

# The Feast of The Nations

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[ 0 : 00 ] John 7, 25. 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 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? Verse 32. 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.

[ 1 : 19 ] 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? 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.

Verse 40. 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 in the village where David was? So there was a division among the people over him.

[ 2 : 36 ] Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him. Verse 45. 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, it's accursed. Nicodemus, who had gone before him, 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. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Thanks be to God. You may be seated. Let's pray. Lord Jesus, without you, our lives are dry and barren.

[ 3 : 43 ] Would you please quench our thirst today? We are earthen vessels. We are jars made out of dirt. We are empty without you. Would you please speak to us again today, as you did to your disciples in Acts 13, that we too may once again be filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Amen. Well, beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, today I want to show you in this passage how Jesus Christ is the Feast of Nations.

You heard reference to the feast in our passage. In the book of Leviticus, chapter 23, six feasts are described. One, two, three. Then there's a period of rest in between.

And then one, two, three. So the first three feasts come in the spring. And the big one that you'll be familiar with is Passover. And that's Easter time, even today. That's when our Lord Jesus rose from the dead.

But he's not talking about Passover. He's talking about the three feasts and the fall that coincide with the end of the harvest. The first one in Leviticus 23 is the Feast of Trumpets.

[ 4 : 53 ] It announces that the time of worshiping God will begin. And the people travel from all over Jerusalem, all over Israel, up to Jerusalem. Feast of Trumpets. The next one is the Day of Atonement.

That comes next. The forgiveness of sins. And then the last one, the last feast of the year, the last one of that cycle of three in the fall after the harvest is called the Feast of Tabernacles.

And it goes by a lot of different names. The Feast of Booths. So when it says tabernacle, don't picture the tabernacle where God dwells. Just picture a tent. And booths means the same thing. It means these temporary dwellings. Sometimes these booths were made out of branches. Other times they're made out of cloth, like we would make a tent. So as you'd go to Jerusalem, you'd see tents everywhere. And you know they're celebrating the Feast of Booths.

So my goal today is to take this rich backdrop that John has set up here for what Christ is going to say and show you the connection. Jesus Christ fulfills this feast.

[ 5 : 51 ] I'll show you in a moment why it's also called the Feast of Nations. But we'll get to that in a bit. So the first observation I want to make here, I want you to see for yourself, is how the Feast of Nations was celebrated at God's temple.

There's no better place for a celebration of our forgiveness, our atonement, that God provides by grace through the blood of animals so that sinners can be with him. And all of that takes place at the temple.

So I want to show you that our Lord Jesus Christ, he comes into the temple, and this temple is empty. It's empty of God. But Christ fills the temple with God's truth.

That's my first point. How does Christ fill the temple with the truth of God? God. This feast goes by several names. It's in Leviticus, they're commanded to be, you know, gathering, so to form a holy convocation.

It begins on a Sabbath and it ends on a Sabbath, so it's marked by rest. They're to do no ordinary work, Leviticus 23 says. And every single day of this feast, we'll give you the details in a moment, every day there is the shedding of blood, these offerings of animals, and their blood is flowing.

[ 7 : 02 ] So I want you to have these images in your mind. The temple, the booths, or these tents, water, and blood.

We're on the temple first, that's number one. See, the Feast of Booths, God has already tied it to covenant renewal ceremonies, and he's tied it to temple dedications.

When it says that Jesus entered the temple, look back at verse 14. The middle of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple. This is really the third temple that Jerusalem has had.

The first temple God had built through Solomon. So in 2 Chronicles chapter 5, we read of that first temple. They're moving from that tabernacle, that tent dwelling, to an actual temple.

They'll be glorious, made of gold, and people will travel from all over to behold its wonder. But then that temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, by the Greeks later, and it was rebuilt at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.

[ 8 : 03 ] So Ezra 3 and Nehemiah 8, we have the building of the second temple. And so that's second temple Judaism. However, that temple was also destroyed. And this temple was rebuilt by Herod the Great.

Remember, we've talked about Herod the Great. He's the one who wanted to kill all the baby boys. Well, it was Herod the Great who built this third temple. And if you look at an image, even Google images, you look at the temple, and like in ancient times, what's been preserved above the temple was what's called the Herodium.

