

Jesus - Millenium Man (4)

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[0 : 0 0] I pray that you'll help us to understand and apply this word to our lives, that we may bring you glory, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Much of what happens in John's Gospel, and certainly distinct from the other three Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, which are called the Synoptic Gospels, because they see things with a similar perspective, much of what happens in John occurs in Jerusalem rather than in Galilee, and in the context of the Jewish feasts of Jesus' day.

This chapter is no exception. We saw in chapter 2, if you remember, the Passover festival. It's mentioned a couple of times in chapter 2 and referred back to in chapter 4, and it's the Passover, it seems, probably two years before Jesus died.

It was in that context that Jesus went up to Jerusalem and cleansed the temple. Chapter 5 began with a reference to a feast of the Jews, but we're not told which feast.

Chapter 6, which we saw last Wednesday night, is in the context of the Passover, when Jesus feeds the 5,000, and that's part of the interpretation of that miracle, is in the context of a new Exodus event and the Passover and rescue and so on.

[1 : 2 3] In chapter 7 tonight, the context is the Feast of Tabernacles. I'll say a little bit more about that in a minute. But just to complete the picture, in chapter 10, there is a feast of dedication, and then most significantly of all, of course, is the Passover at which Jesus died.

The first sounding of that comes as early as chapter 11, when Jesus goes up to Jerusalem for it. It's part of the background then a few times in chapter 12 and in 13 and then in 18 and 19, when finally Jesus is crucified.

Especially the Feasts of Passover, Weeks and Tabernacles were the main three feasts of the Jewish calendar, all of which have their origins in the Old Testament, and they were meant to be pilgrimage feasts, where at least the men would go up three times a year to Jerusalem for the festival, each of which would last a week.

So that is why Jesus in John's Gospel goes up to Jerusalem so many times. In saying that, I don't mean to say that the other Gospels are disagreeing with John, it's just that their area of interest is basically what happens in Galilee, in between the feasts.

John has more of a Jerusalem orientation to his Gospel. They're the three main feasts. The instructions for them are given in Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy. All of them had a harvest association about them.

[2 : 5 1] The Passover was the commemoration of the Exodus itself from Egypt, of course, and I mentioned a bit about that last week. Seven weeks after that festival occurs the Feast of Weeks, hence the name.

Seven weeks, counting inclusively, ends up with being 50 days, not 49, and the Greek expression for that is the name of Pentecost. And then the other feast, which occurs about six months later in our September or October, is the Feast of Tabernacles.

I should have said the Feast of Weeks, commemorated in particular the giving of the law at Mount Sinai, because roughly speaking, it was that length of time from leaving Egypt to arriving at Mount Sinai.

So it came to have, as well as a harvest festival, the association of the giving of the law. That, of course, is fulfilled on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, when the law is written in the hearts of believers by the Spirit.

And then the Feast of Tabernacles in our September-October was a feast that commemorated the provisions of God in the wilderness time. All of those feasts look backwards to God's events in the past, but all of them also look forwards, anticipating their fulfillment or realization one day, when God would send his Messiah to feed them spiritually and so on.

[4 : 16] Now, to say a couple more things about the Feast of Tabernacles, because that's the festival that is the background in John 7. As I say, it's September-October. It was the harvest of fruits like olives and grapes, and I think dates and those sorts of fruits, rather than barley and wheat, which were earlier in the year at the time of Passover and the Festival of Weeks.

At this festival, when the men would go up to Jerusalem, they would build little shelters, booths, out of branches of trees and so on, or bits of tent and goat hide and so on.

The idea being that they would live in those sorts of tents or booths to commemorate the time when in the wilderness they lived in tents on their move from Egypt into the Promised Land.

Even today, Jews do that, at least symbolically, and in high-rise-type apartments, you'll see sometimes on the balconies of those houses a little booth, because it's the only place that they can make one to celebrate the festival.

As I said, the festival commemorates God's provision during the wilderness, and two things in particular in Jesus' day were recalled at that time. One is that in the wilderness God provided water, in the middle of the desert, water from the rock.

[5 : 40] The other thing was that he provided light for them to guide them through the wilderness. We know from the Old Testament that God provided a pillar of cloud by day and fire or light by night to guide them in the wilderness.

So they became two symbols of that festival of tabernacles in Jesus' day, water and light. We'll see how that's applied later on. Probably in Jesus' day, this was the feast that was the most popular.

Josephus, the Roman historian who lived just after Jesus' day, overlapped with him in lifespan, says in his history. So then, that's by way of background to what's going on in this chapter.

But Jesus at this time is in Galilee. That's where he was last week for the feeding of the 5,000. Galilee is in the north, around the Sea of Galilee. Jesus' base was there at Capernaum.

Nazareth is in Galilee and so on. Jesus went about in Galilee, we're told in verse 1, he didn't wish to go about in Judea because the Jews were looking for an opportunity to kill him.

[6 : 49] By and large, the Jews mean the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem rather than Jewish people generally because the people of Galilee were Jews as well, by and large.

And it was safer for Jesus to be in Galilee, not Judea. They had a different government. The Romans were not in charge. Herod Antipas was, although he was no goody.

