting to kill Jesus. Murder violates every moral principle given by God. He penetrated the outward sham of their righteousness and looked upon their heart (cf. Matt. 5:21-23).

The multitudes, of course, could see no outward signs of such drastic action. There were no soldiers, no one carrying weapons, no angry mobs as yet. This man from Galilee was beside himself, they reasoned.

But Jesus shows the inconsistency of their judgment. He had made a man whole on the Sabbath over a year ago (cf. Jn. 5:1-18) and for this they sought to kill Him. Now in view of the fact that the rulers had determined to kill Him for healing on the Sabbath, for this reason, He is going to show how they themselves set aside Sabbath regulations for much lesser expediencies.

The Pharisees were fond of making Sabbath rules (*not* legislated by Mosaic law) for the people to be burdened with, while they themselves used all sorts of devious means to get around their own traditions. Sabbath regulations were not for the rulers. They enforced a tradition that no one was to travel over seven-eighths of a mile on the Sabbath. But the rulers could not afford to be bound by this tradition. They built little palm-leaf booths all over the countryside and on the roads between the villages every seven-eighths of a mile apart. If business or some other reason demanded it, they could travel from city to city just by going seven-eighths of a mile, abiding in the booth for a while, and then traveling seven-eighths of a mile farther toward their destination.

So Jesus, the accused, now puts them on the defensive and shows them their unjust judgment by illustrating their regulations regarding circumcision (ceremonial rite).

According to the Law of Moses, every male child had to be circumcised on the eighth day after his birth. Even if that eighth day fell on the Sabbath, the priests performed the rite of circumcision.

The argument of Jesus is, if they permit this *work* of circumcision to be done on the Sabbath that the Law of Moses be not broken—how can they be so unrighteous and prejudiced as to prohibit the healing of a man's body and soul on the Sabbath? God did not create man merely to keep Sabbath regulations, but the Sabbath was given for man's benefit. There are principles and actions which are higher and must supercede Sabbath regulations. God works on the Sabbath; He sends rain, sunshine, life and many other necessary things on the seventh day. So it was proper that the Son of God heal and teach on the Sabbath.

In verse 24 Christ makes the application. "Judge righteously—judge according to truth." Consider the real substance of the situation (cf. I Sam. 16:7). How different the atmosphere of many churches today if Christian people were not so quick to condemn others in those things which they themselves do. "Consistency, thou art indeed a gem!"

Incidentally, verse 24 is a positive command by Jesus that men judge! So often we are told that we *must not judge*, yet here our Lord requires it of us. There is, however, no contradiction between Matthew 7:1, "Judge not, that ye be not judged," and verse 24 here. In Matthew 7:1 Jesus condemns censorious judgment—unfair, hypocritical judgment motivated by an evil desire to hurt another's character. But in John 7:24 He commands that men use wisdom, discretion and honesty in their judgments of both men and doctrines. Followers of Christ, *must* judge religious doctrines and religious teachers (cf. Matt. 7:15-20; Jn. 10:4-5; Rom. 16:17-18; Thess. 3:14; I John 4:1-3; II John 7-11).

Quiz

1. Why were the rulers amazed at Jesus' teaching?
2. Why is it necessary to have a desire to do God's will in order to understand the truth of His word?
3. What is the natural tendency of the teacher who seeks to glorify himself?
4. What attitude of heart by the Jewish rulers violated the Law of Moses?

5. How did the Jews, out of necessity, violate the Sabbath regulations?
6. Explain the principle laid down by Jesus in verse 24 concerning righteous judgment.
7. Have we a right to judge religious teachers?

MIXED EMOTIONS CONCERNING JESUS

Text 7:25-36

25 Some therefore of them of Jerusalem said, Is not this he whom they seek to kill?

26 And lo, he speaketh openly, and they say nothing unto him. Can it be that the rulers indeed know that this is the Christ?

27 Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when the Christ cometh, no one knoweth whence he is.

28 Jesus therefore cried in the temple, teaching and saying, Ye both know me, and know whence I am; and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not.

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

30 They sought therefore to take him; and no man laid his hand on him, because his hour was not yet come.

31 But of the multitude many believed on him; and they said, When the Christ shall come, will he do more signs than those which this man hath done?

32 The Pharisees heard the multitude murmuring these things concerning him; and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to take him.

33 Jesus therefore said, Yet a little while am I with you, and I go unto him that sent me.

34 Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, ye cannot come.

35 The Jews therefore said among themselves, Whither will this man go that we shall not find him? Will he go unto the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks?

