

John 7:1-36
Leviticus 23:33-44
Psalm 25

“The Hour Has Not Yet Come”

June 7, 2020

The feast of booths – or “tabernacles” – was in the seventh month.

Passover was in the first month – so Passover was in the spring,
Pentecost was in the summer, and Booths was in the fall.

The point of the feast of booths was to remember God’s provision in the wilderness.

“that your generations may know that I made the people of Israel dwell in booths
when I brought them out of the land of Egypt.”

Of course, God himself dwelt in a booth with Israel –
the Tabernacle was the tent

where the glory of God resided in the midst of his people.

And all of this was designed to show forth what God intended:

that his only-begotten Son should become flesh and *tabernacle* with his people.

Our Psalm of response is Psalm 25 –

a song that would have been very appropriate to sing at the Feast of Booths!

In this song we ask God to lead us in his paths –

We ask God to remember his mighty deeds – and *not* to remember our sins.

Forgive me.

Deliver me.

Redeem your people!

Sing Psalm 25 (PHSS)

Read John 7:1-36

What does Jesus mean when he says “My time has not yet come”?

Or later, “his hour had not yet come”?

What is Jesus’ hour?

Children, have you ever been expecting something really great?

Maybe you waited for it for a long time,
eagerly expecting that wonderful thing!

You spent days, weeks, maybe even months hoping for it.

And then it happened.

And it was over just like that.

Jesus’ whole life was focused on his “hour.”

But Jesus’ hour was not merely an important event in his life;

It was the most important event in all of history.

All of the ages--past and future--would be centered on this hour.

We have already seen in John 6:15
that Jesus wants to avoid the crowds who wish to make him king.
He is indeed the Prophet of whom Moses had spoken,
but his hour has not yet come.

John is beginning to move his narrative toward the cross.
John 5:18 says that the Jews were seeking to kill Jesus
because he made himself equal with God.
Now chapter 7 reminds us of this.

The rest of John's gospel is going to keep us focused on this.
In every passage from John 7-11
there will be an emphasis on the attempt to arrest and kill Jesus.

And regularly John will say that Jesus' hour, or time, has not yet come.
2:4 Jesus said this to his mother: "my hour has not yet come."
7:6 Now he says it to his brothers: "My time has not yet come"
7:30 no one lays a hand on him because "his hour had not yet come"
8:20 They do not arrest Jesus because his hour has not come

Finally in 12:23 and 13:1 Jesus makes it clear that the hour has come.

What is the "hour"? What is the "time" that Jesus is waiting for?
Jesus addresses this question at the Feast of Booths—or Tabernacles.
Jesus taught in John 6 that he is the bread of life—
and we were told that this happened around the feast of Passover.
Now in John 7 he explains that he is a sojourner—
during the feast of Booths.

Now John connects all these stories.
Back in chapter 5 Jesus had healed a man on the Sabbath at "a feast of the Jews."
Usually, when it just says "a feast" that is a reference to Booths.
Passover and Pentecost are usually called by their names –
Booths is simply called "The Feast" –
because it was the *great feast* of the year.

1. "Your Time Is Always Here" (v1-13)

a. The Feast of Booths (v1-2)

After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea, because the Jews^[a] were seeking to kill him. ² Now the Jews' Feast of Booths was at hand.

The Feast of Booths was designed to remind Israel of their wilderness wanderings.
Israel was to spend seven days living in booths as a reminder

of how God provided during their 40 years in the wilderness.
Jesus has been “exiled” from Judea, in a sense.
He is wandering in the wilderness of Galilee.
His brothers urge him to go to Judea and proclaim himself openly.
They do not believe in him, so they mock him.

(verses 3-4)

b. Jesus and His Brothers (v3-9)

³ So his brothers^[b] said to him, “Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you are doing. ⁴ For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world.” ⁵ For not even his brothers believed in him.

It would have been hard to be Jesus’ brother!

Sure, he was good.

He never sinned.

Think of how annoying that would be!

Talk about the “favorite child”!

You can understand why his brothers would be slow to believe –
not for lack of evidence –

but precisely because of it!

