



DATE	REVISED CONTENT
October 26	John 7-10
November 2	John 11
November 9	John 12-17
November 16	John 18-21 / Conclusions

All notes and recorded sessions are available at the Church WWW site



John 1-6

# REVIEW

- John is not interested in the realities around us that can be seen with the eye but in reality which must be seen in truth... a seeing that comes only through faith. This Gospel is truly a blind man's Gospel.
- "In the beginning..." before anyone was around to see it, God brought a first, visible creation into existence by His Word. Now, through that same Word made flesh, God is bringing about a new creation that cannot be seen with the naked eye (i.e., they are like wind/spirit). This new creation of God's offspring are fully and truly alive (i.e., they will never die).
- John the Witnesser pointed as a witness to the Lamb of God who removes sin. His disciples began to "abide" with Jesus and started to un-learn what seemed true and to learn what is true.
- The Word continues to reveal Himself to be I AM, the God who revealed Himself to Moses. The disciples – worthy and unworthy – catch glimpses. Those who believe and do the truth (the will of the Father) will truly live in the bosom of the Father; others who believe and understand full well who Jesus is but who do not do the truth (the Devil and Judas who will be possessed by the Devil) may live but only separate from the Father.
- The world doesn't receive the Word; instead, it puts the Word on trial... right from the start. That trial, in which the Word will be found "guilty" by the world, is actually a trial of the Father (since the Word only says and does what the Father says and does, such that to hear the Word is to hear and see the Father). By the world's guilty verdict and execution of Jesus, the offspring of God – the new creation – will come to full birth. By that same death, the world will be shown to be guilty and to be judging the truth by what only appears to be sight.
- The disciples also learn that they must die with Jesus (symbolized by eating his flesh and drinking his blood which will be stripped from him in the death on the cross) and that they can only live by taking in (eating) the Word, which alone gives life and which is actually the word of the Father (Jn 6).

John 7 – 10

# A DRAMA IN 5 ACTS

# THE SETTING: THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

- Originally, an autumnal, harvest feast. **Concluded on October 15 this year!**
  - Booths were built using branches and vines to protect the olive orchards in harvest time and to guard the workers by night.
  - Prayer was offered for good harvest and rain (water) to ensure the harvest.
- After the Temple was built, the festival began to be celebrated in the vicinity of the Temple (one of the three great pilgrimage feasts to the Temple with Passover and Pentecost)
  - Booths were set up around the Temple courtyard
- Eventually Tabernacles became associated with covenant renewal
  - Characterized by three main symbols, all in the context of the Temple:
    - Water
    - Light
    - Joy

John 7:1-10

# NARRATIVE INTRODUCTION

# INTRODUCTION: HOW DID JESUS GET TO THE FEAST?

- Jesus' own brothers kin ("his own" in the closest sense) don't believe in him
  - Their time is always now and they are fully at home in the "world".
  - The "feast" of Tabernacles is thus theirs! (That's why they should "go up" to it.)
- Jesus says he won't; then he does.
  - Another example of Jesus not following any human agenda: Jesus has his own "time" and his own "hour".

John 7 - 10

# A DRAMA IN 5 ACTS: JESUS AT TABERNACLES

ACT1: THE FIRST 6 DAYS

ACT 2: THE LAST GREAT DAY OF THE FEAST

ACT 3: THE MAN BORN BLIND

ACT 4: RESPONSES TO THE MIRACLE

ACT 5: THE "LITTLE" TABERNACLES = HANUKKAH

# ELEMENTS COMMON TO THE 5 ACTS

- John 7-10 contains 5 acts of dialogues like those we have already seen in John 3 - 6
  - Interwoven into these 5 acts of dialogues are elements from earlier chapters:
    - THEMES: Belief / unbelief, "time" / hour, judgment, Jesus' origin, the Spirit
    - TRIAL: including a "crime", accusations, defence, calling of witnesses, turning the tables on the accusers
    - SIGNS: What do they mean?
    - A COMMON BACKDROP: The Temple and its feasts
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John 7:11 - 36

ACT1:

THE FIRST 6 DAYS OF THE FEAST

# ACT 1 JOHN 7:11-36

Some time during the first 6 days of Tabernacles (near the middle of the 6 days):

- Jesus teaches in the Temple and the people, like those in the wilderness (John 6), marvel (7:14-15)
- Jesus again seeks to get the people to see what matters (7:16-19): These are not my words, but the words of the Father. You don't hate me, but the Father!
  - NB: vs. 24: "Do not judge by appearances. Judge with right judgment."
- Like others before who couldn't see, the Temple worshippers change the subject: 'He can't be the Messiah because we know where he's from'
- Jesus continues to teach them: You don't know where I'm from at all or who sent me
- The crowd can't arrest Jesus him because "his hour had not yet come" and the scene ends in confusion (7:35-36)

John 7:37 – 8:59

ACT 2:

THE LAST GREAT DAY OF THE FEAST

## ACT 2: JOHN 7:37 – 8:59

This act will pose three important questions regarding the three important symbols of the feast (water, light, and joy).

# TRUE WATER

- Water has now been carried to the Temple during 7 mornings and now is being carried there 7 times on the same morning.
- But Jesus proclaims that rivers of running water do not matter since true living and life-giving water will pour forth from him and then from the offspring of God = the spirit (7:39)
  - True water (the Spirit) gives life. First creation water cannot give true life.
- The apparently seeing (but unbelieving) crowd again confirms that it cannot see when they ask again the wrong question: Who is this man? Where is he from? Bethlehem? Can he be the Son of David? (7:40-44)
  - Even if that is where his flesh is from the flesh profits nothing.
  - The real question is: Where is I AM from? For it is I AM who gave water in the wilderness (as well as bread in the wilderness – John 6) and it is I AM who will give life by the spirit (true water) to enliven the new creation of God (God's offspring).

# TRUE LIGHT

- Light has regularly filled the Temple and the streets of Jerusalem every night for 7 nights for people to see around them in the dark. But, do they see?
- But Jesus proclaims: I AM is the light of the world (in contrast to Temple torches) (8:12)
- The apparently seeing but unbelieving Pharisees respond with a legal trick:
  - You are calling yourself as witness. You can't do that!
  - They don't understand what Jesus has said: Not "I am the light" but "I AM is the light" and I am that I AM (the Word of the Father)
- Thus Jesus' response: I AM is nothing more than the very Word of the Father, whom you say you know, but whom you very clearly don't know because you don't recognize his voice or what he says (8:19).

# TRUE JOY

- Rejoicing has now been heard throughout Jerusalem for 7 days and 7 nights
- But Jesus now says surprisingly
  - Not: I am your true joy
  - But: 'I am leaving you' (8:21): cf. 7:33-34
  - How can this be true joy?
- The apparently seeing crowds again ask the wrong question: Suicide? Leaving? (8:22)
- Jesus' point: It is better for you that I go so that you will have full joy when I am raised up and you will see I AM. 8:25b-29. That will be paradoxically your true joy!
  - The same I AM that Abraham saw. (Jesus is not a son of Abraham, as the Jews say they are, but the Word of God who spoke to and blessed Abraham.)
  - Abraham, a non-Jew, lived centuries before there was the Mosaic Law, and centuries before the first feast of Tabernacles. And yet, Jesus will say, I AM was there even before Abraham was!
  - In fact, the Jews show that they are not true children of Abraham by trying to kill the incarnate God who spoke to and blessed Abraham

# IN SUMMARY

- I AM is truly alive, whether in the living flesh of Jesus or in the dead Jesus on the cross.
  - Those who see only the flesh will believe that the death of Jesus is the end.
  - Those who truly see will most truly see I AM alive when the world sees Jesus dead.
  - Like Abraham, who is alive, having been justified not by his works but by his faith, those who see by faith will live.
  - Those who truly see will truly rejoice... even when death appears to have the last word!
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# END OF ACT 2