And Jesus is safer there. And it seems from that verse, he's going about doing ministry and teaching and healing and so on, like the Synoptic Gospels tell us he did. Now, the Jewish festival of booths was near.

So his brothers, that is his physical brothers, sons of Mary and Joseph, we know that after Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph presumably did get married and had other children, we're told.

James was one of them. But in Jesus' lifetime, before his death and resurrection, they were unbelievers. So they said to him, Leave here and go to Judea so that your disciples also may see the works you're doing.

[7 : 53] For no one who wants to be widely known acts in secret. If you do these things, show yourself to the world. Now, this chapter is full of heavy irony and we'll see lots of verses that are slightly ironic in their meaning.

Jesus' brothers are speaking from the point of view of being unbelievers. Verse 5 tells us that in brackets, for not even his brothers believed in him, they think that if Jesus is performing all these signs, they fail to see the significance of them, then get a bigger audience.

If you're such a miracle worker, why just do miracles in the back blocks of Galilee? Go to Jerusalem where the crowds are, especially at the Feast of Tabernacles.

That's the time when the city is full of people. So it's a strategic time to do miracles and signs, to display your wares. So to speak. Jesus, of course, has a different agenda.

He's not on about that. Although the irony of the verse, when they say to him, show yourself to the world, is that he'll do precisely that at a festival, the next festival of Passover, and he'll show his works to the world, so to speak, by hanging on a cross to die.

[9 : 07] There's the irony in what Jesus will eventually do compared to what his brothers think. They don't understand what's going on. And they also say, show yourself to the world as though the world is neutral and eager to hear what Jesus is on about.

Well, Jesus challenges that view of the world in the next few verses. He said to them, my time has not yet come, but your time's always here. Now, we saw that sort of expression in the first week, in John 2, when he said to his mother, Mary, my hour has not yet come, which always refers to his death.

Here, it's not the word hour. It is the word, or a word for time, but time not in the sense of just chronology running sequential time, but time as in the time of opportunity, a special time.

Now, Jesus here is saying, it's not the right time for me to go to the feast. He's not saying I'm not going to go, although he's not saying that he will go, but he's saying it's not the right time for me to go, because later on, of course, he does go, but your time's always here.

You go. Some suggest that there's actually quite an undercurrent of rebuke here because to say that there is a special time for doing something picks up some ideas, say, in that famous passage in Ecclesiastes, where there is a time for mourning, a time for joy, a time for dancing, a time for this, a time for that.

[10 : 39] It's a statement of God's sovereignty, that if we're living, under God's sovereignty, then we do things at the right time. When Jesus says to his brothers, anytime's all right for you, some suggest that what he's actually doing is saying to them, you're not aware of God's sovereignty.

You just do what you like. You're ignoring God. That's a bit of a veiled comment, but there may be some truth to that part of what Jesus is saying to his brothers. But then he corrects their idea about showing himself off to the world.

He says, the world cannot hate you, but it hates me. They've just said, go and show all your miracles to the world. Jesus says, the world hates me. And the reason it hates him is not because of the miracles, but because I testify against it that its works are evil.

Jesus is acknowledging here a moral component to what he's on about, that his brothers have failed to understand. And throughout John's gospel, the world, in God's or Jesus' eyes, or in John's eyes, is the world opposed to Jesus and God.

It doesn't carry, usually, a neutral connotation. So in John 3.16, for God so loved the world that he gave his only son, it's not talking about the universal extent of God's love, that God so loved the whole world, that it's actually God loved the world that is its enemy, his enemy.

[12:07] That is, God is loving his enemies, the world that is hating him and opposed to him. That's the dimension in that verse. And the same thing here, the same idea of the world.

The world hates Jesus because its works are evil, and Jesus is exposing that. It's the same idea where men love darkness rather than light, because the light of God exposes the darkness of their deeds.

So that's the idea in what Jesus is saying here. Well, he, and that idea occurs several times in John's Gospel. Well, he tells them, go to the festival.

He tells, I'm not going to this festival by implication now, for my time, my quality time, or time of opportunity, as I said before, has not yet fully come.

He's not talking about the cross there. That's the hour has not yet come. He's just saying, it's not yet the right time to go to the festival. In the context of verse 1, where he's afraid, or he's not in Judea because he's afraid of being got at, it seems he's delaying his entry or time of arrival at the festival.

[13:16] So after that, he remained, we're told, in Galilee. But later, he went. His brothers had gone, and then at some stage, later in the festival, before its end, Jesus goes from Galilee down to Jerusalem.

Rather than being in the great pilgrimage procession, he may well have traveled by himself. Maybe it would take a couple of days, keeping himself to himself. The festival's well and truly underway, it seems, by the time he goes.

He's not lying when he says to them, I'm not going to this festival in verse 8. It's not that he changes his mind. It's just that he's going for the end of it, because that's the strategic time, as we'll see in a minute.

The Jews, though, in the meantime, were looking out for him. Clearly, he's created some stir. They're actually noting the fact that he's not there, because he's been to other festivals that pass over the previous year, and so on, and they're expecting him to be there, and they're looking out for him, to kill him, because that's what they've been wanting to do since chapter 5, at least.