Mr. Goody-Two-Shoes thinks he’s the Messiah!

But if you are the Messiah, then you need to go to Jerusalem and take charge!

That’s what the Messiah is supposed to do.

Win over the priests and the leaders – and establish God’s kingdom!

If you are who you say you are, Jesus, then you need to make yourself known publicly!

“Show yourself to the world!”

Oh, the irony of that statement!

Jesus will show himself to the world – when the time comes!

He will show himself to the world when he is hung on a cross....

And so Jesus replies:

⁶ Jesus said to them, “My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. ⁷ The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil.

This is your time.

This is not my time.

You belong to the world – so the world cannot hate you.

It hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil.

Jesus came not to condemn the world – but to save the world!
And yet the world hates Jesus, because Jesus testifies that its works are evil!

Jesus does not save the world because of how good we are.
He saves the world because of how good *he is*.

And our response was to hate him for it –
just like his brothers!

⁸ *You go up to the feast. I am not^[c] going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come.”*
⁹ *After saying this, he remained in Galilee.*

The time for revealing his true mission has not yet come.
When Jesus says “I am not going up to this feast,”
he is answering their call for him to go up and reveal himself.
He will go up secretly, but not yet openly as Israel’s Messiah.
This is not yet his time.
This is their time.

Jesus adds a second phrase in verse 8:
“my time has not yet *fully* come.”
Jesus told the Samaritan woman, “the hour is coming, and is now here,
when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.” (4:23)

Jesus said in 5:25 that “an hour is coming and is now here,
when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God,
and those who hear will live.”

In the incarnation of Jesus, the hour is both already and not yet.
Insofar as the age to come is dawning in his own ministry,
Jesus says that it is coming and now here.

But it is still incomplete.
There are signs and pictures of the age to come in the life and ministry of Jesus,
but his time has not yet come.
The kingdom has come *in Jesus*,
but it has not yet come for us.

And so Jesus says to his brothers:

This is your time.
You are immune to the world, because you are part of the world.
And therefore, you can do whatever you want, whenever you want,
and your actions mean nothing to God.

If you want to understand what Jesus is saying,

look at John 15:18-19

“If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.
If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own;
but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world,
therefore the world hates you.”

A few verses later, Jesus tells his disciples that their hour will also come. (16:2).

This is whole point of the incarnation.

This is why the word became flesh and dwelt among us.

(By the way, this is also why John organizes *everything* in his gospel around *time*.

From the seven days of John 1-2 – connecting to the seven days of creation –
to the fact that every episode in the whole gospel of John is connected
to a feast.

The gospel of John is organized around *time*.)

Ever since God created all things, *time* has measured the relationship between events.

As one of my professors at Notre Dame put it,

God gave us *dates* – everything else is interpretation.

Jesus has come in order to reorganize time.

He refers to his death as *his hour*.

And through *his hour* – through his death –
he will be revealed to the world.

He will do what his brothers ask – and he will show himself to the world!

But for now, it is the time of the world.

So Jesus says to his brothers:

Go up to the feast;

pretend to be strangers and wanderers – sleep in booths.

I am the true wanderer whose time will soon come.

c. “Where Is He?” Jesus Went Up in Private (v10-13)

¹⁰ But after his brothers had gone up to the feast, then he also went up, not publicly but in private. ¹¹ The Jews were looking for him at the feast, and saying, “Where is he?” ¹² And there was much muttering about him among the people. While some said, “He is a good man,” others said, “No, he is leading the people astray.” ¹³ Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of him.

Later, however, he goes up in private.

He is going to show his brothers that his time has not yet come.

They do not realize that his “time” refers to his death.

The Jews were looking for him, and the people were muttering about him.
The crowds were in turmoil.
Jesus had created a big stir

Some said he was a good man, but others thought that he led the people astray.
But no one spoke openly of him.
His time had not yet come.

The Feast of Booths is a seven day feast –
with sacred assemblies on the first day and the eighth day.

2. Jesus' Teaching Is from the Father (v14-24)

a. The Unlearned Teacher (v14-15)

¹⁴ About the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and began teaching. ¹⁵ The Jews therefore marveled, saying, "How is it that this man has learning,^[d] when he has never studied?"

