

These next two chapters form one whole. They are interrupted in the middle by the story of the woman taken in adultery. We will move this to the end of chapter 8 so we can see the story as a whole.

In the last chapter Jesus had returned to Galilee from celebrating the Feast of Pentecost in Jerusalem. He has ministered there all summer and had gained such a following that the people wanted to make him king. That would have been very unwise politically because Rome would have squelched it like we can an ant. Jesus did not allow this to continue and the irrational fervor of the masses was quelled.

By the end of the summer, however, the crowds had significantly thinned out. How fickle we all are! **Has your fervor for the faith and for Jesus dimmed from your early days in the faith?**

Now it is fall, and time for the most loved feast of the Jews, Succoth, or the Feast of Tabernacles (Booths). This is an eight-day celebration of the fall harvest and of the wanderings in the Wilderness. The people would build little shelters out of boughs and camp out for a week. It is an annual national jamboree. You can see how the children would love it. It is feast of thanksgiving for the harvest of fruit, olives and wine. For everyone, food and wine would be flowing. Every morning the priests would draw water from the Pool of Siloam (7:37-38) and carry it to the Temple as the offering, and at night the courtyard would be lighted with enormous candelabras so the celebrations could continue well into the night.

However, as this commemorates the 40 years of wilderness wanderings, it also anticipates the second Exodus when the eschatological kingdom of God should come into fruition. It is most appropriate, therefore, that Jesus should be there with his message that the people should repent and believe, for kingdom of God is at hand.

**Lev. 23:34-36** *“Speak to the people of Israel, saying, On the fifteenth day of this seventh month [Tishri] and for seven days is the Feast of Booths to the LORD. On the first day shall be a holy convocation; you shall not do any ordinary work. For seven days you shall present food offerings to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall hold a holy convocation and present a food offering to the LORD. It is a solemn assembly; you shall not do any ordinary work.*

**: 1-9** *After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill him. Now the Jews’ Feast of Booths was at hand. So his brothers said to him, “Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you are doing. For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world.” For not even his brothers believed in him. Jesus said to them, “My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil. You go up to the feast. I am not going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come.” After saying this, he remained in Galilee.*

Jesus' brothers are not fully convinced who their brother really is. They are following him with the disciples and are witnessing the miracles and healings, and they are probably in tune with the crowd's desire to make him a king. But Jesus is not following the party line. They want him to go to Jerusalem in power to win back the disciples who have fallen aside (**6:60-66**). They are still hoping for an insurrection against Rome. But Jesus sends them on their way with all the pilgrims going to Jerusalem.

The temptation to political power is similar to the temptation by Satan after Jesus baptism.

**Matt. 4:8-10** *Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, " 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.' "*

**: 10-13** *But after his brothers had gone up to the feast, then he also went up, not publicly but in private. The Jews were looking for him at the feast, and saying, "Where is he?" And there was much muttering about him among the people. While some said, "He is a good man," others said, "No, he is leading the people astray." Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of him.*

This is the second Succoth festival (**Gen 33:17**) in Jesus' public ministry. He has also been to two Passover festivals. His reputation has spread throughout the land. The people are anticipating his arrival. The Jewish leaders are waiting for him as well, with the hope of finding a way to kill him. The people are divided about whom he is, and the political powers of the day are, as usual, suppressing free speech.

**: 14-25** *About the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and began teaching. The Jews therefore marveled, saying, "How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?" So Jesus answered them, "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me. If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority. The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory, but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood. Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why do you seek to kill me?"*

*The crowd answered, "You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill you?" Jesus answered them, "I did one deed, and you all marvel at it. Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man's whole body well? Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment."*

Jesus arrives in the middle of the festival and begins to teach in the temple. His message is similar to that which he taught in Galilee, that his authority comes from God, the Father, and therefore his teachings are the true teachings of God. If anyone wills to do God's will he will recognize that Jesus teaching is true. Note the appeal to **'free will'** here.

Jesus' teachings were as hard to accept in those days as it is today. The crowd denies that a Fatwah has been placed on him, even though at least some of them know about it (v.25). A false prophet must die according to Moses, so the question before them and before us is, **“Is he a false prophet?”**

**Deut. 13:1-10** *“If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, ‘Let us go after other gods,’ which you have not known, ‘and let us serve them,’ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For the LORD your God is testing you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice, and you shall serve him and hold fast to him.*

***But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has taught rebellion against the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you out of the house of slavery, to make you leave the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.***

*“If your brother, the son of your mother, or your son or your daughter or the wife you embrace or your friend who is as your own soul entices you secretly, saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods,’ which neither you nor your fathers have known, some of the gods of the peoples who are around you, whether near you or far off from you, from the one end of the earth to the other, you shall not yield to him or listen to him, nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare him, nor shall you conceal him. But you shall kill him. Your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. You shall stone him to death with stones, because he sought to draw you away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.*

**From the Talmud:**

“It was taught: On the eve of the Passover they hanged Yeshu. And an announcer went out in front of him for forty days saying: ‘He is going to be stoned, because he practiced magic and enticed and led Israel astray. Anyone who knows anything in his favor, let him come and plead in his behalf.’ But not having found anything in his favor, they hanged him on the eve of the Passover.”

