ONLY FOUR DAYS AFTER the solemn holy day of Yom Kippur, Jews celebrate a seven-day holiday known as Sukkot. Although there is no direct connection to Yom Kippur, Sukkot changes the mood of the fall holiday season. ...

The holiday of Sukkot celebrates both the conclusion of the fall harvest and commemorates the Jewish people’s wandering in the desert after they left Egypt when they lived in temporary tentlike structures—simple booths called sukkot.

Today Jews annually build their own sukkot for the week to re-experience that pivotal liberation. In addition to building sukkot, Jews use specified plants to personally thank God for the bounty of the harvest.

Sukkot is a wonderful outdoor holiday filled with symbols and a partylike atmosphere. The mood is festive. The focus of the week’s celebration is in the sukkah decorated with fruits, vegetables, cornstalks, palms, willows, and other greenery. Family and friends are invited to join us in the sukkah to eat there (weather permitting) and sometimes to even sleep there.

The first day of Sukkot in Reform synagogues and in Israel and the first two days in Conservative and Orthodox synagogues outside of Israel are those that are celebrated as holidays with special rituals within the synagogue. If possible, one should not work or attend school on these days.¹

L. A. Story²

A few days before one Sukkot a friend of ours had an “only in L.A.” experience. He was driving in an area west of downtown Los Angeles and he spotted some city workers cutting down palm fronds.

He stopped his car and asked if he could have some. The foreperson, an Hispanic woman, told him the fronds were all taken. He asked in amazement, “What do you mean?”

The foreperson looked at him as if he had just arrived from the planet Mars. Then she said, “They’re for Sukkos!”

VII The Christ Revealed to Israel

K. Festival Messages

3. The First Response Verses 25-36
4. The Second Message Verses 37-39
5. The Second Response Verses 40-53

Introduction: So, it’s the Festival of Booths, a 7 day celebration with a time of rest on the first and eight day. And …

“Halfway through the festival, Jesus went up to the temple and started to teach. Astonished, the Jewish leaders asked, “He’s never been taught! How has he mastered the Law?”

² Ibid., p. 58
Jesus responded, “My teaching isn’t mine but comes from the one who sent me. Whoever wants to do God’s will can tell whether my teaching is from God or whether I speak on my own. Those who speak on their own seek glory for themselves. Those who seek the glory of him who sent me are people of truth; there’s no falsehood in them. Didn’t Moses give you the Law? Yet none of you keep the Law. Why do you want to kill me?”

The crowd answered, “You have a demon. Who wants to kill you?”

Jesus replied, “I did one work, and you were all astonished. Because Moses gave you the commandment about circumcision (although it wasn’t Moses but the patriarchs), you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. If a man can be circumcised on the Sabbath without breaking Moses’ Law, why are you angry with me because I made an entire man well on the Sabbath? Don’t judge according to appearances. Judge with right judgment.”” (John 7:14–24 CEB)

3. The First Response: One thing about Jesus’ ministry, when led by the Spirit He doesn’t hesitate to call “a spade a spade.” And that doesn’t make Him attractive to those who are fans of the status quo. As noted last time Jesus can be called a radical. He wasn’t a political radical, as defined by some. He was a radical, a zealot, for God’s truth as we too are to be.

Keep in mind some had responded to Jesus’ question “Why do you want to kill me?” by saying He was demon possessed. Or as we’d say, “He’s suffering from paranoid delusions. But apparently the word had gotten around and some residents of Jerusalem weren’t afraid to say it. “There is a plot within the leadership to kill someone. Is it possible this Jesus is the one they are trying to kill?”

What was amazing to those who thought Jesus might just be right was that He didn’t let death treats stop Him from preaching. Here He was right out in public, in the Temple of all places, preaching to any and all who would stop to listen to Him.

The other odd comment here was, “Do the powers that be actually know Jesus is the Christ.” Here the power probably refers to the Sanhedrin. This opens up a can of worms. Did the people think so little of the Jewish leadership that they believed Jesus was a target because He was the Christ? Or were they wondering, since no one was trying to stop His teaching, did the leadership realize He is the Christ. The Greek leaves the sense that this question is rhetorical and is answered “Nah.”

More likely the powers that be weren’t trying to stop Jesus from speaking out because of their fear to the public’s response to any action they took. And later when we see them move against Him they do so under the cloak of darkness.