So there is enmity against Jesus in Jerusalem, and they're looking out for him, and they're wondering, where is he? And there was considerable complaining about him among the crowds, we're told in verse 12.

[14:37] So it's not just the leaders that are looking out for him, but even the crowds were murmuring, grumbling, complaining about him. Maybe the fact that he's not there, maybe the things that he'd said and done.

Now, I think there is also an added irony here, because if you remember, the Feast of Tabernacles commemorates the time in the wilderness, God provided miraculously, yes, that's what the feast was celebrating, but on the other hand, if you read Exodus and Numbers, you realize that the time in the wilderness, from Israel's point of view, was a time of grumbling, and murmuring, and complaining, at every point, about the water, or lack thereof, about the food, or lack thereof, about the meat, or lack thereof, about everything else that was going on.

Before they'd even crossed the Red Sea, they were complaining. So, I think this comment here, probably alerts us to the fact, that these Jews are no different, from the early Israelites.

They murmur, and they complain as well. Some of them were saying, he's a good man. Others were saying, no, he's deceiving the crowd.

There's debate. They don't know. They can't tell. Which is really a sad indictment, that you cannot identify, the Son of God, as being the Son of God.

[15 : 56] Some people even think, that he's bad. That just shows, how blinded and dark they are, in their thinking. Yet no one would speak openly, about him for fear of the Jews.

It's clear that the leadership, that's the Jews, is against him. And so there is this sort of, surreptitious discussion. Do you think he's a good man or not?

But they're not going openly, because nobody wants to be, identified with him, because they're afraid, of the Jewish leaders, who it is clear, are opposed to him. Now the next section, is Jesus' initial teaching.

He's arrived, his arrival's not noted, but about the middle of the festival, Jesus went up into the temple, and began to teach. Now from now on, Jesus is not at all afraid, of being public.

You could be no more public, than being in the temple, at the biggest feast of the year, and teaching in the temple. Without a doubt, Jesus has seized his time, to go public, at this festival.

[17 : 04] The Jews were astonished at it, saying, how does this man, have such learning, when he's never been taught? Maybe the Jews there, is not just the leadership, of the people as a whole.

But even though, they're opposed to him, they're still astonished. He hasn't been formally trained, in a rabbinical school. Oh yes, you'd expect him, a man to probably be able, to read and write, at least basically, in that society.

But they're amazed, that he is able, to sustain such theological, argument or discussion, his knowledge of the scriptures, the Old Testament, and so on. They're astonished, just like in the Synoptic Gospels.

They're amazed, at his authority, to do with such learning, and so on. And so Jesus, answers them. Now I should also say, that's the first, of a series of questions, that are raised, to Jesus in this passage.

How does this man, which is slightly, dismissive of Jesus, have such learning? And Jesus' response is, my teaching is not mine, but his who sent me.

[18 : 12] He's applying his teaching, to God, maybe not unlike, the Old Testament prophets, who would say, thus says the Lord, making it clear, that it's not their word, but God's word. But maybe he's even making, a slightly bigger claim, than the prophets.

Anyone who resolves, to do the will of God, will know, whether the teaching, is from God, or whether I'm speaking, on my own. Now there's the test. How do we know, whether Jesus' words, are from God or not?

There's a moral component, or even a faith component here. You see, Jesus' teaching, is not something, that is an abstract, academic issue, for debate.

Whether it's true or not. The one who resolves, to do the will of God, that person will know, whether Jesus' words, are from God, or not, or not, and hence, whether they're true or not.

That is, Jesus' words, contain a commitment component, or a moral component. It's about, his truth, obligates you to action, to obedience, to God's word.

[19 : 19] It's not just, an abstract issue. It's not something, that you can say, is true, and then just put, to one side. We can say, that Julius Caesar lived, and put that to one side, but the truth about Jesus, compels us to respond.

We cannot just, academically say, yes it's true, without obeying it, and keeping it, and doing it. And that's what Jesus, is saying here. He's making it clear, that the rejection of him, is really in the end, an issue of morality, of life, of obligation, and commitment.

He's making it clear also, that understanding God's will, is impossible, without being willing to obey. Now sometimes, we Christians, are seeking God's will.

Sometimes people come to me, for help, in discerning what is God's will. But often our dilemma, in understanding God's will, is really a lack of willingness, to obey it. I mean the classic sort of case, is the person, who, who comes to a minister, who is already married, and says, I believe God is calling me, to leave my spouse, and get married, to another person.

Well there's no dilemma there, God's will is very clear, we are to be faithful in marriage. But really their dilemma, is their lack of willingness, to obey God's will.

[20 : 45] Now the same thing I think, happens on a whole host of issues, I'm not meaning to just pick one out, but our dilemmas, with God's guidance, are often, a reflection of our lack of willingness, to obey him, whatever he says.

I think Jesus is hinting towards that, in this verse as well. He goes on then, to clarify a little bit, about, about what he's just said.

Those who speak on their own, seek their own glory. But the one who seeks the glory, of him who sent him, is true, and there is nothing false, in him.