And this was Herod's palace. So Herod set himself above the temple of God. The temple was meant to be the place from where God would rule his nation. Well, Herod's making it very clear. His palace is above the seat of God. That's the temple that Jesus enters, we read in verse 14. Now this temple, it's full of people.

On the rooftops all around it are these booths set up everywhere. Where the law of God required that every man, every head of the household travel to Jerusalem and celebrate this feast. So it

would have been full of sinners.

[ 9 : 10 ] And they would have been watching the priests do these rituals. And the blood is flowing. But the symbolism here is totally lost. Because even the Holy of Holies by this point in the third temple, it was empty.

When Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem, they carried away all the belongings of the temple. And they carried away the Ark of the Covenant, which represented the presence of God with his people.

So can you picture that? A crowded temple area. Herod the Great's palace above looking down. And inside the Holy of Holies, empty. Echoey.

God is not there. And then Christ steps on the scene. Look at verse 25. This is the man whom they seek to kill. And the crowd is very confused.

Well, we know he comes from Galilee. But the Messiah is supposed to be born in Bethlehem. So they didn't have the full story. But they had some pieces and they know what to look for. They're very confused. Verse 26.

[ 10 : 06 ] Here he is speaking openly. Verse 28. Jesus proclaimed as he taught in the temple. In the middle of all the noise and the commotion, the word of Christ rings out.

And he fills this empty temple with the word, the truth of God. What is it that he tells them? Look at verse 28. You know me. And you know where I come from.

He didn't want to skip over that very fact. They're saying I can't be the Messiah because they know that I'm a man. They know I'm from Galilee. I'm an ordinary Jew.

He says you just confessed that I am fully human. See, God's justice demands that human nature which has sinned must pay for its sin.

Yes, the Messiah had to be fully human. And they recognize him as fully human. But that's not the full story. Jesus says, I have not come on my own accord.

[ 11 : 11 ] He who sent me is true. And him you do not know. I know him for I come from him. And he sent me. Look at verse 31. Many of the people believed in him.

See, not only was Jesus fully human. He says, I come from the Father. I know God, the Creator. I am one with him.

In the beginning when everything was formed, that was through me. I am sent from above for you. I am fully God as well as fully human.

And our catechism answers this question very well. Why must Jesus not only be fully human, but also fully God? It's so that by the power of his divinity, he might bear the weight of God's wrath against sin in his humanity.

So that we might be right with God and live. The mediator, the Messiah, the one who would be that touching point between the holy God and sinners, he is the new temple.

[ 12 : 21 ] He had to be fully human to mediate as their priest, representing them to the holy God. And he had to be fully divine to be their prophet and their king.

He would rule from his temple, not Herod, not the Roman Empire behind Herod. Christ, God himself, the mediator, the temple of God.

So Jesus came to be the temple, the meeting point between God and man, so that the nations could gather and feast on him.

Look at verse 30. As he's coming, as the spiritual king of heaven, inaugurating his kingdom, they were seeking to arrest him.

But no one laid a hand on him because his hour had not yet come. And there are human ways to explain, you know, what they were thinking and why they might have done that.

[ 13 : 20 ] But John's blunt on this point. Why did they not arrest Jesus? Because God's providence did not yet call for it. His hour had not yet come. This is another proof that Jesus is fully God.

Jesus is eternal, infinite, and unchangeable in his power and perfection, in his goodness and glory, wisdom, justice, and truth. Listen to this.

Nothing happens except through him and by his will. Standing in the temple, they're seeking to kill him. Nothing's going to happen except through him and by his will.

His hour had not yet come. Do you see the power of Christ? The true king. And this is power, the same power, the same king who laid down his life when the time did arrive.

So that your sin could be forgiven. And this same Christ now rules from heaven. And he watches over us, Heidelberg number one, in such a way that not a hair can fall from your head without the

will of the Father in heaven.

[14:30] You can trust this same powerful God. See, you are no better than these Jews. And I'm worse than most of them, I'm sure.

