

As we are setting the stage for Jesus words about Him being the living water through the promise of His Spirit and the light of the world we are looking at the event of the Feast of Tabernacles and the conflict Jesus encounters before making these truths about Himself evident.

In the text this morning from John 7 we will see how Jesus approached His death. First, listen to His words in John 17:1-5 as He was anticipating the end of His life.

1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, 2 since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. 3 And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. 4 I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. 5 And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

He did not look at the end of His life so much as His demise, but rather, He was looking excitedly at His death as the final stepping stone to the glory of heaven.

We have been looking at Christ's attendance at the "Feast of Booths" in John 7. We are in the process of dividing Christ's attendance at the "Feast of Booths" or the "Feast of Tabernacles" into three different parts. Three weeks ago we considered the first part.

The first part of the "Feast of Booths" we called, "The beginning of the feast" (John 7:1-13). These verses highlighted for us the unbelief of Christ's brothers.

We are now considering the second part of the "Feast of booths" that we have entitled, "The middle of the feast (John 7:14-36). How have we divided this particular section of verses?

The middle part of the "Feast of Booths" answers three basic questions. What was the first question?

The first basic question that Christ answered while teaching in the temple was "Where did Jesus go to school?" This was answered in John 7:14-24. What was the

answer to that question?

The answer to that question was that Christ went to school in heaven. This week we will continue to study the events that took place in the middle of the "Feast of Booths," but this time we will go on to answer the two remaining questions contained in this particular section of Scripture. What are those two questions? Where did Jesus come from, and where is Jesus going.

Before we seek to answer these two questions, we need to do some review of the first question that we answered last week.

Hopefully you remember that the Jewish authorities had challenged the qualifications of Jesus as a teacher in John 7:15. Jesus response was to challenge their qualifications as listeners in John 7:17-19. And of course, as He did this, He exposed their murderous plot against Him.

This led the multitude in verse 20 to charge Jesus with having a demon. Why did they do this? Those making this charge had a very high view of their leaders, and they could not understand how Jesus could say what He said unless what they said about Him was true.

Were they right in this judgment? Of course not! Jesus did not have a demon! He was the Christ, the Son of the living God, and not only spoke the truth, but was the truth.

Jesus therefore in responding to their charge against Him explained how what sometimes on the surface might appear to be wrong, such as His healing a man on the Sabbath, can actually be right. Then He demonstrates the validity of what He said in John 7:21-23 by pointing to their own Sabbath day practice of circumcising Jewish boys. Jesus in doing this made a very persuasive argument that their earlier judgment based on outward appearance could be wrong.

He therefore makes a final appeal to them in John 7:24. "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment." Obviously, up to this point in their interaction with Jesus they had failed to do this. But if they were to respond to this

exhortation by Christ or least some of them were to do this, what would they need to do?

First of all, based on the teaching of John 7:17, they would need to make sure that they are wholeheartedly committed to doing the will of God. Secondly, as a tangible outworking of this commitment, they would need to commit themselves to search the Scriptures so that when they are called upon to make judgments, such as these people were being called on to make a judgment in John 7, those judgments might be righteous.

Was the multitude impacted by the argument that Jesus made in John 7:21-23 and then by His appeal in John 7:24? Based on the passage that we will be studying today the answer to that question would have to be, Yes! The impact certainly was not entirely positive, but there was an undeniable impact and that leads us to this morning's passage containing the two questions that we will answer.

"Therefore some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, 'Is this not the man whom they are seeking to kill? (26) And look, He is speaking publicly, and they are saying nothing to Him. The rulers do not really know that this is the Christ, do they? (27) However, we know where this man is from; but whenever the Christ may come, no one knows where He is from.' (28) Jesus therefore cried out in the temple, teaching and saying, 'You both know Me and know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. (29) I know Him; because I am from Him, and He sent Me.' (30) They were seeking therefore to seize Him; and no man laid his hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come. (31) But many of the multitude believed in Him; and they were saying, 'When the Christ shall come, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He?' (32) The Pharisees heard the multitude muttering these things about Him; and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to seize Him. (33) Jesus therefore said, 'For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me. (34) You shall seek Me, and shall not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come.' The Jews therefore said to one another, 'Where does this man intend to go that we shall not find Him? He is not intending to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks, is He? (36) What is this statement that He said, "You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come?" 7:25-36.

