

To Jerusalem

Dear Ladies, this is our last lesson. I am amazed how quickly we have come to this point! I hope it has been a wonderful journey for you and a season to come to know Jesus better. It has been a time to glimpse Jesus' humanity, his love, and his consuming compassion, as well as his deity. We have travelled so many places with him and his disciples. We have seen miraculous events and wondrous healings; we have heard difficult teachings and puzzling parables. Jesus has revealed his Father's love, his kingdom, his plan, and himself to us. Last week we stood with the disciples as they proclaimed Jesus to be the Son of the Living God, and then in the next breath struggled over who would be greatest in his Kingdom. We stood with the disciples on the mountain and observed the Transfiguration and then could not come to terms with Jesus' predictions over his death. This week we will head to Jerusalem with Jesus for the Feast of Tabernacles¹.

Let's take a few minutes to come before the Lord in prayer asking for his blessings upon our studies. There is still so much for us to learn and understand even this week before the end of our study. *Lord, we humbly ask for understanding and a heart to seek the truth contained in your Word. You have graced us with a feast of your Word this week. Please bless this Dear One with the hunger to pursue your teaching, and the understanding to let it nourish her soul!*

Jesus Laments Over Jerusalem

In our first passage of study this week we are travelling toward Jerusalem with Jesus and his disciples. Along the way he continues to heal the crippled, teach his disciples, and preach in the synagogues of the towns and villages through which he passes. On his approach to Jerusalem he has an encounter with the Pharisees.



Read Luke 13:31-35 and answer the following questions.

¹ The book *Feast of the Lord*, by Kevin Howard and Marvin Rosenthal (Published by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Nashville Tennessee, 1997) was most helpful in understanding the customs and fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles as described in these pages.

"Who Do You Say I Am?"

Lesson 9 Homework Answers

Who told Jesus to leave? _____ . Do you think these Pharisees were friends of Jesus, or were they intimidating Jesus, hoping to dissuade him from going to Jerusalem?

What does Jesus response imply? (v. 32-33)

Look up 1 Kings 19:9-10; 2 Chronicles: 24:19-21; Jeremiah 26:20-23. What information do they provide regarding Jesus' final statement in Luke 13:33?

Who does Jerusalem represent?



Why does Jerusalem destroy the Prophets of God?

Despite knowing what will befall him in Jerusalem, what does Jesus long to do?

Complete the following verse: *"I tell you you will not see me again until you say,*

' _____ '

Look up Psalm 118:25-26. What did we learn in our lesson in our last meeting about this Psalm?

When will Jerusalem see Jesus again?

It is hard to believe that the Pharisees' threat of danger coming from Herod is valid. Herod the Great had died during Jesus' childhood and was succeeded by Herod Antipas who did indeed behead John the Baptist. Throughout much of Jesus' ministry Herod has had little mention in the Gospels until we reach Jesus' trial before Herod in Luke 23:8-12. It is possible that the Pharisees mentioned in this passage could have been attempting to protect Jesus from viable threats from the religious leaders in Jerusalem, but then why didn't they admit that? More likely these Pharisees were not sympathetic to Jesus'

ministry. They were trying to prevent Jesus from going to Jerusalem and disrupting the “powers that be” in Jerusalem. Wherever Jesus went, crowds followed and the Pharisees suffered ridicule and embarrassment at Jesus’ words and teachings.

Jesus would not be dissuaded from his mission. He had to go to Jerusalem to fulfill his mission from the Father. He would not be deterred from his healing work or from reaching his final destination. That destination – Jerusalem was where he, Israel’s Prophet and Messiah would meet his death by divine necessity. Not only would it be in Jerusalem, but also at the hand of Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the political, as well as, the religious center of Israel and symbolized all of Israel. In Jerusalem Jesus would be rejected by Israel just as the prophets of Israel’s history had.

Jesus longed to draw the nation to him, to protect and shepherd them as the Good Shepherd. Instead he was rejected. They were not willing to come to him. His entire ministry was dedicated to offering the Kingdom of God to the nation of Israel. But just as the nation had killed its prophets, it rejected Jesus, too.

Many in Israel would see Jesus upon his entry into Jerusalem for the Festival of Passover and hail him as God’s anointed, but the religious leaders would not acknowledge him. One day he will be hailed as Messiah when he comes again to usher in the millennial kingdom.

Jesus Teaches in the Temple

The Feast of Tabernacles has arrived in Jerusalem, and so has Jesus. We were told in John 7:6-9 that Jesus did not join his family in traveling to Jerusalem. Instead he chose to go alone to Jerusalem in his own timing, and discretion. It was not yet time for a publicly heralded entrance. As we begin today’s lesson, take a few minutes to pray with the Lord over the scriptures we will be studying.