The real picture here is one of Jesus’ fearlessness. He is carrying out the will of the Father and no one has any power over Him but what the Father allows.

“But the Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame. He who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who is my
adversary? Let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord God helps me; who will declare me guilty? Behold, all of them will wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up” (Isaiah 50:7–9 ESV).

Has there ever been a time when you were in a fearful situation where you were depending on the Lord for courage? How did the Lord strengthen you?

Verses 27-29: One popular myth was Messiah would suddenly appear. Which meant there was a serious problem with Jesus being the One. After all they “knew” Him, which He pointed out. It appears there was a general knowledge that Jesus came from Nazareth.

While this sudden appearance may have been one of the myths floating around, as will be seen a few verses down, others knew that scripture stated where the Messiah would actually come from: Bethlehem.

Now Jesus speaks again. Well actually more that speaks. Kruse points out …

“Because Jesus was making an important public declaration, the evangelist uses the verb ‘to cry out’ (krazō), as he does on three other occasions, all related to important public declarations (1:15; 7:37; 12:44).”

The reality is these people don’t know Jesus; they only think they do. He once again states that everything He says and does is at the bidding of the Father. He is of God. He was sent by God. And when He speaks it is God who is speaking. By the way the people said they knew God but Jesus says … “You people don’t know God!”

“How can you say, ‘We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us’? But behold, the lying pen of the scribes has made it into a lie. The wise men shall be put to shame; they shall be dismayed and taken; behold, they have rejected the word of the Lord, so what wisdom is in them?” (Jeremiah 8:8–9 ESV).

Once again the people know that Jesus is claiming to be God. And as far as many are concerned this qualifies as blasphemy. Accordingly, they want to arrest Him. And if He wasn’t whom He claimed to be, their dismay and desire to arrest Him were warranted.

Now something rather strange occurs. As some in the crowd rush to place Jesus under arrest they are unable to do so. John gives us the why but not the how. The why was because Jesus’ time, that is for His arrest, trial, death, and resurrection was still some six months away.

As for how, maybe it was supernatural. Certainly the fact that it wasn’t His time gives a sense of something beyond the ordinary happening. Jesus disappeared from their midst or in some way He was untouchable. MacArthur speculates it may have had more to do with the intervention of some in the crowd who supported Him. In any case we don’t know.

“My times are in your hand; rescue me from the hand of my enemies and from my persecutors!” (Psalm 31:15 ESV).

And, as a slight aside, this reinforces the truth that the only reason Jesus went to the cross was because that was what He came for. No one had any power over Him but that which He allowed. Whether it was the intervention of the Holy Spirit, the Father, or Christ Himself, no one could lay hands on Him until it was His time.

“For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father”’ (John 10:17–18 ESV).

Verse 31: As we can see, the Spirit is acting and there are actually divergent views about Jesus. Some of the crowd, remember this is all going on in and around the Temple, were sincerely wondering if Jesus actually was the Messiah. Their point was that everything He did was in line with what was expected from the Messiah.

“And all the people were amazed, and said, “Can this be the Son of David?” (Matthew 12:23 ESV).

Verse 32: We don’t know from this verse exactly what the Pharisees heard, but they knew the people were discussing Jesus among themselves. It is safe to assume from their actions that they were concerned that some of the people were beginning to speculate that He was the Messiah. The situation was clearly getting out of hand. So they must have talked to the Chief Priests * who were growing equally concerned. Consequently the two groups sent the Temple Police to arrest Him. But it was too late because Jesus had already slipped away and …

“The officers (temple guards) were a kind of police force consisting of Levites, who were responsible for maintaining order in the busy temple grounds (especially at feast times), though the Sanhedrin could also employ them elsewhere in matters not affecting Roman policy. 6

Verses 33-36: … in a secluded corner of the Temple He privately continues making His point. Which also may be a reaction to the coming of the Temple guards. Who was listening at this point is unclear. Since He had escaped those who wanted to arrest Him, it is most likely these are individuals who were at least somewhat open to hearing what He had to say. What is clear is Jesus isn’t mincing words and that His words, to some degree,

And so we enter another motif of misunderstanding. Jesus very succinctly states that His time is short and then He will be returning to the Father. Obviously, from our perspective, we know He is speaking of His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. But the people hear something completely different.

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* The chief priests (Sadducees who were former high priests and members of important priestly families).


