

The Church of the Servant King

Survey of the Bible Series – The Gospel of John (SB_JN7C_Controversy on the Last Day of the Feast & Controversy of the Sanhedrin)

Controversy on the Last Day of the Feast (7:37-44)

The last day of the Feast of Tabernacles concluded the entire cycle of annual feasts in Israel. It was kept as a special Sabbath (Lev 23:36). It was on this day that Jesus made His most climatic appeal. [Read excerpts here].¹ As Jesus cried out, He compared Himself to “living water.” Jesus had already compared Himself to the temple and to the bronze snake (Jn 3). He had also referred to Himself as the bread from heaven (Jn 6). Now, He reveals Himself as the Rock that, when pierced, gives forth the living water of eternal life (Ex 17:6 cf Num 20:8, 11; Deut 32:30, 31, 37; 1 Co 10:4).

The promise of living water or streams of water flowing from within do not occur literally in the Old Testament. However, the essence of this promise is found in such passages as follows:

For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, and floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants and My blessing on your offspring. (Isa 44:3)

Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come buy wine and milk without money and without price. (Isa 55:1)

The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. (Isa 58:11)

Prophetically, John builds upon this same theme in the book of Revelation as He describes the river of the water of life in the New Jerusalem (Rev 22:1-3). This river of the water of life is much like that described in Ezekiel 47 as that prophet describes the restored Temple of the Messianic kingdom (47:7-12). Here in John 7:37-38, Jesus pulls together the water libation ritual of the Feast of Tabernacles and connects it to the spiritual blessing of the Holy Spirit's ministry in the Messianic kingdom. Jesus' statements in these verses refer to the Holy Spirit coming to live within believers in a whole new way. Pentecost (Acts 2) represented an initial fulfillment of these prophecies in such a manner that had Israel responded to Peter's preaching (Acts 3:19-21), Israel would have eventually seen the complete fulfillment of these promises regarding the Holy Spirit's ministry in Israel's last days (Joel 2:28-32 cf. Acts 2:17-21). Later in John's Gospel, we see Jesus promising to send “another Comforter,” the Holy Spirit, who would live not only with them but in them (14:16-17). However, this could only be accomplished after Jesus had fulfilled all Scripture in regard to His death and resurrection (Jn 7:39). The Church Age believer shares in common the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Ro 8:9; 1 Co 3:16) that was to be and will be the experience of believer's of Israel's last days.

Principle: The ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer should result in blessings flowing forth from that believer's life to others.

Application: Is your life a spiritual blessing to others – one of encouragement and example? Or does your life reflect the selfishness which is the natural by-product of a life characterized by a lack of spiritual discipline or even self-discipline? Are you allowing God to reveal areas in your life where you are keeping God from removing the self-centeredness?

¹ See Daniel Fuchs, *Israel's Holy Days* (Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1985), 74-79 and Merrill F. Unger, *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1988), 423.

Controversy at the Meeting of the Sanhedrin (7:45-52)

The Pharisees reveal their arrogance in response to the officers refusal to take Jesus. These officers were evidently decent men. They could not violate their conscience. The conscience of the Pharisees had already been seared. They had already rationalized their hatred to the point that they had no qualms about arresting and killing Jesus. The crowds were too uneducated and ignorant to know what was good for them. Nicodemus attempts a timid defense in the face of the prominent Pharisees of the day. Later in his life as he assisted with Jesus' burial, Nicodemus must have wished he had articulated a more clear case. Nevertheless, the great and prominent religious leaders names of Jesus' day are not even known in history, yet Nicodemus' name is memorialized for eternity in God's Word. The exceptions are Annas and Caiphas.

Principle: The timing of the spoken word when given in testimony of our Lord is crucial.

Application: What will your eternal record of the spoken word of testimony look like?