

He Who Tabernacled among Us: John 7:37–8:29 (Jaunting thru John)

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Wed., April 6, 2011

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND FROM LEVITICUS 23:39-43

23³⁹ . . . you shall keep the feast of the LORD for 7 days; on the 1st day there shall be a sabbath-rest, & on the 8th day a sabbath-rest. ⁴⁰ & you shall take for yourselves on the 1st day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, & willows of the brook; & you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for 7 days. ⁴¹ You shall keep it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the 7th month. ⁴² You shall dwell in booths for 7 days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, ⁴³ that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

BACKGROUND FROM NEHEMIAH

Neh 8:5–18 shows Ezra guiding Judah's returning exiles in a month of studying the Law and worship. Neh 8:2, dates the start as first day of Tishri, the 7th month (e.g., October). Neh 8:13–18 describes rediscovery of the Feast of Booths, observed for a whole month. Neh 9:1ff. is the Levites' prayer on the 24th day. Excerpts follow:

The sea was no obstacle:

¹⁰ You showed signs and wonders against Pharaoh, Against all his servants, And against all the people of his land. For You knew that they acted proudly against them. So You made a name for Yourself, as it is this day.

¹¹ And You divided the sea before them, So that they went through the midst of the sea on the dry land; And their persecutors You threw into the deep, As a stone into the mighty waters.

The Light of the World gave light to Israel

¹² Moreover You led them by day with a cloudy pillar, And by night with a pillar of fire, To give them light on the road Which they should travel.

God provided bread from heaven and water

¹⁵ You gave them bread from heaven for their hunger, And brought them water out of the rock for their thirst, And told them to go in to possess the land Which You had sworn to give them.

The Light of the World gave light to Israel

¹⁹ Yet in Your manifold mercies You did not forsake them in the wilderness. The pillar of the cloud did not depart from them by day, To lead them on the road; Nor the pillar of fire by night, To show them light, And the way they should go.

God provided the Spirit, bread from heaven, and water

²⁰ You also gave Your good Spirit to instruct them, And did not withhold Your manna from their mouth, And gave them water for their thirst.

God provided all that Israel needed for life

²¹ Forty years You sustained them in the wilderness. They lacked nothing: Their clothes did not wear out And their feet did not swell

God enabled Israel to conquer a land already flowing with milk & honey

²⁵ And they took strong cities and a rich land, And possessed houses full of all goods, Cisterns already dug, vineyards, olive groves, And fruit trees in abundance. So they ate and were filled and grew fat, And delighted themselves in Your great goodness

RELATING JOHN 7–8 TO THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE FEAST OF BOOTHES

Day	Number of Animals Sacrificed				Other Features of the Celebration		
	Bulls	Rams	Lambs	Goats	Pour H ₂ O?	Court Lit?	In Booths?
1	13	2	14	1	Yes	Yes	Yes
2 = Middle Day	12	2	14	1	Yes	Yes	Yes
3 = Middle Day	11	2	14	1	Yes	Yes	Yes
4 = Middle Day	10	2	14	1	Yes	Yes	Yes
5 = Middle Day	9	2	14	1	Yes	Yes	Yes
6 = Middle Day	8	2	14	1	Yes	Yes	Yes
7 = Great Day	7	2	14	1	Yes	Yes	NO
Totals:	70	14	98	7			
Sabbath (8th day)	+ 1	+ 1	+ 7	+ 1	NO	NO	NO

Jesus came around the midpoint (on one of the middle days): (John 7:14ff.)

The 7th day (the Great Day) He taught that He fulfills the imagery of the feast (7:37ff). 8th day is an appendage.

The 8th day an adulterous woman was brought to Him & said He is the light of the world (8:2ff)

By Jesus' day, much was added to the feast (beyond what Leviticus requires), but the essential idea remained. For almost forty years after God led the people out of Egypt and parted the Red Sea, God provided, as they wandered in the wilderness. Cf. the Nehemiah 9 prayer:

Water: Water from the Rock: cf. Jesus promising living water in John 7:38

Food: Manna and quail: cf. the loaves and fishes in John 6

Shelter from the elements:

Tents or *presumably* (where vegetation allowed) booths (tabernacles)

The presumption is based on Leviticus 23 commanding booths made of branches, not tents

John 1:14 The Word became flesh and lived (*skēnoō*: literally, **tabernacled) among us.**

Gk lacks the *sh* sound: *Skēnoō* communicates that Jesus, the *shekinah*, dwelt on earth.

Guidance: Pillar of cloud & pillar of fire by night: Jesus the light of world: cf. John 8:12

Crossing the Red Sea: Jesus walking on the Sea of Galilee: cf. John 6:18–21

(7:37–39) On the feast's 7th day, Jesus urged people to drink of Him (believe in Him), so (per Nehemiah) they would have living water in abundance (fulfilling the feast) when the Holy Spirit would be given to believers

The seventh day of the feast is the Last and Great Day of the original feast.

Note 7⁵³–8¹: So each one went to his house. & Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

They went home that night, because they *had dismantled* the booths *that morning*.

Jesus urged believing in Him, to receive living water in abundance (per Nehemiah)

Isaiah 55:1 is relevant, but Jesus claims to fulfill the Feast of Booths, so Nehemiah is the most pertinent passage:

Neh 9¹⁵ You gave them bread from heaven for their hunger, And brought them water out of the rock for their thirst, And told them to go in to possess the land which You had sworn to give them. . . . ¹⁹ Yet in Your manifold mercies You did not forsake them in the wilderness. The pillar of the cloud did not depart from them by day, to lead them on the road; nor the pillar of fire by night, to show them light, and the way they should go. ²⁰ You also gave Your good Spirit to instruct them, and did not withhold Your manna from their mouth, And gave them water for their thirst.

