

JOHN

Lesson 8 w/Answers

John 7:1-53

In this lesson we follow Jesus to Jerusalem as he confronts the Jewish teachers and leaders.

We will note again in this lesson that the timing of the Messiah's work was always paramount with Jesus. As we study his teachings, we should be mindful of his awareness of proper timing, and we should also be mindful from the disciples' experience in Capernaum in the last lesson that they are beginning to have a difficult time understanding his teachings.

Read John Chapter 7 and respond to the following:

1. Earlier, in John 7:6, Jesus had responded to the disciples' request for him to travel with them to Jerusalem by telling them that his time had not yet come. To understand how Jesus was always aware of timing, read the following verses and note what each says relative to the Messiah's timing: John 12:23-28, John 13:1, and John 17:1.
 - a. ANSWER: We see in these verses that Jesus, the Messiah, was following God's divine plan, and nothing was done outside of that plan and God's timing. The same will be true when Jesus returns—it will occur precisely as God has planned it, and not a moment too soon or too late. Putting our faith in Jesus as our Savior gives us the assurance that all of God's plan will be accomplished through him, and exactly according to God's plan.
2. Jesus arrives secretly in Jerusalem and stays hidden for three days until he begins to teach in the Temple. The crowd is perplexed and questions his authority to teach, because he was not taught by any particular known teacher. Jesus establishes his authority to teach, and begins in verse 24 with a teaching that is hard for all of us to put in practice. What is that practice, and how is Jesus telling us to change and turn away from that practice?
 - a. ANSWER: All of us have fallen into the trap that Jesus pointed out to the crowd at the Temple: we judge by appearances. What kind of clothes a person wears, the job that they have or do not have, their physical characteristics (the color of their skin, their height, their weight, etc.) their titles, their dress (neat or disorderly), and so on. It is of course easy for us to judge in this manner since we don't have to do anything but look. However, judging correctly requires us to think and to see beneath the surface. It requires us to have the Holy Spirit living in us. The crowd at the Temple did not have the Holy Spirit. Instead, they were living by manmade rules and judging strictly based on these rules. As followers of Jesus, we need to learn to judge differently.
3. Read Galatians 5:16-26. How does the guidance provided in this verse help us avoid judging solely on appearances? How, then, are we to act? What basis should we use for judging anyone, or anything? Jesus tells them to "judge justly," and we are to do likewise, using discretion and wisdom. In addition to Galatians 5:16-26, also read Matthew 23:23 and John 5:39-40. What can we learn about judging from these verses?
 - a. ANSWER 1: First, we see that we should be judging by, and using, the fruits of the Spirit. As believers in Christ, we are also to think and behave differently than those who are of the world.
 - b. ANSWER 2: Additionally, we note that the only way to judge correctly is through the Holy Spirit. The crowd was following man's teachings combined with only a superficial knowledge of scripture. Jesus is pointing out to them that until they accept him as their savior, they will never be capable of judging correctly. This is because the world corrupts our bodies and our minds; it is only through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that we can see the world as it truly is, and judge correctly.
4. Read John 7:25-30. Why did the crowd try to kill Jesus when he made these statements?
 - a. ANSWER: They were angry that a mere carpenter's son from Galilee was telling them that he was from God.
5. In John 7:25-30, we observe the crowd moving forward to seize Jesus; however, they were unable to. What happened, and why?
 - a. ANSWER: The angry crowd wanted Jesus arrested for claiming to be from God, but they were not able to accomplish this, "because his hour had not yet come." Once again, we see that everything is only accomplished according to the proper time, and not man's—no matter the size of the crowd or the level of their anger. God's hand was over Jesus, and nothing happened to him.

