

St. John's Gospel

Session #13

We left off last time with Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem, a 7 day festival celebrating God's provision to the Jews during the wilderness wandering period. In chapter 7 – Jesus claims to be the “bread of life”, the “living waters”, in other words – he claims to be the fulfillment of the two main provisions during the wilderness wandering period – manna (the bread), and the water (from the rock). In effect he is claiming to be God.

We now pick it up in chapter 8, vs. 12 - We noted last week that ch 8: 1-11, which is the story of the woman caught in adultery – was inserted right into the middle of the story of the Feast of Tabernacles. My RSV Bible – shows this by separating 8:1-11 from both ch7:52 and 8:12. Many of you indicated your Bible also spaces it to show it is inserted into chapter 7 and the story of the Feast of Tabernacles. We will come back to the story of the woman caught in adultery later.

So lets read ch.8: 12-20

Vs. 12 – Jesus claims to be the “light of the world” – He who follows me – will not walk in darknes, but will have the light of life. This claim to be light – some believe to be connected with the prophet Zechariah, ch. 14:508 (read this). Zechariah prophesied late – probably 520-518 BC, after the fall of Jerusalem. His zeal was for the rebuilding of the temple, which was the center of Jewish faith and life. Ch. 14: 5-8 is a prophesy about the coming of the Messiah.

“then the Lord your God shall come, and all the holy ones with him. On that day there shall be neither cold nor frost. And there shall be continuous day (it is known to the Lord), not day and night, for at evening time, there shall be light. On that day living waters shall flow out of Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea, and half of them to the western sea, it shall continue in summer as in winter”.

Bread, Living Waters, Light – all symbols and fulfillments of Messianic expectations. These are very bold claims by Jesus.

You will also remember from the story of the Exodus, that they were led by night by a pillar of fire that provided light for their journey, through the darkness of night. (Ex 13:21) “and the Lord went before them by day, in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give light, that they might travel by day and by night”.

In the actual Feast of Tabernacles, on the 1st night, there was a ritual lighting of 4 golden candlesticks, which took place in the Court of Women. Jewish historians place Jesus in the Court of Women for this claim to be the light of the world.

We also recall the Prologue to John's Gospel, ch 1:1-5 – “In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it”.

Also we remember Jesus dialogue with Nicodemus in ch 3: 19 - "And this is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than the light, because their deeds were evil"

Also we remember I John 1:5 - "This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all".

Ch 8: Vs 13-20 - Well as you would imagine, this claim to be the Light, did not sit well with the Pharisees. They say to Jesus: "you are bearing witness to yourself. Your testimony is not true".

Vs. 14-18 - Jesus sort of agrees with the Pharisees. But he says: "Even if I do bear witness to myself, my testimony is true. I know where I have come from, and where I am going. But you do not know where I come from and where I am going. I judge no one, yet even if I do judge, my judgement is true, because God the Father and I judge together. You know neither me nor the Father.

Vs. 19 - The Pharisees ask Jesus - where is your father? Jesus answers: "you know neither me nor him. If you knew me, you would know the Father.

Vs. 20 - We again see who in John's Gospel is in charge and it is not the authorities. Jesus is in charge. John tells us: "in spite of Jesus being in the treasury, no one arrested him - because his hour has not yet come."

8:21-22 - This section has many similarities to ch 7: vs 33-36:

7:33b - I am going away - 8:21a

7:34a - you will look for me - 8:21b

7:34b - Where I am going - 8:21c

7:35 - misunderstanding by Jews - 8:22

7:36 - Jesus repeat Jesus statement - 8:22

8:23-24 - serve as an answer to vs. 22 and the Jewish misunderstanding. "You are from below, I am from above" "you are of this world, I am not of this world".

Vs. 24 - Once again, Jesus tells the Jews - everything about their eternal fate depends on one thing - whether or not they "believe". Belief is what determines the fate of the soul. If you believe in me, you will not die in your sins.

Vs. 25 - The Jews ask Jesus bluntly: "Who are you?". Jesus responds - even who I told you I was from the beginning.

Vs. 26 - Jesus says: "I have much to say about you" "The one who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him".

Vs. 27 - The Jews do not understand He is speaking of God the Father.

Vs. 28 – Jesus clarifies - He will be “lifted up”, on the cross and then you will understand. I do nothing on my own accord and authority, but speak as God the Father taught me.

Vs. 29 – He who sent me is with me, I am not alone. I always do what is pleasing to Him.

Vs. 30 – As he spoke these words, many believed in Him. When Jesus speaks the Word, people are changed within.

We will pick it up there next week.