



February 9, 2025

Jesus at the Festivals

THE FEAST OF BOOTHS (PART 1)

John 7:1-24



1. **Opening Discussion Questions:** (in a group setting you may not want to use all of these)
 - a. Two holidays are closely identified with summer in America: Memorial Day and Independence Day (4th of July). How do you celebrate the two holidays? Is there any reason the celebrations should be fundamentally different? Have you ever considered that the celebrations may have lost their intended purpose over time?
 - b. Have you ever thought you knew someone well only to learn something about that person that completely changed your opinion of her/him (it could be for the better or for the worse)? Without revealing personal identities, describe the situation. How did you feel when you learned that your opinions of the individual were wrong?
 - c. Excluding any living American politician, what is the most surprising, outlandish, challenging, or even ridiculous statement you've ever heard a public figure make? Why did you find it so? Over time was your view of the statement vindicated or did events show that the statement was not as strange as you had thought?
2. **Sermon Outline/Key Points**
 - a. Be Sensitive to God's Timing
 - i. After months in Galilee, the brothers of Jesus challenged Him to return to Jerusalem
 - ii. Jesus was perfectly aware of God's timing and completely submitted to it
 - iii. Be obedient to God's timing in your life and ministry
 - b. Those Sincerely Seeking God's Will Eventually Recognize the Authority of Jesus' Words
 - i. The marvelous teaching of Jesus demonstrated He was sent by God
 - ii. Keep the word of Jesus central as you share the Gospel
 - c. In Confusing Times, Focus on Godly Fruit Rather than Godly Appearances
 - i. Jesus remained controversial after healing the disabled man on a Sabbath in John 5
 - ii. Judge wisely as you navigate tensions and apparent conflicts between theology and practice
3. **Study/Discussion Points:**
 - a. **Sunday Afternoon** – As soon as possible after listening to the sermon set aside some time to ponder these questions prayerfully:
 - i. What one thing most stood out to you in this sermon?
 - ii. What new truth did you learn or of what truth were you reminded?
 - iii. After listening to the sermon, is there a Scripture passage you feel led to meditate on or commit to memory this week?
 - iv. What is one thing you feel God is leading you to do after hearing this message?
 - v. Did God convict you of a need to make any changes in your life and walk with Him?

b. Monday:

- i. This week's sermon is the first of three associated with the Feast of Booths, also known as the Feast of Tabernacles, Feast of Ingathering, Sukkot, or sometimes just "the feast". Understanding this feast and how it was celebrated helps understand what Jesus teaches in the passages that will be used for the next three weeks. Read these passages:
 1. Exodus 23:14-17
 - a. What instructions did God give to the Israelites concerning the three annual festivals?
 - b. How do you explain that both Feasts prescribed in verse 16 seem to celebrate the same thing – the collection of food?
 2. Leviticus 23:33–43
 - a. What additional details concerning how the Feast is celebrated are provided by this passage?
 - b. What is the attitude to be during this celebration (verse 40)?
 - c. What reason is given for the celebration?
 3. Numbers 29:19-39
 - a. What is the purpose of these instructions?
 - b. Who would have been responsible for obeying these instructions?
 4. Deuteronomy 16:13–15 and 31:10-13.
 - a. What additional details are provided about who should celebrate?
 - b. What do these verses tell us about the purpose and activities of the Feast?

c. Tuesday:

- i. Another extremely important event occurred just 5 days before the Feast of Booths. Read Leviticus 23:18. How does the mood described for the Day of Atonement differ from that prescribed for the Feast of Booths? Why would rejoicing be particularly appropriate after the Day of Atonement?
- ii. In the passages read yesterday God commanded all men to participate in the Feast at the place He chose (Jerusalem). How faithful do you think the Israelites were in obeying God?
 1. Read 1 Kings 8:1-2 & 65-66 and 2 Chronicles 5:2-3 & 7:8-10. Why would having Solomon's Dedication of the Temple coincide with the Feast of Booths have given greater meaning to the Feast in the future?
 2. Read Nehemiah 8:13-18. What do these verses suggest about the Israelite's faithfulness in obeying God's commands? How does verse 18 demonstrate a change in mindset (revival)?
 3. We may think of the Feast of Booths as interesting history. Read Zechariah 14:16. How does this passage show it is far more than historical?
- iii. During the intertestamental period two ceremonies were added to the Feast of Booths and may have been the backdrop for two of Jesus' main teachings.