36 What is this word that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, ye cannot come?

Queries

- a. What did the people of Jerusalem mean when they said, "when the Christ cometh, no one knoweth whence he is."
- b. Did Jesus mean that they actually knew Him as the Messiah? (v. 28)
- c. When would they seek Him and not find Him?

Paraphrase

Some of the Jerusalemites, recognizing the profound wisdom of Jesus' words, said, Is not this the man whom the rulers seek to kill, yet behold, he speaks openly and boldly in the temple and they say not one word to Him. Some said, Can it be possible that our rulers have come to recognize this man as the Christ? Others replied, No, we know where this man comes from—when the Christ comes, no one will know where He comes from. Exasperated at their unbelief, Jesus cried aloud, as He taught in the temple and said, So you think you know me? and where I am from? To the contrary I have not come to you as a mere mortal—on my own authority. He who sent me is the One True God, and Him you do not know. I know Him because I came from His very presence and He sends me with His commission. The rulers, hearing Jesus' words, were eagerly seeking to arrest Him. However, in the Divine providence of God, His hour had not yet come, and no one laid a hand upon Him. Great numbers of the feast crowds were following Him and saying among themselves, When the Christ comes He will not do more signs than this man has done, will He? The Pharisees heard the crowd mumbling these things concerning Him and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple police in order that they might arrest Him. Then Jesus said, I am going to be with you only a little time more and then I go away unto Him that sent Me. You will look for Me but you will not find Me, and where I am you are not able to come. At this the Jews said among themselves, Where is this fellow about to go that we shall not be able to find him? Will He go to the Jews that are scattered in the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? What does he mean when he says, You shall seek and shall not find me, and where I am you are not able to come?

Summary

There are many opinions concerning Jesus at the Feast. Some say He cannot possibly be the Christ—others say He must be—the rulers are determined to kill Him. Jesus claims unequivocally to be sent from the very presence of God and soon to return to the Father. Jesus then warns the Jews of a time when they will diligently seek Him but they will not be able to find Him.

Comment

In verse 25 John uses the word *Hierosolumton* (Greek for Jerusalemites) to make a distinction between the definitely hostile rulers of the Jews (7:15), the crowds of pilgrims from Galilee, Perea and

Judea (7:20), and these city dwellers or Jerusalemites. Why their opinion of Jesus was important enough for John to include it in an extremely abridged account of the Life of Christ we do not know. But notice that they seem to be well informed as to the premeditated intentions of the rulers, while the pilgrims who have come from afar are shocked at the suggestion of Jesus' impending execution (cf. John 7:19).

The Jerusalemites were shocked at the boldness with which Jesus openly denounced the rulers. Neither could they understand the hesitancy of the Jews to have Jesus silenced or arrested. Their amazed reaction is an impulsive, "Can it be that the rulers' have been persuaded that this man is the Christ?" To say, as some commentators, that the question is asked in derision does not suit the context. These city dwellers knew very well the attitude of the rulers in the past (cf. John 5:18). But now the Nazarene was even more bold and there was no official action being taken. They could only conclude that the rulers had recognized Jesus as the Messiah.

Yet, with a moment's deliberation, they knew this man could not be the Messiah. The rulers may have made a mistake but not these people—they knew where Jesus was from! Some of them knew that He was from Nazareth and some, perhaps, knew His family.

There seems to have been a popular theory that the Messiah, when He came, would appear suddenly and no one would know where He came from. The origin of this theory is obscured by vagueness, but there are some passages in the Jewish apocryphal books and Rabbinical writings such as this extract: "A roe appears and then is hid; so the Redeemer shall first appear and then be concealed, and then again be concealed and then again appear. So the Redeemer shall first appear and then be hid, and then, at the end of forty-five days, shall reappear, and cause manna to descend. (Barnes, Notes on the New Testament, Luke and John, Baker Book House, 1956, page 258.) There are also passages in the canonical books such as Isaiah 53:2, 8; Daniel 7:13; Malachi 3:1, from which the people may have started this theory. On the other hand, it appears that many of the Jews knew the Messiah was to be born at Bethlehem (cf. Matthew 2:5 and Jn. 7:42). Jesus may have been correcting their theory in Matthew 24:23, when He said, "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not." And again in Matthew 24:26, "If they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert, go not forth; behold, he is in the secret chambers, believe it not." When the "great tribulation" was to come upon Jerusalem in 70 A.D., the people in

that city would certainly look in every direction for a sudden appearance of the Messiah.

The origin of their false theories about the Messiah is of minor importance here. Of major importance is the self-willed rejection of Jesus by these Jerusalemites and His ironic condemnation of their ignorance of the One True God.