This is the distinction, he made in chapter 5. You either seek your own glory, or you seek the glory of God. If you seek your own glory, you cannot believe, and you will not believe, and therefore you won't accept Jesus, if you seek your own glory.

But if you seek God's glory, then, you will actually accept Jesus, because Jesus is, as John 1 tells us, God's glory, made manifest to the world.

[21 : 53] So what Jesus is implying here, to his, in effect, enemies, is that, the reason, you are not accepting me, is not an issue of academic truth, it's because you're not willing, to obey God.

He'll go on to say, you've got the law, but you don't keep it. It's because you're seeking, your own glory, and not God's glory. Maybe there are words of warning, for us as well.

They've contested, his credentials to teach, he turns the tables, by challenging, their competence, to listen. Well, the next section, takes this argument, a step further, and deals with the issues, of Moses, and especially, the Sabbath law, from verse 19, to 24.

Did not Moses, give you the law? The expected answer, to that question, is of course he did. In Greek, you can ask a question, which has very clearly, the expected answer, that's the case here.

Yet none of you, keeps the law. Why are you looking, for an opportunity, to kill me? Now this is, picking up the issue, of God's will, from the previous verses.

[23 : 09] They've got God's law, and Jews gloried, in the fact, that they had God's law. The problem is, that they're not doing it. And hence, as Jesus has said, back in verse 17, they're not accepting him.

They're not willing, to do God's law. He's also implying here, that if you, kept the law of Moses, which strictly speaking, is the first five books, of the Old Testament, then you would believe, in Jesus.

That's an argument, he's made clear, at the end of chapter 5, already. And that's what he's, alluding to here as well. He's saying, if you, kept the law of Moses, then you would not, be seeking to kill, me.

Because if you kept it, and therefore believed in it, you would therefore, by corollary, believe in me. Jesus has got a very high view, of the Old Testament. He's saying, if you believe the Old Testament, properly, you actually believe in Jesus.

And I think he's saying there, that the Christians, who read the Old Testament, as pointing to Jesus, have actually rightly, understood the Old Testament. Unlike so many scholars, who are not Christian, maybe Jewish today, or pagan today, who seek to read the Old Testament, without any link, to Jesus at all.

[24 : 27] That's actually sadly, the predominant, scholarly view, of the Old Testament. I think Jesus is making it clear, that it's wrong. But of course also, if they're seeking to kill Jesus, they're going to break, the law of murder.

And clearly then, they would break, the law of Moses as well. The people, the crowd this time, respond, you have a demon, who is trying to kill you.

Now remember, this is the crowd, not the leadership. The crowd know, that the leaders are opposed to Jesus. Maybe they don't know, that they're out to kill him. Maybe it's an innocent question. Although maybe, they're actually, trying to deceive Jesus, in saying, who's trying to kill you.

But the fact that they say, you have a demon, shows just how blind they are. To think that the Son of God himself, the only perfect one, actually has a demon, is an extraordinary thing.

Or maybe, more loosely, they're just saying, I think you're being paranoid. Which in that day and age, may have been attributed to a demon. But their question is, who is trying to kill you?

[25 : 35] And Jesus' reply, does not answer that question directly, but he shows why, there is opposition to him. From verse 21 to 23, he answered them, I performed one work, and all of you are astonished.

He's referring to the healing of the man, in chapter 5, it seems. That's the only miracle, recorded in John, that Jesus has done to this stage, in Jerusalem. He healed a man, on the Sabbath, at the pool of Bethesda, where the water would be, near the north side of the temple.

The man had been lame, or paralyzed, for 38 years. And it happened that Jesus healed him, on the day of the Sabbath. I perform one work. I mean, he's done many, but that's the one he's referring to.

And all of you are astonished. Moses gave you circumcision. Well, strictly speaking, it wasn't Moses, it actually came from Abraham, in Genesis 17, but it's in the Mosaic law.

And traditionally, Moses was the author of Genesis anyway, that talks about circumcision, and Abraham. And you circumcise, a man on the Sabbath. Now, Jesus is not saying, they're doing the wrong thing, in doing that.

[26 : 47] The law did say, that you shall circumcise, a boy, on the eighth day. So if he's born on the Sabbath, he gets circumcised, on the Sabbath, because you count in, inclusive days.

So if he's born on a, let's say a Friday, the eighth day, being born on the first day, will be the next Friday. So he gets circumcised, on the Sabbath. Jesus is not saying, that's wrong.

If a man receives circumcision, on the Sabbath, in order that the law of Moses, may not be broken, are you angry with me, because I healed, a man's whole body, on the Sabbath?

Now, as I say, his point is, that firstly, the Jews have got, a hierarchy of law. You can't work on the Sabbath, but circumcision is okay. So the circumcision law, takes precedence, over the Sabbath law.

Jesus is not disputing that, whether or not he agrees with it, is another issue. But what he's saying is, that healing the whole person, is an even more important thing, than circumcision.

[27 : 48] So if you're going to have a hierarchy, you would have healing the whole person, circumcision, Sabbath law. Jesus has done one miracle, healing the whole person.

Circumcision was regarded as, just healing a part of a person, if you understand what I'm implying, by that. Jesus is saying, what I've done on the Sabbath, is a much more important, a much bigger thing, than circumcision.