Jesus focuses on a future benefit of believing (receiving the Spirit), rather than the present benefit (everlasting life). Why? He speaks in terms of fulfilling the Feast. Post-Pentecost believers had the living water more abundantly than pre-Pentecost believers.

1. Pre-Pentecost: river of living H₂O **from** Jesus **to** believers.
2. Post-Pentecost: river of living H₂O **from** Jesus **through** believers **to** the world (**by** the Spirit)

The Holy Spirit **could not be given until Jesus was glorified** (ascended to the Father). Especially note **John 16:7**. Cf. also John 14:16, 26; 15:26).

(7:40–44) Claiming to fulfill H₂O ceremony caused division: Some called Him the Prophet/Christ; others called Him a non-Bethlehemite, but police did not arrest Him
 (Christ must be born in Bethlehem, so the second group rejected Him as Christ)

(7:45–46) Chief priests & Pharisees demanded an explanation for the police failing to arrest Jesus, so the (Levitical) police said His (persuasive) words prevented arrest

(7:47–49) Pharisees scoffed at (theologically trained) police being as gullible as the crowd lacking theological training, but rulers (esp. Pharisees) were above being fooled

(7:50–52) Nicodemus, a ruler who investigated Jesus, reprimanded them for seeking to lynch Jesus w/o a formal investigation (as the Law demands); but was labeled a Galilean & as if Jesus (a resident of Galilee) and thus, could not be the Prophet

No prophet has arisen from Galilee, but Hosea, Amos, & Jonah were Galilean prophets

It should be translated: *The Prophet [e.g., the Christ] has not arisen from Galilee*

(7:53–8:1) After the feast's 7th day, all went home, except Jesus, who went to Mt. Olivet
 Some Bibles question whether 7:53–8:11 belong in the Bible. Imagine a scribe trying to sneak this into his manuscript). He would not know that booths were used 6 nights (not 7)

Manuscript evidence supports this passage belonging here. John would know about the seventh night being different from the preceding six. The passage belongs here.

(8:2–6a) Early the next a.m. as Jesus taught crowds, Pharisees stood a woman there & asked if He would obey Moses by ordering stoning her, so they could accuse Him

(8:6b–8) Jesus wrote on the floor while they pressed for an answer, so He finally said for the sinless one among them to cast the first stone, and resumed writing on the floor

Isaiah 11:1ff.

(8:9–10) They left Jesus, the woman (& the crowd); He asked about no accuser staying

(8:11) She said no condemner remained; He said He did not either, but said to avoid sin
Warning to avoid sin is like what Jesus told the man in John 5:14. It is for believers.

(8:12) As He resumed teaching the crowd [& the woman], Jesus said He is the light of the world (unlike Pharisees who walk in darkness), so Jesus' followers walk in light
On the 8th morning of the feast, the court of the women was not illumined brightly as on the prior days. Jesus is the light. He is the One to whom the feast points

(8:13–15a) Pharisees called His claim to be the Light of the world invalid self-testimony; He called His testimony valid, because He knows His origin, but they (who do not) judge by fleshly standards

A word about the connection between John 8:2–13 and John 8:14ff.

1. Jesus taught crowds in John 8:2 (possibly including some Pharisees)
2. Some Pharisees came to Jesus in 8:3, bringing an adulteress.
3. Some of those Pharisees were eyewitnesses to the woman's adultery (8:4).
4. No eyewitness was without sin, so eyewitness Pharisees left (8:9)

How is it (if Pharisees left Jesus) that 8:13 speaks of Pharisees hearing John 8:12?

None of the points above (1–4) requires that every Pharisee left Jesus in 8:9:

- A. Pharisees may have been present in 8:2. They did not leave in 8:9.
- B. Non-eyewitness Pharisees may have come in 8:3 (who did not leave)

Debate over Jesus' origins came up in John 5:17ff., 6:41ff., & 7:28 (which is a question)
This old debate had been going on for a year (since Feast of Booths in AD 31: John 5).

(8:15b–18) His witness is valid, because the Father testifies (2 witnesses)

John 5:30ff. says that Jesus will not testify at Great White Throne, because (as judge) He will need to avoid being One who gives testimony there. This does not mean that He cannot testify in other situations. Jesus affirms His right to testify in John 8.

When Jesus says *in your law*, it is also His law. His point is that what He says is valid in the law, which is something that they accept. This is something they could not reject.

(8:19–20) When asked to identify His Father, Jesus said they do not know the Father [whose character witness they reject], no one arrested Him, because it was not His time

(8:21–22) Jesus said that He would go away [to the Father] where they could not come, but they will die (as sinners w/o eternal life), but some Judeans wondered if He were suicidal

His reference to *you will die* caused them to understand (properly) *going away* as death

They ignored Him saying they would die under judgment & tried to turn it against Him

(8:23–24) He says that (being born from below) that they will die unless they believe in Him

Stated positively, this would say, the only way for them not to die is to believe in Him

(8:25–27) Jesus' antagonists demand that He tell them who He is; He affirms that He has said from the beginning that He is the One sent by the Father (which they do not grasp)

(8:28–29) Jesus said that when they lift Him (on a cross) His identity will be clear to them, as the One the Father sent & with whom the Father abides, because the Son pleases Him

CONCLUSION