

Week Six reading: Luke 10 - 11 | John 7 – 10

The Gospel of John written by the apostle John	Jesus represented as Son of God	Written circa 85AD	Most likely written in Syria or Asia Minor (Ephesus)	John's primary audience was Christ-followers. His purpose was to confirm and secure Christians in the faith. (vs 20:31)	John's writing style is very artistic – using word pictures and analogies to highlight the uniqueness of 'the Word made flesh'.
--	---------------------------------	--------------------	--	---	---

DURING THE TIME OF THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES IN JOHN 7

Jesus took a time and celebration period as an opportunity to further reveal His identity and purpose to the people. The Feast of Tabernacles is a week-long feast in September or early October. This feast was given in thanksgiving for God's gracious provision for Israel, both in the past and in the present. God's graciousness in the present is seen in the harvest that has just occurred at this time of year (Deut 16:13-15). His past blessing is His provision during the wilderness wanderings (Lev 23:39-43). By recalling the wilderness pilgrimage while thanking God for the blessings of the land, participants realized their profound dependence upon God for provision. The feast's emphasis on God's provision fits perfectly with the teaching Jesus has just given, in which he revealed himself as the bread of life, and with the revelation in this chapter of himself as one who gives living water. He is the one who provides nourishment for eternal life even during the present time of our pilgrimage.

Even the details of the feast correspond to Jesus' activity and teaching during the feast. The Jews lived in huts during the feast to commemorate how the Israelites lived in tents in the wilderness. In these chapters Jesus is depicted as a pilgrim, through the many references to where he is from and where he is going. Another feature of the feast was a series of water libations each morning in the temple, commemorating the provision of water in the wilderness. This provides a striking setting for Jesus' great invitation to come to him to drink (7:37-38). Similarly, Jesus' proclamation that he is the light of the world (8:12) was made in the part of the temple where the feast's lamp-lighting ceremonies took place, ceremonies that commemorated the pillar of fire during the wilderness wanderings. Thus, Jesus is revealed as the fulfillment of the major themes of this feast. The very God to whom they are giving thanks in this wonderful feast has come into their midst (8:58). {Source: IVP New Testament Commentary}

Each of the feasts/holy days were established by God for remembrance of their trials and His provisions. There was significance and symbolism throughout the ceremony to etch this into the minds of the nation of Israel. But, somewhere along the way, significance transformed into ritual. And their pride turned from being grateful recipients of God's favor to legalistic performers of religious pomp and circumstance.

Are there any habits in your spiritual life that are in danger of becoming empty ritual over true worship (think meal prayers, casual Bible reading without absorption, trite spiritual sayings, non-engaged singing)?

A CHIASM EXPLAINED IN JOHN 8:42-47

A chiasm is a writing style that uses a unique repetition pattern for clarification and/or emphasis. Chiasm is pronounced ky'-az-um. Often called the chiastic (ky'-az-tic) approach or the chiastic structure, this repetition form appears

throughout the Bible yet it is not well known. The way you approach the Scriptures can be dramatically enhanced as you learn what a chiasm is, how to recognize chiasms, and how to glean a fresh application from these New or Old Testament passages. Chiasms are structured in a repeating A-B-C ... C'-B'-A' pattern. Simply put, a chiasm is a repetition of similar ideas in the reverse sequence. The importance of the chiastic structure is found in its hidden emphasis.

In John 8:42-47, Jesus proceeds to attack precisely his opponents' claim to have God for a father. Here is the heart of the rebuke between Jesus and these Jewish opponents: Jesus is one with God the Father, expressed here once again in terms of his origin and obedience (v. 42). It follows that anyone who rejects Him is rejecting God the Father who sent Him and to whom He is obedient. The rest of this section (vv. 43-47) works out the implications of this point. Jesus has said the opponents have no room for His word (v. 37), and now He says that they are not able to hear His word (v. 43). This inability indicates that something is radically wrong with them. The next verse is the central accusation: they have the wrong father--they are of their father, the devil. The centrality of this verse is signaled by its place at the center of a chiasm:

- A The Jews and God (v. 42a)
- B The Jews and Jesus (vv. 42b-43)
- C The Jews and the devil (v. 44)
- B' The Jews and Jesus (vv. 45-46)
- A' The Jews and God (v. 47)

The reason Jesus gives for their rejection of Him and their alienation from God is their relation to the devil.

John portrays the devil as exactly the opposite of Jesus. Here the devil is described with respect to a *beginning* (v. 44), as is Jesus also (1:1). But Jesus is life (14:6) and has life in Himself and gives life (1:4; 5:26), whereas the devil is a murderer (v. 44). Furthermore, the devil was not holding to the truth (more literally, "did not stand in the truth,"), because there is no truth in him (v. 44). In John's thought, "truth" means "eternal reality as revealed to men--either the reality itself or the revelation of it". These two aspects of truth are united in Jesus who both is the truth (14:6) and speaks the truth (8:40). Just as it is Jesus' very nature to be the truth, so it is the devil's very nature to lack the truth and speak lies, for he is a liar and the father of lies. So John depicts the devil as the personification of what is the exact opposite of Jesus.

A chiasm organizes themes much like a sandwich: A) a piece of bread on top, B) mustard, C) a delightful piece of meat, C') another savory piece of meat, B') more mustard, and finally A') another piece of bread on the bottom. Chiasms generally focus on the flavorful meat, but the bread and mustard are necessary for a complete sandwich. Some chiasms do not have a mustard layer, other chiasms have lettuce on both sides of the meat, and some have just one piece of delicious meat.