That has healed the whole person, spiritually as well as physically, is what he's implying by that. He's also saying that, in effect, what he has done, has fulfilled, in a sense, both the circumcision law, and the Sabbath law.

That is, the circumcision law, pointed to the healed person within, that's what Jesus has done to the man, and the Sabbath law, pointed to a perfect place, of God's rest, and harmonious creation.

Healing, fulfills what that's on about as well. So Jesus is saying, you've got your priorities wrong here. You've failed to see, what I've really done, in healing that man, is far, far greater, than keeping the Sabbath law.

[29 : 00] If it's okay, to have a little ritual, of circumcision on the Sabbath law, on the Sabbath day, then healing the man, must certainly, take precedence, over all of that. Then he says, to wrap up that argument, do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.

I think he's saying, what I've done, understand it fully, and judge appropriately. You've just judged by appearances, you've failed to see the significance, of the sign of the healing.

Well, the next section, takes us on to the question, of is Jesus the Messiah, or the Greek word is the Christ. Now, some of the people of Jerusalem, were saying, is not this man, whom they, is not this, the man, whom they're trying to kill?

And here he is, speaking openly. But they say nothing to him. Can it be, that the authorities, really know, that this is the Messiah? Well, there's a sort of, sense of irony here.

They know, that the Jewish leaders, are out to get him. But here he is, speaking publicly. They think, therefore, the Jewish authorities, are letting him carry on. They've changed their minds, about him.

[30 : 17] Maybe, really, their opposition to him, is just, really deceiving the people. Maybe they really, think that he is the Messiah. Now, this is the third question, in the series of questions, that are asked, and Jesus will, reply to that, in a couple of verses time.

But there is, of course, irony here. Can this really be the Messiah? Messiah. We know it is. They don't. So often, truth, is on the words of people, who don't understand, in John's Gospel.

For those who do understand, like us who read it, we can always have a, sort of, ironic smile on our mouth, when we read some of these, these passages. Before Jesus replies, though, they say, in verse 27, yet we know, where this man is from.

That is, Galilee, Nazareth, Capernaum, and so on. But when the Messiah comes, no one will know, where he is from. Now that's raised a bit of debate, because the Old Testament is clear, that the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem, in Micah chapter 5, for example.

What probably this is referring to, is the expectation, that when the Messiah comes, he will just suddenly appear. He won't be doing things, leading up to his great arrival, and the overthrow of whatever's bad, and the bringing in of God's kingdom.

[31 : 38] He will just suddenly appear. That was their expectation, it seems. And presumably, they would find out, that he'd actually come from Bethlehem, but that's all, sort of, in the background, and so on.

They say, no, we know where this man is from. We know where Jesus is from, but we don't know, where the Messiah, Messiah will come from. Hence, Jesus cannot be the Messiah.

Now, there's, again, great irony here, because they're boasting that, oh, we know where you're from, Jesus, you're from Galilee. But of course, he's not. He's from Bethlehem. They don't know that.

Their boast is exposing their ignorance. But also, of course, even deeper than that, Jesus is from heaven, and they don't know that. And so, again, their ignorance is seen rather ironically here.

They think they know something, but they're actually ignorant. In their claim to know something, they're actually stating something about Jesus, the opposite of what they actually believe. Well, Jesus then cries out in verse 28, which means a big public proclamation, shouting to gain the attention of the crowds.

[32 : 50] You know me, and you know where I am from. Meaning, I think, Galilee, Nazareth, Capernaum, and so on. I have not come on my own, but the one who sent me is true, and you do not know him.

I know him because I'm from him, and he sent me. Now, Jesus, I think, is maybe even mocking their claim to know where he's from. Ah, you know where I'm from.

Well, I'm from the one who sent me, whom you don't know. Of course, he's talking about his real origins, being God in heaven. And they don't know God.

Now, there's a logic here. They've just said, we don't know where the Messiah comes from. Jesus is saying, by implication, the Messiah comes from God.

Therefore, you don't know God. See how he's taken their logic, and turned it back on them. We don't know where the Messiah's from. Jesus says, in effect, I'm the Messiah, I'm the Messiah, and I come from the one who sent me.

[33 : 52] That is an allusion to God. Therefore, you don't know God. And they don't, of course. They think they do, but they don't. Well, they tried to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him, because his hour had not yet come.

Here now is the word hour, rather than time, and it's referring again to the cross, as that expression does in John's Gospel. It's not yet time for him to be arrested, and taken to death.

So nobody laid hands on him. So even, I mean, it's hard to picture exactly what happened, but even though there were people out to arrest him, and kill him, something held them back. God protected him, because it was the wrong time.

So, all through here, in John's Gospel, there are the plots to do away with Jesus, and in the end, of course, they succeed in killing him, but we get this very clear through, through the Gospel, that God is sovereign, and things happen in his time.

So until Jesus' hour comes, despite the enmity, he will be preserved. God is sovereign, and things happen in his time.

[34 : 59] He's in control, all the time. But then at the end of that paragraph, yet many in the crowd believed in him, and were saying, when the Messiah comes, will he do more signs than this man has done?

