

The Word Became Flesh
Week 21
John 7:14-36
“Who Is This Man?”

Introduction

This is My Servant; I strengthen Him, this is My chosen one; I delight in Him. I have put My Spirit on Him; He will bring justice to the nations. He will not cry out or shout or make His voice heard in the streets. He will not break a bruised reed, and He will not put out a smoldering wick; He will faithfully bring justice. He will not grow weak or be discouraged until He has established justice on the earth...

Isaiah 42:1-4

After Jesus's family caravan had left to attend the Feast of Tabernacles, He secretly made His way into Jerusalem. I believe that He, more than likely, entered into the city once again by the Sheep Gate, not wanting to draw any attention to Himself. The time make Himself known would come during Passover some six months later. Jesus must have made every effort just to blend into the crowd. Dressed in His normal homespun clothing, He would have looked like just another ordinary sojourner from Israel making His pilgrimage to the holy city as required by law to celebrate the week long feast of Tabernacles.

In fact, no one even knew Jesus was there until the middle of the week, when he began teaching in the Temple Courts. As usual, when He spoke, a crowd gathered to listen, for no one ever taught The Word of God, like The God of The Word in the flesh! Is it any wonder that He taught with such clarity and authority? For:

In the beginning was The Word, and The Word was with God, and The Word WAS God. **John 1:1**

When we read all the back and forth from the crowd in this chapter, it is helpful to realize that there were at least three separate groups that are being discussed here. First, there would have been those who had made the journey into the city from all around the country. Much like Jesus' own family, they would have traveled some distance to reach the city in time for the festival. And being from different regions, they would have had no idea of Jesus' past run-ins with the ruling Jewish establishment.

Second, there would have been many Jews who resided in Jerusalem and knew full well the animosity between Jesus and the Temple authorities. And, as such, most of them would have come down on the side of the Pharisees and Sadducees in their disdain for this radical from Galilee. They all knew full well the precariousness of going against the ruling class in Jerusalem. It was far easier to go along to get along.

Thirdly, there were the Pharisees and Sadducees, who together made up the body of the Sanhedrin (Jewish High Court) in Jerusalem, along with all their very large company which included various priests, as well as, scribes and the temple guards. The Pharisees and Sadducees literally despised one another, but with Jesus as a common enemy, they would come together to do everything that they possibly could to either discredit or destroy Him. They were a treacherous “brood of vipers” (**Matthew 12:34**) to say the least. And Jesus knew full well that going into the city would be a difficult time for Him. But, as the Prophet Isaiah had foretold, the Messiah would not allow Himself to become discouraged until He had fulfilled the plans that God had for Him (**Isaiah 42:4**).

So with keeping all these things in mind, let us continue along in the John's recording of this Feast of Tabernacles that occurred just six months prior to our Lord's death and resurrection. As The Savior taught the crowd, many of them began to believe, while others questioned *His Learning, His Legitimacy*, as well as, the statements He made regarding *His Leaving*. Please allow me to explain.

His Learning (vs. 14-24)

When the festival was already half over, Jesus went up into the temple and began to teach. Then the Jews were amazed and said, "How is this Man so learned, since He hasn't been trained?" Jesus answered them, "My teaching isn't Mine but is from the One Who sent Me. If anyone wants to do His will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on My own. The one who speaks on his own seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One Who sent Him is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him. Didn't Moses give you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why are you trying to kill Me?" "You have a demon!" the crowd responded. "Who is trying to kill you?" "I performed one work, and you are all amazed," Jesus answered. "This is why Moses has given you circumcision — not that it comes from Moses but from the fathers — and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses won't be broken, are you angry at Me because I made a man entirely well on the Sabbath? Stop judging according to outward appearances; rather judge according to righteous judgment."

When Jesus began to teach in the temple courts mid-week of the festival the people were astonished at His teaching. After all, He was The God of The Word, teaching The Word. No one knows His own words or their original intent better than the one who spoke them in the first place! We live in a world where people's words are twisted from their original meaning and used against those who spoke them in ways that the speaker never intended. If you do not believe me, just watch an episode of the evening news. Dishonest reporters and politicians do this all the time. Reason being, they want every narrative to fit their own agenda. Nothing, in my opinion is more dishonest and immoral than knowingly using another person's speech to say something completely different than what the speaker was trying to communicate. It is one thing to misunderstand or mishear, but entirely another to corrupt another's message intentionally for political agendas or dishonest gain. This would be a good time for someone to say "amen."