When God inspired the Hebrew and Greek writers to inscribe their portions of the Scriptures, the chiastic structure was often used to add emphasis. He could not use techniques such as bold, italics, underline, indentation, bullets, or font size to help the reader understand what is important because these were not part of the ancient languages at the time. Instead He often used the structural arrangement of repeated thoughts or phrases to accomplish this emphasis.

We study Him to know Him, and by knowing Him, learn how to better live for Him.

“I AM” STATEMENTS BY JESUS

Context verse	Word picture	An illustration Jesus provided	The response from the people	The lesson in the word picture
John 6:35: “I am the bread of life,” Jesus told them. “No one who comes to Me will ever be hungry, and no one who believes in Me will ever be thirsty again.”	Bread of Life	Feeding of the crowd	They were looking for a miraculous sign like the manna from heaven in order to be convinced (vs 30-31)	Jesus used the process of physical digestion to teach a spiritual truth. Food taken into the body is digested and then assimilated so that it becomes a part of the body of the one who consumed it.
John 8:12: Then Jesus spoke to them again: “I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows Me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life.”	Light of the world	Healing of the man blind from birth	The Pharisees rejected His statement because He was testifying about Himself	He came to reveal Himself and illuminate the way to salvation. (Cf Psalm 119:105)
John 10:7: So Jesus said again, “I assure you: I am the door of the sheep.”	The Door	The door of a sheep fold	They did not understand Him (6); they considered Him crazy (20)	Access to the sheepfold is through Jesus
John 10:11: “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”	The good Shepherd	The roles of those who interact with the sheep (thieves & robbers, wolf, the hired man, the shepherd)	They did not understand Him (6); they considered Him crazy (20)	The sheep know their Shepherd and He will sacrifice His life for the sheep (Cf Psalm 23)
John 11:25: Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me, even if he dies, will live.”	The Resurrection and the Life	The raising of Lazarus	Many believed; the Pharisees consulted how to suppress Him (45-57)	Through Jesus, physical death cannot interrupt the continuation of eternal life

THE UNIQUENESS OF JOHN’S GOSPEL

The synoptics (Matthew, Mark and Luke) are written from a third person point of view, describing the events as if the authors had personally observed all of them and were reporting what they saw at the time. Thus they are basically descriptive in their approach. John’s Gospel, on the other hand, although also written from a third person point of view, is more reflective, clearly later than the events he describes. The author of the Fourth Gospel very carefully separates himself from the events he describes (cf. the role of the Beloved Disciple in the Fourth Gospel). However clear it is that he was an eyewitness of the life of Jesus, it is no less clear that he looks back upon it from a temporal distance. While we see the events through his eyes, we are carefully guided to see the events of Jesus’ life not as John saw them when they happened but as he now sees them. We understand more of the significance of the events

We study Him to know Him, and by knowing Him, learn how to better live for Him.

described from the position the writer now holds than an eyewitness could have understood at the time the events took place. In this sense John’s Gospel is much more reflective. {Source: Commentary on the Gospel of John}

A COMPARATIVE VIEW OF THE SHEPHERD FROM PSALM 23 AND JOHN 10

PSALM 23	THE SHEPHERD’S ACTIONS	THE SHEEP’S ACTIONS	SELECTED VERSES FROM JOHN 10
<p>The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I lack.</p> <p>He lets me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters.</p> <p>He renews my life; He leads me along the right paths for His name’s sake.</p> <p>Even when I go through the darkest valley, I fear no danger, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff—they comfort me.</p> <p>You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.</p> <p>Only goodness and faithful love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord as long as I live.</p>	<p>Leads the sheep</p> <p>Renews life</p> <p>Lead along right paths</p> <p>Is with the sheep</p> <p>Prepares a table</p> <p>Anoints the sheep’s head</p> <p>Enters by the door</p> <p>Calls His sheep</p> <p>Leads them out</p> <p>Goes ahead of them</p> <p>Came</p> <p>Lays down his life</p>	<p>Lacks nothing</p> <p>Goes through valleys without fear</p> <p>Will dwell</p> <p>Hears the shepherd’s voice</p> <p>Follows the shepherd</p> <p>Recognizes the shepherd’s voice</p> <p>Never follows a stranger</p> <p>Runs away from a stranger</p> <p>Doesn’t recognize the voice of strangers</p> <p>Has life in abundance</p>	<p>The one who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.</p> <p>The doorkeeper opens it for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.</p> <p>When he has brought all his own outside, he goes ahead of them. The sheep follow him because they recognize his voice.</p> <p>They will never follow a stranger; instead they will run away from him, because they don’t recognize the voice of strangers.”</p> <p>A thief comes only to steal and to kill and to destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance.</p> <p>“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.</p>

APPLICATION FROM WEEK SIX

Consider this picture of the Good Shepherd. There is much more responsibility on the part of the Shepherd than the sheep. Can you approach this coming week with a sense of release that, as a sheep, you do not have to be in charge as much as you think you do? Name a situation in your life that needs that reminder: _____

A hidden danger to the life of a sheep is not being familiar enough with the shepherd that the stranger's voice is noticeable. A hidden danger in the life of a Christian is that we listen to the strangers speaking all around us enough that we don't see them as strangers any more. What can you do to allow the voice of The Shepherd to speak louder than the voices of the world? _____

Thank you, Lord, for the word pictures of your Son! May You reveal Yourself to us this week as the Bread, the Light, the Door, the Shepherd, the Life, and any other way that helps us to know You more. And through a thirst for that knowledge, may your Holy Spirit flow from us to those around us that need You.

Memory/meditation verse: On the last and most important day of the festival, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone is thirsty, he should come to Me and drink! The one who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, will have streams of living water flow from deep within him." John 7:37-38

Week Seven reading: Luke 12 - 16