That is, they've seen the miracle, or miracles, and they think he's the Messiah. They probably don't have a full understanding, but at this point, that's okay.

But it's also showing how Jesus divides people. There were Jews who believed, and those who did not believe. Those who didn't believe were very angry, and others, perhaps a bit fearfully, began to wonder, maybe this person is actually the Messiah, who is to come.

Well, some officers are sent to arrest Jesus. That's in verses 32 to 36. They're sent by the Pharisees, and the chief priests, back in the temple.

These are the temple police, or the temple guards, Jewish people, probably of the tribe of Levi, some police, who had this sort of guard role. They were sent to arrest him, but then John just turns again, to what Jesus says, before he goes back to the issue, of Jesus being arrested.

[36 : 08] Jesus says, I'll be with you a little while longer, and then I'm going to him who sent me. You will search for me. Literally, you'll be searching intentionally. You'll keep on searching for me, but you will not find me, and where I am, you cannot come.

Now, as so often happens in John's gospel, they misunderstand this. They wonder, what does he mean? Is he going, where's he going to go, that we can't find him?

Does he intend to go, to the dispersion? That is, in Jesus' day, there were Jews living in, what is now Egypt, Turkey, Greece, Rome, scattered throughout the Roman Empire. That was called the dispersion.

Some of those Jews, would come to Jerusalem, from time to time, as we know in Acts 2, for the festivals. Is this saying, Jesus is going to go, to another country, where there are Jews, and even teach the Greeks, that is the Gentiles, now that's heavily ironic, because, it actually happens, that Jesus through his spirit, later on after the ascension, does go to the Gentiles, to the ends of the earth, to bring the gospel, but even in John's gospel itself, in chapter 12, Greeks come to Jesus, to find out about him, and Jesus responds to them, and that is the signal, for his hour to come, in this gospel.

They have no idea, what they're saying, these Jews here, but it's actually, full of ignorance, and misunderstanding, is revealing ironically, the truth, of what Jesus will do, but, there's a deeper level, of course again, because Jesus is talking about, where he'll go after the death, on the cross, he'll go to heaven, and they can't go there, they won't be able to find him, when he goes there, they don't understand that, but it's clear, that that's what Jesus, is alluding to, in those verses, they are puzzled, by this, they don't understand it, what does he mean, verse 36, you'll search for me, and you'll not find me, and where I am, you cannot come, they're bamboozled, they're stumped, and we leave it there, in effect, we don't know, which day of the festival, that's all happened, but it's one of the days, in the second half, of the festival, from the middle onwards, but now we go, to a different day, from verse 37, the last day, the great day, of the festival, and Jesus, is back in the temple, maybe he's been there, in the intervening days, we just don't know, this is the great, this is the important day, of the festival, during the festival, of tabernacles, each day, there would be, a water rite, as I said before, one of the symbols, of the festival, was the pouring of water, to commemorate, in part, the provision of water, from the rock, in the wilderness, what would happen, each day, is that one of the priests, would go down, to the pool of Siloam, which is, at the far bottom end, of the city, old city of David, possibly outside, the walls in Jesus day, they would fill up, a flagon, a gold flagon, with water, and then carry it up, from the pool of Siloam, up the hill, back into the temple, courts, and up to the temple itself, during this procession, carrying the flagon, of water, they would be singing,

[39 : 25] Psalms 113, to 118, they would be, blowing their trumpets, the shofarim, and they would be, waving palm branches, or branches of fruit trees, maybe as a sign, of the harvest, that God had given them, often the Hebrew word, is lulav, it would recall, as I said, the wilderness provision, and then the water, from the gold flagon, would be poured into a bowl, near the altar, and then from there, poured onto the altar, as a symbol of God, providing the water, in the wilderness, one of the passages, that would be read, during the feast, of tabernacles, is from the book, of Zechariah, chapter 14, this is one of the last, parts of the Old Testament, from 500, and about, 520, BC, onwards, I'll just read, a couple of verses, isolated, beginning of chapter 13, of Zechariah, on that day, the day of the Lord, a fountain shall be opened, for the house of David, and the inhabitants, of Jerusalem, to cleanse them, from sin, and impurity, and then from, chapter 14, verse 6, on that day, there shall not be, either cold or frost, and there shall be, continuous day, it is known to the Lord, not day, and not night, for at evening time, there shall be light, on that day, living waters, shall flow out, from Jerusalem, half of them, to the eastern sea, and half of them, to the western sea, it shall continue, in summer, as in winter, and then from, verse 16, of chapter 14, then all who survive, of 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 festival of booths, now in that, prophecy, you get the expectation, of living water, flowing from Jerusalem, cleansing, and purifying, and the celebration, of that, is at the festival, of booths, that's the background, for what Jesus, is about to say, in verses 37, to 39, here, let me also say, that this water pouring, ceremony, stopped, on the day before, the last day, of the feast, it would go for the seven days, but not the eighth, and last day,