Read John 7:10-36 and answer the following questions.

We know that many in Jerusalem were looking for Jesus during the feast days. In fact, verse 11 says: *“Now at the Feast the Jews were watching for him and asking, “Where is that man?”* It was widely believed that Messiah would make an appearance during the Feast of Tabernacles, would this be the year? Read through verses 12-20, what do people say about Jesus?

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When did Jesus go up to the Temple Courts and begin to teach?

Why were the Jews amazed at Jesus' teaching?

Where does Jesus teaching come from?

What does verse 18 tell us about those who *“speak on their own”* compared with the one *“who works for the honor of the one who sent him?”*

In verses 21-24, Jesus is addressing the crowd in the Temple Court. In the crowds would have been visitors, students, rabbis, Pharisees, and the Temple Guard. He tells them *“Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment.”* Based on his example in these verses, how are they judging by appearance and what is a “right judgment”?



What do Verses 25-31 convey about the understanding of the crowds who are listening to Jesus?

Jesus does finally come to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles. He makes his appearance in the Temple Courts during the day when rabbis and pharisees would have been teaching their students and anyone who wanted to hear the teachings could come and listen. Just as when he was a youth, all are amazed at his understanding and teaching. It is widely known that he did not receive his training in the conventional method of the rabbis. He had not been a student of any of the prominent rabbis and teachers of the law. Jesus answered the crowds that his teaching came from God, and that he was sent by God to teach the Truth. By the very fact that he claims to be serving God he is not exalting himself as *the* authority, as the preeminent teachers do. He subjects himself to God's authority;

therefore his teaching is True and Right. The teachers exalt themselves and their own understanding which is self-serving, not God-serving. They twist and subvert the law to suit and exalt themselves. He accuses them of not being able to live according to the law they hold up to others, and even breaking the law by plotting to murder him.

The crowd (and likely some among them are religious leaders) attempts to deflect his charge against them by accusing him of being demon-possessed, which should be understood in the sense of calling him crazy or paranoid. It is an insult designed to publicly discredit and dismiss Jesus in front of the crowds before he could gain any more power and popularity among the crowds seeking a messiah.

Jesus then points out the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. The Pharisees permit circumcision on the Sabbath because it is such an important command from God and is a sign of Israel's covenant and unity with God. According to the Pharisees, it should supersede the Sabbath Law which prevents work on the Sabbath. Circumcision deals with only part of the body, while Jesus' healings heal the body and soul. By their own logic, healings too ought to supersede Sabbath Law. A right judgment is one based on love and the needs of the desperate, not adhering blindly to laws when they don't bring God's justice – love and compassion.

Then some in the crowd recognize Jesus, and know of the religious leaders' plot to kill him. They voice this fact to the crowd and begin to wonder if the religious leaders have changed their mind about who Jesus is. The very fact that he is teaching publicly reveals that the leaders have done nothing to prevent him. Jesus' very presence is taken as a silent acknowledgment of their approval. The crowd debates among themselves and becomes confused over the lack of leadership among the religious leaders regarding Jesus. If he was a deceiver he should be arrested. But if he was the Messiah he should be recognized as such by the religious leaders. This passage ends with the fact that no one was able to seize him and "*many in the crowd put their faith in him*" with the thinking that no one could possibly say and do more than Jesus has done. He must be the Messiah.

The Last Day of the Feast

In our last passage of scripture we will join Jesus in the Temple Courts for the *Hoshana -Rabbah* Ceremony. It is the pinnacle of the week-long Feast of Tabernacles. Take a moment to pray to Jesus to give you the eyes to see the events unfolding before us and the heart to understand Jesus' words and actions as recorded by John.



Read John 7:37-52 and answer the following questions.

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What day is it and based on our group lesson what is the significance of this day?

What does Jesus proclaim?

 Read the following scriptures. What does Jesus' claim signify?

- Isaiah 12:2-3

- Isaiah 44:3-4

- Isaiah 58:11

Jesus receives a mixed response: some believe and others reject him. Why do the crowds begin to doubt Jesus? **Because they don't know he was born in Bethlehem, that he is born in the House or Line of David.**

In verse 45, who gathered together?

Why didn't the Temple Guard arrest Jesus?

What does *“Has any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believe in him?”* allude to?