Their unbelief vexed the Lord's heart. He was exasperated, yet heartbroken; ironic in tongue, yet concerned for their souls. He cried out, "So you think you know me? and you know where I am from?" We believe Jesus was using irony and was not making a statement of fact. We further feel the words of Jesus are better punctuated interrogatively. Our most ancient manuscripts indicate that there were no punctuation marks at all in the original New Testament. But time after time Jesus said emphatically the people did *not* know Him (cf. John 3:11; 5:18, 37, 38; 6:42, 60-62; 8:19, 42, 43; 8:55-69; 14:9). Jesus was not averse to using irony (cf. Luke 13:31-32; Mark 7:9).

They knew His mother and brothers and sisters—they knew His boyhood home—but they did not know *Him*. They were like so many of our modernists today. They accepted Jesus as a wise teacher, but they knew too much to accept Him as the Divine Son of God.

Then Jesus declares that He comes not on His own authority (see our comments on John 5:32-32, Vol. I, pages 192-193). Jesus comes forth from the presence of the One True God. It is no wonder they reject Him as the Divine Messiah—they do not know the One True God. Jesus had said essentially the same thing six months before at the Passover in this same city (cf. John 5:37-44), and He repeats it again and again (cf. John 8:19, 55). They did not know God for the same reason the Gentiles of Romans 1:25, 28 did not know God—they *did not want to know God*. And for this reason, thousands of every generation do not know God—they refuse to have Him in their lives because His Word condemns their carnal minds and deeds.

In verse 29, Jesus claims to have come from the presence of the Father with a Divine commission. The Greek word *apostelein*, from which we get *apostle*, means "sent with a commission, or by the authority of another." This is the word Jesus uses for *sent* in verse 29. Jesus is called "the Apostle . . . of our confession" in Hebrews 3:1.

The rulers of Jerusalem had sought to kill Jesus even before the close of His first year of ministry. At the second Passover of His public ministry they sought "the more" to kill Him (cf. John 5:18). Now they were trying again to take Him into custody (v. 30). But,

strangely enough, no one laid a hand on Him. The excuses His antagonists had for not taking action against Him at this time are not made known. Perhaps they were afraid of the multitudes of pilgrims who were in favor of His teaching (v. 31). One thing is certain, the proper time for His suffering within the Divine scheme had not yet arrived and the Providence of an omnipotent God overruled the designs of evil men.

In contrast to the rejection of Jesus as the Messiah by the Jerusalemites and the rulers, many of the pilgrims there for the Feast of Tabernacles were clamoring after His teaching. We agree with Hendriksen that the words in verse 31 "many believed on him" do not "necessarily indicate true, living faith." There were many in Galilee who believed in Him until the time of testing at the Sermon on the Bread of Life. Then multitudes forsook Him.

Their materialistic attitude is revealed in the remainder of verse 31. They were enamored of His wonderful miracles and signs. But six months later, in this same city, they, too, will forsake Him when they realize He is not to be a materialistic Messiah. The construction of the Greek in verse 31 shows the people to have asked the question expecting a negative answer. In other words, the pilgrims are asking each other and expecting confirmation of each other that the wonders and signs of this man can only mean He is the Messiah they are looking for.

The Pharisees, hearing the teeming multitudes mumbling among themselves that the Nazarene is the long looked for Messiah, must take drastic steps for a serious situation. The Pharisees and chief priests were bitter enemies, yet they united in this Satanic pact to destroy a common foe, Jesus the Nazarene.

In verses 33 and 34, Jesus speaks a solemn and fearful warning. Yet, He speaks it in a voice full of tenderness. They have decided secretly to kill Him, but He knows it and tries to tell them that He is aware of it. He warns them further that the time will come when they shall seek Him, but be unable to find Him. This does not mean that there would come a time when it would be impossible for these Jews to find Jesus unto salvation and forgiveness. We know, in fact, that many thousands did seek Him and find Him for salvation (cf. Acts 2, 3, 4 and 5). We believe Jesus refers to a time of great sorrow or tribulation when they would search desperately for the Messiah to lead, deliver and comfort them. Just such a time occurred in 70 A.D. at the destruction of Jerusalem (cf. Matthew 24; Josephus' "Wars of

the Jews, Books V and VI). Jesus here warns that He will be unavailable for such leadership and deliverance. He will soon ascend unto His Father in Heaven (cf. John 13:33, 36-38).

The Jews glibly cast aside any seriousness to His warnings. They joke about His prophetic warnings. "Where will He go," they say, "to our people who are scattered throughout the world (the Dispersion)?" In sarcasm and ridicule they ask if He will go among the Gentiles and teach them. Little do they know how the gospel of Christ will be rejected by their countrymen and then taken by the apostles to the Gentiles (cf. Acts 13:46-52; 28:25-28).