You and I, we need a mediator just as much as they did. Christ alone, the God-man, His perfect holiness to remove your sin, to be your perfect temple, the fullness of God in Christ.

Christ, that you can dwell with your maker and be at peace. So you see how Jesus is the temple? That's the first image. Well, let's move from the temple now to the booths.

This feast would have been celebrated all around what's going on at the temple, but people in the whole city would be dwelling in these tents and in the booths. And what I want you to understand with this on the feast is that God has always desired that the sojourners, those traveling to Him from all the nations, would be able to feast with God.

That's been God's heart all along. And our Lord Jesus Christ, He fulfills that desire. He brings the nations to feast in Him.

[15:39] So I want to break this down into two parts. First, the sojourners, what does that mean? And then all the nations, those two. God desires that sojourners from all nations feast on Him.

I want to break that down. Number one, sojourners. This was a feast for pilgrims. As they were traveling to Jerusalem, they would have been singing special psalms that were set apart just for this feast.

One of them would have been the batch of songs from Psalm 113 to 118. This is known as the Hallel. If you go look this up, all of these songs have this repeating motif. Hallel means praise God. Praise the Lord. So that's going to be the theme over and over and over, this repeating chorus as they travel. And then the second group of songs is Psalm 120 to 134. These are called the songs of ascent.

The songs you're meant to be singing as you sojourn, remembering those pilgrim years in the wilderness as you gather in Jerusalem. Deuteronomy 14 says that every family must set apart a tithe, a special tithe, 10% just to celebrate on this day, on this week of the Feast of the Nations.

[16:48] So it's almost guaranteed that you're going to have a good time. 10% of all your family's income has been set apart for you to go and spend on this one week in Jerusalem. It's a big deal.

You can imagine this city vibrating with all the sights and the smells and the colors, these tents everywhere, all shapes and sizes. Children would have loved this.

The ceremonies at the beginning of the day and the end of the day, which I'll talk about more this week and next. But yet in the midst of all that clamor and that alive city all the time, these are worshipers who on the inside were very empty.

They were physically near God represented by this temple, but spiritually they were very distant from God. They were dark.

Their foolish minds were darkened. And look at verse 32. The authorities, the religious elite, sent officers to arrest Jesus. Verse 33. Jesus then said, I will be with you a little longer.

[17:53] Then I am going to him who sent me. And I think this is especially fitting with the image of everyone traveling and living in these temporary booths.

Do you see what Jesus is saying? You are here in this week-long celebration that you grew up doing as your tradition. This celebration, dwelling as a sojourner temporarily like this, this points to what I am doing by taking on flesh.

In these 33 years, I came to dwell among you for a short while. But I am not going to set up a kingdom here. I'm not going to go knock down the walls of the Herodium.

And I'm not going to drive away the Roman legions. I am dwelling among you in the flesh so that my spiritual kingdom from heaven will come until the fullness of time.

Then I will come again. But my mission now is to prepare a place for everyone that my spirit will draw to faith. In John 14, 2, Jesus says, In my Father's house are many rooms.

[18:59] I will go first to prepare a place for you there. And I will come again. And I will take you to myself that where I am, you also may be. See, he's opening up this early hint that he gives.

I'm not going to be here forever. This is not my final coming. But you will come to be with me. Verse 34, You will seek me and you will not find me.

Where I am, you cannot come. It is humanly impossible for a sinner to do anything to merit their way into heaven. Christ has to blaze that trail.

And he has to pull you with him as part of his parade, ushering in his church to his eternal rule. But listen, what Jesus says there gets this reaction from them that I think John is using irony once again.

Because they're actually foreshadowing the second point, which is not only sojourning, but it's how all nations will be part of that. Look at verse 35. They say, does he intend to go to the dispersion? [20:04] This means Jews who no longer live in Israel, but live now in the Greek territories and other parts of the world. They've been dispersed. Does he going to go to them among the Greeks and teach the Greeks?

Is that what he means? We can't go where I'm going? See, they're foreshadowing that Jesus is dwelling temporarily here and his mission does include the Greeks.

Yes, it does. And that's what Paul is going to do. That's what the book of Acts is about. So you see how both the sojourning, the traveling, the tents and the all nations is included and the backdrop of this feast of the nations.

