

John 7: 19-53

Strange as it might seem, Jesus had spent

His last six months in Galilee.

The fact of the matter was "--- **he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.**"

However, John 7:2 tells us "**the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand,**" and as we noted in last week's lesson, this feast required the attendance of every Jewish man.

Certainly the significance of that requirement had not been lost on the religious leaders.

No, they were just waiting for Jesus.

They were out for blood, and they were convinced that their actions were justified.

Yes, "--- **the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.**"

Certainly, these were serious charges, but the real motivator was an all-consuming hatred of Jesus.

They hated Him because He had dared to speak out against their evil works.

And although they wouldn't admit it, they hated Him because He threatened their corrupt power base.

Yes, He was the True Shepherd of Israel, and they were the false shepherds.

So, with God on their side, at least according to them, they had set out to destroy Him.

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Seemingly unaware of this dangerous situation, Jesus had walked right into their trap.

Yes, at **"about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught."**

They could hardly believe their good fortune.

However, right in the middle of His lesson, He looked them straight in the eye and said in V 19, --**"Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?"**

The common people were dumbfounded.

Oh yes, they had a pretty good idea what was going on, but **no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews."**

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Notice how Jesus prefaced His charge ---

"Did not Moses give you the law?"

No, this wasn't some foreign power plotting to assassinate Israel's Messiah; this was God's Chosen People, the very nation that had been given the law, and yet they hadn't kept the law.

In fact, their history was one long saga of disobedience and captivity.

And now, when their Messiah had finally appeared, their leaders were about to break the sixth commandment --- **"Thou shalt not kill."**

Yes, in the name of the law, they were fully prepared to break the law.

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Considering what they knew, or at least suspected, it's quite amazing that the people defended their leaders.

Yes, **"The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee?"**

Some people are like that, aren't they? Rather than admitting they're wrong, they resort to character assassination.

"Thou hast a devil" (or in other words, you're demon possessed) -- **"who goeth about to kill thee?"**

Well, Jesus wasn't being put off that easily.

The original charge had been Sabbath breaking, and that's where He would begin.

V 21-24 **"Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel (referring, I believe, to the healing of the impotent man). 22: Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision;**

(not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man.

23: If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day?

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

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"I have done one work, and ye all marvel."

After all, who wouldn't marvel when a man, who had been crippled for 38 years, had suddenly been healed?

It should have been very evident that anyone who could perform such a miracle must be from God.

However, they had stubbornly stuck to their charge of Sabbath breaking.

What an example of willing ignorance!

And not only willing ignorance, but a complete lack of love.

Had they even considered what it would be like to be crippled for 38 years?

Not one year, or even five years, but 38 years!

However, his suffering meant nothing to them.

There was no joy on their countenance when he came striding down the street.

No, their faces were hardened in judgment --

- **"It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed."**

Nevertheless, a smile crept over their faces when they heard the words ---**"He that**

**made me whole, the same said unto me,
Take up thy bed, and walk."**

The man had no idea who had healed him, but they knew.

Who else could perform such a miracle? And now they had Him!

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These were the kind of men that Jesus was facing.

He knew there was no use talking to them about sympathy, so He chose reason.

V 22 **"Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the Sabbath day circumcise a man."**

They were quite familiar with this situation.

The Law of Moses specifically stated that all males should be circumcised on the eighth day.

Therefore, if a baby was born on the Sabbath, he would have to be circumcised on the next Sabbath.

Do you see the problem?

That's right. The Sabbath was a day of complete rest.

No, they couldn't obey both laws. They must set a priority.

And everyone knew they had opted for the rite of circumcision over the keeping of the Sabbath.

And then, in V 23-24, Jesus asks the question --- **"If a man on the Sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man**

every whit whole on the Sabbath day?

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

Can't you see this miracle, which even you marvelled at, is a work of God?

And isn't a work of God as important as the rite of circumcision?

Of course Jesus didn't actually say those words, but that's what He was driving at.

By this time, even the common people realized how unreasonable this charge was.

And they noticed something else.

Their leaders, who had been so aggressive in their attempts to find Jesus, were hesitating.

V 25-26 **"Then said some of them of**

**Jerusalem, Is not this he, whom they
seek to kill?**

**26: But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and
they say nothing unto him. Do the
rulers know indeed that this is the
very Christ?"**

However, these people who were so close to
the truth, we're about to be derailed
by an ugly piece of misinformation.