The Jews are perplexed (v. 36). Their carnal minds are not able to comprehend that He was sent forth from the presence of Jehovah and will soon return to heaven. But amazingly, Jesus does not answer their question. He has more relevant teaching He wishes to give the multitudes. What He says in verses 37-39 will be more pertinent at this time than a discussion of eschatology, and so the Lord merely ignores their sarcastic question.

Quiz

1. Where would the people get the idea that the appearance of the Messiah would be sudden and secret?
2. How do you think verse 28 should be punctuated?
3. What does the word *apostle* mean?
4. Why was Jesus not arrested at this time?
5. Do you think the belief of the multitudes was sincere or superficial?
6. When would the Jews seek the Messiah and be unable to find Him?

DISCOURSE ON THE LIVING WATER

Text 7:37-52

37 Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.

38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water.

39 But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive: for the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified.

40 Some of the multitude therefore, when they heard these words, said, This is of a truth the prophet.

41 Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, What, doth the Christ come out of Galilee?

42 Hath not the scripture said that the Christ cometh of the seed of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?

43 So there arose a division in the multitude because of him.

44 And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him.

45 The officers therefore came to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why did ye not bring him?

46 The officers answered, Never man so spake.

47 The Pharisees therefore answered them, Are ye also led astray?

48 Hath any of the rulers believed on him, or of the Pharisees?

49 But this multitude that knoweth not the law are accursed.

50 Nicodemus saith unto them (he that came to him before, being one of them),

51 Doth our law judge a man, except it first hear from himself and know what he doeth?

52 They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and see that out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.

Queries

- a. How will the "rivers of living water" flow from the believer?
- b. Was the Spirit not given in some measure prior to Jesus' glorification?
- c. What criteria did the Pharisees use to judge the validity of Jesus' teachings?

Paraphrase

On the last day of the great feast, Jesus stood and cried aloud, If any man thirsts after righteousness and everlasting life let him come unto Me and drink. For the man believing in Me, as the scripture has said, Out from his innermost being shall flow an abundant river of this life-giving water (He said this concerning the gift of the Holy Spirit which they that believed in Him were about to receive. For the gift of the Holy Spirit had not yet been given because Jesus was not yet glorified). Some of the multitude, having heard these words of Jesus, were saying, This is truly the Prophet. Others were saying, This is the Christ. Still others said, The Christ does not come out of Galilee, now does He? Have not the scriptures said that the Christ, when He comes, will come from the ancestry of David and from the village of Bethlehem where David was born? There arose a division therefore in the multitude on account of Jesus and His teaching. Some of them desired to arrest Him but no one forcibly laid their hands upon Him. The temple police even returned to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, Why have you not brought him? The officers answered, Never has a mere mortal spoken as this man is speaking! The Pharisees replied, He has not seduced you also, has he? Have any of the authorities or Pharisees approved his teaching? As

for this crowd of ignoramuses that do not know the law, they are accursed! Then Nicodemus, the one who came to Jesus before, being one of the Pharisees, said to them, Does our law permit a man to be condemned and sentenced without first giving him a hearing and hear his defense in order to determine the facts? The Pharisees replied, You are not also from Galilee are you, Nicodemus? Search where you will in the scriptures and you will see that the Prophet does not come from Galilee.

Summary

The Lord's discourse on the living water touches the chords of hope in some who are ready to accept Him as the Messiah. Others, judging Him hastily and in ignorance of the facts, reject Him as the Christ. The Pharisees condemn everyone as ignoramuses who do not believe what they believe and reject what they reject.

Comment

We have substituted the phrase, "on the last day of the great feast," in our paraphrase in lieu of the traditional ". . . on the last day, the great day of the feast." Josephus (*Antiquities* 3:10:4) states that this feast is "the holiest and greatest feast." We believe that the Greek word *me gas* (great) more appropriately applies to the whole feast rather than to any particular day. This was precisely the way the Bodmer II papyrus (P66) read originally—"on the last day of the great feast." The manuscript was evidently changed in later years from its original reading to the traditional reading.

The most joyous of all festive seasons in Israel was that of the Feast of Tabernacles. It fell on a time of year when the hearts of the people would naturally be full of thankfulness, gladness and expectancy. Edersheim says of the three great annual feasts: "the first [Passover] . . . spoke, in the presentation of the first sheaf, of the founding of the church; the second [Pentecost] of its harvesting, when the church in its present state should be presented as two leavened wave-loaves; while the third [Tabernacles] pointed forward to the full harvest in the end, when 'in this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things . . .'" (*The Temple, its Ministry and Services*, p. 269, pub. Eerdmans, by Alfred Edersheim.) The Rabbis, in many passages of the Mishnah, single this feast out from all the other feasts. This feast closed the sacred festive cycle for the year. It very appropriately followed the Day of Atonement by only five days. At the Day of Atonement the sin of Israel was removed

and her covenant relationship to God was restored. Thus a sanctified and cleansed nation could keep a holy feast of harvest joy unto the Lord. In Zechariah's prophecy of the new world it was this Feast of Tabernacles which was to be celebrated all over the world (Zechariah 14:16-19). Finally, more sacrifices were offered at this feast than either of the other two annual feasts.