The first question, where did you go to school was answered. The second basic question in John 7:25-32 was "Where is Jesus from?"

Let us begin by looking, first of all, at the very first part of verse 25. "Therefore some of the people of Jerusalem were saying."

Notice the reference to the people of Jerusalem. In this chapter, a number of different people groups are referred to. There were the Jews, which refers to the Jewish religious leaders, the avowed enemies of Christ, who were seeking to kill Him. We see them mentioned multiple times in chapter 7. Then there was the multitude in verse 20 who appear not to be residents of Jerusalem but pilgrims coming into the city to celebrate the feast.

This group of people who charged Jesus with having a demon apparently had no knowledge of their leaders' plot against Christ based on John 7:20. In contrast to the people mentioned here in John 7:25. Who is this group?

The people of Jerusalem were apparently not pilgrims to the feast but were residents of the city who were aware of their leaders plot to kill Jesus (John 7:25). How do we know that this group knew about their leaders' plot to kill Jesus?

"Therefore [in light of Christ's argument against the charge that He had a demon and then His subsequent appeal to them to make righteous judgments] some of the people of Jerusalem [the residents of Jerusalem] were saying, 'Is this not the man whom they are seeking to kill?'"

Clearly, this particular group of people was knowledgeable of their leaders' plot to kill Jesus.

Now we come to an interesting question. Were they sympathetic with their plot or not sympathetic with their plot? The people of Jerusalem were totally sympathetic with their leaders' plot and were becoming frustrated by their leaders' lack of action in light of Christ's public teaching. How do we know this?

It says in John 7:25-26, but this time let us read down through the first part of verse 26.

"Therefore some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, 'Is this not the man whom they are seeking to kill? (26) And look, He is speaking publicly, and they are saying

Was this group of people sympathetic or not sympathetic? They were totally sympathetic with their leaders' plot to kill Jesus and they wanted their leaders to carry through on that plot. We know this, because if this were not true, then they would not have been so frustrated with their leaders' lack of action.

How frustrated were they? This group of people from Jerusalem was so totally frustrated with their leaders that they were losing confidence in their leaders' judgment (John 7:26).

Where do we see this? In John 7:26,

"And look, He is speaking publicly, and they are saying nothing to Him. The rulers do not really know that this is the Christ, do they?"

By asking the question, "The rulers do not really know that this is the Christ, do they," they actually entertained the possibility that their leaders might have embraced the absurd.

Why is this absurd?

John 7:27. "However, we know where this man is from; but whenever the Christ may come, no one knows where He is from."

These people considered the possibility of Jesus being the Messiah absurd; because they believed He would come suddenly and mysteriously, and this was not true of Jesus.

For these Jews the commonplace appearance of Jesus at the feast disqualifies Him completely. He was not a whole lot different than anyone else. They knew He came from the area Nazareth from a rather poor family and recently had been involved in a healing and teaching ministry in Galilee. For these particular Jews, who had so much knowledge of Christ's earthly origins and activities, it was totally unacceptable that He would be considered to be the Messiah. For them, this would have been impossible.

Obviously, this particular group of Jews was mistaken. Their judgment was not correct, and their judgment was not righteous. Though Christ did have a humble and also well-known human history, it did not contradict the fact that He had been sent

from heaven on a divine mission (John 7:28,29).

Jesus in these verses, first of all, tells them what they do know. Let us look at the first part of verse. What does He say? "Jesus therefore cried out in the temple, teaching and saying, 'You both know Me and know where I am from.'"

He acknowledges that they know a great deal about Him, but then He goes on to share with them what they do not know.

verse 28. "Jesus therefore cried out in the temple, teaching and saying, 'You both know Me and Know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know.'"

They knew a great deal about Jesus, but they did not know God.

But this was not true of Christ. He knew God. In fact, He tells them not only that He knew God but also that He had been sent from God. Let us read John 7:29. "I know Him; because I am from Him, and He sent Me." When Jesus said this, He is making it very clear to those listening to Him that He had a heavenly address before His earthly address. Where did Jesus come from? According to Jesus He came from heaven (John 7:28-29).

How did these certain residents of Jerusalem respond? John 7:30. "They were seeking therefore to seize Him; and no man laid his hand on Him, because His hour hora) had not yet come."

