

# Bible Study Notes

Friday Night, October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017 - Second Day - Feast of Tabernacles

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## John 7 and Religious Authority

### John 7:1-2

The Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. Jesus was going to go up to Jerusalem to keep the Feast.

### John 4:20-24

In this passage Jesus was teaching the woman at the well. She was a Gentile. The Jews had an advantage over the Gentiles because they had the Old Testament Scriptures and were very well grounded in them (Romans 3:1).

What's the difference between the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles and the Christian Feast of Tabernacles? It is similar to the difference between the "Passover of the Jews" and the "Christian Passover" (John 2:13; I Cor. 5:7-8). One distinction is that the Jewish observance was tied to the location of the physical temple at Jerusalem (until its destruction in 70 AD), while the Christian observance was not. The Church of God is the temple of the New Testament (I Cor. 3:16-17; Eph. 2:20-22; II Cor. 6:16-17). It keeps the Feast of Tabernacles today in many different locations around the world, and is led by the Spirit of God (Rom. 8:14). Where the true Church is, that's where the temple is today (Eph. 2:20-22; II Cor. 6:16).

### John 7:2-10

Jesus' brothers assumed he wanted to have a reputation and to be seen and well known by others. That was totally untrue. At this time, Jesus' brothers didn't believe in him. At least two of his half-brothers eventually did come to believe in him - James (author of James) and Jude (author of Jude).

People always wanted to say something negative about Jesus! Notice - they were always ready to accuse Him or put Him down. Jesus did end up going to the Feast, but in secret, all alone and not shown to anyone else.

### John 7:11-13

The Jews were expecting Him at the Feast - they knew He kept the Feast. They were ready to persecute him too! Notice, there was controversy and division. Some people thought Jesus was a good man, others had the opposite opinion of Him. Don't expect universal or even widespread acceptance if you are ever called by God to a position of influence - it just doesn't happen that way because the majority of people in this world are being influenced by Satan. Read John 9's blind-man story, John 12:37-43, John 15-16, Hebrews 13:10-14 and other such Scriptures to see how people who are not connected to God usually react to those who are.

The Jewish people feared their leaders, and did not want to be put out of the synagogue for expressing any form of belief in Jesus (9:22; 12:42-43). Jesus was a real burden to the Jewish leaders of His day (11:46-8). That feeling filtered down to many of their lay members.

### John 7:14-36

The Jews didn't know how Jesus received His education and understanding. Jesus said that if anyone really knew God, they'd recognize that His doctrines came from God. The Jewish leaders of that day THOUGHT that they knew God (8:37-42), but they really DIDN'T (8:44). Jesus knew that He had come from God. He had grown up in a totally different way from everyone else. However, for anyone else to believe in Jesus meant being excommunicated from the synagogue (16:2-3). Mr. Armstrong said that if Jesus were here today, He'd be rejected all over again, just as He was at His first coming!

#### John 7:40-52

Great division surrounded Jesus. Even the officers were impressed with Jesus' teachings. But the Pharisees were outraged! None of them had believed in Jesus - except Nicodemus. They were so caught up in their own understanding, they couldn't figure Jesus out, nor the truth of God.

#### Phil. 3:4-14

One of the most amazing things that happened during the first century A.D. was that Saul of Tarsus - one of the highest religious leaders of the Pharisees in his day - ended up converting, believing in and becoming an apostle of Jesus Christ, whom the other Pharisees opposed tooth and nail. Paul (formerly Saul) gave up everything he had - his entire religious upbringing and career as a Pharisee - counting it all as rubbish - in order to become an apostle of Christ. His family undoubtedly opposed this vigorously! Paul was from the strictest sect of the Pharisees (Acts 26:5), the son of a Pharisee (Acts 23:6).

The first law of success is to set the right goal for your life (Matt. 6:33) - to be in the first resurrection at the second coming of Christ (I Cor. 15:50-54; I Thes. 4:15-17; Rev. 20:4-6). This means becoming and remaining connected to God and Christ in this age (John 3:3-8; 15:1-8) and driving yourself relentlessly toward the "prize" of eternal life (as a runner in a marathon race charges toward the finish line - I Cor. 9:24-25; II Tim. 4:7-8; Heb. 12:1). This goal will NOT be understood and well-liked by your former friends and companions (I Pet. 4:4)!

#### Gal. 1:1, 6-24

"The initiative was God's!" is what Paul is saying here. Paul wasn't preaching to please men. If he did, he would not be a servant of Christ. If God takes the major initiative of calling someone off of a path they had previously followed, that's a really BIG DEAL!

People get confused and have difficulties with the book of Galatians. Paul actually wrote this on a much higher level than most of the Church of God members were aware of. He was writing on a level which the Pharisees and other Jewish leaders of his time could understand. He was telling them to "Back off!" He knew what he was talking about - he himself used to be a part of the Jewish religion, had persecuted the Church of God and now was a part of it. He knew very well what he was doing when he wrote Galatians!

Paul had been a super-Pharisee. He knew their way of thinking in depth. God called him out of that religion, educated him directly by Jesus Christ and sent him out as Christ's minister.

#### Gal 4:1-6, 21-31

In Old Testament times, God raised up the Levitical priesthood - the family of Aaron - to shepherd the Israelites in religious and secular matters. They were the temporary "guardians and stewards" of Israel, of whom Paul is speaking in this passage. Think of Donald Trump's young child, Barron. He is heir of a vast fortune and immense power. But, for now, he's simply

regarded as a child until he becomes old enough to handle the wealth he will inherit. It's the same thing with the Church of God.

Even Jesus was under the Old Testament Levitical system while growing up. He acknowledged the leadership of the Pharisees (Luke 2:46; Matt. 23:1-3). So did all of the apostles and original church members, until God called them out from under that system, which became obsolete (Matt. 21:42-45; Heb. 8:13). Today, we need not be subject to the authority of any religious organization that is not obeying and being led by God. To be under that kind of bureaucracy would be "bondage" (Gal. 5:1). Paul did not want his converts to be brought under the Pharisaical system he had come out of. That is what the book of Galatians is all about. It should be studied alongside of the book of Hebrews, chapters 7-10.

Today we are under the New Covenant, directly under God and His government, not under the Old Covenant represented by the religious leadership of the Levitical priesthood. We are not to be brought under the bondage of men who are NOT connected to God! God's true Church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:20). The Bible is the foundation of the Church.

#### Gal 6:12-18

The "Israel of God" consists of those who are truly connected to God through the Holy Spirit (John 15:1-8; Rom. 8:9) and are under the high priesthood of Jesus Christ (book of Hebrews). The true Christian is a new creation (II Cor. 5:17) - a new person who follows God's way of life - and who receives the education that comes from God through Christ and His chosen apostles (Col. 3:10, 16).