Some of the background of the ceremonies during this feast will make Jesus' words in verses 37 and 38 much more significant. Each day of the feast the people came with palm branches and limbs of willows to the temple. They held these branches over the great altar of burnt offering until they formed a sort of roof and the people marched around the altar. While the people were thus marching, one of the priests went, according to the ceremony, to the pool of Siloam and filled a golden pitcher with about two pints of water. As he returned through the Water Gate, the people chanted Isaiah 12:3 . . . "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." The priest walked up the steps to the great altar and began to pour the water out into the altar and the people began to sing the Hallel (Psalms 113-118) to the accompaniment of the flute.

Perhaps this is the very moment Jesus cried out, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water. This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive." Jesus explained the deep significance of the ceremony and claimed to be Himself the One through Whom they would find fulfillment of its promises.

To the people this ceremony was both a prayer of thanksgiving and supplication for the rains which brought the harvest. It was also a memorial ceremony looking back to the water which sprang from the rock when their forefathers were in the wilderness. It was also understood as a prophetic-type ceremony in which they depicted the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. The Talmud says, "Why is the name of it called, The drawing out of water? Because of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, according to what is said: 'With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.'"

Jesus must have meant "the scriptures in general teach that from within the believer shall flow rivers of living water." No scholar yet has been able to determine that His words (verse 38) are an exact quotation from any specific Old Testament passage. These are some

of the Old Testament passages to be studied in connection with verses 37 and 38: Psalms 46:4-5; Isaiah 44:3, 55:1, 58:11; Ezekiel 47:1-12; Zechariah 14:8.

In John 4:14 Jesus promises the believer a never-failing source of life, strength and joy. The living water promised to the woman at the well was to be a "well of living water springing up unto eternal life." This is figurative language to describe the continual renewing work of the Holy Spirit so long as He is allowed to dwell within the believer (cf. Isa. 40:31; II Cor. 4:16; Eph. 4:23; Col. 3:10; Titus 3:5). But here in John 7:37-39 Jesus uses figurative language to show that the living water will also flow out from the "inward man" of the believer. The Christian will naturally become a source of life to others. Jesus is the Water of Life and believers become streams of life-giving water pouring forth to those thirsting for Life, the believers being ever supplied from the Source themselves. Jesus is the Light of the world and believers are also lights (Matthew 5:14). One only need review the book of Acts and especially the life of Paul to see examples of those who have drunk deeply of the Water of Life and become rivers of living water themselves.

The indwelling Spirit of Christ is meant in verse 39. The gift of the Holy Spirit which is promised to every Christian (Acts 2:38, 5:32); without which no man belongs to Christ or may have eternal life (Romans 8:1-17). This measure of the Holy Spirit was not given before the resurrection and ascension of Christ. The Holy Spirit was given to individuals in the Old Dispensation on an arbitrary basis by God (I Pet. 1:10-11; II Pet. 1:20-21). A few individuals out of God's chosen people were given the Spirit, e.g., Samson; Samuel, etc. Even those believers who repented and were baptized at John the Baptist's preaching were not given the indwelling Spirit. We have an instance of the rebaptism of certain of John's disciples (Acts 19:1-7) into the name of the Lord Jesus because John's baptism carried with it no promise of the Holy Spirit. Jesus distributed the powers of the Holy Spirit as He saw fit while He lived on earth (cf. Matthew 10:1). But while Christ dwelt among men in the flesh it was not possible for Him to send the Comforter to each believer. As Westcott says, "The necessary limitations of Christ's historical presence with the disciples excluded that realization of His abiding presence which followed on the Resurrection" (The Gospel According to St. John, by B. F. Westcott, p. 279, Eerdmans). Jesus says much the same Himself (cf. John 14:17, 16:4-5, 16:7). Jesus is spoken of as being glorified in a num-

ber of ways—through His works, through His disciples, in His death, in His resurrection, in His exaltation to the right hand of the Father (cf. John 11:4; 12:16, 23, 28; 13: 31; 14:13; 15:8; 17:4, 10; Acts 3:13).