How careful we must be of so-called
conventional wisdom.

Here's what they said ---- V 26-27 **"Do the
rulers know indeed that this is the
very Christ?**

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

"--- **when Christ** (or the Messiah) **cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.**" --- Where

did they get an idea like that?

Certainly not from the Scriptures.

Why, the prophet Micah had clearly told them that Christ would be born in Bethlehem.

Micah 5:2 **"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."**

And when we get to V 42, we will discover that this prophecy was common knowledge among the people.

And certainly their religious leaders were well aware of it.

When Herod had demanded of the chief priests and scribes **"where Christ should be born,"** they answered him without a moment's hesitation --- **"In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet."**

So, quite frankly, I really don't know where they got the idea that --- **"no man knoweth whence he is."**

It was simply an erroneous piece of misinformation, but it had done its devilish work.

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V 28-29 **"Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not.**

**29: But I know him: for I am from him,
and he hath sent me."**

The word "**cried**" seems to indicate that He raised His voice at that particular point in His lesson.

Maybe He was making sure that the religious leaders, who no doubt were standing in the background, could hear Him.

He wasn't challenging the fact that they knew His mother, and thought they knew His father.

No, He said, "**Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am;**" but that wasn't really the point.

The point was, He had a heavenly origin.

V 28 --- "**I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not.**
**29: But I know him: for I am from him,
and he hath sent me."**

It was much the same message as the one He had given the Galileans.

He told them that He was **"the bread which came down from heaven."**

And now He was telling the Jewish leaders, **"I am not come of myself" --- I am not just a carpenter's son --- "I am from him, and he hath sent me."**

But the Jews wouldn't stand for this kind of talk.

V 30 **"Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come."**

Yes **"--- they sought to take him,"** and murder was on their minds, but they were powerless.

Some day they would succeed.

Not because their hatred would be any more
vehement than it was right then, but
because it would be God's time.

Until then, they must grind their teeth, and
wait.

Yes, God has wicked men on a chain.

Satan may fill their hearts, but God can tie
their hands, and that's a good thing to
remember.

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So, Jesus continued to preach the gospel of
the kingdom, and the people continued
to listen.

V 31 **"And many of the people believed on
him, and said, When Christ cometh, will
he do more miracles than these which
this man hath done?"**

Yes, public opinion was beginning to turn in
His favour.

V 32 "The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him."

Yes, the situation had gotten out of hand, so they decided to send in the military.

However, before the officers arrived, Jesus' words became quite worrisome.

Would the soldiers be too late?

V 33-36 "--- Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me.

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

35: Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? will he go unto the

dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?

36: What manner of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come?"

If they have been paying attention, they would have picked up on His words ---"**I go unto him that sent me.**"

Of course, they didn't believe He had been sent by anybody, so they jumped to the conclusion that He was about to escape.

Would they lose this grand opportunity to arrest Him, and never see Him again?

Would their plans be completely frustrated?

There was no need for concern.

Some day, when their plans coincided with God's plans, they would realize their most ardent desire.

And after His death, they would be
successful in denying His resurrection,
persecuting His disciples, and
hindering His cause.

No, they needn't worry about their little
schemes.

However, had they understood Jesus' real
meaning, they would have had plenty to
worry about.

You see, Jesus was talking about His death,
resurrection, and ascension to God's
right hand.

No, **"where I am, thither ye cannot come,"**
*for there will be no place in heaven
for you.*

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Also, Jesus' words were a warning to the
nation.

He had proclaimed the coming of their Kingdom, and He had backed up His message with many mighty works.

They needed to make a decision, and they needed to make it now **"--- Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me."**

If they continued to halt **"between two opinions,"** they would seek Him in vain throughout the centuries.

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

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V 35 **"Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?"**

Even though their suspicions were unfounded,
in a rather unusual way, they were
true.

Remember what old Simeon said when he held
that little Babe in his arms?

He called Him **"A light to lighten the
Gentiles, and the glory of thy people
Israel."**

That prophecy was about to be fulfilled.

Very soon Israel's Messiah would be stepping
into His larger role as the Saviour of
the world.

Yes, Jesus' words, **"Ye shall seek me, and
shall not find me,"** were a warning.