In 1 Kings 8, there's a wonderful prophecy that God gives that will come to pass in two levels. The first level of fulfillment will be with Solomon, but that's only a greater picture of what Christ will do when he comes back the final time.

So here's what it says. When a foreigner who is not of your people Israel comes from a far country for your name's sake. So think of the Queen of Sheba traveling to Jerusalem because Solomon is famous.

[21:07] You can picture that as the level one fulfillment. They shall hear of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm. When he comes and prays toward his house, this house, the temple, here in heaven, your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls on you.

The promise, this blessing says that as foreigners travel because of the name of God put on display with Solomon, they will be blessed. And even foreigners now will be able to pray and know that their prayers are heard because of the great name of God elevated.

See, David came as Christ in his incarnation. Solomon then is a picture of Christ in his glorification, in the full glory that he has now from heaven.

And the nations, that's you and me, we are gathering. And as we pray in the name of Christ that's elevated, he hears our prayer. Isn't that a wonderful promise? That's way back in 1 Kings 8.

Christ knew that all the nations would hear of his great name and they would come to him. What's the connection with the Feast of Booths? Well, Deuteronomy 16 says this, Now when it describes the sojourner here, it's talking about everyone.

[22:37] The traveler, the foreigner, the alien, the stranger. That's all that's included in that word. So for this reason, the Israelites came to call this Feast of Booths the Feast of the Nations.

This is the feast where they can all come. They can all have this special blessing that God will hear their prayer. See, this has never been all about Israel.

It's never been about a piece of geography in the desert. What Christ has desired all along is a spiritual kingdom. And it's the kingdom of heaven that's been pictured for us throughout the history of Israel.

But listen to how Hebrews 11, 9 interprets what Abraham looked forward to. By faith, Abraham went to live in the land of promise. So here is Abraham now as a picture of a sojourner, as a foreigner in the promised land.

Living there in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.

[23:44] Even Abraham, the one to whom God promised this promised land, even Abraham was looking not to Israel and the geography and that land there. He was looking at that as a picture of the heavenly kingdom that God designed.

And Abraham represents the nations in that sense that he lives there temporarily, in tents, dwelling, looking forward to the greater kingdom of God that would come.

So Christ is the temple. Christ came to sojourn so that all the nations could receive that blessing through him. The next image I want you to picture is that of water.

The water. See, the Feast of the Nations had two ceremonies. The one in the evening we'll talk about next week. It involved lights. But the one in the morning involved water.

And God wants everyone who is at his feast to not leave dry, not go back to the desert wasteland empty. He wants to fill you, not only with food and luxuries and water.

[ 24 : 45 ] He wants to fill your heart, your inner being. And that's what our Lord Jesus Christ preaches. He comes to fill your thirsty heart with living water. The Feast of Nations was such a big feast that there was actually a curse attached to not keeping it.

In Zechariah 14, if you refuse to observe this feast, you will be supernaturally punished by God with no rain and with drought. Because this feast comes at the very end of the crop cycle.

And it's really to celebrate God has provided. Look at the bounty, all the good. We can live through another winter. And when we plant our seed, it will be watered once again in the new year.

So they came up with a ritual. It's not commanded in God's word. It's not part of the law. But it was a ritual. And the ritual, it involved celebrating the water that God would provide and trusting that he would do so for yet another year.

And this is how it would go. From the temple, the high priest that year would walk away from the temple with a large procession of worshipers following behind him.

[ 25 : 52 ] They would walk out of the temple. And they would walk about 300 meters away. That's about a third of a football field. And they would go down some steps into what would look like a rectangular man-made pool of water, a little bit lower, cut into limestone.

And this was a man-made pool called the Pool of Siloam. We've seen this already. We're going to see this pool more and more. So the Pool of Siloam, it's fascinating how it came to be. When Nebuchadnezzar was approaching to take over Jerusalem and the city, the king at the time, his name was Hezekiah.