When Jesus cried aloud in the temple courts it was probably right at the moment when the worshippers were at the highest pitch of interest in the ceremony. His words, being highly significant for the moment, had instantaneous effect. Many of the worshippers were ready to impulsively declare, "This is truly The Prophet, the one our father Moses promised in the Law" (cf. Deut. 18:15). Others were just as ready to declare Him "Christ!" But their emotional instability and their ignorance is betrayed. They do not even know that Jesus was actually born in Bethlehem—they hastily make their judgment of Him assuming that He originated in Galilee.

They were correct in two points! The Scriptures do say that the Christ is to be born in David's birthplace, Bethlehem (cf. I Sam. 16:1-4 Isa. 11:1; Jer. 23:5; Micah 5:2). And the Scriptures also say that Christ comes from the seed of David. Scholars are not agreed on the lineage of Mary. Some say Christ gets His Davidic lineage from Joseph. But this writer is persuaded that Mary was a descendant of David (cf. Sam. 7:12; Acts 2:30; Rom. 1:3; II Tim. 2:8; Rev. 5:5). Scripture tells us that Jesus was born, according to the flesh, of the seed of David, and Jesus' human nature was not derived from Joseph, for Jesus was born of the *virgin* Mary.

Some of the worshipping pilgrims appear to have been actually hostile. Perhaps they were angered by Jesus' interruption of the ceremonies—perhaps at His silence in denying to be the Christ (which was really a claim). How could a lowly Galilean be the Christ—he was guilty of blasphemy. Some wanted Him arrested. There were temple officers already there, sent by the chief priests and Pharisees to arrest Him. But they returned empty-handed. Their superiors demanded a reason for their failure. The officers' reply would seem rather ludicrous were it not for other instances where people were overawed by the words, countenance, or mere presence of Jesus (cf. Matt. 7:28-29; Luke 5:8; John 18:6). What restrained these hardened temple police—was it the eloquence of Jesus? His personality? Or the authority with which He spoke and carried Himself? Perhaps all three.

But the Pharisees were not the least impressed by such a report. These ignorant police and the ignorant masses might think the Galilean to be eloquent, persuasive and speaking with authority, but the Pharisees knew him to be a sinister character, seeking to lead the masses astray. The scribes and Pharisees spent practically their whole lives in minute study of the Scriptures and the traditions of the fathers. The more Scriptures one could quote, the more Rabbinical authorities and traditions one could quote, the wiser and holier one became. And so the multitudes who could not quote much Scripture or traditions were ignorant and sinful. Thus the ignorant masses were to follow unhesitatingly the decisions and opinions of the religious experts—the Pharisees. This is one reason Jesus told men who were following the Pharisees that they were "blind men following blind guides . . ." (cf. Matt. 15:14).

The Pharisees have just boasted that none of their number believes in this Galilean and now one of their own number, Nicodemus, speaks up in defense of Jesus. The Pharisees have just boasted that they were the great students and interpreters of the Law and now one of their own number points out that they are violating that Law.

We have discussed the personality of Nicodemus in Volume I, page 93. This incident shows that he was not a craven coward. He was speaking in defense of a hated enemy of his colleagues. They had sworn to kill the Galilean and were not at all reticent in expressing their hatred for Him and His followers. Nicodemus was reminding these arrogant, self-righteous men that they were violating their own Law.

And violating the Law they were indeed! The law required that justice be done, and impartially. Every man was to have the right to fair, and legal trial upon being accused. Every accusation had to be established at the mouth of two or more witnesses (cf. Ex. 23:1-2; Lev. 19:15-18; Deut. 1:16; 19:15-18).

Although Nicodemus was ready to speak out for a fair trial for Jesus, this passage (7:50-52) leaves one with the feeling that Nicodemus could have been more bold and direct and testified openly his persuasion that Jesus was a "teacher come from God" (John 3:2)—even that He might be The Prophet or the Messiah. Nicodemus quoted the relevant legal maxims and when his august colleagues taunted him with having a connection with the Galilean rabble, he said no more.

Many Christians today often find themselves in much the same situation. There comes the "moment of truth" in every Christian's

life—and more than once—when he must openly and boldly witness for Jesus or be reduced to an uncomfortable and ashamed silence. Let every follower of Jesus remember His warning, "Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 10:32-33).

A final note in the field of textual criticism. Both the King James Version and the American Standard Version texts read, in the last sentence of verse 52, "Search, and see that out of Galilee ariseth *no prophet.*" (Italics mine.) The Bodmer II (P66) manuscript places the definite article before "prophet" in verse 52 making it read thus: ". . . *the prophet* does not arise out of Galilee." This relieves the chief priests and Pharisees of making an egregious error, for there were prophets who came from Galilee, such as Jonah (II Kings 14:25; Jonah 1:1), and perhaps Hosea and Nahum. It is doubtful that the scribes and Pharisees would make such an error as the K. J. V. and the A. S. V. would have them commit by saying "*no prophet* ariseth out of Galilee." Furthermore, the P66 rendering would more aptly fit the contextual discussion which concerned "*the prophet*" and "the Christ."

