

Gospel Reflections:
JOHN 7

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JOHN 7:1-23

¹ After these things JESUS walked in Galilee: for He would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill Him.

² Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand.

³ His brethren therefore said unto Him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that Thy disciples also may see the works that Thou doest.

⁴ For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If Thou do these things, shew Thyself to the world.

⁵ For neither did his brethren believe in Him.

⁶ Then JESUS said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready.

⁷ The world cannot hate you; but Me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

⁸ Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for My time is not yet full come.

⁹ When He had said These Words unto them, He abode still in Galilee.

¹⁰ But when His brethren were gone up, then went He also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.

¹¹ Then the Jews sought Him at the feast, and said, Where is He?

¹² And there was much murmuring among the people concerning Him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but He deceiveth the people.

¹³ Howbeit no man spake openly of Him for fear of the Jews.

¹⁴ Now about the midst of the feast JESUS went up into The Temple, and taught.

¹⁵ And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth This Man letters, having never learned?

¹⁶ JESUS answered them, and said, My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me.

¹⁷ If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of GOD, or whether I speak of Myself.

¹⁸ He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh His glory that sent Him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.

First, the time of The Festival of Tabernacles – “SUCHOTH,” the feast of booths or “ingathering” - arrives. This is the third greatest holiday on the Jewish calendar. Its primary meaning is a commemoration of Israel’s passage through the desert of Sinai under the hand of The LORD, The Glory of The Presence of The Almighty leading them by a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. It is also a time of thanksgiving for the harvests given to the Israelites by GOD’s hand. It is a time of offerings given up to GOD.

And it is a time of solemn gathering to hear the reading of The Law of GOD from The TORAH. Today observant Jews build booths in their yards with open roofs, a reminder of the nights in which the ancient Israelites slept under the open skies of Sinai, The LORD looking over them. It is a time of family thanksgiving and festive joy. [Fausset’s Bible Dictionary]

Moses gives The Divine Command for the Feast of Tabernacles in EXODUS 23:16, “And the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field.” And more exactly in LEVITICUS 23:34-36, “Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto The LORD. On the first day shall be an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto The LORD: on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto The LORD: it is a solemn assembly; and ye shall do no servile work therein.”

הַיְהוּדָה חַג הַסּוּכוֹת

This feast of Booths, HAZEH HAG HASSUCHOTH.

Now here is The same LORD Incarnate, Who had lead and watched the forefathers of the Jews, come among His covenant people. And they seek to murder Him, The Anointed One! So JESUS enters Jerusalem secretly, and convicts us in two things most deeply: First, that if we indeed love GOD, we will seek to do His will. The will of GOD for all mankind is revealed in His Son JESUS CHRIST. You can not claim to love GOD The Father if you do not seek to do what GOD The Son commands.

Second, when we do the works of GOD, what is our motivation. Is it the acclaim of men, or the acclaim of GOD? Do we seek our reward in the glory of this world, or do we give the glory to GOD? The Almighty calls His faithful people to give to the poor, to pray privately and publicly, to fast. But what is the purpose that we seek in our hearts when we do so?

As CHRIST says to us in MATTHEW 6:2, “Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men...” And again in verse 5, “And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men...” And again in verse 16, “Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast...” For truly, when we do these things, our reward is only of men, and not of GOD. As did JESUS Himself, we should obey the will of GOD for us because of our love for Him!

JOHN 7:19-24

¹⁹ Did not Moses give you The Law, and yet none of you keepeth The Law? Why go ye about to kill Me?

²⁰ The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill Thee?

²¹ JESUS answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel.

²² Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on The Sabbath Day circumcise a man.

²³ If a man on The Sabbath Day receive circumcision, that The Law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at Me, because I have made a man every whit whole on The Sabbath Day?

²⁴ Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

We Must wonder how JESUS CHRIST would be received by The Church and observant Christian people if He were to suddenly to walk into our Houses of Worship today. Here The Anointed One is hated by His people because He did good by healing a man on The Sabbath Day. These were the people who had The Law of Moses, and they kept well the letter of GOD's Commands, but had lost any deeper understanding of The Spirit of The Law of GOD. Are we at times not like this today in The Church?

So The Almighty laments of His wayward and hardhearted people in HOSEA 6:4-7, "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away. Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by The Words of My mouth: and thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth. For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of GOD more than burnt offerings. But they like men have transgressed The Covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against Me."

What does The King of the universe require of us? The same thing of The Church – and even more! – that He required of ancient Israel, as the prophet declares in MICAH 6:6-8, "Wherewith shall I come before The LORD, and bow myself before The High GOD? shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will The LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth The LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God!"

