

G R A C E

Reformed Baptist Church

Soli ♦ Deo ♦ Gloria

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Sermon Notes

The Feast of Tabernacles, part 4

John 7:25-36

July 17, 2005

Verse 25

- John the Evangelist refers, here, to the “people of Jerusalem” or “Jerusalemites”
 - The term “Jerusalemites” is only used here and in Mark 1:5 [in the entire N.T.]
- Unlike the naïve “crowd” in Verse 20, “the Jerusalemites,” because of their understanding of the workings of the religious/political system in the Jewish capital, as well as the escalating controversy between Jesus and the Jewish authorities, were well aware of the plot to kill Jesus.
- “The Jerusalemites” were quite surprised at the **public and bold nature** of Jesus’ teaching; therefore, they were stating/questioning, “Is this not the man whom they are seeking to kill?”

Verse 26

- Now, the Jerusalemites are perplexed as to why the authorities are not arresting Jesus.
- They, then, raise a possible answer to their question: maybe the authorities have gathered, in secret, behind closed doors, weighed all of the evidence, possibly even reviewing new evidence unavailable to the general public, and have concluded that Jesus is truly the Christ, the long-awaited Messiah.
 - “The rulers do not really know that this is the Christ, do they?”
 - This is the question of the Ages. Many “believe” in Jesus. Many embrace His teachings. But, as Jesus Christ himself asked Simon Peter, “Who do **you** say I am?” Who do you **know** Jesus to be?

- In the Gospel of John, this is the first time that the possibility of Jesus being the Messiah has been raised in Jerusalem.

Verse 27

- However, **immediately** after raising such a possibility [that the authorities believe Jesus truly is the Messiah], the Jerusalemites **dismiss it outright**.
 - This is why the Jerusalemites begin Verse 27 with the word “**But**” [Greek, *al l a, alla*]. This is a “strong adversative” and, as one commentator points out, “*al l a* implies something quite different from that which has been suggested by the preceding context.”
- The reason for the Jerusalemites’ dismissal of Jesus as the Messiah is because **they believe they know His origin**, where He is from.
- However, among many Jews of the first century, the [earthly] origin of the Christ was believed to be a great mystery, although it was understood that His *ultimate* origin was eternity past [i.e. heaven].
 - Micah 5:2: But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
Too little to be among the clans of Judah,
From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel
His goings forth are from long ago,
From the days of eternity.

NOTE: The chief priests and scribes called in by Herod in **Matthew 2:1-6** quoted from Micah 5:2; thus, revealing a basic understanding of the geographic/earthly origin of the Messiah

- Daniel 7:13: I kept looking in the night visions,
And behold, with the clouds of heaven
One like a Son of Man was coming,
And He came up to the Ancient of Days
And was presented before Him.
- Yet, the “great mystery” centered around how the Messiah would “arrive on the scene.”
- Many, if not most, Jews “ascribed to the Christ [i.e. the Messiah] a mysterious supernatural origin and a sudden appearance on the scene.”
Leon Morris
- More specifically, they [the Jews, as well as these Jerusalemites] believed that, in accordance with rabbinical teaching, the **Messiah would be born of flesh and blood, yet, He would remain completely unknown until He would suddenly appear to secure the redemption of Israel.**

- Such beliefs were based upon a few Old Testament passages:
 - Daniel 9:25: “So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.”
 - Malachi 3:1: “Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me And the Lord, whom you seek, will **suddenly come** to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts.”

NOTE: Some scholars believe this prophecy was fulfilled in John 7:14, when Jesus, in “the midst of the Feast [of Tabernacles]” began to teach in the Temple.

- Also, other works of Jewish literature suggest that the Messiah would “suddenly appear”:
 - 4 Ezra 7:28; 13:23; 2 Baruch 29:3 [in the Apocrypha] describe the Messiah as “revealed”
 - Rabbi R. Zera taught the following: “Three come unawares: Messiah, a found article and a scorpion” *(Sanh. 97a.; Soncino edn. P. 659)*
 - Justin Martyr, in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, stated, “But Christ – if He has indeed been born, and exists anywhere – is unknown, and does not even know Himself, and has no power until Elijah comes to anoint Him, and make Him manifest to all.”
- Jesus, on the other hand, did not “remain completely unknown until He suddenly appeared to secure the redemption of Israel.” Rather, He was known to have been raised in Galilee.
- Therefore, since Jesus did not fit the mold the Jews and Jerusalemites had created for the Messiah [i.e. with respect to His ‘origins’], they rejected Him.
- This is a classic case of irony, often seen in the Gospel of John.

