

The Gospel of John

Christ at the Feast of Tabernacles

John 7:1-53

Christ is creating quite a stir in Israel. People are talking about Him and His teaching. In this chapter, we see the opinions of His earthly family, the people, and the rulers.

The Setting – Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*)

- Leviticus 23:33-44
- One of three “pilgrimage feasts”, with Passover and Feast of Weeks (Shavuot)
- Remembrance of wilderness journey and recognition of God's blessings
- Celebrated by dwelling in “tabernacles” for the week
- Days after the Feast was holidays (“Eighth day of assembly”)
- Started on 15th of Tishri – Sept. or Oct. – five days after Day of Atonement
- Four Species – date palm frond, myrtle tree bough, willow branch, citron fruit
- This is the last Feast of Tabernacles before Christ’s crucifixion the following Spring at Passover.

The Story

- Christ is urged to go to Feast of Tabernacles – vs. 1-13
 - Jesus is staying in Galilee, avoiding the Jewish leaders in Judea – vs.1
 - His unbelieving family wanted Him to go to prove His works – vs. 2-5
 - Jesus tells them to go on ahead because He wasn't coming just now – vs. 6-9
 - Everyone at the Feast has Christ on their mind – vs.10-13
- Christ at the Feast – vs. 14-36
 - The First Question - “How does He know so much?” - vs. 15
 - Answer – Truth comes from doing God's will – vs.16-19
 - The Second Question - “Are you crazy?” - vs. 20
 - Answer - “No, you are hypocrites” - vs. 21-24
 - Christ refers here to His healing of a man on the Sabbath day, which took place about 18 months prior to this - see 5:1-18
 - The Third Question - “Can He really be the Messiah” - vs. 25-27
 - Answer - “I am” - vs. 28-29
 - Note – the people first denied the plot to kill Christ in vs. 20 but now acknowledge it as a well-known fact in vs. 25
 - In response to Christ’s claim, “they” (Jewish leaders) tried to seize Him – vs. 30
 - Instead of silencing Christ, He reaches even more people – vs. 31
 - Pharisees join the plot, and men are sent to arrest Christ – vs. 32
 - Christ says they will soon be rid of Him, but not like they wanted – vs. 33-34

- He says that He is leaving shortly and after that they will seek Him (Messiah) but not find Him.
- The Jews do not understand and assume he means to leave the country – vs. 35-36
- Prophecy of the Spirit on the Eighth Day of Feast – vs. 37-39
 - “The last day of the Feast of Tabernacles was the greatest. It was the eighth day, a day of rest and holy gathering together. During the seven days of the feast water was daily drawn from the pool of Siloam and then poured out. On the last day this ceremony did not take place. The seven days typified their wilderness journey; the eighth day the entrance into the land. For seven days they drew the water and poured it out, commemorating the water the Lord had supplied to Israel during the wilderness journey. On the eighth day they enjoyed the springs of the land itself an emblem of the living waters which the Lord had promised to His people. Israel has these promises. ‘And it shall be in that day that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem.’ (Zechariah 14:8.) The same promise we find elsewhere. (See Ezekiel 47:1-23; Isaiah 12:1-6.) And He Who had given to His people these promises, Who had come to fulfill them, stood in their midst.” – A.C. Gaebelien
- The Divided Opinion of the People – vs. 40-53
 - Some said He was the Messiah – vs. 40
 - Some said He could not be – vs. 41-44
 - The officers could not take Him – vs. 45-49
 - Nicodemus gives a defense – vs. 50-51
 - The reply: no prophet can come from Galilee – vs. 52
 - This is demonstrably false. Jonah is the best example (II Kings 14:25) and others like Nahum are possible. This also discounts the prophecy of Isaiah 9:1-2 which points to Christ coming from this very area.
 - The meeting of leaders breaks up in the early evening – vs. 53
 - We pick up the following morning in 8:1