Jesus then, in that context, cries, that is a solemn pronouncement, a calling out, shouting for attention, let anyone, who is thirsty, come, to me, the water pouring, ceremony stopped, let anyone, who is thirsty, come to me, and let the one, who believes in me, drink, as the scripture, has said, out of the belief, believers heart, shall flow rivers, of living water, and he said this, about the spirit, which believers in him, were to receive, for as yet, there was no spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified, saying that the spirit, will only come after the death, and resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, do you see, what Jesus is saying there, he's wrapping up, all the expectations, of the feast, of tabernacles, which looks back, to the provision, of water, in the wilderness, and looks forward, to the provision, of water, to flow out, of Jerusalem, and cleanse, and purify, God's people, celebrated on the day, of tabernacles, or feast, of tabernacles, or booze, he's saying,

I'm the one, who's doing that, here I am, if you want, this living water, come, to me, the Old Testament, said it would be God, who would provide it, so Jesus saying, come to me, he's saying in effect, I'm divine, I'm God, I'm what the Old Testament, was expecting, I'm better than Moses, who brought water, out of a rock, because this is the living water, that will bring eternal life, it's God's spirit, that is being poured out, the end of the ages, is here in me, he's saying, it's a very bold claim, everything to do, with the Old Testament, feast of tabernacles, is fulfilled, in Jesus words here, and he's describing it, in terms they would be familiar with, from the readings, from the celebration, of the water pouring ceremony, but of course, he does it the day, after it stops, because that water's ended, for another year, he's also alluding, to words of Isaiah 55, if anyone's thirsty, come to the waters, and drink, it's me, he says, come to me, and drink, that is believe, same sort of metaphors, as we saw last week, with the bread, and eating his flesh, and so on, well they're the highlight, of this chapter, but when they heard, these words, some people in the crowd, said this is really, the prophet, prophet, the prophet, is the one expected, in the line of Moses,

Deuteronomy 18, and 34, as we saw, was seen earlier, in John's gospel, that is because, he's providing the water, that is even better, than the water, from the rock, Moses brought the water, out of the rock, they would expect, the prophet like Moses, to do something similar, here's Jesus saying, I will do something, better than that, this must be the prophet, that's the first option, other people though, said, this is the Messiah, now it seems, that some people, would have linked, prophet and Messiah together, other people, perhaps distinguish them, there would be the prophet, like Moses to come, but that would not be, the Messiah, that's another person, for some people, and that's what some of them, thought this is the Messiah, but some asked, and this is the third option, surely the Messiah, does not come from Galilee, does he?

I mean, you wouldn't expect the Messiah, to come from Geelong, would you? I mean, if he's going to come from anywhere, it would be Melbourne, probably Doncaster, but not Geelong, or Benalla, or you know, I mean that's the sort of, derogatory thing, if you were in Jerusalem, and Judea, you wouldn't expect anything, really decent, or important, to come from Galilee, I mean that's the outskirts, the northern part of the country, that's sort of a bit backward, and rural, you know, like Queensland, they know, that the Messiah, comes from Bethlehem, and Bethlehem's in Judea, not in Galilee, they think Jesus is from Galilee, but again, they're exposing, their own ignorance here, and that's fairly ironic, has not the scripture said, that the Messiah is descended, from David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David lived, of course it had, Micah 5 is that verse, and of course the Old Testament, is full of allusions, that the Messiah will be descended, from David, from 2 Samuel 7, Jeremiah 23,

[46 : 12] Isaiah 9, all sorts of prophetic references, to the fact that we're expecting, a Messiah in the line of David, Micah tells us, that he's from Bethlehem, they're just ignorant, about Jesus, they think they know, but they don't, and their ignorance, is fairly ironic, so there was a division, in the crowd because of him, some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him, presumably, because God protected him again, and then the final paragraph, those in charge, still do not believe, the temple police went back, they haven't arrested Jesus, they were told to in verse 30, they go back empty handed, maybe because the people, were divided, and it would cause a riot, maybe just because, they were unable to, because of God's protection, so they go back, they're asked, why didn't you arrest him, and they say, never has anyone spoken like this, and maybe you see, some of them are the believers, some of them think, he's the prophet, or the Messiah, maybe they are divided as well, in what they think of Jesus, the Pharisees though, are a little less open, to that sort of possibility, the Pharisees replied, surely you've not been deceived too, have you, has anyone of the authorities, of the Pharisees, believed in him, that's a fairly boastful comment, where the intelligent people, where the learned people, have any of us believed in him, that's what they're saying, are you, are you sort of, a commoner, a rural, an uneducated person, that you're going to believe in him, be deceived by him, none of us, the leaders, none of the, the important people, have believed in him, but again, that boast, is actually their undoing, as we'll see in a minute, but this crowd, which does not know the law, they're accursed, they're stupid, they're dumb, they're uneducated, but half the crowd, of course, has come from Galilee, because they've come, for the pilgrimage feast,