The Jerusalemites are convinced they know the origin and the identity of Jesus of Nazareth [i.e. He is simply the son of Mary and Joseph]; however, in truth, they have no idea that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah, the Christ, who has no beginning and no end [i.e. He is eternal].

Verses 28 – 29

- Now, Jesus “cries out”
 - The word for “cried out” is *ekraxen* [Greek, *ekraxen*], describing a loud shout.

- Jesus acknowledges some validity in the statements of the Jerusalemites:

“You both know Me and know where I am from...”

- However, this is not completely true.
- It is essential, here, that the reader fully understand that the Incarnate Christ has two [2] natures: (1) He is fully God; and (2) He is fully Man.
- Jesus, here in Verse 28, is acknowledging that the Jerusalemites both know Him [the man Jesus of Nazareth] and know where He is from [Nazareth].
- However, the Jerusalemites *really* do not know Jesus Christ, or where He is from [from the Father...from eternity past].

Notice the irony here. Jesus **shouts**, “So you know me and my origin!”

- Jesus’ shout could also be translated/interpreted as a question, “You know me, and you know where I am from?”

- Jesus, then, states, “and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true...”

- The Jerusalemites denied this crucial truth.
- They believed Jesus acted in His own self-interests, on His own initiative.
- However, Jesus states that this is not true, because “He who sent Me is true.”
- In other words, Jesus was stating that He was sent by a **real, true Being**.
 - “someone who is very real, whom you do not know, has sent me”
Goodspeed
 - “the One who has sent me exists as the Real One” C.B. Williams

- Jesus, then, makes a scathing indictment upon the Jerusalemites, “...**whom you do not know**. I know Him, because I am from Him, and He sent me.”

- The Jewish people, as a whole [to include, certainly, the Jerusalemites and the Pharisees] prided themselves in knowing the one true and living God, Yahweh.
- Read **Romans 2:17-23**.
- “If the Jews do not recognize who Jesus is, it must be that they do not really understand the law, they do not really know the God who gave the law, for if they had really known him they would have not rejected his Son.” Carson

- In other words, although the Jews knew a great deal **about God**, they did not **know Him**.
- Let us never forget, mere head knowledge converts and sanctifies no one [it “puffs up”] (1 Corinthians 8:1).
- As one scholar once wrote, “As they celebrate their loyalty to the one true God at the feast [of Tabernacles], they are rejecting Jesus, the Sent One of the one true God.”
Moloney

A little knowledge of God is worth more than a great deal of knowledge about Him...One can know a great deal about God without much knowledge of Him. I am sure that many of us have never really grasped this. We find in ourselves a deep interest in theology (which is, of course, a most fascinating and intriguing subject – in the seventeenth century it was every gentleman's hobby). We read books of theological exposition and apologetics. We dip into Christian history, and study the Christian creed. We learn to find our way around in the Scriptures. Others appreciate our interest in these things, and we find ourselves asked to give our opinion in public on this or that Christian question, to lead study groups, to give papers, to write articles, and generally to accept responsibility, informal if not formal, for acting as teachers and arbiters of orthodoxy in our own Christian circle. Our friends tell us how much they value our contribution, and this spurs us to further explorations of God's truth, so that we may be equal to the demands made upon us.