The crowd that day was hanging on Jesus' every word. He spoke with authority. And His doctrine was unassailable. We do not know what passages of Scripture that He taught, but more than likely it had something to do with the Feast of Tabernacles, which speaks of a time when God dwelt among His people in the wilderness, and of the coming kingdom of heaven, when God will again dwell amongst His people. But whatever the sermon topic, the message was spot on. No one could dispute the truth that Jesus shared. Not a single person could argue with His teaching. So what did the skeptics do instead. They question His scholarship.

"How is this Man so learned, since He hasn't been trained?"

John 7:15

You see, Jesus had never studied in the hallowed seminaries of the Pharisees. He had no formal education whatsoever. Those who are "learned" tend to always look down their noses at others who have not been privy to their own scholarship. As if God cannot teach and equip those He calls unless they attend the "right" schools. I am not discounting education here. Everything that we can do to improve our minds is most certainly a positive thing. But let me make this perfectly clear: a seminary degree does not make someone a preacher. God does that. And if He can speak through a donkey (**Numbers 22:21-39**), then He most certainly can use a common person for great things.

The crowd that day couldn't understand how Jesus could teach like He did without being formally trained to do so. Now, we know how He did it, because we know that He is God incarnate. But they were so hung up on how He was doing things, they completely missed out on Who He was! His answer to them was astounding, and to be honest, it is perfect instruction to tell the difference between a false teacher from one who has been called from above. The distinguishing difference between the two is... MOTIVE. Think about this for a moment. A false teacher takes the Word and twists it to work out an advantage for himself. While a true preacher only teaches in a way that glorifies God. THAT is the

distinction. Think about this for a moment. Many false teachers are out there, and they do everything that they can to flatter their listeners. Why? So that those who hear will love the teacher and support his/her "ministry".

Then there are other teachers who try and scare their audience to death. Why? So that they will fear them, support them financially, as well as do everything that they say. Both types are preaching with an agenda. Listen to what Jesus said to the crowd when they questioned His teaching:

"The one who speaks on his own seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One Who sent Him is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him." **John 7:18**

So there you have it! It is all about MOTIVE. The next time that you hear someone teaching God's Word, ask yourself why they are teaching in this manner. You'll be surprised to find how much spiritual discernment you truly have. False teachers are in it to glorify themselves. True men of God live to bring Him alone the glory.

Jesus went on to tell the people that while He was righteous, they were most certainly not! This is the very reason that they needed a Savior. I'm quite certain that they did not like hearing that! After all, they prided themselves on keeping the law of Moses, and yet, Jesus pointed out to them that they had not kept the law. He was righteous, and they were unrighteous, and yet, they wanted to kill Him? At this point, a portion of the crowd who were not from Jerusalem (who had no inclination of the Jewish leaders animosity toward Him), accused The Son of God of being demon possessed! Who had said anything about killing Him? They wondered. They might of been ignorant of current circumstances, but Christ was not.

He had healed a paralyzed man on the Sabbath over a year prior, and the Pharisees were still fuming about it. Jesus reminded them that they had often performed circumcisions on the Sabbath, for The Law of Moses required them to be done on the eighth day after a male child was born. So why was it that they could do God's work on the Sabbath, but He, the Son of God, could not? The whole concept was ridiculous, and these "learned scholars" had no answer for Him. Again He tells the people to open their eyes and look for the motive before they judge the action.

"Stop judging according to outward appearances; rather judge according to righteous judgment." **John 7:24**

This is good advice for all of us as well. Examine the motives of those who presume to teach you, and you will determine whether they be of God or not.

His Legitimacy (vs. 25-31)

Some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, "Isn't this the Man they are trying to kill? Yet, look, He's speaking publicly and they're saying nothing to Him. Can it be true that the authorities know He is the Messiah? But we know where this Man is from. When the Messiah comes, nobody will know where He is from." As He was teaching in the temple, Jesus cried out, "You know Me and you know where I am from. Yet I have not come on My own, but the One Who sent Me is true. You don't know Him; I know Him because I am from Him, and He sent Me." Then they tried to seize Him. Yet no one laid a hand on Him because His hour had not yet come. However, many from the crowd believed in Him and said, "When the Messiah comes, He won't perform more signs than this man has done, will he?"