- *Yet another verdict by the court: stone him! John 8:59*

John 9:1 – 39

# ACT 3: THE MAN BORN BLIND

# ACT 3 JOHN 9:1-39

- The Temple Feast of Lights (Tabernacles) still in process.
    - Light fills the Temple by day (sun) and by night (torches)
  - Blind man: seen by Jesus' disciples, truly seen by Jesus: an occasion for God's glory!
  - Stylized discussion (found previously since John 3)
    - The disciples of Jesus and Jesus (concluding with the giving of sight)
    - The religious authorities, the man's clan, the man's parents and the man (concluding with the expulsion of the man not from the synagogue but from Israel!)
    - The formerly blind man and Jesus (concluding with the man's worship of Jesus – the true source of life for all the world)
  - The healed blind man can now see in a fleshly way like all others around him but unlike the healed paralytic in John 5, he now truly sees too (represented by his worship of Jesus).
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John 9:40 – 10:21

# ACT 4: JESUS' SERMON: THE SHEPHERDS

# ACT 4 JOHN 9:40 – 10:21

- Meanwhile, the Temple and its adherents become an ever darker cave (even though filled with fleshly light)
- The Pharisees evidence their inability to see:
  - Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind." <sup>40</sup> Some of the Pharisees near him heard this, and they said to him, "Are we also blind?" <sup>41</sup> Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains.
- Leads to Jesus' extended discourse on good shepherds and bad shepherds (cf. Ezek. 34)
  - Bad shepherds were stewards of God's flock who have become interested only in themselves
  - Only Good Shepherd is I AM = the door, the excellent shepherd (cf. Ezek. 34:23-24)
- Act again ends with division
  - From the start the Word has created division (*krisis*) wherever He has appeared

Acts 10:22-39

ACT 5:

THE "LITTLE" TABERNACLES = HANUKKAH

# ACT 5 JOHN 10:22-39

- The apparently seeing but clearly blind Jews want Jesus to indicate clearly whether he is the Messiah (one of the first titles used of Jesus in John 1!)
- Jesus indicates (as in John 5) that the Father's works witness to who he is:
  - Not: The Messiah
  - But: The one who is always with the Father
- Again the verdict: stone him!
- Jesus' response: Anyone who has received the Word and does the Father's will is actually "God's son" = offspring of God
  - The Temple is not the issue (whether defiled or restored)!
- End of the 5 acts: Concluding verdict by the world: arrest Jesus!

# CONCLUSION?

- Acts 10:40-42 is not a conclusion to the five acts of 7-10
- A conclusion to the entire first section of John (10 chapters)
  - Last witness of John the Witnesser (even though he doesn't appear)
  - Crowds come to Jesus where John was baptizing
    - John did no sign (glimpse of the divine) but witnessed faithfully to the Word
    - John's witness has led them to Jesus and as a result they have believed in Jesus
- The material of the Fourth Gospel that has John as a faithful witness (beginning with the introduction of John in 1:1-18) now ends:
  - We no longer need a voice crying out in the wilderness because he has done his job (he has borne witness to a coming light)
- The light has now appeared and is shining giving light to the new creation ...
  - in contrast to an ever darkening pseudo-light that was intended to enlighten the world and is iconically represented by a Temple lit with fleshly (false) lights.

# QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Do you consider Jesus to be indecisive when he at first tells his brothers that he won't go to Jerusalem (for the feast of Tabernacles) and then goes anyway? If not, why not?
- The rituals associated with Tabernacles (and especially with the Temple at the feast) are richly visual, are wonderfully evocative of the people's history, and draw on the Scriptures for the words that are used in them. Yet Jesus seems to have little time for the rituals. For him, they – and the words used for them – mask a faithlessness towards the Father. What conclusions do you draw from Jesus' attitude toward these rituals? What rituals do you think Jesus might have looked favourably on?
- The trial of Jesus in John 5 is mirrored in the interrogation by the Temple authorities of the man born blind in John 9. In John 5 Jesus was accused of inciting the former paralytic in John 5 to violate the Sabbath and found guilty. In John 9 the man born blind is guilty of what crime that allows the authorities to find him guilty and expel him from the congregation of the people of Israel? (NB: This man only worships Jesus after he has been "found guilty".)