Romans 10:19-21 **"But I say, Did not Israel
know? First Moses saith, I will provoke
you to jealousy by them that are no
people, and by a foolish nation I will
anger you.**

**20: But Esaias is very bold, and saith,
I was found of them that sought me not;
I was made manifest unto them that
asked not after me.**

**21: But to Israel he saith, All day
long I have stretched forth my hands
unto a disobedient and gainsaying
people."**

Yes, time was running out.

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At this point, the narrative moves from the
middle of the feast to the very last
day.

And since the feast was eight days long, it
would now be four days later.

V 37 **"In the last day, that great day of the
feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying,
If any man thirst, let him come unto
me, and drink."**

Jesus was well aware of the importance of the hour.

Tomorrow the people would be returning to their homes across the nation, and there wouldn't be a gathering of this magnitude for another six months.

As He looked into their faces, He was grieved by the indecision He saw there. His heart was full, and His voice was passionate --- **"If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."**

Yes, His offer was open to everyone, rich and poor, high and low.

"If any man thirst," He said.

All they had to do was repent of their sins and recognize their need.

The only requirement was a **"thirst"** for God; the only decision was to **"come unto me, and drink."**

And the message is just the same today.

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And then He described the blessedness
awaiting those who would come.

V 38-39 **"He that believeth on me, as the
scripture hath said, out of his belly
shall flow rivers of living water.
39: (But this spake he of the Spirit,
which they that believe on him should
receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet
given; because that Jesus was not yet
glorified.)"**

Already, His message seemed to be changing
from the Gospel of the Kingdom to the
Gospel of Grace.

**"(But this spake he of the Spirit, which
they that believe on him should
receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet**

given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)"

Yes, He was talking about God's Holy Spirit
Who would come on the day of Pentecost.
On that blessed day, He would become an
internal spring in the hearts of
believers, filling their lives with
blessing, and overflowing to others.

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Again, the crowd was divided.

Many were teetering on the very edge of
belief.

V 40-41 "--- **Of a truth this is the Prophet.**

41: Others said, This is the Christ."

However, once again, the good seed was to be
destroyed by another piece of
misinformation.

V 41-44 "---**Shall Christ come out of
Galilee?**

42: Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?

43: So there was a division among the people because of him.

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

Isn't it interesting, that the naysayers had finally remembered Christ's birthplace? Only yesterday, the conventional wisdom was, **"when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is."**

Well, they had the scripture right this time, but now their historical facts were all wrong.

Christ hadn't come out of Galilee, and He hadn't been born in Nazareth.

Maybe we shouldn't blame the common people for such a mistake, but what about their leaders?

Like everyone else, they knew their Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem.

And for some time now, Jesus had claimed to be that Messiah.

Why didn't they check Him out?

They had the time and the education, and Bethlehem was only five miles away.

If Joseph had been obliged to pay his taxes there because his birth had been written down in their records, wouldn't Jesus' birth be recorded there also?

And even if it wasn't, it had only been 33 years since His birth.

Wouldn't there be someone still living in Bethlehem who would remember those

excited shepherds and the story they had told about a heavenly host?

After all, this wasn't ancient history.

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Apparently, they had made no inquiries, and had simply assumed that the carpenter from Nazareth would have been born in Nazareth.

After all, why look for trouble?

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V 45-46 **"Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him? 46: The officers answered, Never man spake like this man."**

Apparently, these officers had no problem recognizing what the Pharisees had missed.

Jesus was no ordinary man.

However, the answer they got was quite typical.

V 47-49 "--- Are ye also deceived?

48: Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?

49: But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed."

Beware of so called experts, especially when it concerns your eternal soul.

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V 50-53 "Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,)

51: Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?

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

53: And every man went unto his own house."

His point had been well made --- **"Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?"**

They were teachers of the law, and he was stating a point of law.

Even today, many countries uphold the view that a man is innocent until proven guilty.

However, ignoring his question completely, they shoot him down with an unproven piece of misinformation.

Actually, it was the same piece of misinformation that had sidetracked the common people.

V 52 **"--- Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet."**

So, not only were they basing their remarks on the mistaken idea that Jesus had been born in Galilee, but they were putting him down.

You're a Galilean.

Don't you know that your people have never produced a single prophet?

In actual fact, at least two prophets had arisen out of Galilee.

The prophet Jonah, whom God had sent to Nineveh, was a Galilean, and so was the prophet Nahum.

Yes, anyway you look at it, they were wrong.

However, this erroneous piece of misinformation suited their purposes very well. --- **"Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."**