And Hezekiah got all of his men and laborers together with pitch axe, and they set out to dig a tunnel to bring water into the heart of the city in case the Babylonian army surrounded them in a siege, tried to cut off access to water and food and starve them so they would die or get so weak they have to surrender.

They were anticipating. So at breakneck speed, they set two crews of workers, one on either end, and they're chopping at the limestone. It's about six feet up to 18 feet high. And this man-made tunnel is still, to this day, the longest underground water tunnel from the ancient world.

And the total length of this tunnel is about six soccer fields, 1,700-some feet. That was connecting this spring outside of the city of Jerusalem, under the walls of the city, and it came to fill up what's now called the Pool of Siloam.

[ 27 : 19 ] So there's a city that would not naturally have water, but it does have this spring now in this pool, so even if you surround it underground, they can't cut off your water. And Jesus now knows of all this typology, all this history.

Many of the worshipers are gathering, and this just adds significance to what He said. But in their water ritual, the priest would go down to this pool. He'd take a golden vessel. He would fill it. Then they would march all the way back up.

They would go through what's called the water gate into the temple, up the planks. Then you'd have two basins. One basin is where all the worshipers would pour in the wine. They had to contribute wine to the livelihood of the priests and Levites.

Then the other basin is where He would pour from a golden vessel the water from the Pool of Siloam. And He would raise His hand, and as He would pour, the people would chant back, Raise it higher, raise it higher.

It's this big celebration. And they would do that every single day, every morning of the feast. Here, the Lord will provide water for the next year. More water is coming. Every day they do it. And every day of this feast is marking out those seven days.

[ 28 : 22 ] It's like rehearsing new creation. It's like the creation story, 24-hour days. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven. Then on the last day of the feast, they would not pour water.

We're trusting by faith. Trusting by faith going into the new year. Now, in the midst of all this superficial festivity, the worshipers gather, and they're thirsty.

They're muttering. They're longing for the true Messiah. Their bodies are being gorged. They're just living it up, spending all the money they had to. But their souls are parched.

They knew, some knew, the promise from Isaiah 12, 3, that God said, With joy you will draw water from the wells of your salvation.

And in Isaiah 44, God promises he will pour out his spirit on them. See, up to this point, the spirit is given like droplets in measure. And you didn't even have to be a believer to receive the spirit.

[ 29 : 24 ] Like Saul got God's spirit. God used him. One author said that the spirit would put on a man and do something through him and then let him go like a garment. Samson, you know, these droplets of the spirit.

But God promised in Isaiah, I will pour water on the thirsty land and streams on the dry ground. What is this talking about? I will pour my spirit upon your offspring and my blessing on your descendants.

They shall spring up among the grass like willows by flowing streams. You look out at this crowd. They're broken. They're poor. They're oppressed.

God will pour out his spirit on them. They will blossom. They will flourish. They will be like oaks planted by the water. And it will be the spirit of God blessing them like the water.

Now look in your Bible at verse 36 and 37. On the last day of the feast. He even adds a comment.

[ 30 : 26 ] The great day. See, this is the last feast of the series of three in the fall. And it's the last feast of all six that are commanded in Leviticus 23 that they're going to do every single year.

And this is the last day of the last feast. The great feast. Verse 37. 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.

Isaiah 58 says, The Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong.

And you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. You shall be that way. Jesus says, Out of your heart, rivers of living water will flow forth.

See, what's being pictured here is what the Lord does from heaven in pouring out his Holy Spirit on the church, starting in Jerusalem in Acts chapter 2.

[ 31 : 44 ] And it spills out from Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria, representing all of the 12 tribes of Israel, and to the ends of the earth. And everywhere the apostles go, they are taking the Holy Spirit waters flowing through the church, through the word, through these church plants, going out to all the nations.

And look, here we are. We're all foreigners, not Jews. The waters of the Holy Spirit have flowed all the way to us through the word of God. And if he has saved you, you know what this talks about, what Jesus promises.

In your heart, your inner being, waters of life will fill up. He will make you new. And he will produce a bounty of fruit in your life.

And the waters are the Holy Spirit. And the fruit is the fruit of the Spirit, abounding in your life, if you are planted in Christ. God provides for your soul, this flow of waters through his church, through his word.