All very fine – yet interest in theology, and knowledge about God, and the capacity to think clearly and talk well on Christian themes, is not at all the same thing as knowing Him. We may know as much about God as Calvin knew – indeed, if we study his works diligently, sooner or later we shall – and yet all the time (unlike Calvin, may I say) we may hardly know God at all.
Knowing God, J.I. Packer, p. 26

Packer continues by examining the life of Daniel, noting five effects of knowing God [intimately] versus knowing about Him:

1. **When people know God, losses and “crosses” cease to matter to them;** what they have gained simply banishes these things from their minds.
2. **Those who know God have great energy for God.** Daniel 11:32 states, “...the people who know their God will display strength and take action.”
3. **Those who know God have great thoughts of God.** There is not space enough here to gather up all that the book of Daniel tells us about the wisdom, might, and truth of the great God who rules history and shows his sovereignty in acts of judgment and mercy toward individuals and nations according to his own good pleasure...[Daniel stated, in 4:25] that “the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men.” He knows, and foreknows, all things, and his foreknowledge is foreordination; he, therefore, will have the last word, both in world history and in the destiny of every man; his kingdom and righteousness will triumph in the end, for neither men nor angels shall be able to thwart him.

4. **Those who know God show great boldness for God.** Daniel and his friends were men who stuck their necks out. This was not foolhardiness. They knew what they were doing. They had counted the cost. They had measured the risk. They were well aware what the outcome of their actions would be unless God miraculously intervened, as in fact he did...But these things did not move them. Once they were convinced that their stand was right, and that loyalty to their God required them to take it, then, in Oswald Chamber's phrase, they 'smilingly washed their hands of the consequences.'
5. **Those who know God have great contentment in God.** There is no peace like the peace of those whose minds are possessed with full assurance that they have known God, and God has known them, and that this relationship guarantees God's favor to them in life, through death and on for ever.

This is why John Piper states,
“The chief end of man is to glorify God by enjoying Him forever.”

Verse 29

- Jesus, unlike His current audience, truly knows God [the Father]
- The reason Jesus knows God is clear – He [Jesus] is from Him [the Father]
- Read **John 1:14, 18**

Verse 30

- Notice, here, what the result is when the truth of Jesus Christ is revealed:
 - “They”, that is *some* of the Jerusalemites, seek “to seize Him.”
 - Notice also the spontaneity here, as opposed to the careful planning of the Sanhedrin officials later
 - The words of Jesus spark a **quick, angry** reaction on the part of the Jerusalem audience
- One of the clearest displays of God's providence and sovereignty throughout the Gospels is that Jesus was arrested, tried, and crucified at the exact *hour* the Father had designated...and not a moment sooner.
 - This passage is silent as to *how* Jesus escaped capture; however, the *reason* why “no man laid his hand on Him [Jesus]” was “because His hour had not yet come.”
 - The word *hour* [Greek *hora*, ὥρα] throughout the Gospel of John refers to Jesus' death by crucifixion and His glorification that is associated with it [see also the Wedding at Cana account in John 2]

- Thus, John is stating that Jesus' hour (his crucifixion and subsequent glorification) has not yet come. [Note: Shortly before Jesus is crucified, He states, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified."]

Verse 31

- "There is little direct evidence in the Old Testament that miracles were expected of the Messiah, though this may be implied from the fact that Jews expected a prophet like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18), who performed miraculous signs at the exodus (Exodus 7-11)."
- The crowd "believed in Him" and were saying, "When the Christ comes, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He?"
 - The reason for the crowd's belief was that they could not imagine that when the Messiah [in Greek, *the Christ*] came he would perform more miracles than Jesus.
 - Thus, their belief was based, at least partially, on the fact that Jesus worked miracles.
 - Therefore, it is difficult to determine whether this was **genuine faith**, as this account is similar to **John 2:23-24**.
- However, I believe, that these individuals probably did exercise genuine faith [unlike those in John 2:23-24] because of the following reasons:
 1. Their faith doesn't appear to be based entirely on the miracles of Jesus.
 2. They are not looking for **additional signs and wonders**. It is as though [possibly] Jesus' works thus far are sufficient evidence of His Messiahship. [Unlike John 6:30].
 3. The people who were believing in Jesus were not the Jerusalemites [i.e. those native to the Judea and the capital of Jerusalem], but rather, the more humble **crowd**; that is, the group of pilgrims from not only Judea, but Galilee and beyond [i.e. the diaspora]. This demonstrates the truth that God [if in fact this represents genuine faith] "God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong" [1 Corinthians 1:27].