

## February 11: John 7

Vs. 1-36, Jesus takes the threats against him by the religious authorities in Jerusalem seriously. For this reason, at first he refuses his brothers' suggestion that he accompany them to Jerusalem for the Festival of Booths. His brothers believe in him and want him to be as widely known as possible –that means more work in Judea, and less in backwater Galilee. Jesus essentially tells them to go without him, but then he does end up going in secret (similar to the wedding at Cana where at first he refuses his mother's suggestion, but ends up doing what she wanted in the end). Even though Jesus was not visible at the festival, there was a lot of complaining about him behind his back. When people talk about you, you're in good company, they did it to Jesus too! Some defended him as a good man, while others said he was a deceiver. In the middle of the festival (it lasted for 7 days), Jesus broke his secrecy and began teaching publicly in the temple. This is a dramatic entrance, for no one knew that Jesus was in Jerusalem. Some were astonished by his wisdom, for he'd had no formal education. Jesus gives all the glory to God, stating that his teaching comes directly from God and is intended for the glory of God. Jesus controversially points out the double standard of the law which Moses handed down: boys are expected to be circumcised on their 8<sup>th</sup> day, even if it's the Sabbath, but healing (literally "making whole") is forbidden on the Sabbath. What could be more important than making a person whole? This further angered those who were already trying to kill him, but many in the crowd believed in him "When the Messiah comes, will he do more signs than this man has done?" Jesus is speaking of his death and resurrection in verse 33-34, but the people misunderstand and think Jesus intends to travel to Greece to teach and perform signs.

Vs. 37-52, The last day of the festival of booths recalls the story of Moses drawing water from the rock in the wilderness (Numbers 20: 2-13), this story was commemorated as a way of promising future blessings. Jesus connects himself with that life-saving water which flowed from the rock in the wilderness. Jesus is the life-sustaining gift of God. Jesus invites anyone in need to draw near to him and receive what they need. When Jesus says "drink" he is referring to drinking of the Spirit, which will be poured out on his followers on the day of Pentecost (or, according to John's account, when Jesus comes to his disciples in the upper room and breathes his spirit on them). The Holy Spirit is the living water –the life sustaining gift for the world- that flows out of the believer's heart. Vs. 41, while some believe that he has to be the Messiah, others are uncertain because he's from Galilee and not Bethlehem or Jerusalem. The temple police are sent to arrest him but even they come to believe in what he's saying and forget their duties! Vs. 50, Nicodemus' faith continues to evolve, once a secret believer, he now defends Jesus' before the other religious authorities: they accuse the crowd of not knowing the law, but they themselves disobey the law by condemning Jesus without a hearing. His peers accuse him of being a Galilean sympathizer.