JOHN 7:25-36

²⁵ Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this He, whom they seek to kill?

²⁶ But, lo, He spiketh boldly, and they say nothing unto Him. Do the rulers know indeed that This is The very CHRIST?

²⁷ Howbeit we know This Man whence He is: but when CHRIST cometh, no man knoweth whence He is.

²⁸ Then cried JESUS in The Temple as He taught, saying, ye both know Me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of Myself, but He that sent me is true, whom ye know not.

²⁹ But I know Him: for I am from Him, and He hath sent Me.

³⁰ Then they sought to take Him: but no man laid hands on Him, because His hour was not yet come.

³¹ And many of the people believed on Him, and said, When CHRIST cometh; will He do more miracles than these which This Man hath done?

³² The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning Him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him.

³³ Then said JESUS unto them, yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto Him that sent Me.

³⁴ Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come.

³⁵ Then said the Jews among themselves, whither will He go that we shall not find Him? Will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?

³⁶ What manner of saying is this that He said; ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come?

Again JESUS chastises the people of GOD and most especially their leaders, a warning for The Church in all ages, but most especially for today! Here the people of GOD who claimed to know The Father Above, but did not, were face to face with The Anointed One of GOD and could not see Who He was! Many of the people clamored, "Will The Messiah do more miracles than This Man when He comes? Certainly This is either The Prophet Who comes to precede The Messiah, or He is The Messiah Himself!"

But the blind guides of GOD's people sitting in the seat of Moses could see only their own glory and not The Glory of The LORD before them and in their very midst! So The Lord says well elsewhere in The Gospels, as in MATTHEW 23:23-26 in the woes He pronounces upon the Pharisees and the scribes of His Day, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also!"

JOHN 7:37-53

³⁷ In the last day, that great day of the feast, JESUS stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.

³⁸ He that believeth on Me, as The Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

³⁹ (But this spake He of The Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for The HOLY GHOST was not yet given; because that JESUS was not yet glorified.)

⁴⁰ Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, of a truth This is The Prophet.

⁴¹ Others said, this is The CHRIST. But some said, Shall CHRIST come out of Galilee?

⁴² Hath not The Scripture said, That CHRIST cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?

⁴³ So there was a division among the people because of Him.

⁴⁴ And some of them would have taken Him; but no man laid hands on Him.

⁴⁵ Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, why have ye not brought Him?

⁴⁶ The officers answered, never man spake like This Man.

⁴⁷ Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived?

⁴⁸ Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him?

⁴⁹ But this people who knoweth not The Law are cursed.

⁵⁰ Nicodemus smith unto them, (he that came to JESUS by night, being one of them,)

⁵¹ Doth our Law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?

⁵² They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee arises no prophet.

⁵³ And every man went unto his own house.

On the 8th day of SUKKOTH, The Saviour stands up in The Temple and speaks. Again many of the people, and even some of the rulers, speak well of Him, but others speak evil of Him. Again JESUS offers Himself as The Source of all earthly life, and The Giver of eternal life, The Living Water of GOD offered to all men. And again we see that JESUS comes and there is division among men, "Is This The Messiah of GOD or a deceiver in league with the devil? Is This The Promised One of The Almighty or one who merely makes promises of himself?"

Note that Saint John reminds us how any people who have not The Law of GOD in their hearts and governing their lives are cursed. Here was the covenant people of GOD, and they had The Law of GOD externally, but lacked it within their hearts! Therefore are they cursed by The very Giver of That Law, for they cherished the letter of That Law for its own sake, as is often still the case even today, over The Giver of That Law Himself!

Consider the song of Maschil the Ezrahite unto The LORD in PSALM 89:14-18, "Justice and judgment are the habitation of Thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face. Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of Thy countenance. In Thy Name shall they rejoice all the day: and in Thy righteousness shall they be exalted. For thou art The Glory of their strength: and in Thy favour our horn shall be exalted. For The LORD is our defence; and The Holy One of Israel is our King!"

But consider the frightful alternative! If any people do not dwell in the justice and judgment of The Almighty, if they spurn the mercy and truth from the very face of The LORD, they are a cursed people! They shall know no joy and they shall walk before The LORD in darkness. Before The Name of The Almighty they shall mourn all the day long, and the righteousness of The King of Glory shall crush them in their sin. The Truth of GOD shall be their very weakness and the judgement of Heaven shall crush them into the dust of the earth. The LORD is their enemy, and The Holy One of Israel is their Destroyer!