**: 25-31** *Some of the people of Jerusalem therefore said, “Is not this the man whom they seek to kill? And here he is, speaking openly, and they say nothing to him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Christ? But we know where this man comes from, and when the Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from.” So Jesus proclaimed, as he taught in the temple, “You know me, and you know where I come from? But I have not come of my own accord. He who sent me is true, and him you do not know. I know him, for I come from him, and he sent me.”*

*So they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come. Yet many of the people believed in him. They said, “When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done?”*

The authority and the graciousness of Jesus teaching impress many people. In fact, many became believers, acknowledging Jesus to be the long awaited Messiah. He taught ‘not as the scribes.’ He did not have to appeal to the rabbinic authorities, which were the interpreters of both Scripture and the Mishna. Jesus could appeal directly to the Father.

The pressure on Jesus by the authorities is building up. They will get him, but not until spring.

**: 32-36** *The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to arrest him. Jesus then said, “I will be with you a little longer, and then I am going to him who sent me. You will seek me and you will not find me. Where I am you cannot come.”*

*The Jews said to one another, “Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him? Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? What does he mean by saying, ‘You will seek me and you will not find me,’ and, ‘Where I am you cannot come’?”*

The Temple guard has been dispatched to arrest Jesus, but they come under his spell and are unable to do so. Or maybe they were waiting for the right opportunity so as to avoid the ire of the crowd (**Mark 14:1-2**).

Anyone who truly seeks Jesus will find him. Therefore, Jesus is speaking another parable here using physical searching to teach spiritual searching. There can be a time when one seeks for him but cannot find him because the one has refused to respond when the Father sought him (**Matt 8:11-12; Heb 10:26-31**).

When they finally do put Jesus to death, they do in fact send him to the Greeks (Gentiles), for through his death and resurrection he brings salvation to all nations, by way of his followers and the Holy Spirit.

**: 37-39** *On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ ” Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

On the seventh day of the feast the priests would go down to the Pool of Siloam once again. A large train of Jews would follow them down, and then back up to the Temple. There would be rejoicing and great delight. The men and boys would carry a bunch of willow and myrtle boughs in their right hand and hold aloft citrus fruit in their left hand signifying the harvest gathered in. They would sing the Hallel (**Psalms 113-118**), crying, “Give thanks to the Lord” (**118:1**), three times. They would then shout “O Lord save us!” (**118:25**).

Once in the Temple they would march around the altar seven times carrying the holy water, and then pour it into a large silver bowl. A second silver bowl would be filled with wine, and then the two bowls would be poured out as an offering to God. The crowd would then call out, “Lift up your hand!” The priest would raise his hand aloft to show that he had faithfully discharged his duty.

**Zech. 14:16-17** *Then everyone who survives of all the nations that have come against Jerusalem shall go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Booths. And if any of the families of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them.*

Jesus uses this occasion to show to the people that He is the true water every man needs. The Temple ceremony is a picture of Jesus as the true water poured out for the people. He is the Rock that gave them water in the wilderness. This can be translated:

*If anyone is thirsty let him come to me,  
And let him drink who believes in me.*

In the last chapter he fed the multitude with bread. The hungry one was invited to *come and eat*. Now the thirsty one is invited to *believe and drink*. This is the essential call of Jesus to all of us. It is a call to his eschatological kingdom that begins here and extends into eternity (**Ezekiel 47:1-10; Rev 22:1-5**).

**: 40-44** *When they heard these words, some of the people said, "This really is the Prophet." Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Is the Christ to come from Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" So there was a division among the people over him. Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.*

No one can remain neutral when confronted by Jesus and his revelation of God.

Here are three common responses to Jesus:

1. This really is the Prophet (**Deut 18:15, 18**).
2. This is the Christ (Messiah)
3. He is a charlatan. He is from Galilee, not Bethlehem (**Micah 5:2**)

What are our responses to Jesus today?

1. He was a great teacher and left us a good example.
2. He is the Christ (Messiah).
3. He was a charlatan who has fooled millions of people for the past 2000 years.

**: 45-52** *The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why did you not bring him?" The officers answered, "No one ever spoke like this man!" The Pharisees answered them, "Have you also been deceived? Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed." Nicodemus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them, "Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?" They replied, "Are you from Galilee too? Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee."*

I think the officers were astounded by Jesus teaching, and were convinced of the truth of his teachings. *No one ever spoke like this man*. Our role on earth is to be witness to Jesus. If we show Jesus to our neighbors and friends hopefully many will respond as these skeptical tough Temple guardsmen did.

Nicodemus, who was one of the Sanhedrin, stuck his neck out in Jesus' defense. The response was vicious. They accused him of ignorance of the Scriptures. They had forgotten that Jonah came from Gath-hepher in Galilee (**2 Kings 14:25**). Rightly, the Messiah was known by all to come from the house of David, and Bethlehem, his home.