

Exegetical Notes, John 7:25-8:1

“The People Were Divided Because of Jesus”

Prepared by Charles H. Jensen, Pastor, Cornerstone Fellowship

101 Kylies Road, Coatesville, PA 19320

610-384-1375

charleshjensen@aol.com

Verses 25-31

At that point some of the people of Jerusalem began to ask, “Isn’t this the man they are trying to kill?”²⁶ Here he is, speaking publicly, and they are not saying a word to him. Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Messiah?²⁷ But we know where this man is from; when the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from.”²⁸ Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, “Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own authority, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him,²⁹ but I know him because I am from him and he sent me.”³⁰ At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come.³¹ Still, many in the crowd believed in him. They said, “When the Messiah comes, will he perform more signs than this man?”

- At some point during the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:17), the people who were attending the feast realized that Jesus was freely teaching in the Temple courts and that the authorities, who were plotting to kill him (John 5:18, 7: 19), did nothing to stop him. They asked, sarcastically, if the authorities had come to the conclusion that Jesus really was the Messiah.
- They then agreed that this was impossible since everyone knew that Jesus was from Nazareth. Some scholars argued that no one would know where the Messiah would come from. Others said that the Old Testament said the Messiah would come from Bethlehem. No one believed that the Messiah would come from Nazareth. Since they knew Jesus was from there, he could not be the Messiah.
- Jesus, boldly, confronted those who were questioning his credentials, by suggesting, with equal sarcasm, that they may have known where he was from but they did not understand that he was not speaking on his own authority but on the authority of him who sent him. The one who sent him was God. He proclaimed that they did not know God, but he did because God had sent him.

- Because they were offended by Jesus' accusation that they did not know God they, some of those in the crowd, tried to grab him and throw him out of the Temple. Their intention was to stop his insulting remarks. But they were not successful. They attempted to discredit Jesus by saying that when the Messiah came he would do greater miracles than did Jesus.
- None-the-less, still more people believed that Jesus was Israel's Messiah.

Verse 32

The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering such things about him. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple guards to arrest him.

- When the authorities heard the commotion in the Temple courts and realized that Jesus was causing it and that the people were divided regarding him, they sent the Temple guards to arrest him.

Verses 33-36

Jesus said, "I am with you for only a short time, and then I am going to the one who sent me."³⁴ You will look for me, but you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come."³⁵ The Jews said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we cannot find him? Will he go where our people live scattered among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks?"³⁶ What did he mean when he said, 'You will look for me, but you will not find me,' and 'Where I am, you cannot come'?"

- As the Temple guards listened, Jesus explained that in a short while he would return to the one who sent him, he would return to God. He said to those who had been sent by the authorities to arrest him, "soon you will search for me but not be able to find me." He said that where he would go they could not follow.
- This confused everyone. They thought that he meant that he would leave the area which was controlled by the Jews and disappear among the Greeks. They did not understand what Jesus meant.

Verses 37- 44

On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink."³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them."³⁹ By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

⁴⁰ On hearing his words, some of the people said, "Surely this man is the Prophet."⁴¹ Others said, "He is the Messiah." Still others asked, "How can the Messiah come from Galilee?"⁴² Does not Scripture say that the Messiah will come

from David's descendants and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?"

⁴³ Thus the people were divided because of Jesus. ⁴⁴ Some wanted to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him.

- The feast lasted seven days, but concluded on the eighth day with a grand celebration. These words were spoken by Jesus on that day at the concluding celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles.
- Jesus promised that everyone who believed in him would have “rivers of living water flowing within them”. (See John 4)
- John explained that this “living water” was a reference to the Holy Spirit which would come to abide with all believers after the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Until the Day of Pentecost (see Acts 2), the Holy Spirit visited people at special times but did not abide with them at all times. Jesus was promising that the Holy Spirit would come to abide with all who believed in him at all times.
- By saying this, Jesus caused a great division among the people about him. Some said he was The Prophet who would be sent to prepare them for the Messiah's coming. Some were absolutely convinced that he was the Messiah. Others still believed that he could not be the Messiah because he was from Nazareth and not from Bethlehem, David's home town.

Verses 45-49

Finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests and the Pharisees, who asked them, “Why didn't you bring him in?” ⁴⁶ “No one ever spoke the way this man does,” the guards replied. ⁴⁷ “You mean he has deceived you also?” the Pharisees retorted. ⁴⁸ “Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him? ⁴⁹ No! But this mob that knows nothing of the law—there is a curse on them.”

- When the Temple guards returned to the authorities they did not bring Jesus with them under arrest as they had been instructed to do.
- When the authorities asked the guards why they had not brought Jesus with them under arrest, the guards explained that they never heard anyone speak/teach as had Jesus. They had been so impressed by him that they did not arrest him or stop him from teaching.
- The authorities could not believe that the guards had been so influenced by Jesus in such a short time. The authorities pointed out to the guards that none of them had put faith in Jesus but only the crowd; and the people in the crowd were under an evil spell.

Verses 50-8:1

Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their own number, asked,⁵¹ “Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing?”⁵² They replied, “Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee.”

⁵³ Then they all went home, ⁸¹ but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

- Nicodemus (see John 3:1-21) was one of the authorities. He spoke out on Jesus' behalf. The others turned against him for his support of Jesus. They accused him, sarcastically, of being from Galilee and of not knowing the facts. If he looked into things he would know that Jesus was a fraud because no prophet, let alone Israel's Messiah, would come from Galilee as had Jesus.
- The crowds, Jesus' brothers, the authorities all went home. But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives, a hill outside of Jerusalem.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *The People Were Divided Because of Jesus*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by *Cornerstone Fellowship* & The Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen. They are used here by permission.)