When Jesus told these particular residents of Jerusalem that He had, in effect, been sent by God from heaven, they were no better prepared to make righteous judgments than their leaders. They therefore went ballistic, and they were unwilling to wait any longer on their leaders. They acted and they attempted to seize Him. And of course, according to the passage, they failed.

Why did this attempt fail? "Because His hour had not yet come." The "hour" when He would be seized and crucified according to the Father's will had not yet arrived. Yet,

even while some were trying to seize Him, others put their faith in Him.

John 7:31. "But many of the multitude believed in Him; and they were saying, 'When the Christ shall come, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He?'" There is some good reasoning here but it is faith based on signs alone. They could not conceive that when the Christ came, he would do more miracles than Jesus did. Their question, "will he do more signs than those which this man has? Expects the answer, "No." How would the Jewish leaders respond to this?

John 7:32. "The Pharisees heard the multitude muttering these things about Him; and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to seize Him."

When the Pharisees saw that there was a growing movement in Jerusalem to believe in Jesus as the Messiah in spite of their objections and the objection of others, they finally acted (7:30-32).

They approached the chief priests, or in other words the Sadducees, their archenemies, fellow members of the Sanhedrin, which was the ruling body of the Jews; and determined together that officers (temple police) needed to be sent to arrest Jesus.

The sinister desire expressed in John 5:18 to kill Jesus has now formally taken shape.

Where did Jesus go to school? According to John 7:14-24, Jesus went to school in heaven. Where did Jesus come from? According to John 7:25-32, Jesus came from heaven. We are now going to answer the third question.

The third basic question in John 7:33-36 that Christ answered while teaching in the temple was "Where is Jesus going?"

verses 33-34. "Jesus therefore said, 'For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me. (34) You shall seek Me, and shall not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come.'" Jesus tells those who have been opposed to Him that in a little while He will no longer be with them, and they will not be able to find Him. This must have been

a very interesting response for those who were plotting to have Christ arrested by the temple police to hear. They must have thought Jesus is preparing to escape.

They are perplexed as to how He might think He could elude them. The Jews, or in other words the Jewish authorities, could not think of a place that Jesus could go that they could not find Him if they chose to do so. So they searched their minds to think of what place Jesus was thinking about going.

John 7:35. "The Jews therefore said to one another, 'Where does this man intend to go that we shall not find Him? He is not going to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks, is He?'"

The Jews, or in other words the religious authorities, thought that perhaps Jesus, when He talked about going away, meant that He was going away to the Dispersion. What exactly is the Dispersion?

The term "Dispersion" was a technical term for the large number of Jews who at this time were dispersed throughout the Roman Empire and beyond.

Did the Jewish authorities really think that Jesus intended to do this? Did they really think that Jesus was going to go to these distant lands to the dispersion among the Greeks, which even apparently included gentile proselytes to Judaism? No, but they could not think of any better explanation for the meaning of what He had said. We know this because of what they say in John 7:36, "What is this statement that He said, 'You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come?'"

The Jewish authorities are totally perplexed by what He said, but we're not! We know exactly what He means by what He said.

Where is Jesus going? According to Jesus, He is going to heaven (John 7:33-36). This is what He meant by His words.

The Pharisees' action in John 7:32 to join forces with the chief priests (Sadducees) was a major step in ultimately bringing about the death of Christ and the fulfillment of

His mission. Jesus would quite naturally begin to reflect on His fast approaching death.

How will He reflect on His death? Will He look upon death as His demise? No!

Christ's realization that the Jewish authorities were becoming united in their desire to kill Him caused Him not to reflect on His departure.

Christ did not look at His death as bringing His life to an end rather He looked at His approaching death as a stepping stone to the glory of heaven.

If we are in Christ can we do the same thing?

Can we see our inevitable and approaching death, known or unknown as our point of departure. Not for places unknown, but rather for the glory of heaven and our rendezvous with Christ.

Let me read for you the words of the hymn "Face to Face."

Face to face with Christ my Savior Face to face – what will it be When with rapture I behold Him Jesus Christ who died for me? Only faintly now I see Him With the darkened veil between But a blessed day is coming When His glory shall be seen What rejoicing in His presence When are banished, grief and pain When the crooked ways are straightened And the dark things shall be plain Face to face! O blissful moment! Face to face-to see and know Face to face with my Redeemer Jesus Christ who loves me so.