

25. Jesus Went to the Feast of Tabernacles

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that those who have not yet come to Jesus in true faith and belief will have many different opinions about Jesus. We saw that we want to help our children learn to share the Word of God clearly so that the Trinity can work to change those opinions. In our topic today, we are going to see what Jesus taught when He went to the feast.

We saw in our last topic, that Jesus had gone up secretly to the feast. John 7:14-19 says, “Now about the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught. And the Jews marveled, saying, ‘How does this Man know letters, having never studied?’ Jesus answered them and said, ‘My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or *whether* I speak on My own *authority*. He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him. Did not Moses give you the law, yet none of you keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill Me?’” Here, we see that Jesus waited until the middle of the feast and then He went into the temple and began teaching.

The Jews were amazed at the teaching of Jesus. They asked the question, “How does this Man know letters, having never studied?” This was the same reaction that Jesus had received twice before. Luke 2:46-47 says, “Now so it was *that* after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.” In these verses, we see that the religious leaders in the temple were amazed at the understanding of Jesus when He was just twelve years old. Then, when Jesus first taught in Galilee, Matthew 7:28-29 says, “And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” Jesus had never studied under any of the Jewish rabbis, yet the Jews recognized that His teaching was greater than any rabbi.

Then, Jesus explained the source of His teaching in answer to their question. Jesus began His answer by saying, “My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.” Jesus said that the source of His teaching was supernatural because it was from the Father who had sent Him. Jesus said that those who chose to do the will of the Father would know whether He was speaking from God or speaking from His own authority. Jesus had said earlier in Jerusalem in John 5:30, “‘I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.’” Then, Jesus said in Galilee in John 6:38, “‘For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.’”

Then, Jesus gave a very important statement. He said that those who speak from themselves seek their own glory. That is common in many people today. In contrast, Jesus said, “He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.” Jesus never looked for His own glory because He is the One who is both the truth and also true. He is the One who has no unrighteousness in Him. Jesus was the One who also kept the law perfectly. Then, Jesus reminded the Jews that Moses had given them the law. However, He pointed out that none of them

had kept the law perfectly. Romans 3:19 says, “Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” In fact, they were seeking to kill Him at that very moment. The fact that they were seeking to kill Him only revealed the purpose of the law. The law could never make a person righteous. It can only show a person when he is guilty.

The people immediately reacted when Jesus said that they wanted to kill Him. John 7:20-24 says, “The people answered and said, ‘You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You?’ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘I did one work, and you all marvel. Moses therefore gave you circumcision (not that it is 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 should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath? Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.’” Here, we see that the people said that Jesus had a demon because He thought that they wanted to kill Him.

The Jewish religious leaders tried to cover up their desire to kill Jesus. John 5:16 says, “For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath.” Jesus had just healed the man that had been paralyzed for 38 years when the Jews wanted to kill Him. Then, in John 5:17-18, we read, “But Jesus answered them, ‘My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.’” Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.” This was the first return of Jesus to Jerusalem since the things that happened in John 5. As a result, this is the work that still caused the religious leaders to want to put Jesus to death.

The first reason for the anger in John 5, was due to the fact that Jesus had healed a man on the Sabbath day. Jesus then reminded the Jews that Moses had given them the law and that they were to circumcise each baby boy on the eighth day. That meant that there were boys being circumcised every Sabbath. However, it was Abraham who had been told to circumcise each male child on the eighth day and that happened hundreds of years before the law was given. Genesis 17:12 says, “‘He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant.’” In addition, this was a direct command from God to Abraham. Jesus said that He did no more work to speak the words that healed a man on the Sabbath than Abraham, Moses or the Jewish religious leaders of Jesus day did to circumcise a child on the Sabbath.

Jesus then told them to stop judging according to the outward appearance. 1 Samuel 16:7 says, “But the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For *the LORD does not see* as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.’” The Jewish religious leaders were giving an example of what the Lord had told Samuel. They were judging Jesus because He had healed on the Sabbath. That did not break any commandment in the Bible. However, the Jews were upset because it showed that their traditions were not from God but from their own human ideas.

Jesus told the Jewish religious leaders that they needed to learn what it meant to judge according to righteous judgment. In the Old Testament, the Jews had accused the Lord of not judging. Habakkuk 1:4-5 says, “Therefore the law is powerless, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; therefore perverse judgment proceeds. ‘Look among the nations and watch—be utterly astounded! For *I will* work a work in your days *which* you would not believe, though it were told *you*.” God told the Jews in the Old Testament, that He would judge in His time. Then, in 1 Corinthians 6:5, we read, “I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren?” Here, we see that God also equips wise men to judge with righteous judgment in cases where there is a dispute.

There were other Jews in Jerusalem, that knew that the religious leaders wanted to kill Jesus. John 7:25-27 says, “Now some of them from Jerusalem said, ‘Is this not He whom they seek to kill? But look! He speaks boldly, and they say nothing to Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is truly the Christ? However, we know where this Man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from.’” Here, we see that the Jews who knew that the religious leaders wanted to kill Jesus were very confused in their thinking. They saw that Christ was speaking boldly in the temple and the religious leaders were not saying anything to try and stop Jesus from speaking.

Suddenly, these Jews reached a new conclusion. They said among themselves, “Do the rulers know indeed that this is truly the Christ?” Here, we see that they began to wonder if the religious leaders actually knew that Jesus was the Christ and were unwilling to admit it. This explains why the people had become very confused. One of the responsibilities of the religious leaders was to protect the people from false teachers. Since the religious leaders were doing nothing to stop Jesus, these people began to wonder if the religious leaders actually knew in their hearts, that this was the Christ.

The Jews in Jerusalem, all knew that Jesus came from Galilee. They also thought that no one would know where the Christ would come from when He came. As a result, they could not figure out things clearly in their minds. In John 6:42, we see that the Jews in Galilee had said, “And they said, ‘Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, “I have come down from heaven?”’” The fact that many of the people in Galilee knew the family of Jesus had been one of the things that caused the Jews in Galilee to refuse to believe that Jesus was the Christ. Here, this same confusion was now present among many of the Jews who lived in Judea because they saw that their religious leaders were not doing anything to stop Jesus from speaking while at the same time they knew that the religious leaders wanted to kill Jesus. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that today there are also many people confused about whether Jesus is God. That confusion will continue in those people, until they come to Jesus in repentance and faith. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children to understand the results of unbelief in the lives of others.