But in the middle of the feast, Jesus began to teach in the temple.

And his teaching amazed even the leaders of the Jews.

(Note that in verses 1, 13, 15, and 35, the "Jews" are the leaders,
while in verses 12, 20, 25, 31, and 32, the "crowd" or the "people" is used)

Jesus was an unlettered carpenter's son

(this just means that he did not have rabbinical training).

He never studied with the rabbis.

But he knew the scripture intimately.

How did he know the scripture so well?

Sure, Luke tells us that he grew in wisdom and stature –

and no doubt he learned much from Mary and Joseph –

and from other teachers as well –

but the person of Jesus is the second person of the Holy Trinity.

He is the eternal Word of God – the one who was God,

the one who was in the beginning with God.

And so Jesus answers:

b. Teaching, Authority, and Glory: How to Know Whether Jesus Is True (v16-18)

¹⁶ So Jesus answered them, "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me.

Verse 16 is a very rabbinic way to argue.

The rabbis loved to appeal to authority.

"I am just saying what Rabbi Hillel says."

“My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me.”

But then Jesus appeals – not to a rabbi – but to God himself:

¹⁷ If anyone's will is to do God's^[e] will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority. ¹⁸ The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood.

Now, in Greek, the word “God” is not used in verse 17 – it is simply the pronoun “his.”

Jesus is being deliberate in how he reveals his source!

My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me.

If anyone's will is to do *his* will...”

I simply teach what my Father taught me.

If you had been taught by my Father, then you would believe my teaching.

In chapter 5 Jesus told us about the fourfold witness:

John the Baptist testified,

The Father testified,

his works testified,

and Moses testified.

How do you know that Jesus' teaching is authoritative?

Can you go to some neutral intellectual starting point and prove it?

No.

Only those who are taught by the Father will recognize Jesus' authority.

Sure, if neutrality were possible, then Jesus could prove his case.

But no one is neutral.

This was a point that I struggled with a lot when I was younger!

Where can I find a neutral standpoint to evaluate truth claims?!

Jesus says: you can't find one!

How can you know whether Jesus is true?

If your will is to do God's will, then you will know that Jesus is from God.

If you think about it, this is the way all ultimate truth claims work.

The atheist cannot prove that science is trustworthy and reliable.

The atheist assumes it.

Claims to final authority depend upon our basic beliefs.

In dealing with the Jews, Jesus knows where to start.

Their “basic beliefs” are rooted in Moses:

c. “Judge with Right Judgment”: Moses and Jesus (v19-24)

¹⁹ *Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why do you seek to kill me?”*

²⁰ *The crowd answered, “You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill you?”* ²¹ *Jesus answered them, “I did one work, and you all marvel at it.* ²² *Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath.* ²³ *If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man's whole body well?* ²⁴ *Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.”*

It is interesting to see the argument of verse 19:

Moses gave you the law.

If you kept the law aright, then you could judge from a neutral starting point.

But none of you keeps the law.

The Jews’ problem—for that matter humanity’s problem—
is not an intellectual one.

It is a moral problem.

Cornelius Van Til suggested that man is like a saw that cuts perfectly straight every time.

The problem is that the saw is at an angle.

If you are trying to cut a right angle, but the saw is set on 37.3 degrees,
then no matter how straight you cut it, the result will be skewed.

Jesus says, you are trying to judge *me*, based on your own skewed moral compass.

The crowd doesn’t get it.

They think that Jesus is getting paranoid.

“You have a demon! Who is trying to kill you?”

Jesus again cuts straight to the heart of the issue:

referring back to his healing of the invalid at the pool of Bethesda,

Jesus says that he did that one deed.

What was the point of that healing?

He was giving rest to the man’s body.

And Jesus compares that with circumcision.

Circumcision was seen as a symbol of healing or cleansing.

The snipping off of the foreskin symbolized the death of the old man.

If this spiritual act could be done on the Sabbath, why not a bodily healing as well?

If you can circumcise a baby on the Sabbath –

then you can heal a man’s whole body on the Sabbath.

Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.

Let’s be clear.

Jesus is saying that the Jews have missed the point of what the Sabbath is about.

The Pharisees thought that the point of the Sabbath was to avoid doing work.

So they went to great lengths to avoid doing work on the Sabbath.

Jesus is saying that the Sabbath is about *him*.

Jesus is the one who fulfills both Sabbath and circumcision in his own work.

When you see the point of the Sabbath –

the call to enter God’s rest –

then you will see that Jesus’ death and resurrection
is what the Sabbath is all about.

And then you will judge rightly.

3. Is Jesus the Christ? (v25-36)

a. Where Is Jesus From? (v25-29)

²⁵ *Some of the people of Jerusalem therefore said, “Is not this the man whom they seek to kill?*

²⁶ *And here he is, speaking openly, and they say nothing to him! Can it be that the authorities*

really know that this is the Christ? ²⁷ But we know where this man comes from, and when the

Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from.” ²⁸ So Jesus proclaimed, as he taught in

the temple, “You know me, and you know where I come from. But I have not come of my own

accord. He who sent me is true, and him you do not know. ²⁹ I know him, for I come from him,

and he sent me.”

Some of the people were beginning to wonder.

“Is not this the man whom they seek to kill?

And here he is, speaking openly, and they say nothing to him!

Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Christ?”

But they were uncertain—because they believed Jesus to be from Galilee.

Jesus does not correct their misimpression.

It would do no good to tell them that he had been born in Bethlehem.

Oh, it might gain a few more camp followers,

but Jesus isn’t interested in numbers.

He did not come to gain a following—he came to die.

And his hour has not yet come.

So all he says is:

“You know me? You know where I come from?”

I don’t think so!

“He who sent me is true, and him you do not know.

I know him, for I come from him, and he sent me.” (Verses 28-29)

Where is Jesus from?

Bethlehem?

No.

Jesus is not from Bethlehem.

Sure – he was born there.

Nazareth?

Well, he was conceived there.

But he is not from Bethlehem – he is not from Nazareth.

He is from the Father.

He is the one who was with God in the beginning.

He is the one who was God in the beginning.

b. Many of the People Believed (v30-31)

³⁰ So they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come. ³¹ Yet many of the people believed in him. They said, “When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done?”

Again they seek to arrest him,

“but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come.”

And in spite of all his indirection, many of the people believed on him.

They have seen the signs, and while they don’t understand who he is,
they do understand that this is the Messiah.

Unlike their leaders, they do know the Father—and they have heard his voice.

John talks about this more in 1 John 3.

1 John 3:1 says that “the reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.”

And 1 John 3:13—“Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you.

We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers.

Whoever does not love abides in death.”

And 1 John 3:16,

“By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us,

and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.”

What was Jesus’ hour?

Jesus’ hour was when he laid down his life for us.

Jesus’ hour was the cross.

All of history was narrowing down to that one moment.

No longer was the focus on the everlasting covenant,
or the age to come.

It was not even the Year of God’s favor,
or the Day of his Visitation.

It was the hour—the precise moment—
the crux of history—when all things would be laid bare.

And in that hour the cosmos would tremble at the revelation of God’s justice and mercy.

And because that hour has come,
you can never be the same again.

Because Jesus has laid down his life for you,
you must lay down your life for others.

How do you hear that?

Is it “because Jesus died for me, therefore I *have to* do this...”

If so, then you are missing the point.

1 John 4:7-21

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

¹³ By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

¹⁴ And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.

¹⁵ Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. ¹⁶ So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. ¹⁷ By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. ¹⁹ We love because he first loved us. ²⁰ If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot^[a] love God whom he has not seen. ²¹ And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

c. “Where I Am You Cannot Come” – Jesus and the Greeks (v32-36)

³² *The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to arrest him. ³³ Jesus then said, “I will be with you a little longer, and then I am going to him who sent me. ³⁴ You will seek me and you will not find me. Where I am you cannot come.” ³⁵ The Jews said to one another, “Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him? Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? ³⁶ What does he mean by saying, ‘You will seek me and you will not find me,’ and, ‘Where I am you cannot come?’”*