6 Ibid.
Instead Jesus’ audience thinks that Jesus is talking about going into exile, into the diaspora and bringing His preaching to the Jews who have been scattered throughout, and beyond, the empire.

**Diaspora** Scattering of the Jews from the land of Palestine into other parts of the world. The term “dispersion” is also often used to describe this process.

The Diaspora took place over several centuries. While its exact beginnings are difficult to date, two major events greatly contributed to it. In 722 B.C. the Assyrians captured the Northern Kingdom (Israel). Following this victory, the Assyrians resettled large numbers of the Israelites in Assyria (2 Kings 17:6). In 586 B.C. the Babylonians captured the Southern Kingdom (Judah) and followed the same policy of resettlement. Many of the residents of Judah were transported to Babylon (2 Kings 25:8-12). While some of these persons later returned to Judah, many of them remained permanently in Babylon. Later other wars fought by the Greeks and Romans in Palestine helped scatter more of the Jewish people.

The result of the Diaspora was that by NT times as many Jews lived outside of Palestine as lived within the land. In almost every city Paul visited on his missionary journeys, he found a Jewish synagogue (Acts 14:1; 17:1, 10; 18:4). The Diaspora thus helped pave the way for the spread of the gospel.°

His audience asks, what does He mean? He says they will look for Him, but won’t find him. “There is nowhere He can go that we can’t find Him,” is the implication. Jesus also says they can’t come with Him. “What does He mean by that?,” they speculate. The first statement is prophetic in that it looks to the state of the Jewish people, even today. They can’t find their Messiah, but …

> “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn. On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning for Hadad-rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. The land shall mourn, each family by itself: the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the Shimeites by itself, and their wives by themselves; Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen” (Zechariah 12:10–13; Revelation 1:7 ESV).

Jesus of course is speaking of the end of the first coming. Zechariah is speaking of what follows at the second coming.

Jesus’ second statement leading to the latter part of the people’s response may refer to the fact that the unbelieving Jew, those who don’t follow Him, will never enter God’s presence.

> “Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently but will not find me” (Proverbs 1:28 ESV).

Those, be the Jew or Gentile, will never follow Jesus were He goes if they don’t follow Jesus’ words, teachings, and His call to salvation. But for those who do …

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Conclusion: “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going.” (John 14:1–4 ESV).

Which also takes us back to verse 33 …

“Jesus then said, “I will be with you a little longer, and then I am going to him who sent me” (John 7:33–34 ESV).

When Jesus speaks of His death, not related to the manner of it, He does so as simply a return to the presence of the Father. And for us we do not have to fear death, not related to the manner of it, because it is simply a transition into a better place.

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment” (Revelation 21:1–6 ESV).

This is our comfort and our hope …

“For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:14–18 ESV).

…and this is what we have to offer to the lost, a place where, if they choose to follow Jesus here, will be able to follow Him there.

“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but he hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit,” and, as far as we understand that revelation we are taught by it that we shall enter into a state of complete rest and perfect peace; a state of holy delight, and of serene and blissful activity; a state of perfect praise; a state
of satisfaction; a state, probably, of progress, but still of completeness at every inch of the road; a state in which we shall be as happy as we are capable of being, every vessel, little or great, being filled to the brim. We shall be supremely blessed, for at the right hand of God there are pleasures for ever more. 

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8 Spurgeon, C. H., Exploring the Mind and Heart of the Prince of Preachers: Five-thousand Quotations, Illustrations, and Axioms, public domain.
The Gospel of John
A Question of Identity

John 7:25-

VII The Christ Revealed to Israel
   K. Festival Messages
      3. The First Response
      4. The Second Message
      5. The Second Response

Introduction:
(John 7:14–24)

3. The First Response:
(Isaiah 50:7–9)

Verses 27-29:
(Jeremiah 8:8–9; Psalm 31:15; John 10:17–18)
Verse 31:
(Matthew 12:23)

Verse 32:

Verses 33-36:
(Zechariah 12:10–13; Revelation 1:7; Proverbs 1:28)

Conclusion:
(John 14:1–4, 7:33–34; Revelation 21:1–6; 1 Thessalonians 4:14–18)

Personal Application: This week meditate on the blessing of knowing your going to heaven and how that can impact your daily walk.

Prayer for the Week: Lord, thank You that I know whom I have believed and therefore know my future destination. In Christ’s name, Amen.