I mean, you don't want to follow, what they think, do you, now the irony, comes out in verse 50, because Nicodemus, who'd gone to Jesus before, at night remember, in chapter 3, and who was one of them, he was a member, of the Sanhedrin, asked, our law does not judge people, without first giving them, a hearing, to find out, what they are doing, does it, now there, is a loaded statement, if ever there is one, he's exposing their irony, from verse 49, because they're boasting, that none of the Pharisees, the leaders, we don't believe in him, and here is one, who is gently, suggesting that maybe, there's truth in this Jesus, so he's, showing them up, but more than that, he's saying, doesn't our law, say that somebody, should get a hearing, he's actually saying, to the other Pharisees, and the leaders, you do not know the law, you're the dumb ones, you're the uneducated ones, you've got Moses law, but you're not keeping it, because this man, deserves a fair trial, he deserves the chance, of a defense,

Nicodemus, I think becomes a Christian, in the end, they replied, surely you are not also, from Galilee, are you, search, and you'll see, that no prophet, is to arise from Galilee, and there's another dumb boast, Jonah, came from Galilee, so did Nahum, Capernaum, is the town of Nahum, they're wrong again, all through this chapter, all through this gospel, they're showing their ignorance, they're showing what fools they are, they're showing how blinded they are, how dark in their understanding they are, they've exchanged the truth about God, for a lie, as Paul says in Romans 1, well a couple of concluding comments, this chapter is part of a sequence, of gradual increase in opposition to Jesus, that climaxes at the crucifixion, there's hostility, that is gaining, especially in Jerusalem, and especially in the Jewish leaders, some of the crowds, they're happy with him, especially the northern crowd from Galilee, but a lot of the crowd, are opposed to him, and certainly the leaders, are out to kill him, so that hostility, that Jesus faced, is something that we ought to, keep expecting in our own society, there's no reason why our society, should be any different, here are religious learned people, who know their Old Testaments very well, who are very opposed to Jesus, remember what Jesus said, and this is a second point of conclusion, why is it that there is such hostility, because Jesus exposes the evil of this world, it's full of good news, a good gospel, full of grace, full of love, but nonetheless, consistent with all of that, is the exposure of the evilness, of this world, verse 7 of chapter 7, made that clear, verse 17 said, that you've chosen, not to do God's will, you've got it, the law, but you don't keep the law, in verse 19, you seek your own glory, in verse 18, you judge by appearances, not with right judgment, in verse 24, they're the sorts of things, that we must be careful, not to replicate, we must be sure, that we are doers of the word, not just the keepers, and readers of it, we must be sure, that we seek God's glory, and not our own, we must make sure, that our works are not evil, we must make sure, that we judge with right judgment, rather than by appearances, otherwise, we will end up being people, who are hostile to Jesus, thirdly, we see in this chapter, as I hinted at,

God sovereignly in charge, rising forces against Jesus, that seem to be, pushing him towards his death, and yet, at every point, God's timing is right, Jesus' timing is right, he is actually in control, he's doing his father's will, fourthly, I guess, for a feast, that was so full, of the celebration of life, and God's provision, to give life, and sustain life, right through this chapter, there is the note, or theme of death, they're out to kill Jesus, they're out to kill Jesus, they're out to kill Jesus, it's heavily ironic, because he is of course, life, and light, as we see back, from chapter one, in the end, that theme, is leading to the cross, where, ironically, his death, brings life, fifthly, we notice that, in this chapter, the offer of water, is made even, to Jesus' enemies, he is indiscriminate, in that offer, even those who are out, to kill him, he stands in the temple, and offers them, the water of life, we ought not be surprised, by that, because God describes us, as his enemies, in Romans five, it's while we were God's enemies, that Jesus died for us, that is great love, it's not love, in a wide extent, but it's love, that goes to the heart, of hostility, but finally, we saw how,

Jesus' words, about providing living water, come, when the water pouring ceremony, is over, the altar is dry, the next day, the day after, this whole feast is over, the day after, the great day, where all the candles, in the courtyard, have been extinguished, Jesus there, probably, said, I am the light, of the world, chapter 8, verse 12, Jesus is picking up, the two themes, of this festival, he is the living water, which it anticipates, and all the candles, which celebrate, the provision of God, leading them, by pillar of fire, through the wilderness, they're extinguished, you can imagine, a great courtyard, full of, lumps of, wax, the next day, before the cleaners, get in, or something like that, and there is Jesus, with all these, extinguished candles, around him, or near him, saying, I am the light, of the world, he brings, all those themes, of this feast, to their fulfillment, as John's gospel, makes clear, he brings, all the old testament, to its fulfillment, well let me, stop there, and pray, and then, we'll just have, a couple of minutes, in case there are, any questions, or answers, well any questions, and I don't know, about the answers, and then we'll sing, a hymn, and then we'll pray, and sing a final hymn,

[54 : 52] Heavenly Father, we thank you, for Jesus, that he is sovereign, and in control, despite the enmity, towards him, we thank you, for the truth, that he is the Messiah, he is the prophet, like Moses to come, he is the one, which the feast, of tabernacles, anticipated, would bring, the living water, of God's spirit, to the world, help us, to be people, who are doers, of his word, not just readers, of it, help us to be people, who seek your glory, rather than our own, help us be people, who do not have evil works, that we wish to hide, help us to embrace, his truth, to believe in him, to drink of his, living water, and know your Holy Spirit, inside our hearts, providing a river, of life for eternity, Amen.

Amen.