1. Water was drawn from the Pool of Siloam and carried in a procession to the Temple where it was poured out at the altar – supposedly as a memorial to receiving the water from the rock in Horeb (see Exodus 17:6-7)
2. Several huge lamps were placed in the Court of Women and lit in the evening as a memorial to the pillar of fire that led the Israelites by night. Reportedly they lit up much of the city.

d. Wednesday:

- i. Before focusing on this week’s focal passage read quickly through John’s entire description of the events that take place at the Feast of Booths – John 7:1-8:30 – in order to get the big picture in context.
- ii. Read and meditate on John 7:1-12.
 1. According to verse 1, why was Jesus in Galilee? Was Jesus afraid of what the Jewish leaders could do to Him? If not, what explains His unwillingness to go to Jerusalem (see verse 6)?
 2. What do Jesus’ brothers’ comments tell you about them and what they were interested in? What selfish reasons might they have had for wanting their brother to risk His life by going to Jerusalem?
 3. Verse 5 tells us that His “brothers did not believe in Him.” What do you understand John to be saying in that statement? What do you think they would have told Jesus if they did believe?
 4. Jesus answers His brothers by referencing “His time” twice (verses 6 & 8). Compare this with similar comments He makes in John 2:4, 8:20, 12:23, 13:1, and 17:1 about “His hour”? What, if anything, do you think is different between His time and His hour?
 5. What is Jesus telling them when He says, “your time is always here”?
 6. What different message does Jesus have for us than He told His brothers in verse 7 (see John 15:18 & 24, 17:14, 1 Timothy 3:12, and 1 John 3:13)? What reason does Jesus give for this (verse 7 and John 3:19-20)?
 7. How would you explain the apparent inconsistency between what Jesus says He is not going to do and what He does (verses 8 & 10)?
- iii. What speculations and opinions are circulating among the various groups in Jerusalem before Jesus arrives for the Feast?

e. Thursday:

- i. Read and meditate on John 7:13-19.
 1. What does verse 13 tell you about the Jewish leaders? How secret were their plans?
 2. The Feast of Booths lasted 7 days with an extra day of worship at the end. What reason might Jesus have had for waiting until the middle of the feast to make an appearance?
 3. What was the reaction of the Jewish leaders to what Jesus taught?
 - a. What does their reaction suggest about how they viewed the accuracy of what Jesus taught?
 - b. If Jesus had been teaching a doctrine that they did not agree with would they have been likely to credit Him with learning?

- c. Following that line of reasoning what could we conclude was the real objection and reason for wanting to kill Jesus?
 - 4. Where did Jesus say His teaching came from (see also John 8:28 and 14:24)? In view of John 10:30 and 17:21-23 what could Jesus just as well have said? What does it tell us about His nature and the relationship between the Father and the Son that He gave this answer?
 - ii. How does Jesus say we can know if His teachings come from God?
 - 1. How would you paraphrase verse 17 in modern language?
 - 2. Read Psalm 25:14. How does this verse clarify what Jesus is teaching?
 - 3. How do you think John 6:44, 6:65, and 14:6 relate to Jesus' statement in verse 17?
 - iii. What quality did Jesus say a person of truth possesses? Based on this statement by Jesus what should we do to be men and women of truth? Who should our actions seek to honor?
 - f. **Friday:**
 - i. Read and meditate on John 7:20-24.
 - ii. In view of John 7:13 why is the crowd's reaction in verse 20 unexpected?
 - iii. What did Jesus say that astonished the people? What one thing do you think He was referring to (see John 5:18)?
 - iv. Verse 24 sometimes seems to contradict what Jesus taught in Matthew 7:1. How can both be true? Read 1 Samuel 16:7, Isaiah 11:3-4, John 8:15, and 2 Corinthians 10:7. What insight do they provide about judgment?
 - g. **Saturday:**
 - i. Read and meditate on John 7:1-24.
 - ii. How does this passage illustrate the various responses people have today when confronted with His teachings?
 - iii. What truths do you see in this passage that should affect the way you live as a Christian?
4. **Application:**
 - a. God's time is not our time. He works on a perfect timetable and we need to be receptive to the fact that things may not happen when we want. We need to pray regularly for the patience to "wait upon the Lord" (Psalm 27:14 and 38:15).
 - b. Despite significant progress in the church there is still an all too frequent tendency to judge by appearance. Whether that judgment is based on race, economic status, or just physical appearance Jesus tells us to stop doing so. How often in our judgment do we ignore obvious moral shortfalls (ongoing sin) in our deference to appearance? Pray that the Holy Spirit will guide you to make righteous judgments when necessary and to avoid judging based on appearance in any situation.
5. **Prayer Points:**
 - a. Adoration – Psalms 8:1 and 29:1-2
 - b. Confession – Proverbs 28:13 and 1 John 1:8-10
 - c. Thanksgiving – Psalms 95:1-2 and 100:4-5
 - d. Supplications –Matthew 21:22 and John 16:19