Quiz

1. How important was the Feast of Tabernacles to the Jews?
2. What was the most significant part of the ceremonies connected with this feast?
3. Name four Old Testament passages which speak of "living water."
4. What is the "living water" within believers—and how does it flow out from within them?
5. What measure of the Holy Spirit was not given prior to Jesus' glorification?
6. Why could the Holy Spirit not be given before Jesus was glorified?
7. What law was the Pharisees violating in their accusations and actions against Jesus?

EXPOSITORY SERMON NO. SEVEN

SYMPTOMS OF UNBELIEF

John 7

Introduction

I. FEAST OF TABERNACLES

A. Describe the Feast: its meaning, its ceremonies, the rejoicing, the spectacle of it all (cf. comments Chap. 7, pgs. 15, 16, 17).

II. OMINOUS SHADOWS OF UNBELIEF CAST UPON THE FEAST

A. In spite of all the joy, ritual and splendor of the feast, its significance was ruined by the manifestations of unbelief. Ugly infidelity cast a pall over the whole joyous occasion and obscured the real lesson behind the feast. This festival was to remind the Jews of ancestral trust in God . . . it was to teach them of the Fatherly care of Jehovah in the wilderness journeys of their forefathers.

B. But when Jesus faced the people here with His claims it becomes evident that Judaism is rotten to the core with unbelief.

Discussion

I. UNBELIEF OF JESUS' BROTHERS, vs. 1-9

Notice that they admitted His supernatural character. They admitted that He performed miracles. But it says of them that "they did not believe on him." How can men admit the supernatural nature of Jesus and disbelieve in Him? Is such a contradiction possible? Remember the rulers of the Jews in Acts 4:15-16 who admitted the miracles of the apostles and could not deny them, but they refused to accept the message of the apostles. His brothers would not accept Him as a spiritual King over their wills and hearts. **THERE IS THE CRUCIAL POINT.** One may get many people today to say they believe in Christ and God and the Bible—but they do not want God's Word to rule over their minds, hearts and actions. This attitude is very prevalent among people today. You may see such people any Lord's Day, washing their cars, raking leaves, going to the lake or some other mockery of God. You may see them at the football games sitting on hard seats in bitter cold, screaming their lungs out, while twenty-two boys run back and forth over a field with a piece of pigskin. But these people can't get up on Sunday morning and come to church and sing and

worship the Lord who willingly hung on Calvary's cross for their sins. Oh, God, have mercy upon their souls! His brothers betrayed their weakness. Jesus told them that the world did not hate them as it did Him. The Lord is plainly indicating that their godly witness was weak—they were friends of the world, but enemies of God (Jas. 4:4-5). They had the worldly outlook. They mockingly betrayed their skepticism by chiding Jesus for staying in Galilee when He could be in Jerusalem doing His miracles and getting a worldly following toward His mission as Messiah. Remember the thousands of Jews as they walked the wilderness and beheld all the miracles of God, but murmured to return to the leeks and garlic of Egypt.

II. MISTAKING ERUDITION FOR HOLINESS, vs. 15-16; 47-49

Jesus had never attended the Jerusalem schools of the Pharisees. Immediately they crossed Him off their list as an unlearned ignoramus from the hills of Galilee. At once they threw up a barricade of self-willed prejudice against anything Jesus had to say. In verses 47-49 the Pharisees show that they believe scholarliness and law-keeping is the way to piety. There are many self-named "scholars" today who show the same symptoms of unbelief by attacking the Bible and Jesus as unphilosophical, unscientific and irrational. They demythologize the Scriptures—they attack fundamentalist preachers and small preacher training schools (loyal Bible Colleges). These "scholars" claim the real wisdom is to be found in their universities where the Bible is studied, not as the only supernatural revelation from God, but as a *work of man-conceived literature contemporary with Buddhism, Mohammedanism and other Oriental religions*. Paul faced the same situation in Corinth. Christians there were elevating the wisdom of men above a growth in knowledge of God's word. The Corinthians were placing value on eloquence, reason and rhetoric rather than the "foolishness of the cross." Great numbers of preachers today are too scientific and too reasonable to try to change men's hearts and convert them through preaching the gospel of atonement by the blood of Jesus Christ. To such the Gospel is outmoded. Scholarship and the evolutionary attainment of man now demands the preaching of a "social gospel"—raising the standards of living, one world government, etc. On the other hand, there are orthodox believers who maintain that study leads to salvation. They know the Book from "kivver to kivver" and have read it all the way through so many times. The Pharisees studied—memorized the Scriptures frontward and backward. They

counted the words, letters and paragraphs and knew every jot and tittle. But although they knew the Scriptures as no other men have known them since, they could not recognize the Messiah when He came (cf. John 5:39-47).