6. What happened with respect to God's Kingdom as a result of Jesus' faithfulness in preaching the truth? Even when the crowd grew angry and wanted to arrest him, Jesus did not alter his teaching nor his faith in the Father. As a result, read what happened in John 7:31. What can we learn from this to apply to our own lives, as we work in the kingdom serving Jesus?
 - a. ANSWER 1: We see that in spite of the anger and unrest, "many of the crowd began to believe in him."
 - b. ANSWER 2: As a result, we see that if we are doing God's will, no matter the circumstances, the Gospel can and will reach people, e.g., even if the environment is unsettled and bordering on violence. We should stand with faith doing the work of God, trusting that our faith will produce fruit in the kingdom.
7. In John 7:37-44, we find Jesus at the last, and greatest, day of the Feast of Tabernacles. Let's consider the events on this last day, so that we may better understand Jesus' teaching regarding "living water." Specifically, on each day of the Feast of Tabernacles, a processional led by the priests from the temple would go down to the Gihon Spring. There, a priest would fill a gold pitcher with water while the choir sang Isaiah 12:3. Then the procession would return to the Temple, where the priest would pour out the water on the altar. This ritual reminded them of water coming out of the rock during the wilderness wanderings (see Numbers 20:8-11 and Psalm 78:15-16), and it spoke prophetically of the coming Messiah (see Zechariah 14:8, and 14:16-19). On this last, and greatest day, Jesus does not sit to teach (as was the custom), but rather he stands and exclaims something. What does he tell them, and what does John 7:39 tell us that it was referring to?
 - a. ANSWER 1: He tells them that anyone who is thirsty should come to him and drink, and that whoever believes in him will have rivers of living water flow from within them.
 - b. ANSWER 2: This verse also indicates that Jesus was referring to the Holy Spirit, which all believers would receive.
8. Read Isaiah 12:1-6. In order to understand the crowds' reaction in John 7:40-44, we need to understand what the crowd would have known about this passage in Isaiah. You will recall that, during the processional, the choir sang Isaiah 12:3. Read the entire passage, Isaiah 12:1-6, and at the same time, imagine that you are standing in the middle of the crowd in the Temple, witnessing the processional and hearing Jesus' proclamation. What is being revealed by Jesus that is also referenced in the Isaiah passage?
 - a. ANSWER: Jesus is telling them that he is the salvation referenced in Isaiah 12:3—he is the fountain that salvation flows from. He is also trying to get them to realize that, just as referenced in Isaiah 12:6, "the Holy One of Israel" is "in your midst."
9. Given what we just learned regarding the processional and the passage in Isaiah, how did the crowd react to Jesus' statement? (see John 7:40-44)
 - a. ANSWER: Some realized immediately that he was the Messiah, and some thought for sure he was a prophet; but some did not believe. Once again, they judged based on man's knowledge, arguing about Jesus' birthplace and where he grew up. Even with all of the miracles, all of the teachings, and now, this clear indication of Isaiah's prophecy pointing to the Messiah, many still did not believe.
10. The remaining verses of John Chapter 7 show us the reaction of the Pharisees when confronted by those who wanted Jesus arrested. Even the guards recognized the Jesus was not simply a common man, and that what he was saying was making a lot of sense. The Pharisees reacted immediately with disgust at anyone who wanted to believe that Jesus was the foretold Messiah. How did the Pharisees treat the guards, and how did they treat Nicodemus?
 - a. ANSWER: They treated the guards as though they were ignorant and beneath the teachings of the Pharisees. Furthermore, they insulted Nicodemus, a respected teacher within their midst, because of his entreaties and his belief that Jesus was from God.

Blinded to the real truth by their worldly pride and desire to maintain their power, the Pharisees refused to consider any evidence that supported Jesus being the true Messiah. Their desire to control the Jewish population, to remain in power, and to arrest Jesus grew stronger with each passing day. Jesus, however, had a different plan and timetable. He was following God's will and not man's.

In our next lesson, we will continue to see stark contrasts between the Pharisees and the non-believers on one side, vs. the Messiah and those who followed him.

Have a blessed week as you continue to study with us,

In Christ,

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