And we are the plan for how these waters will go to every nation and tribe. See, Revelation chapter 22 describes the river of water of life that flows forth from the temple to all the nations of the world.

[ 33 : 04 ] Here's a picture of the spiritual kingdom of Christ. And it's the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city, and also on either side of the river, the tree of life, with its 12 kinds of fruit, yielding each fruit in its month.

And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. See, Jesus redeems the fall in the garden with Adam and Eve, the picture of his kingdom is like a new garden, and there's trees on both sides of the streets, both sides of the river, and from Christ, through his city, his church, the water flows, and what brings with it the healing for the nations.

That is his promise, and we get to be part of it. Well, the fourth image is blood. We've seen the temple.

We've seen the tents and booths. We just saw the water, and this is the last image for today, the blood. Spilling of blood was regulated by God's law.

It was a required payment for sin. And I want to show you how our Lord Jesus Christ is the fullness, the perfect fulfillment of God's law, including the shedding of his own blood.

[ 34 : 31 ] Look at verse 49. This crowd that does not know the law is accursed. The Pharisees looked out at these people.

They didn't see a special blessing coming through Christ. They saw people who didn't know as much as they did, and they must be cursed. They can't keep it perfectly. We know it so well, we have a better shot. What they're saying is ironic as well because everyone, including them, are under the curse of Adam.

Everyone who has sinned has broken the perfect law of God. But they also expose that they don't know God's law perfectly themselves. Deuteronomy 31 commanded that every sabbatical year, so every seven years, during the Feast of Booths, the entire law of God was to be publicly read during this feast.

So every day, they're going to be reading the law so that these crowds would know the law of God, would know what pleases Him. Numbers 29, we read that on the 15th day of the seventh month, you shall have a holy convocation and not do any work, and you shall feast before the Lord for seven days.

Now I want to walk you through what it commands for the rest of the chapter. I'm not going to read it. I'm going to summarize. On the first day of the feast, you shall offer a burnt offering. This is a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the Lord.

[ 35 : 53 ] The first thing they offer is 13 bowls. The next day, they offer 12 bowls. The next day, they offer 11 bowls.

The day after that, 10 bowls. And there's only seven days in the feast, so you count down. On the last day of the feast, you're going to offer seven bowls, and we're done. And to the Hebrew mind, seven is the number of perfection and completeness.

And it's also establishing a rhythm of counting down, less blood spilled, a little less blood spilled. Finally, the fullness, the perfect amount of blood has been spilled, and the forgiveness of sins is complete.

Do you see how this countdown is preparing them for the work of Christ? If you add up the number, 13 plus 12 plus 11, you add it all up down to seven, it comes to the number 70.

And to the Jews, the number 70 would have represented all the nations. And this goes all the way back to Genesis chapter 10. Moses lists a bunch of names that came after Noah, and you add up all those heads of homes, and it's the number 70.

[ 37 : 06 ] So for them, 70 bulls represents all the nations of the world, not just Abraham's line, all the nations. And the countdown until the final satisfaction, no more blood will be spilled.

The nations can have forgiveness of sin. The other animals are interesting. We don't have time for it today, but I want you to just remember this. Picture this in your mind.

When the Lord made a covenant with Abraham, he told them what, he told Abraham what animals to sacrifice. Split them in two, lay them on the two sides, and the Lord consumed it. Every one of those animals that God commanded to Abraham, every one of them show up for the ceremonies of Israel.

And one scholar, Alistair Roberts, Old Testament scholar in England, he observed, you know, taking their culture, the bull represents the nation. The next is like the ram.

It represents the leader of the tribe or like the head of the home. Then the lambs represent the women and children. The dove represents the clean, it's a clean bird. It represents Israel.

[ 38 : 11 ] You know, like the poor among Israel that couldn't afford anything else, they would offer a dove. And then the pigeons were also to be offered. And the pigeons represented us, the Gentiles, the non-Jews. It's not a clean animal.

Every one of those animals accounted for, every single people within Israel represented by blood. Isn't that powerful? I don't know what all Jesus would have taught from the temple, but this is what would have been going on around everyone for seven days.