Hopes for blessings of plentiful water and the coming Messiah were at a fever pitch by this time in the week-long festival. It is the last day and crowds are gathered into the Temple court to watch the priests perform the Great Hosanna Ceremony. Just as the High Priest pours out the water offering from the golden pitcher, Jesus' voice rings out with *"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."* (John 7:37-38) Jesus' words quote Isaiah 55:1, *"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters"*. The offer of living water alludes to a messianic theme of the prophets, particularly Isaiah, wherein the living water is associated with the blessings of Messiah and the Holy Spirit. By promising the living waters Jesus was doing something only the Messiah could do: offer the Holy Spirit to all who would believe. Messiah ushers in the Holy Spirit, the blessings of living water gushing forth from the hearts of all who will believe. The people of Israel are the dry and parched land of Isaiah's prophecy. Jesus was boldly claiming to be the Messiah in the midst of the Great Hosanna Ceremony.

His claim was met by mixed responses. Some believed and exclaimed, *"Surely this man is the Prophet"* and others, *"He is the Christ"*. But many did not believe his words because what little they knew about Messiah – *that he would come from Bethlehem and the House of David* – did not match what they thought they knew – *Jesus was from Nazareth*. They couldn't reconcile this man with what little they knew of the prophecies about Messiah. The crowds were divided over who they thought him to be.

The Religious Leaders on the other hand already decided he wasn't the Messiah. The Chief Priests² were the Sadducees who controlled the Temple worship, and the Pharisees, who established the Oral Traditions and controlled the synagogue worship throughout Israel, likely comprised the Sanhedrin. They came together and summoned the Temple Guard (the Levites who patrolled the Temple and enforced Temple law) to give an account as to why Jesus hadn't been arrested for interrupting the sacred ceremony of the *Hoshana-Rabbah* (*Great Hosanna*). By not arresting or confronting Jesus the Religious Leaders failed to prevent the crowds from following Jesus. None of the Pharisees or Priests had sanctioned Jesus as the Messiah. Jesus did not have their permission to intervene in the ceremony, and yet because no one stopped him it did not appear to the crowds that the Religious Leaders had denied his claim of Messiah. The Religious Leaders failed to deny Jesus publicly, and he became a greater threat to their political power and position. Even by failing to deny his claim, they were in a way acknowledging that Jesus was the Messiah and they would have to submit to his authority. No wonder they were furious! Jesus took over the most holy day of the festival commemorating God's presence dwelling with Israel during the desert wanderings; and then, proclaimed himself the awaited Messiah fulfilling

² The Chief Priests are the 24 head priests of each of the 24 divisions of the priesthood – see 1Chronicles 24:1-19 for more information.

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the Messianic role of the Festival. They failed to publicly put an end to Jesus' claims and people were still intrigued by him.

One Last verse to ponder anew in the context of the Feast of Tabernacles:

John 1: 14 says, *“The Word became flesh and made his _____ among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”* Jesus made his dwelling among us. The same word “dwelling” in the Greek here is translated “tent” or “tabernacle” as it is in Hebrew³. We can say that Jesus came to “tabernacle” among us. When Jesus proclaimed himself Messiah at the Feast of Tabernacles, he was proclaiming that Messiah had come to tabernacle, to *dwell* among them.

It has been my joy and pleasure to lead you on this journey with Jesus. I hope it has transformed and deepened your understanding of who Jesus is. We have experienced so much of his humanity and witnessed the power of his divinity in this study. Just like Peter I stand in awe of who I've witnessed Jesus to be. I can only exclaim, *“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”* Thank you for this opportunity to put this study together for you and to share it with you. I have learned so much about my Savior over the weeks we've spent together. You have given me valuable insight through your questions and our discussions. I know that our Lord is so pleased with your effort to keep up with this study! It has been long, time consuming, and even difficult at times; but Jesus will certainly bless you for the time you have spent with him. I can think of no better blessing than time spent getting to Him better, and learning to discern his voice through studying His Word. He loves *you* immensely, and every word recorded in the Bible is meant to bring *you* closer to Him. Take a few minutes to write a reflection or prayer to Jesus of how this study has affected your relationship with Him. You couldn't have put as much time and effort into His Word without it changing you! Keep yourself tucked into His Word. *“Man does not live on bread alone, but every word that comes from the mouth of God.”* (Matt. 4:4) God Bless you, Dear One!

³ Strong's Talking Greek & Hebrew Dictionary: **skenos**: to *tent* or *encamp*, i.e. (figurative) to *occupy* (as a mansion) or (special) to *reside* (as God did in the Tabernacle of old, a symbol of protection and communion) :- *dwell*.