III. UNWILLINGNESS TO DO GOD'S WILL, v. 17

When the Jews rejected Jesus because they supposed Him to be unlearned and uneducated, He posed a statement that contains all the wisdom and supernatural insight of One who is able to read their very deepest meditations: "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself" (v. 17). They were unwilling to do God's will—they had not the love of God in them (cf. John 5:42). Knowledge, as such, never produces love. No matter how much we know *about* Christ, our knowledge alone will never produce obedience. A certain amount of understanding and knowing God comes *only* from obedience or the desire to obey His will (cf. I John 2:3-5). See also John 8:47. This same stubborn unwillingness to do God's will led the Pharisees to reject the counsel of God, refusing to be baptized of John the Baptist (Luke 7:29-30). If we are not willing to do God's will, we shall desire to do Satan's will! There is no middle ground, no neutrality (cf. John 8:44). There must be that surrender—that giving up—of one's will to where one desires to do God's will. The man who wills to do God's will is the man Luke calls the "man of an honest and good heart." The fundamental equation is, then, (1) knowledge, (2) love, (3) obedience. Yet each of these three principles complement one another and interact. Knowledge of Jesus leads to love and obedience, while on the other hand, obedience leads to a full-grown knowledge of Christ and a more perfect love of Him (cf. Eph. 4:11-16). We never quite grasp the full significance and import of some of the more profound passages of Scripture until we have obeyed them or experienced them (like Job and David). A lifetime of studying the Bible is to no avail if a man's will and desire is out of harmony with God's will. Paul said the same thing in I Corinthians 2:6—3:9. The rebellious, carnal-minded man cannot discern the things of the Spirit, because the worldly-minded man has no desire to *do* God's will. **AND THIS IS JUST THE REASON SO MANY PEOPLE IN OUR DAY SAY THEY CANNOT UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE. THEY HAVE NO DESIRE TO OBEY IT—NO DESIRE TO LIVE LIKE THE BIBLE DEMANDS THEY LIVE.** They cannot understand the New Testament concept of stewardship because they do not want to give

like the Bible demands. They cannot understand the Bible concept of worship and personal witnessing because they willeth not to do God's will!

IV. PREJUDICED AND SUPERFICIAL JUDGMENT, vs. 18-24

These Jews judged all teaching by how men heaped plaudits upon the teacher. They judged a man's teaching as to whether he sought honor and prestige and applause of others or not. Jesus did not seek His own glory, but the glory of the Father only. They also judged a man's teachings by the standards they themselves had set up. They had judged Jesus as a blasphemer and one possessed of demons because He had cured a man on the Sabbath and had broken their traditions. Jesus shows them just how superficial their judgment was. They circumcised babies on the Sabbath in order that the Law of Moses be not broken (in spite of their traditions). Now if they permitted this work of circumcision to be done, how could they be so shallow and unrighteous and unmerciful as to prohibit the healing of a man's body and bringing him to faith on the Sabbath? You see, making laws where God never made them is also evidence of unbelief! Judging others by man-made standards and by superficial, shallow prejudices is a symptom of unbelief.

Conclusion

- I. HAVE YOU ANY OF THESE SYMPTOMS OF UNBELIEF?
 - A. Believing His supernatural character but not allowing Him to rule your heart?
 - B. Mistaking knowledge or personal merit for holiness?
 - C. Unwillingness to *do* God's will?
 - D. Prejudiced and superficial judgment?
- II. IF YOU DO, YOU ARE HARBORING SOMETHING MORE DEADLY THAN CANCER!
 - A. Flee to the Great Physician . . . partake of the Balm of Christ.
 - B. By His stripes you may be healed . . . ONLY TRUST HIM.
- III. IF YOU HAVE NOT OBEYED THE GOSPEL OF SALVATION, WHY NOT NOW?
 - A. A father once had a boy who liked to have his own way. He said to him one day, "Son, you ought not to want your own way—you ought to want God's way." After thinking a while, the son said, "Father, if I choose the will of the Lord and go His way because I *want* to, don't I still have my own way?"

IF WE LEARN THAT SECRET, WE HAVE LEARNED THE WHOLE SECRET OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. LET HIM HAVE HIS WAY WITH THEE . . . NOW!