And when he's speaking on the last day, look at verse 45. The officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees and said, why did you not bring him to us?

And the officers answered, no one ever spoke like this man. See, Jesus spoke with an authority, being God and being man, being the true high priest.

His authority was the one of the man who knew he would pay the price that God's law requires. And he spoke with compassion for them.

[ 39 : 16 ] And he spoke knowing exactly what his mission for them was. Hebrews 10.4 says, it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin.

So God set up this beautiful ceremony to show, look, the blood of a substitute is what you need. And there's no forgiveness of sins except through grace given by faith in both testaments. And it's ultimately the faith that you have that God will be true to his promise, ultimately by taking on flesh himself and shedding his very own blood that your sins may be forgiven.

Notice the response. Verse 47. The Pharisees answered him, answered them, these officials who did not arrest him, have you also been deceived?

Well, they are the ones who are deceived, aren't they? They're long on all their man-made regulations. They're very short on true holiness. Verse 48. Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him?

[ 40 : 19 ] Expecting the answer would be no. And then John subtly, ironically again, sets in Nicodemus. Here's a prominent Pharisee who has in fact believed him. And at this point, Nicodemus is not at night.

It's on the great day of the feast with everyone's attention, all the murmuring about him. He speaks up now. He speaks up in verse 50. Nicodemus, who had gone to him before, who was one of them, one of the Pharisees, said to them, does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does.

He's still tactful. He's still, you know, politically savvy, you could say, like Esther. For such a time as this, God placed him and used Nicodemus in his providence. We can take an encouragement from this as well, that Peter's profession of faith was bold and loud, you know.

You alone have the words of eternal life. Nicodemus believed and he spoke up, but it was in God's timing for him. And God will save each one that he died for in his right timing.

We need to be patient. We need to trust him to draw each one in their own way. And look at the reaction that Nicodemus gets. Immediately after making a profession of faith, he's persecuted.

[ 41 : 33 ] They replied to Nicodemus in verse 52, are you from Galilee too? Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee. You're going to associate yourself with that man.

You better be ready for the way of the cross. That's the way he's going. And if you follow him, that's what you need to expect as well. So that's the Feast of Nations to the end of chapter 7, but it continues into chapter 8 next week.

I've just tried to show you how Jesus is the temple mediator. He is the living water. He fulfilled God's law perfectly. And he poured out his blood, the full satisfaction that God requires.

Jesus is the head of his nation. He poured out his life on his last day of ministry, the great day, the last day, Good Friday. And he rose on the Lord's day, the first day of the new creation.

And he promises bounty and abundance of life in him. You'll be part of the new creation. His blood fully satisfied God's law because he took the wrath of God in the place of death-deserving sinners.

[ 42 : 48 ] Who he said, that people, they are my bride. I'm married to them. They're coming with me to my father's home. I want to encourage you today to approach God through the truth that Christ preaches.

You need to drink of him. Take Christ in. He pours out his spirit to anyone who is thirsty. And if you are thirsty, it's because he's caused your soul to thirst for him.

Praise God that even though you are still in this world, you don't belong here, you're a sojourner, your home is waiting for you and your home is with Christ if you are in him.

He says that now you no longer need to thirst in your soul. You can be filled each day with the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5. And that from your heart living waters will flow.

So ask Christ now to conform you and prepare you for your eternal home with him. And it's for you, but it's not just for you. You're still on earth to be prepared, but also to be part of his mission.

[ 43 : 57 ] See, the nations are parched. They're thirsty. They don't even know what they're thirsty for. There's over 6,000 people groups that don't have God's word.

And we need to be part of that. Through his church, the waters of life will flow out until all of his people come to him. Hebrews 12 tells us that Jesus, for the joy set before him, endured the cross, despising its shame.

And now from his throne in heaven, he is bringing in the harvest because he is the feast of the nations. You get to be part of that.

Let's pray. From Revelation 22. The Spirit and the Bride say, come.

Even now, let the one who hears say, come to Christ. And let the one who is thirsty come. Let the one who desires take Christ as Lord and Savior and drink from him the water of life given without

price.  
[ 45 : 13 ] Amen.