It was commonly taught among the Jewish people that when The Messiah came, He would just appear out of nowhere, and that no one would know of His origins. They based this (false) claim on Scriptures such as **Isaiah 53**, which speaks of the coming Messiah.

He was taken from prison and from judgement: and who shall declare His generation? Isaiah 53:8a (KJV)

This is a hard Scripture to translate, but it most certainly does not mean what the religious leaders thought it did. The Messiah had been prophesied of many times in Scripture. And one thing is for certain; He would be from the lineage of King David.

The LORD swore an oath to David, a promise He will not abandon: I will set one of your offspring on your throne. Psalm 132:11

Then a shoot will grow from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of The LORD will rest on him —... Isaiah 11:1-2a

Just to name a couple. So, it is unmistakable that The Messiah would have a lineage that could be traced back to David.

The passage in Isaiah that speaks of “His generation” has to be directly linked to the verse that follows in order to fully understand what the prophet was saying.

For He was cut off from the land of the living; He was struck because of My people's rebellion. Isaiah 53:8b

Now it begins to make sense. The messiah would come, and His generation would not recognize Him. And as a result, He will be rejected and killed by them. And His death would atone for their sins, if they would simply turn to Him in faith.

The crowd at Jerusalem that day thought that they knew who Jesus was, but He challenged their assumptions. They may have known His earthly heritage, but they certainly did not know Him, nor the One Who sent Him. He was the Son of God, **and** the Son of Man. They questioned His legitimacy, because they thought they knew all about Him, but they had completely missed the mark. Many that day either referred to Jesus as a good man or a deceiver of the people. But in truth, He was The Only Begotten Son of God. And to miss that is to miss out on the salvation that He offers.

Some in the crowd that day tried to seize Him to stone Him to death for His claims of deity, but His appointed time had not yet come. They had no power over Him. The time was soon at hand for Him to lay down His life for the sins of the world, but it was not this day.

His Leaving (vs. 32-36)

The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things about him, and so the chief priests and the Pharisees sent servants to arrest Him. Then Jesus said, “I am only with you for a short time. Then I'm going to the One Who sent Me. You will look for Me, but you will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come.” Then the Jews said to one another, “Where does He intend to go that we won't find him? He doesn't intend to go to the Jewish people dispersed among the Greeks and teach the Greeks, does he? What is this remark he made: ‘You will look for Me, and you will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come?’”

As more of the crowd began to take the words of Jesus seriously, the religious leaders began to panic. They sent the Temple guards to arrest Jesus. But they were unable to do so. Instead He informed them that He would not be around much longer. They were obviously confused by this statement and wondered if He might leave the region and take His so called "heretical teaching" to the displaced Jews and the Gentiles. This would be a dream come true for the religious leaders, for then they would not have to worry about some of the crowd turning against them. Their sole motive for everything that they did was to hang on to their positions of power, prestige, and authority. If Jesus were to simply leave the territory, so much the better for them, they thought. Little did they know that this was not what He meant when He said, **"You will look for Me, but you will not find Me."**

Six months later, Jesus went to the cross and was buried in a borrowed tomb by two of the religious leaders, who had come to faith in Him, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. Upon His resurrection, those who had killed Him desperately searched to find His body. But He could not be found by them. He was risen, and to those who had believed in Him, He appeared several times before returning to His Father. But to those who rejected Him, He was no where to be found!

The vital importance of this for us today is that we MUST place our faith in Him, while He may still be found. Today is the day of salvation. Jesus asked His disciples, **"Who do you say that I AM?"** It is a question that The Spirit still asks of us today. Do you believe in His teaching? Do you believe that He has the very words of life, that He **Learned** from His Father? Do you believe in His **Legitimacy**? That He is indeed The Only Begotten Son of God The Father. Do you believe in His **Leaving**? That He died and rose again and will one day return to appear to those who have placed their faith in Him. And He will also return to the dismay of those who rejected Him. The simple question that we all must answer is, **"Who do YOU say that I AM?"**

And let those who believe boldly proclaim that **He** is the... **TRUTH!!!**